



Transport and Environment Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Stuart King March 2018

3,500 New Trees to be planted



London Borough of Croydon is embarking on a five year project to plant 3500 new street trees. Historically Croydon, like other authorities, lose trees due to old age, disease or damage. In general this can be up to 800 trees a year. This leaves large numbers of empty tree pits in the footpath or streets with only a couple of trees where once there were dozens. This project aims not only to replant many of these vacant tree pits, restoring the green streetscene but to also focus this planting in areas of poor air quality. A new Tree Planting Officer has just been employed to develop and roll out this project, seeking new planting opportunities and funding streams to enhance this vital scheme.

Our Green Mile

The *Our Green Mile* project was recently launched at West Croydon station and Thornton Heath Pond. The project aims to green up London Road and was officially launched on Sunday 4th March. I was very pleased to help fund this worthy and welcome project with community budget funding. I was also pleased to be at the launch alongside fellow local councillors, Steve Reed MP and representatives from local residents groups – as well as local residents, including some very enthusiastic young people.

The first planter was fixed and planted outside West Croydon Station. The next one was planted just over a mile away at Thornton Heath Pond. Others will be planted along the route between these two locations. The event coincided with the Great British Spring Clean weekend and volunteers undertook a litter pick on the way as well as talking to passers-by about the aim of the project.

The project is important for a number of reasons but principal amongst them is it brings the local community together to care for our environment and make a small commitment to support our efforts to make the London Road corridor brighter and greener given it suffers from high levels of pollution.

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Croydon Completes 20mph Limit Scheme

On Monday 12th March 2018, the fifth and final 20mph area, covering the southwest section of the borough, went live.

This now completes the Council's ambitions to introduce 20mph speed limits in residential roads across the borough to help improve road safety, discourage through traffic, encourage walking and cycling, and to provide a safer and more pleasant environment for people to live and work in.

Monitoring of the five areas across the borough has now started, and for areas one and two, it is expected that initial results will be forthcoming in the summer.

The Council is now looking at further refinements to this project with the possible introduction of 20mph on those parts of the main road network where there is high pedestrian movements and a need to reduce traffic speeds to help improve the local environment, quality of life and community cohesion.

The full benefits of this extensive project may take some years to come to fruition, but Croydon is proud to have taken the ambitious steps towards a safer and healthier borough.

Brighton Main Line Upgrade

Upgrading the Brighton Main Line (BML) has been a longstanding aspiration for the Council and other key stakeholders, including our local Members of Parliament. This has included ongoing campaigning and lobbying by the Council that included writing to the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling MP, in mid-2017 urging him to continue to fund the development of the project.

The good news is that the Department for Transport has recently announced that they have allocated Network Rail £15m towards the project, known as the Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme, to take it through key design stages. The project is the central element of Network Rail's BML upgrade programme to deliver major improvements in punctuality between London, Gatwick Airport and the Sussex coast with the potential for more frequent services in the longer term. Network Rail is currently in the process of employing a multi-disciplinary team for the project that are due to be in place by the end of March 2018.

The project, if taken forward, would see construction of a series of new grade-separated junctions north of East Croydon station to remove the 'Croydon bottleneck' where several routes to and from central London converge. These new junctions are like motorway flyovers and will replace the existing flat junctions, where trains have to wait at red signals to allow others to pass in front, causing congestion and delays to 300,000 passengers travelling between the south coast and the capital each day.

Major improvements at East Croydon station would also be delivered as part of the proposed scheme, expanding the number of platforms from six to eight and providing new concourse areas with better access to the platforms and surrounding areas. This would improve the train

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service along the entire BML, transform the station itself and contribute to the ongoing redevelopment of Croydon town. Over-station development is also being considered as part of this project.

Funding from the Department for Transport means Network Rail, working with the Council and other key stakeholders, can now:

- work up detailed designs for the track and station work in the Croydon area;
- produce an outline business case so informed decisions can be made about funding the scheme to delivery in future; and
- carry out a full public consultation so that the local community, travelling public and anyone directly affected by the work can have their say on the designs.

Cold Weather Response

Following a challenging 10 days starting from around the 23rd February 2018 to 3rd March 2018, we experienced what the press referred to as the 'Beast from the East', when temperatures fell to around -6C and with the wind-chill this felt like -12C. Our Croydon contractors spread approximately 670 tonnes of grit along the equivalent of 4,200 miles of road, which is approximately the distance between London and Delhi in India.

A total of around 140 people, from gritting teams to street cleaners, worked on salting the borough's roads and pavements, with priority going to main roads, town centres and bus routes, plus clearing access to hospitals, care homes, railway stations and schools.

Our winter gritting priority routes are defined from a hierarchy of carriageways and footways and take account of both strategic and local needs such as main distributor roads, town centres and shopping areas, bus routes, approaches to transport interchanges, hospitals, fire stations and other hazardous locations such as steep gradients

The gritting teams were covering these priority borough roads up to twice a night and twice a day. Once primary routes are done, secondary gritting routes are salted.

Our footpath gritting focused on our town centres, local shopping parades and transport hubs, and residents also had use of the borough's 577 salt bins on their roads and pavements.

I would like to personally thank ALL the staff involved with the winter maintenance service our teams have working around the clock to keep the borough going as normally as possible through the disruptive weather

Visit the council website to see a [cold weather and snow FAQ page](#).