

For general release

REPORT TO:	STREETS AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE 12 SEPTEMBER 2017
SUBJECT:	CROYDON'S GROWTH ZONE'S PROPOSED FIVE YEAR PUBLIC REALM PROGRAMME
LEAD OFFICER:	Lee Parker – Growth Director
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alison Butler, Deputy Leader – Statutory and Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration and Planning
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Steve Dennington – Interim Head of Spatial Planning

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item has been identified by Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee as an item of scrutiny
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To consider and provide a view on the questions raised at paragraph 2.20

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council's Growth Zone was approved by Cabinet in July 2016 (<https://secure.croydon.gov.uk/akscroydon/users/public/admin/kab12.pl?operation=SUBMIT&meet=49&cmte=CAB&grpid=public&arc=1>). The Cabinet report sets out the background, financial modelling and governance arrangements for the Growth Zone.
- 1.2 This approval followed the Growth Zone being approved by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Treasury in spring 2016 after the Council's submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government Investment Board.
- 1.3 From inception, the Growth Zone was developed with a collaborative approach with Transport for London and the Greater London Authority to secure Central Government investment and approval. The collaborative approach remains in place today through the Growth Zone governance and is evident from this report.
- 1.4 The Croydon Growth Zone is a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) model which harnesses business rates growth to enable borrowing to fund infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development and growth. Central government has also provided a £7m revenue grant to fund the early borrowing required, prior to significant business rate growth.

- 1.5 The Growth Zone will support the vision for the borough outlined in the Croydon Promise, in particular the following.
1. Our economy will be growing rapidly
 2. New homes will be built at a faster rate
 3. The metropolitan centre will offer the most exciting shopping and leisure experience in London and the South East
 4. Croydon will confirm its position as South London's primary commercial centre
 5. Croydon will be one of London's most enterprising boroughs
 6. Croydon will be a place that is easy to move around
- 1.6 Since the approval of the Growth Zone, the governance referred to in the July 2016 Cabinet report has been established, including a series of topic based sub groups, and further work has been undertaken to better define, cost, prioritise and programme the Growth Zone programme of projects. It is acknowledged that the term Growth Zone could be perceived as a technical term, so Scrutiny's view on a more engaging and accessible term would be welcomed.
- 1.7 This Scrutiny is focussed on the work of the Growth Zone Sub Group Place, Public Realm, Culture and Meanwhile, particularly informing the development of the Five Year Public Realm Programme. The Five Year Public Realm Programme is to be considered by Cabinet in December 2017. Therefore, the input of Scrutiny at this stage is timely in terms of informing the final content of the Five Year Public Realm Programme to be presented to Cabinet.
- 1.8 The Sub Group would appreciate and value Scrutiny's view and comments on the following three questions in particular.
1. How best does the Council maximise health outcomes, improve wellbeing, create healthier streets and promote healthy lifestyle change throughout the public realm and open spaces?
 2. How does the Council engage meaningfully and under what parameters with Croydon's residents, businesses and visitors to inform the design and delivery of the Five Year Public Realm Programme, whilst acknowledging that many residents, businesses and visitors are yet to arrive, particularly for the Croydon Opportunity Area?
 3. How does the Council balance delivery of the Five Year Public Realm Programme whilst ensuring meaningful and comprehensive engagement?

2. CROYDON'S GROWTH ZONE'S PROPOSED PUBLIC REALM PROGRAMME

- 2.1 The Council has been improving Croydon Opportunity Area's (COA) public realm since Connected Croydon was launched in 2011. The Connected Croydon programme included a defined set of co-ordinated projects, many of which arose from specific objectives and components stated in the adopted COA masterplans (listed as background documents).
- 2.2 Connected Croydon was a £50m programme of high street, public space and transport improvements to transform the COA and district centres by creating a more attractive, connected and functional public realm. The Connected Croydon

programme was delivered in partnership with Transport for London and the Greater London Authority, supported by an £18m investment from The Mayor of London.

2.3 The focus of the programme was to improve the connectivity within and between transport hubs, remove obstructions and gaps in the pedestrian and cycle network, provide a contemporary setting for retail areas, office accommodation and cultural facilities and create an inviting urban realm for residents, businesses and visitors.

2.4 The COA Connected Croydon projects completed are;

- West Croydon Station – new entrance onto Station Road, West Croydon tram platform, building frontages improvements (Maplin and Network Rail building) and public art
- West Croydon Bus Station, interchange and public realm
- Bedford Road Pedestrian crossing
- Park Lane Pedestrian crossings (part of Phase 1 of Connect2)
- Wellesley Road central greening
- Legible London (signposting and pedestrian wayfaring within the town centre)
- Phase 1 of Connect 2 (a high quality route for cyclists and pedestrians through the town centre from Wandle Park to Park Hill)
- Wandle Park (the landscaping and refurbishment of one of the COA's principle green space)
- Access to Wandle Park project
- East Croydon Station Cross-Platform Bridge (including the creation of a new pedestrian access to the station from Lansdowne Road)
- East Croydon Bus Station, interchange and public realm
- George Street paving and central greening, including junction with Wellesley Road
- Lansdowne Road and Dingwall Road roundabout public realm improvements (creating a high quality pedestrian route from East Croydon Station to Croydon's retail and business core)
- High Streets Project (including building front improvements) – Southend, London Road, North End and Old Town (Church Street)
- Reeves Corner temporary enhancements
- St John's Memorial Gardens (Pocket Park)
- Brompton Cycle Hub

2.5 In addition to the projects delivered by Croydon and its partners, a number of developers have delivered public realm improvements that have been coordinated with the COA Masterplans and in accordance with the Council's Public Realm Design Guide. This has been achieved through the Council's development management, planning and delivery functions. Examples of this in practice include.

- Ruskin Square
- Premier Inn
- Saffron Square
- Interchange refurbishment

- 2.6 Connected Croydon has reached its conclusion and the focus is now delivery of the next phase of public realm projects through the Growth Zone programme. The Council has appointed Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to support the setting of the final programme of projects. The programme of projects are anticipated to be agreed at several Cabinet meetings at the end of 2017. The Five Year Public Realm Programme will be considered by Cabinet in December 2017. Subject to approval, this will set the design work programme for the Sub Group for the next five years.
- 2.7 The justification for pursuing a Five Year Public Realm Programme is well established in the Croydon context. Notwithstanding the projects delivered through Connected Croydon, which was always intended as the first phase of a much larger programme to transform the COA's public realm over time, the COA still suffers from connectivity constraints (especially the ease of east / west movement), the poor environment and ease of walking and cycling into and around the COA and the quality of public space as an opportunity to dwell, enjoy and undertake activity. The core principles and objectives remain to improve the connectivity within and between transport hubs, remove obstructions and gaps in the pedestrian and cycle network, provide a contemporary setting for retail areas, office accommodation and cultural facilities and create an inviting urban realm for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 2.8 Although the objectives and principles of improving the public realm are well established as outlined above, with the approval of the Growth Zone and the content of the Croydon Promise and Croydon Local Plan, the financial, well being and cultural benefits of public realm improvements have become more prominent.
- 2.9 It is understood that the quality of the public realm and the urban environment of a place influences investment and locating decisions. This is best expressed by real examples. Recently EDF Energy, the Body Shop and HMRC have or are locating to the COA, in addition to the retention of existing major employers. Furthermore, as indicated above it is very noteworthy that developments that have been delivered in the face of the Council's investment and proposed investment in the public realm have delivered the same quality of public realm as indicated in the Public Realm Design Guide. The improvements have set a higher bar of quality that developers are now responding to and delivering in their own schemes. This is real evidence that developers and businesses place importance on the quality of the public realm, which the Council is continually pushing to elevate. There is of course a direct link between the commercial activity in the COA and servicing the Growth Zone loan, which further compounds the importance of the public realm.
- 2.10 It is not just Croydon that is experiencing and is planning improvements to the public realm. It is happening across the city and the country with similar financial rewards being realised. Savills have informed the Council that research undertaken by Living Streets states that well planned improvements to public spaces can improve footfall by up to 40%. Public realm improvements to the Peace Gardens Sheffield increased footfall by 35%, with a net increase in spending of £4.2m. Examples of pedestrian improvements in Coventry and Bristol show a 25% increase in footfall on Saturdays and additional spend of between £1.4 - £2million. Further analysis of public realm improvements in

Preston and the East Midlands all confirm such works result in higher occupancy and footfall levels.

- 2.11 In recent years there has been a sharper focus and appreciation of the benefits of high quality public realm on public health and wellbeing and encouraging activity in public spaces and public realm. There are further benefits with enhanced vitality of places and civic life. This is evident from Transport for London's recent Healthy Streets for London publication and the Mayor's commitment to High Streets and Transport Strategy that encourages public realm improvements and investment to ensure accessibility and creating livable neighborhoods. This focus has been further compounded by the introduction of Public Health back in to Local Authorities. It is unarguable that if quality public realm encourages and increases walking and cycling to and around the COA there will be benefits in terms of wellbeing and health, with people being more active this will relieve pressure on health providers. This could also be supported by public realm that provides opportunities for activity for all interests, groups and ages, for example the introduction of performance space, dwell opportunities and pocket parks. These multi use spaces will be increasingly important as the commercial, residential and visitor population increases in the COA.
- 2.12 Culture has to be an integral component to a vibrant and successful centre and this is equally true for the COA. In recent years there have been significant strides made in the provision of cultural activity and evolving the day and evening offer. Most significantly the Council has defined Croydon's new Cultural Quarter at College Green and is one of the largest projects in the borough. The consented development will transform College Green and Fairfield Halls into a vibrant destination for arts, education and culture. The scheme's masterplan includes new revitalised public spaces, a brand new college, a 2000 sq. metre art gallery, new shops and office space, all with the refurbished Fairfield Halls at its heart. Phase 1 will provide a £30m refurbishment of Fairfield Halls, a brand new gallery and the new public space in College Green.
- 2.13 Other culture based interventions in the public realm include the improvements to Surrey Street that hosted the food festival, improvements to South End that includes the restaurant quarter, public art elements integrated in to public spaces, Rise Gallery (and the street art programme) and cultural events such as the Andy Warhol month, the Croydon Mela and Pride. It is important that as the Cultural Quarter continues to be delivered its projects that facilitate culture underpin the design of the Five Year Public Realm Programme.
- 2.14 As indicated above, a large number of the public realm projects delivered to date are components of the COA masterplans and the Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). These components are still considered the most justified and developed series of components to form a programme of projects to improve the public realm across the COA. They were the basis of the public realm content of the Growth Zone submission to government and have been carried forward into the PBA commission informing the Five Year Public Realm Programme to be considered by Cabinet in December 2017. At this stage, it is envisaged that the Five Year Public Realm Programme will include the following projects / phases of COA Masterplan and OAPF components. Furthermore, given the progress made on completing phase 1 improvements around East Croydon Station and West

Croydon Station, the main focus is intended to be Mid Croydon (around the Town Hall, High Street, Queens Gardens and High Street and linked to the adjacent College Green improvements), Dingwall Loop public realm including the Lansdowne Road pedestrian crossing on Wellesley Road, completion of the remainder of phase 1 of East Croydon and West Croydon public realm improvements and Old Town Public Realm including Roman Way and Minster Green. Following on from these priorities are phase 2 and 3 public realm improvements at East and West Croydon; phase 3 of these being dependent on redevelopment of the existing stations.

Dingwall Road Loop
East Croydon Public Realm (Phase 1 - remaining)
East Croydon Public Realm (Phase 2)
East Croydon Public Realm (Phase 3)
'Meanwhile' Public Realm Projects
Mid Croydon Public Realm (Phase 1)
Mid Croydon Public Realm (Phases 2)
Old Town Public Realm (Phase 1)
Old Town Public Realm (Phase 2)
Wellesley Road Crossings
West Croydon Public Realm (Phase 1 - remaining)
West Croydon Public Realm (Phase 3)
West Croydon Public Realm (Phases 2)

- 2.15 Greater detail regarding the projects and phases of the components, beyond what is included in the COA Masterplans and OAPF, will be included in the Five Year Public Realm Programme December Cabinet Report. This detail will include costs, phasing and enhanced project descriptions.
- 2.16 To ensure continued momentum of the improvement and evolution of the COA's public realm, before the implementation of the Five Year Public Realm Programme, the Growth Zone is also funding a number 'precursor' place, public realm, culture and meanwhile projects. The precursor projects are and will continue to be the most efficient approach to addressing issues in advance of implementation of the Five Year Public Realm Programme and it is anticipated that a large number of the Five Year Public Realm projects will include a precursor phase to test ideas, reveal potential issues and expand public participation and community engagement in emerging project proposals. Such issues include securing all the relevant approvals and consents, responding to advice and recommendations from consultees and understanding any revenue implications. The clear advantage being that these issues will have been addressed and resolved to enable a swifter and smoother implementation of the Five Year Public Realm Programme projects. Equally, there are lessons that have been learnt from the Connected Croydon programme that are being carried forward and addressed through the work of the sub Group.
- 2.17 The precursor projects combine a multi-disciplinary cultural programme with innovative spatial public realm interventions to activate key regeneration areas. One of the primary aims of the precursor programme is to facilitate and enable community and stakeholder engagement, collaboration and interaction, whilst integrating this methodology and lessons learnt into the Five Year Public Realm

Programme development.

2.18 It is hoped this programme of precursor projects will lay the foundation for long term change and therefore must set a new precedent to ensure important issues are addressed, build a sense of ownership and begin to encourage different habits and patterns of use of places that are vital to long term sustainable growth and regeneration of the Croydon Opportunity Area and borough.

2.19 Set out below is the current programme of precursor projects.

College Square Cultural Programme (Revitalising Croydon's Vacant Spaces)
Wandle Road Car Park
Croydon Art Store: (Collaboration w/ Art Halo, Rise, Turf, ICA, Kingston University)
Creative Crossings
Design your own 'Parklets'
Junction calming, legibility study and concept design
Pedestrianisation of High Street and cultural event programme to activate
Lighting / Public Art Commission
Arnhem Stairs and George St Link Upgrade

2.20 Taking into account the COA tour, Scrutiny presentation and this report officers would appreciate and value Scrutiny's view and comments on the following three questions in particular.

1. How best does the Council maximise health outcomes, improve wellbeing, create healthier streets and promote healthy lifestyle change throughout the public realm and open spaces?
2. How does the Council engage meaningfully and under what parameters with Croydon's residents, businesses and visitors to inform the design and delivery of the Five Year Public Realm Programme, whilst acknowledging that many residents, businesses and visitors are yet to arrive, particularly for the Croydon Opportunity Area?
3. How does the Council balance delivery of the Five Year Public Realm Programme whilst ensuring meaningful and comprehensive engagement?

CONTACT OFFICER: Steve Dennington – Interim Head of Spatial Planning

APPENDICES: None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/localplan/spdandoapf>

East Croydon Masterplan

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/localplan/masterplans/eastcroydon-mplan>

West Croydon Masterplan

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/localplan/masterplans/westcroydon-mplan>

Mid Croydon Masterplan

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/localplan/masterplans/midcroydon-mplan>

Fair Field Masterplan

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/localplan/masterplans/fairfield-mplan>

Old Town Masterplan

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/localplan/masterplans/masterplan-improvements>