

Government confirms rapid review into London Borough of Croydon

- Chris Wood appointed to lead rapid review into the London Borough of Croydon
- Review will look into the council's governance and management of risk
- Recommendations will be made to the Local Government Secretary next month

A rapid non-statutory review will be conducted into the London Borough of Croydon, the Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick has confirmed today (Thursday 29 October).

The review will focus on Croydon Council's overall governance, culture and risk management following the Council's announcement that it would seek exceptional financial support from MHCLG.

The council has agreed to this short, informal review to identify the issues the council is facing and make recommendations after a number of serious concerns around the council's governance and risk management identified by MHCLG were underlined in a Public Interest Report published last week by Grant Thornton. The report was highly critical of the Council's financial management and scrutiny of its spending and investments.

The rapid review does not rule out a more formal, statutory intervention from the Government in the future – a decision on which will be informed by this work.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

The situation at the London Borough of Croydon is deeply concerning and completely unacceptable – local people rightly deserve and expect better than this from their local council leaders.

The Public Interest Report published this week is damning about the dysfunctional governance within Croydon Council, who have been entirely irresponsible with their spending and investments. There are serious questions that local leaders to answer, and we are stepping in to get the situation under control.

Croydon Council has been allocated over £23.5 million in unringfenced funding since the start of the pandemic. In addition, the council's core spending power saw an increase of nearly £20.8 million this financial year even before additional emergency funding was announced.

Three independent reviewers have been appointed to carry out the review. Chris Wood will lead the review and will be supported by financial reviewer,

Alan Gay OBE, as well as a commercial reviewer, Boris Adlam.

Lead reviewer, Chris Wood has worked in several London boroughs and with councils and housing organisations on strategic regeneration planning, asset management and capital programme delivery and was Chief Executive of the London Borough of Newham. He is also a former member of the Grenfell Recovery Taskforce and current partner at Altair housing consultancy.

Chris Wood will be supported by financial reviewer, Alan Gay OBE, who is the former Finance Director and Deputy Chief Executive at Leeds City Council. Currently, he is the Director of ATG Associations, providing advice and support to Councils and other public bodies on financial and management. He is also Chair of the CIPFA Devolution Panel.

Commercial reviewer, Boris Adlam is the Crown Representative in the Cabinet Office for Kier, Amey, Deloitte and PA Consulting. A former chairman of Nexus Management plc, he has also held a number of roles across finance and investment at Arcanum Partners, Lehman, BNP Paribas and Nomura.

The findings of the review will be reported to the Local Government Secretary in November and published on Gov.uk once complete.