

**Subject:** Update from Chris Philp MP

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**To:** [REDACTED]

# Update from Chris Philp MP



Dear All,

I've been working hard on local and national issues recently as our MP, and thought you might find this regular update useful.

## **Westfield**

Fantastic news has recently come through on Westfield – John Lewis has agreed to be the anchor tenant, with a large new store and a large Waitrose is going in as well. Work should start on the site of the current Whitgift Centre in mid-2019. This follows years of delay which were finally unblocked a few months ago when I successfully lobbied for a £10 million Government grant to fund infrastructure works in the town centre.

## **School Funding**

Following lots of campaigning last year, Croydon schools are getting an £8.9m or 3.9% increase in Block funding from the Government this year – nearly double the rate of inflation. Larger secondary schools are getting especially big increases in block funding – such as Oasis Cusldon (16%), Woodcote (8%), Riddlesdown (5%) and Harris Academy Purley (10%). Some smaller primary schools had smaller increases (and in a few cases a reduction) even though Croydon's Government funding for schools went up quite a lot. This was due to the way Croydon Council divided up the funding between schools, and I am working with the Council and some of the schools affected to try to find a way to resolve the issue for the next financial year.

## **NHS Funding in Croydon**

Croydon's NHS has recently received a £12 million funding boost to improve local services and help care for people out of hospital. This will really help our local area, and comes as the

£21 million re-build of Croydon University Hospital's (Mayday's) new A&E nears completion. The recent announcement by the Government of long-term increases in NHS funding across the UK will help healthcare in Croydon for many years to come.

### **Planning**

The Labour-run council is continuing to grant wildly inappropriate planning applications across the Borough. I will always support residents in fighting inappropriate planning applications, while encouraging development in suitable places – for example in Croydon town centre where so many buildings stand empty (e.g. the Nestle building, the Royal Mail building) and we could easily build thousands of new homes. On the Purley skyscraper, which I strongly opposed, we will hear the planning inspector's decision over the summer, and I will let you know as soon as the decision comes through.

### **Southern Rail and Thameslink**

After slow improvements in the service over the last year, the introduction of the new timetable on 20<sup>th</sup> May has been a fiasco. Many trains have been cancelled or removed, and there is now a revised cut-down timetable. Despite the fact that the new timetable has been long-planned, the Southern and Thameslink operator GTR (Govia Thameslink Railway) failed to train enough drivers on the new routes. This re-enforces my long-standing view that they should lose the franchise, which I put to the Transport Secretary in the House of Commons:



I asked the Secretary of State to remove the franchise from GTR

The GTR CEO Charles Horton has just resigned, but I am pushing for the whole franchise to be taken away from GTR due to their serial incompetence.

### **Rough Sleeping**

Figures recently released show that the Rough Sleeper count in Croydon has halved in the

last year, from 68 people in 2016, down to 31 people in 2017 (this is now lower than in many other outer London Boroughs, such as Waltham Forest at 44 people and Redbridge at 65 people). However, even one person sleeping rough is one too many. The Government has therefore launched a £30 million fund to help councils do more, and Croydon is getting £510,000 of this. It will help fund hostel places to help people sleeping rough in Croydon.

### **Council Elections**

At the council elections in May Labour retained control of Croydon council despite an extremely valiant fight by the Conservatives. The Conservatives did win 21 out of the 24 seats in our Croydon South part of the Borough and also picked up an extra seat in Addiscombe, but this was not enough to win back control across the Borough as a whole. I would like to thank everyone who helped and supported the Conservative campaign. Despite my disagreements with the Labour-run council, especially on planning, I will seek to work constructively with them where that is possible in the interests of our Borough.

### **National Issues**

Here are some of the issues I have been working on nationally, with clips from Parliament and TV or radio:

Asking the Prime Minister in Parliament to impose tougher economic sanctions on Russia:



Leading a Westminster Hall Debate on stopping the persecution of Christians around the world:



Supporting the new £50m Grammar School expansion Fund in Parliament:



On BBC News supporting the new Grammar School funding:



On Newsnight talking about the recent EU Withdrawal Bill:



Discussing economic growth and Housing on the Daily Politics:



On BBC Newsnight debating military action in Syria following the chemical weapons attack by Assad:



On BBC news debating military action in Syria following the chemical weapons attack by Assad:



Correcting some misleading claims in Parliament by Angela Raynor:



Further information is on [www.chrisphilp.com](http://www.chrisphilp.com) and please do forward this email to friends and neighbours who may be interested in it. I will also be producing a leaflet shortly to update residents on local issues. If you are able to help deliver it on your street or a nearby one, please reply to this email letting me know you can help.

In the meantime, I will keep working hard on local and national issues.

With best wishes,

Chris



**Chris Philp**

**Member of Parliament for Croydon South**



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