

REPORT TO:	CABINET 16 JULY 2018
SUBJECT:	STAGE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM STREETS, ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
LEAD OFFICERS:	RICHARD SIMPSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RESOURCES AND S151 OFFICER STEPHEN ROWAN – HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND SCRUTINY
LEAD MEMBER:	COUNCILLOR SEAN FITZSIMONS CHAIR, SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	The constitutional requirement that Cabinet receives recommendations from scrutiny committees and to respond to the recommendations within two months of the receipt of the recommendations.

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations contained within this report:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.1 Receive the recommendations arising from the meetings of the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee (20 March and 26 June) and to provide a substantive response within two months (i.e. at the next available Cabinet meeting on 17 September 2018).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Recommendations that have been received from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and its Sub-Committees since the last Cabinet meeting are provided in the body of this report. The constitution requires that an interim or full response is provided within 2 months of this Cabinet meeting.

3. 20 MARCH 2018 – STREETS, ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee considered an item on tram safety; present were the Cabinet Members for Finance & Treasury and Families, Health & Social Care. Officers present included the Community Partnership Lead, the Programme Manager and the Business Analysis Manager. Representatives from Transport for London were also in attendance. Subsequent to questions to those present, the Committee came to the following conclusions:

- i. The tram crash of 9th November 2016 caused the death of 7 Croydon residents and injured many others. It had a profound effect on residents of New Addington and Croydon, and it is the duty of Croydon Council to ensure that another incident does not happen again.
- ii. Despite the best intentions of designers and engineers of the Croydon Tramlink system, and the inherent nature of how trams are operated, Croydon Tramlink was not as safe as it should have been, and that TFL and its operator underestimated the safety risks involved in running a tram system, both in terms of physical infrastructure and personnel, which resulted in a scale of death and injuries unprecedented in modern tram history.
- iii. Lessons from this accident will have a profound impact on not just Croydon Tramlink but on all trams system world-wide.
- iv. Committee was not re-assured that safety issues were being addressed fully, in particular in regards to experience of drivers. That further reassurance was required to ensure that appropriate safety measures were in place whilst longer term measures were being explored.
- v. To help ensure that TFL and Tram operators take passenger safety seriously the Council should hold TFL to account on its safety actions in regards to trams. It would also be sensible to consider whether to include safety on buses within any proposed structure.
- vi. Tramlink has not had an effective champion this last 20 years since Croydon Council handed over this role to Transport for London. All other transport systems in London including trains, tube, DLR and buses have expanded in the last 20 years since Tramlink was built, during a time when other trams systems in UK have expanded and added new lines. Political promises have been made on expansion by various Mayors of London but necessary funding for expansion has never materialised. This has to change.
- vii. It was difficult to determine TFL's priorities on future proposals as a result of information contained in the presentation. Mayor's new Transport Strategy alludes to expansion to Sutton, but experience of previous Mayor's promises means these have to be taken with a pinch of salt.
- viii. The opening of Westfield Croydon will result in large number of visitors from surrounding South London boroughs, and the current road network will not cope with large increase in car usage. There is a need for improved public transport connectivity with places like Brixton, Lewisham and Peckham, which are difficult to access by train currently. Tramlink expansion and connecting Tramlink to tube and DLR networks will help alleviate this problem.
- ix. That the transport policy would have an impact on the Local Plan and should be developed in line with SPD.

3.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Transport for London (TFL) that

- i. Provide an updated report to the Committee in 6 months on Tram safety and Future proposals.
- ii. Tram Operators to attend a future meeting to provide an update on safety measures implemented. The committee should also invite Trams drivers/their representatives to the meeting to provide their view and perspective on safety measures that have been improved.
- iii. To review its funding criteria for major projects as currently the current regime means that significant tram expansion will never be funded.
- iv. A briefing on Capital Gains including figures to be provided to the Committee

3.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Croydon Council that

- i. Croydon Council to ensure that it holds to account Tram and Bus Operators on their safety measures.
- ii. Croydon Council to consider how it can re-establish its original role as the Champion of the Tramlink expansion.
- iii. In its new role as Champion of the Tramlink expansion it should undertake a review about how Tramlink expansion could be funded and consider other form of funding outside what is provided by TFL.
- iv. To help improve public transport connectivity with other South London Boroughs, such as Sutton, Bromley, Merton, Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth, It should set up a South London Tramlink Expansion Partnership. One of its first aims should be how the boroughs can help link up the tram system to the DLR and other major public transport networks/nodes.

4. 26 JUNE 2018 – STREETS, ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Sub-Committee considered an item on the recent Rail Timetable changes; present were the Cabinet Member (job share) for Environment, Transport and Regeneration. Officers present included the Project Manager planning and Strategic Transport. There were also representatives from Network Rail, East Surrey Transport Committee, London Travel Watch and London Reconnections. Subsequent to questions to those present, the Sub-Committee came to the following conclusions:

- i. The introduction of one of the biggest timetable change on 20 May 2018 in line with the expansion of the Thameslink network has proven to be a disaster, with major disruption to the level of service experienced by the passengers of Thameslink and Southern. It was also having a detrimental impact on businesses in Croydon and along the route.
- ii. The intention behind the changes to the timetable were needed and would have been welcomed had the delivery been successful. However the scale of implementation was compounded by many factors which resulted in catastrophe and chaos to the network.
- iii. Whilst Network Rail had responded to the request by the Sub-Committee to attend the meeting to be held accountable for actions, it was noticeably disappointing that the main operator Govia Thameslink Railway declined to attend to answer fundamental questions on the impact this was having on residents and businesses in our town who rely on their services. The reason

given by GTR, that they couldn't attend whilst a review was being undertaken, was not accepted as GTR had attended a London Assembly Scrutiny meeting the previous day.

- iv. On hearing the evidence it was concerning that the GTR did not react appropriately despite the assurance process which would have flagged up issues and challenges, such as trained driver availability. Instead the implementation of the timetable went ahead with what can only be described as with an optimistic view of successful delivery and minimal disruption which has not been the case.
- v. It was clear that the Rail Industry-wide assurance process, including the Department of Transport, also failed. There was no evidence to show that other major industry players made any real attempt to rein in GTR gung-ho attitude towards its implementation plans.
- vi. Throughout the process there have been issues with the level of communication with passengers. It was vital that any details of changes to service are passed onto customers at the earliest possible opportunity in order to allow for passengers to make alternative arrangements.
- vii. There are significant changes which affect the borough of Croydon specifically which include:
 - There were as many Southern cancellations as Thameslink especially in late evening and on Sundays.
 - The greatest number of Thameslink cancellations were on the Horsham to Peterborough service which disproportionally effects East Croydon and Coulsdon South
 - On the Redhill Corridor there were often 2 hour gaps between consecutive trains on both Southern and Thameslink services at Coulsdon South and no alternative service was provided.
 - At West Croydon the Overground trains now terminated at platform 1 rather than platform 4. This had ruined the same platform interchange for onwards connections to Waddon and Sutton. This also meant Overground passengers could no longer use the step free access on platform 4 and now had to use the steps and ramp or side gate via the car park. This was a particular difficulty for those with mobility difficulties and wheelchair users who now had to use the gate to the car park, London and Stations Road to make the interchange and this could not be done within the 6 minutes allowed for the next train.
 - The 09.42 and 10.12 Coulsdon Town all stations to London Bridge service were taken out of the final timetable without any notification. This had created a 90 minute gap in the all stations service which affected all the following stations Coulsdon Town, Reedham, Purley. Purley Oaks, South Croydon, East Croydon and Norwood Junction. This also affected the ability to transfer to the Overground at Norwood Junction from East Croydon.
 - The change in timetable had meant that from many stations in Croydon you could no longer obtain an off-peak travelcard, off-peak Oyster fare or use your Freedom Pass at 09.30 and in some cases not until almost 10.00am. GTR should work with TfL and London Councils to reintroduce easements at those stations where the first off peak train was after 9.40 to allow off-peak fares on the preceding train to 09.30.
 - Ticket Vending Machines have had the One day London Bus and Tram pass removed as options. As the tram was about to go cashless, the reinstatement of this facility was important

- viii. Many disabled passengers had been left severely affected by the knock on effects of cancellation, with station concourses extremely busy with commuters. When the platforms were open there was a surge for trains which meant they could not always compete with other commuters to get to their train.
- ix. In the initial aftermath of the timetable fiasco there have been some notable improvements. The fundamental changes to the timetable itself were not the issue, rather the delivery itself that had caused fundamental problems.
- x. The Committee received correspondence from all three local MPs, which show the importance of this issue to Croydon residents. Their evidence demonstrated the impact the changes were having on individuals and business.
- xi. Taking all the above into context, the Committee questioned whether it was right for GTR to continue to act as the operator of the Thameslink and Southern Franchises.

4.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to GTR that

- i. They apologise to the people and business of Croydon for the disruption they caused through a timetable change, which they failed to deliver, and that they should provide generous compensation for passengers.
- ii. Information on timetables changes be communicated to passengers more effectively than and with as much advance notice as possible.
- iii. That passengers with disabilities were being particularly disadvantaged by the breakdown in the delivery of rail services, and they should rethink their approach to ensure additional resources were directed to resolving this issue.
- iv. Cancellations of late evening and Sunday services should be minimal, and in particular GTR should not be cutting the last train services which had the biggest impact on passengers getting home at night.
- v. A robust programme of rebuilding of trust between the operators and passengers should be devised.
- vi. Consideration needed to be given to the reinstatement of the 9:42 and 10:12 Coulsdon Town to London Bridge which were vital trains for commuters.
- vii. Consideration also needed to be given to the reinstatement of facilities such as the bus and tram pass on vending machines.
- viii. To make a commitment in support of public scrutiny of their performance by local authority scrutiny committees.

4.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Network Rail that

- i. To thank them for their attendance and the openness of their responses
- ii. Where Network Rail was responsible, information on timetables changes should be communicated to passengers more effectively and with as much advance notice as possible.
- iii. Should review its own internal assurance processes in regards rail operators proposed timetable changes, and consider whether it needed to take a stronger public stance when it had concerns about the deliverability of those timetable changes.
- iv. The facilities for disabled passengers at all stations, but in particular at mainline stations where passengers had to wait, needed to be revised to ensure that their needs were taken into consideration, especially at times of service disruption.
- v. They take into consideration Croydon's population increase and economic expansion as important factors to be considered when planning changes.

4.4 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Department of Transport that

- i. They consider whether GTR should continue as the operator for the Thameslink and Southern franchises.
- ii. To explain its own role in why it allowed GTR to press ahead with a major time-table change when GTR didn't have the resources in place on the day of implementation, and which others had flagged up earlier as a cause for concern.
- iii. It should make it a legal requirement for rail operators to co-operate fully with local government scrutiny reviews of local rail services, as recently confirmed by the House of Commons Communities & Local Government Select Committee 2017 **"Recommendation 6: Scrutiny committees must be able to monitor and scrutinise the services provided to residents. This includes services provided by public bodies and those provided by commercial organisations. Committees should be able to access information and require attendance at meetings from service providers and we call on DCLG to take steps to ensure this happens (Paragraph 90)"**

4.5 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Croydon Council that

- i. Officers explore a case for compensation to the borough due to the effects this has had on economic activity.

4.6 The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Office of the Rail Regulator that

- i. To copy all the above recommendation to them
- ii. To flag up the Committee's concerns about the industry-wide assurance process for time-table changes, and whether the system was robust enough to ensure that operators have the correct resources in place to deliver the changes from day one.
- iii. It reviews its stance on local government scrutiny of rail operators as local accountability of public services is a fundamental role of local government, as recently confirmed by the House of Commons Communities & Local Government Select Committee 2017 **"Recommendation 6: Scrutiny committees must be able to monitor and scrutinise the services provided to residents. This includes services provided by public bodies and those provided by commercial organisations. Committees should be able to access information and require attendance at meetings from service providers and we call on DCLG to take steps to ensure this happens (Paragraph 90)"**.

4.7 The Committee also resolved that these conclusions and recommendation should be copied to the three local MPs.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

6.1 The recommendations are in accordance with the constitution.

- 6.2 This requires that the Scrutiny report is received and registered at this Cabinet Meeting and that a substantive response is provided within 2 months (i.e. **Cabinet, 17 September 2018** is the next available meeting).

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 Not relevant for the purposes of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Simon Trevaskis, Senior Democratic Services & Governance Officer - Scrutiny

T: 020 8726 6000

Email: simon.trevaskis@croydon.gov.uk

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Background document 1: Reports to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 20 March 2018.

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=170&MId=1136&Ver=4>

Background document 2: Reports to the Streets, Environment and Homes Sub-Committee on 26 June 2018.

<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=170&MId=1487&Ver=4>