



Councillor Stuart King (Job Share)
Lead for Environment and Transport

Environment, Transport and Urban Regeneration December 2018



Councillor Paul Scott (Job Share)
Lead for Urban Regeneration

Transport and Environment

Tree Planting Programme

In February 2018, Cabinet agreed to invest £180k per annum over the next five years as part of the Council's drive to improve the borough's air quality and aging tree stock including employing an Officer to manage/develop the Programme. This initiative will support the aims/objectives of the Council's Air Quality Action Plan 2017-22 and the Mayor of London's vision of increasing London's tree canopy.

190 trees were planted in Spring 2018, with a further 650 trees planned for November 2018 – March 2019, totalling 840 trees; the original overall target of 726 trees has increased by 114 trees due to successful S106 application and securing tree stock earlier in the season to secure best value.



Tree planting has recently commenced in Norbury Park and West Thornton wards, using containerised trees. The main part of the planting programme which consists of bare-root/root-ball species (lifted during the tree's dormant period, late November) will commence early December 2018 through to March 2019.

Blackhorse Lane Bridge

At the October meeting of Full Council I announced that the council had been informed of the possible delay in the completion date for bridge replacements at Blackhorse Lane. Morgan Sindall, Transport for London's appointed contractor, completed & submitted their proposal of works which proposed a 2020 completion date. I explained then, and reiterate now that this is entirely unacceptable to the council.

Following from this a written objection was submitted to TFL with a request for a formal statement as to:

- a) What changes to project have caused delay?
- b) What practical proposals are in place to shorten the programme?



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c) What contractual steps TFL have taken to reduce delay?

d) What sanctions are in contract between TFL and Morgan Sindall?

The issue was subsequently raised with TFL by ward councillors and Sarah Jones MP and was also raised with the Mayor of London at Mayor's Question Time. I am pleased to report that we have received much better engagement from TFL and Morgan Sindall as a result of this activity and a new project timeline which includes the opening of the bridge in 2019.

The council will continue to work with and where necessary apply pressure to TfL at both an officer and political level to realise this objective.

Croydon's award winning school pedestrian zone pilot

Croydon's award-winning school pedestrian scheme continues to attract interest from colleagues around London, and beyond. Earlier this month I was invited to deliver a speech at the London Road



Safety Council's annual conference. There was a lot of interest in our scheme, and rightly so given the results. At our three pilot schools we saw a significant reduction in the number of trips to school made by car: down from 906 to 652 – down 28%.

There were similarly impressive figures in relation to the number of pupils travelling to school by foot, scooter or cycle. Here we saw an impressive 35% increase. A really positive outcome with fewer short school run journeys, more active travel and, according to the schools, an increase in punctuality with fewer pupils arriving late for the start of the school day.



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Winter Preparedness

As we approach the start of winter the council is well prepared and to ensure our roads and footways remain open in the event of heavy snow. Key preparations are already in place and further preparatory work continues as the council monitors weather patterns and forecasts.

The council's investment in a new salt barn will be completed in November. Whilst the temporary salt barn in current use is well stocked, the new facility will significantly increase capacity. It will be stocked in line with the requirements considered necessary as a result of the forecasts we receive during the winter season, which increase in frequency to daily when a cold snap hits us. The fleet of gritting vehicles are in place and comprise 10 adapted vehicles and one specialised vehicle all with tracking systems which will allow us to reprioritise treatment areas as emerging needs become known. The crews have familiarised themselves with the gritting routes, which have been prioritised to keep open highly used roads servicing key destinations, hospitals, transport interchanges, busy town centres.

The service started on 29th October 2018 and will run to the end of March 2019.

Christmas Parking Arrangements

In common with the practice of recent years, the council intends to ease the regulations in its car parks and on-street bays on specific days over the Christmas and New Year period.

Helping to spread a little festive cheer, the relaxation of parking regulations will help people visiting shops, enjoying the displays of festive illuminations or simply dropping in on relatives to share the seasonal good spirits.

The whole borough will be free of parking enforcement in council-run car parks and on-street bays on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Yellow-line, footway and bus lane restrictions, however, will remain in place on these days, and motorists should park in a reasonable manner, showing consideration for other road users and pedestrians.

Normal parking enforcement will be in place from 27 to 30 December, and resume on Wednesday 2 January 2019.



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Growth Zone Cabinet Paper

In October the Cabinet approved a £166m budget to take forward a package of critical infrastructure projects for Croydon town centre and beyond. The growth is already there to see with several new tall buildings now under construction and this growth will continue over the coming years. The Council has allocated the first phase of its Growth Zone budget to key projects that provide additional transport capacity and improvements to the streets and public spaces.

Some of the key investment highlights include:

- over £14m for cycling and walking projects
- funding for a new station at West Croydon and support for the improvements on Brighton Mainline and East Croydon station
- new bus services to serve the town centre
- additional capacity on the tram network
- commitment to Fiveways junction improvements being designed by Transport for London
- improvements to key corridors leading into and out of the town centre such as London Road and Brighton Road
- over £44m for improvements to the public realm including North End, Wellesley Road and George Street
- a comprehensive package of measures to mitigate the increased number of construction vehicles using our roads such as holding areas outside the town centre or restrictions on the timing they can access the town.
- A full review of the Controlled Parking Zones
- funding to continue investigating the benefits of a new district energy centre for the town

This marks an exciting stage of the regeneration of the town which will bring new leisure, retail and work opportunities for the whole borough.

LIP 3 Cabinet Paper

In October, Cabinet agreed the core components for our draft new Local Implementation Plan (LIP). This is our plan to implement the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy within Croydon. Over the summer, we engaged with people living and working in Croydon to gauge opinion regarding travel choices and the quality of the street environment in Croydon. A thousand people responded telling



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us that traffic dominance and the fear of road danger are key factors stopping people in Croydon walking or cycling more often. They also identified the school run and associated car use as key contributors to congestion and high car trips in the Borough, and that these should be areas of intervention that are prioritised.

Our draft LIP is close to completion and will soon be both submitted to TfL for consideration as well as to other statutory consultees. It features:

- Major proposals to increase capacity on the Brighton Mainline and rebuild East Croydon Station into a bigger and world class station;
- Proposals to work with TfL to:
 - investigate means of financing extensions to the Tramlink network to support Good Growth;
 - review bus services in the north and south of the Borough to deliver improved bus capacity and new types of service to meet the differing patterns of growth in the north and south;
- Major Healthy Street Approaches and Liveable Neighbourhood proposals on main road and street corridors radiating from the Growth Zone; and
- Working with schools and the neighbouring communities to develop and deliver 'Healthy Schools Neighbourhoods' in which it is easier and more enjoyable for all to move around on foot and on bike.

Look out for the consultation and your further chance to have your say.



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Urban Regeneration

Development Is Booming But Is There A Brexit Effect



The level of development currently taking place in Central Croydon is unprecedented. With the redevelopment scheme for 101 George Street (by Tide Development), 28-30 Addiscombe Grove (by Pocket Living), Taberner House (by Hub), the refurbishment of the former Nestle Tower (by R&F) and the redevelopment of the Waldrons and 5 Cairo New Road now progressing, a further 1,678 housing units will be soon coming on stream with a healthy slug of affordable housing.

We await with eager anticipation that the Secretary of State will do the right thing and endorse our approval of the redevelopment of Purley Baptist Church (220 housing units and enhanced church and community facilities). The idea of having the landmark tower in the centre of Purley was after all a Tory one!

We also have strong expectations that Westfield Hammerson will actively engage with us to progress the details of the Whitgift redevelopment soon.

However, whilst we are as busy as ever, there is some evidence that the number of planning applications received and determined has fallen over the last year across large and smaller scale development. For example, we have dealt with 500 fewer applications (that are monitored by Central Government) over the last 12 months (compared to the previous year) which might well be down to the degree of uncertainty associated with Brexit. That said, the evidence points to an increase in our approval rates (up by 4% compared to the previous year) which gives a broad indication that Croydon's Local Plan (adopted in February 2018) has had a positive effect in encouraging sustainable development and that we are negotiating schemes more progressively to secure a position where planning permission can be granted and development progress.

Planning appeals have also reduced over the last 12 months, which is partly due to the lower number of planning applications received and determined, but also due to the higher rate of planning approval. What is significant is that we have become more successful on appeal over the last 12 months which gives a broad indication that we are making better quality decisions.



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The Council's Affordable Housing Policies Are Being Supported On Appeal

The Council's affordable housing policy, which seeks to deliver a minimum level of affordable housing on sites of ten or more units irrespective of scheme viability, has been supported on appeal. A scheme for 19 residential units at 825 Brighton Road sought to deliver zero affordable housing, claiming the scheme would not be viable to deliver any affordable units. In dismissing the appeal, the Planning Inspector confirmed that our affordable housing policy was broadly consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and did not agree that the scheme could not provide any affordable housing. Significantly, the decision challenges profit levels expected by developers and concluded that lower profit levels might well be reasonable in such circumstances in view of the reduced risk profile. Scheme viability will always be a consideration but the Council's unconditional approach to require a minimum level of affordable housing will continue to be a firm expectation although policy also expects that 30% affordable housing will be viable across various scheme scenarios.

We are working with private developers and affordable housing providers to find ways overcome the challenge of scheme viability and how the parties can work more closely together to deliver more affordable housing, especially on smaller sites. We are also keen to explore how we might be able to assist affordable housing partners to acquire sites and engage earlier in schemes promoted by private developers at pre application stage to make sure that schemes are designed and progressed with affordable housing delivery given the highest priority. Many local residents in the southern suburbs are raising concerns that the local intensification developments are not including affordable homes. We are hoping though that some of these consents will be bought by Housing Associations to build out as affordable homes.

"LONDON BOROUGHS ALREADY 19 YEARS BEHIND BRAND NEW HOUSE BUILDING TARGETS"

On average London boroughs have fallen more than 19 years behind their own house-building targets, partially explaining the capital's housing crisis, new research by modular smart homes provider Project Etopia has revealed. Their study shows that building across all London boroughs is on course to fall short of housing need by 429,973 over the decade.

Only three boroughs are keeping pace with their housing requirements - City of London, **Croydon** and Hillingdon. The other 30 are already in deficit little more than one year into the 10-year programme. Of the 10 boroughs which have fallen the furthest behind, it would take until between 2050 and 2108 for all the required homes to be built.



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The figures show Redbridge is by far the worst place for meeting its targets, and could be 26,196 homes short of those its needs by the end of 2026 — and if it does not speed up, it would take 82 more years to get there. Enfield, Kingston upon Thames, Bromley, Sutton and Richmond upon Thames are all more than 30 years behind.

It is good to see that our commitment to new homes is working, but clearly we need all boroughs to be committed to working to resolve the housing crisis.

SPD2 – Evolution of the Suburbs Design Guide

The consultation on our new ‘Supplementary Planning Document’ has now closed. The team are making good progress going through the comments in detail. These are being collated and in due course we will be considering our response to these point by point. Through this more detailed screening we are looking for anything alarming but nothing has turned up so far! Most people do seem to recognise the need for considerably more housing.

Approximately 500 representations were received (pending final count) including key stakeholders including:

- Natural England - support
- Historic England - support
- Mayor of London - strongly support and minor observations.
- Steve O’Connell – as GLA member
- Croydon Councillors
- Residents Associations

Issues covered include:

- Kenley Intensification Area and associated issues of development, transport and character change
- Purley – deliberate targeting of detached homes on relatively large plots, demolition of family homes, character, parking and no overall strategy for ‘acceptable development’
- Concerns with approaches to character, meaning it can happen anywhere throughout the borough
- Infrastructure concerns including transport, parking, services, flooding and drainage
- Concerns with the quantity of development
- No justification for the need for homes.



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Oh well, clearly not everyone gets the obvious need for many more new homes! The Mayor of London's response is very positive though, saying "....the Mayor strongly welcomes the aims and objectives of Croydon's draft Suburban Design Guide SPD....."

Coombe Woods School

A resolution to grant planning permission for an eight form entry secondary school for 1680 pupils, with the erection of two/three storey school building and two storey sports hall building, hard and soft landscaping, car parking, all weather pitch and sports areas was made at Planning Committee on 27th September.



The scheme would create a high quality and well-designed school, with the following being available for use by the local community:

- Full size 3G floodlit playing surface.
- Grass football pitches.
- Enhanced semi sprung floor sports hall and changing rooms.
- Main Hall Gymnasium.
- 2 X Activity Studios.
- Hard courts including netball.



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Since the resolution was made, officers have been progressing the legal agreement and engaging with Sport England to overcome their objection. The scheme will be submitted to both the Mayor and Secretary of State in mid-November, with a target to grant permission before Christmas.



Full completion is programmed for the Summer 2020.