

## Croydon Advisory Forum on Active, Sustainable and Accessible Transport

Meeting held on Thursday, 14 December 2023 at 6.30 pm in Room 1.01 and 1.02 - Bernard Weatherill House, Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Scott Roche (Chair);  
  
Councillors Lara Fish and Christopher Herman  
  
Heather Cheesbrough, Tom Sweeney, Claire Scott, Adrian May, Farah Gabdon

**Also Present:** Isabelle Clement MBE, Yusuf Ali Omar, Jonathan Baggs, Adrian Douglas, Charles King MBE. Abiodun Obileye, Roy Endersby, Susanette Mansour, Paul Donald, Catherine Early, Marcus Boyle, Alan Voda, Lee Pilbeam

**Apologies:** Boris Rupnik, Andy Bebington and Richard Simmons.

### PART A

#### 1 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received from Boris Rupnik - Youth Service Co-Ordinator, Croydon, Andy Bebington – Cycling UK and Richard Simmons former Service Quality Manager for Arriva London South.

#### 2 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were no disclosures of interest.

#### 3 **Welcome by the Chair**

The chair introduced both the individuals and groups present in the meeting and highlighted the forums goal to present the views of all road users.

#### 4 **Introductions**

Members introduced themselves, the organisations they represent and the outcome they hope to achieve from the forum.

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## **Terms of Reference**

The Chair presented the terms of reference as set out on paragraph 2.1 of the terms of reference document.

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## **Proposed focus on 'Active, Sustainable, Accessible Transport Plan / Delivery Plan'**

The officer presented the report outlining issues to be addressed in the borough. It was noted that the published supplement was incomplete and officers advised to send out copies of this presentation.

Members commented on low traffic neighbourhoods and cycle lanes noting that they were not good for other traffic. Members also commented on issues with pollards on streets with parking and unloading, meaning delivery drivers were forced to use bus stops to make deliveries. People with reduced mobility were unable to access certain places. Members raised importance of considering these impacts when making decisions.

A member representing wheelchair users highlighted that not having low traffic neighbourhoods made it difficult to cycle. People with disabilities found it easier to cycle than wheeling and walking. The member raised the need for mixed mobility answers for people with fewest mobility choices and the importance of this forum enabling a varied group to consult. The member pointed out that people with mobility issues should be consulted prior to implementation and quality impact assessments should be carried out. The use of language when talking about travel should also be inclusive and include 'wheeling' as well as cycling and walking. The officer recognized the importance of that engagement and of creating a good project plan with enough time to consult less mobile people.

A member gave an example, in the past, of a lack of places to drop people off in Harrow, resulting in an accessibility walk being conducted with Harrow council. It was pointed out that 20 years ago accessibility walks were carried out in Croydon and Bromley. Anything planned should include a walk with affected people who would give feedback. The cycle forum previously used to carry out cycle days around the borough to pick up on accessibility issues. The chair highlighted the importance of learning from other boroughs and schemes they had implemented.

The Officer was asked about monitoring delivery and agreed that monitoring and reaching targets were important, acknowledging that communicating both outcomes and outputs to the public was priority. The officer pointed out that a public consultation was carried out on plans for improvement, however the turnout was extremely low. Members identified two main conclusions, first talking to road users in advance of decisions to address potential conflicts and identify resolutions; and second, carrying out proper equalities impact assessments ahead of time. The officer appreciated the feedback and highlighted the importance of getting

different views and requirements from the varying groups to help ensure whatever is delivered within the delivery plan was the best possible.

Concerns were raised that better compromise between users in the street is quite important. The current streetscape seemed very dedicated to cyclists and disrupts other street users.

Members highlighted the use of questionnaires to gain feedback in Croydon disability forum and suggested this be employed in this forum if there is a budget available.

**RESOLVED:** to note the contents of the report.

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### **The Levelling Up Fund Bid**

The officer in attendance presented the Levelling up Fund, which was a central government fund. The £18.5 million bid was successful last week after being unsuccessful in the summer. The officer outlined a vision for better connecting key areas in Croydon and encouraged new residents to engage with Croydon. The report contained conceptive plans to regenerate the town centre and improve public realm in Croydon to improve walking, wheeling and cycling. Officers have been working alongside TFL to create detailed plans to deliver change by 2025. The presentation identified six key project areas and the estimated cost of each; this funding comes from government and needs to be delivered by March 2026.

Members highlighted concerns regarding the central Croydon bus service which made transport worse, causing 16,000 passengers to have to change from previously direct routes. There was disappointment at Croydon Councils support for this TFL initiated change, as it made life more difficult for everyone but specifically those with reduced mobility. Where bus users could previously change buses at the same bus stop, changes led to people having to walk down the road or elsewhere to catch buses. Officer noted the question and assured they will work alongside TFL.

Members highlighted that Fairfield halls was not accessible and needed more footfall. This also raised the issue of confidence in the council and the need for clarity of vision to increase pride and investment in Croydon. Members addressed concerns about the Giraffe's placed on the streets in Croydon. Although this excited Croydon, they proved a barrier for people with sight loss and caused stumbles or falls. Many people with sight loss don't use a cane and at night can lead to accidents. Buses and bus routes changed quickly and could derail someone with sight loss and disorient them. It was deemed important to collaborate and build a confident Croydon. The officer recognised the need to communicate good things in Croydon, e.g. regeneration strategy and the need to reach out. The new regeneration strategy from the council included Westfield and the desire was for it to be informed by local people and local businesses.

The officer highlighted 'the Urban room' a unit within Whitgift centre which was a council venue to use with partners to enable access to events, exhibition and strategies. This was part of making information accessible. The officer recognised the need to push information out further as members were unaware of the urban room.

It was raised that Lambeth council created an expert panel of pan-impairment members to provide feedback. Members suggested the forum to do the same.

Members also informed the forum that Eastbourne had a wheelchair map that users could use to get around. The chair accepted the feedback and felt wheelchair maps should be used in parks as well, highlighting what type of wheelchair was suitable for different areas.

Concerns were raised by members around West Croydon stations limits of accessibility when trying to get into London. Suggestions were made from the Members to consider road works and re-routes and impacts to all users.

A member suggested working with Foot ways and Strand Aldwych. These would be good partnerships to work with and generate a new buzz around Croydon. Living streets were contracted by Lambeth council and had a service group with street audits and scoring street environments and roads.

**RESOLVED:** to note the contents of the report.

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### **Presentation on current delivery activities and the evidence underpinning**

The officer presented a whistle stop tour presentation on current projects and programme for 2024/5. The presentation focused on the Mayor's Business Plan to support the regeneration of Croydon's town and district centres.

A question was raised about whether there would be a bus route, requested by residents for 15 years, in Old Town connecting to East, West and Central Croydon. Previously there were two schemes by TFL which were deemed too expensive and cancelled. Officer responded this need to be discussed with TFL.

A member raised a question on the pedestrianisation of college road and the impact this would have on reduced mobility users requiring transport and drop off, as well as deliveries to the college and buildings. Officer responded that it wouldn't be complete pedestrianisation but pedestrian priority as part of the Fairfield master plan to balance road use with the growing resident population.

The chair advised members could submit any further questions via email to officers after the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** to note contents of the report.

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### **Questions and Discussion**

The chair acknowledged the questions received in advance by members and advised that the questions and answers would be sent out.

The representative of TFL read his response to a few of the questions submitted and answered in advance of the meeting, agreeing to carry on correspondence with members who have further questions.

The chair thanked the members and officers for attending and arranging the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:00pm.