

1 Croydon's transport strategy

1.1 Introduction

Croydon has one of London's leading Metropolitan Centres and has owed its long term success to its accessibility and strong transport links. It acts both as a gateway to London from the south and a gateway to Surrey and Sussex for London, as well as being a hugely important destination in its own right.

In planning for the future development of the Borough it is essential that the role of transport in the economic vitality and social fabric of Croydon is understood and that future travel needs can be fully met, through well considered transport infrastructure and operational plans. By producing this Transport Strategy the Borough seeks to review and consolidate the many existing plans and proposals, as well as questioning assumptions about growth and how best to meet or manage travel demand over the next twenty years.

This Borough Wide Transport Strategy (BWTS or Strategy) is a key component in the Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) as well as a necessary precursor to preparing future Local Implementation Plans (LIP) for transport in Croydon.

This Strategy develops the transport and movement issues identified in 'Imagine Croydon – A Place for Sustainable Living' [Croydon Council, 2009] into a delivery plan for transport network improvements. These improvements are required to resolve existing problems with the network but more importantly act a catalyst for economic growth to improve Croydon as a place of opportunity, belonging and sustainable living.

1.2 Strategy background

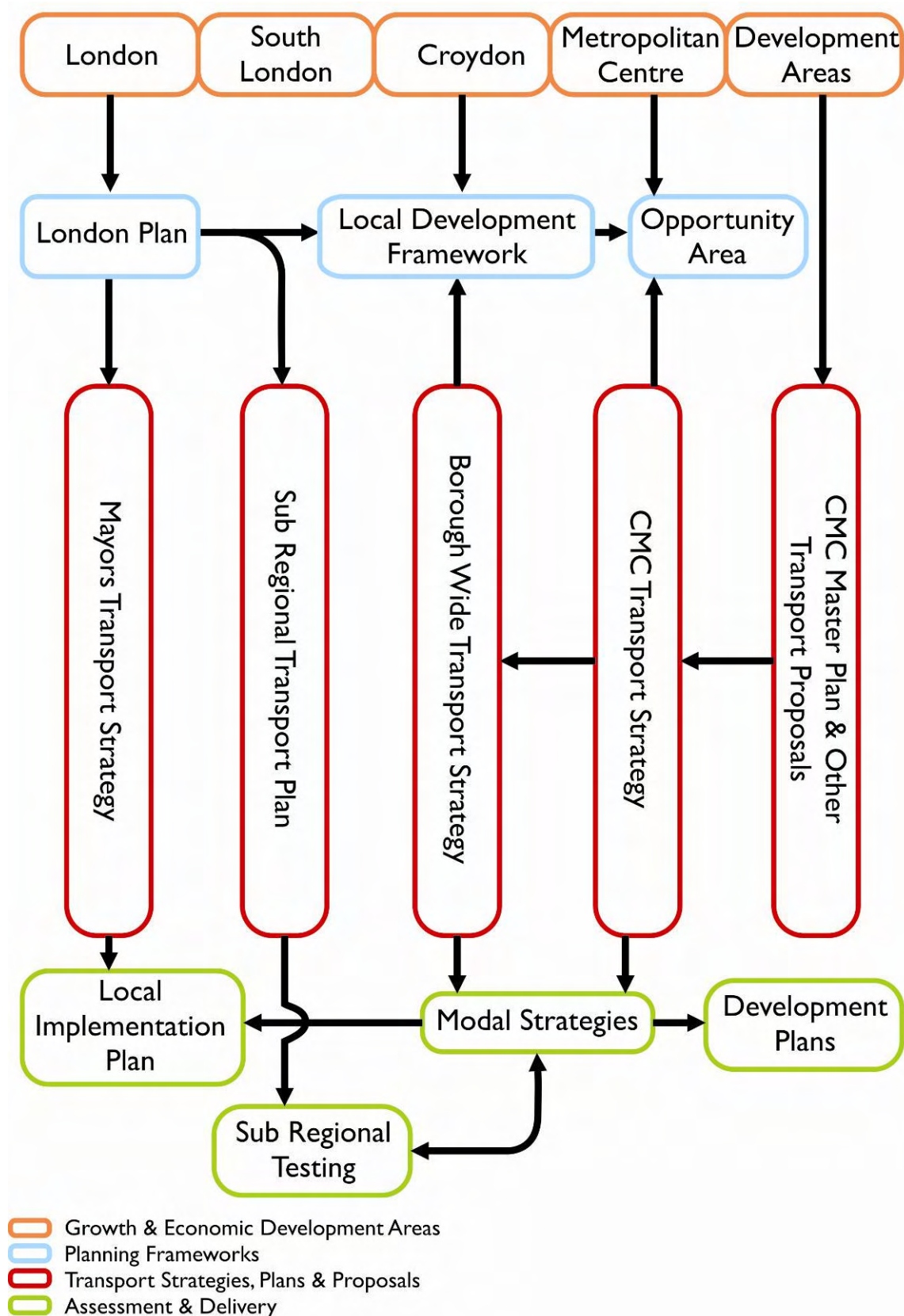
The brief and programme for the BWTS was developed in line with emerging Borough policies and strategies, in particular the development of the Council's Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework. The commission of the BWTS in September 2009 was also timely in that it coincided with the issue of the Mayor's draft Transport Strategy [Mayor of London, 2009b] for consultation and as support to the five Sub Regional Transport Plans that are being developed by TfL.

It was agreed with the Borough that the Transport Strategy would be based on the principles of collaborative development with key stakeholders and that the more detailed modelling assessment of options would be undertaken in the next stage of Strategy development that informs the LDF and LIP.

This document is therefore the evidence base for the Borough Wide Transport Strategy, and its executive summary will be published as the main public document, which will be presented in a style consistent with the LDF. It will in particular focus on the spatial aspects of the Transport Strategy through maps and plans of key issues and possible options for improvement.

Figure 1-1 sets out the key relationships between the BWTS and other existing or planned policies and plans. In particular there is a relationship with a planned daughter document to the BWTS, which provides a similar high level framework for transport in the Croydon Metropolitan Centre (CMC).

Figure 1-1: Planning context



1.3 Strategy objectives

The prime objective is to maximise opportunities to enhance Croydon's current transport infrastructure and services, to enable better transport planning and delivery to support the Borough's growth up to 2031. The Strategy will recommend priority schemes for immediate consideration and provide a lobbying document to support development growth by identifying and prioritising realistic schemes for the short and medium term.

The Strategy provides a baseline review, which identifies current problems across the transport network and considers the impact of the proposed growth options as set out within the draft LDF at three key dates. We have identified a base scenario at 2009 to 2012; a short term strategy up to 2017 aligning with the current adopted TfL Business Plan expenditure programme and the end of the LIP2 period; a medium term plan up to 2022 covering a potential LIP3 programme; and a long term plan up to 2031, which is broadly in line with the LDF end date.

The Strategy is aspirational in regard to what would ideally be required in terms of transport interventions but has to be grounded in what is realistically feasible. The Strategy has therefore been developed to be consistent with key national, regional and local policy documents and known funded projects.

An important element in the evidence review is the "Gap Analysis" of current and future transport provision across this period, developed to agree priorities and identify solutions. Where the identified solutions cannot be provided, for funding, political or technical reasons, areas of further work are recommended, to enable these gaps to be addressed.

1.4 Strategy development

There are two clear approaches to developing transport strategies and each has its value. One method is to concentrate on modelling a range of possible transport scenarios, extrapolating from existing levels of demand and supply. This technical approach is dependent on complex assumptions, is time consuming and can result in acceptable, safe but ultimately sterile strategies.

We can however, also approach transport strategy development in a more participative manner, where core principles and assumptions are tested rigorously with the key professionals before any modelling is undertaken to support the analysis. This method seeks to focus the Strategy on what has to be done and developing a consensus on what can be achieved. This approach is similar to developing a "zero based" budget, where current activities are reviewed in the context of what has to happen, what could happen and what will never happen.

Such an approach fits in well with Croydon's consultative approach to the wider Borough vision and so we also adopted a more participative, engaged process involving workshops, meetings and regular testing of assumptions and views.

Key phases within the Strategy development included:

- **Inception meeting.** To clarify and confirm the study methodology and programme ensuring an acceptable approach is followed and eliminating the risk of abortive work.
- **Workshop (wider audience):** A workshop of internal and external stakeholders, transport operators, local community and pressure groups aimed at exploring the impact of the proposed growth scenarios on Croydon's transport networks. Transport supply issues to be discussed in terms of current and future issues (physical and operational), leading to the identification of opportunities for improvement, their associated constraints and addressing the perception, attitudinal and behaviour factors influencing travel demand.

- **Transport network health check:** Outputs from the above workshop combined with existing data and findings from the transport operator meetings to be used to provide a baseline assessment of Croydon's transport networks. This data collection exercise to provide the "where are we now?" assessment for each transport mode and help build a database of transport opportunity across Croydon.
- **Constraints & solutions:** Each identified Opportunity has a number of associated Constraints that define the schemes feasibility and justification. Constraints will encompass issues such as the suitability of the mitigation, technical feasibility (cost) or political acceptance. If a Constraint can be overcome, then the Opportunity becomes a Solution to be included in the database (or tool kit) of measures and used as the building blocks to the development of the Transport Strategy.
- **Preparation of the draft strategy:** The baseline assessment (health check), the identification of Opportunity and the Constraints & Solutions assessment (tool kit), strategies can be developed for each transport mode and the behavioural and environmental aspects of transport (e.g. travel demand management, air quality and road safety). Solutions within each of these strategies can then be allocated to an appropriate time period and combined to form the full BWTS for Croydon.
- **Consultation of the draft strategy:** To ensure the BWTS meets the requirements of all stakeholders the draft Strategy should be issued for comment.
- **Preparation of the final strategy:** Taking account the comments made on the draft strategy a final version should be produced and issued. This final version should provide an Executive Summary that will form the published output of the BWTS.

This approach was designed to maximise fresh thinking within a structured framework, where we are not dependent on modelled results at this relatively early stage. After each key phase the results were reflected upon to help shape the next phase, ensuring a fully considered Strategy evolved.

1.5 Stakeholder engagement

Croydon is data rich in terms of transport and land use data. As such this Strategy does not intend to 'reinvent the wheel' and makes use of the plethora of recent data available.

The Strategy as delivered reflects key stakeholder objectives (both realistic and aspirational) at key points in time, mapped against current relevant policies and supported by the data available. Engagement with key stakeholders was identified early within the project as being crucial to developing a practical and adoptable Strategy. It is envisaged that further engagement will be undertaken as this Draft Strategy is adopted and finalised.

Initially a workshop with relevant Borough officers was undertaken. This reviewed the Transport Health Check (as set out within Chapters 5 to 16) and helped shape the Borough priorities as well as establishing some core principles.

A second workshop of influential and interested stakeholders external to Borough officers was then undertaken (see Appendix A for notes and attendees). Again the transport health check was reviewed, constraints to the network identified along with possible solutions and their importance to the varying stakeholders. All of the proposed solutions were examined against realistic time and funding conditions to ensure practical and aspirational schemes were clear at varying time points. This workshop provided excellent two-way information in regard to key stakeholder plans, such as TfL's Tram programme and Borough aspirations for the network.

All of the points raised can be found within Appendix A and each issue will be addressed by the appropriate chapter of the Strategy.

1.6 Report structure

1.6.1 Context

The policy context for this Strategy is described in Chapter 2 which is supported by subsequent chapters on the demographic (Chapter 3) and land use (Chapter 4) profiles for the Borough.

To understand how the transport network will operate in the future there is a need to understand future demands. A starting point would be to determine where the demand for travel comes from and how this will change as growth increases within the Borough. Chapter 3 explains the population change that Croydon is expected to undergo between now and 2031 (***Where do we want to be?***) and what the current population is in terms of size, distribution across the Borough and where people want to live (***Where are we now?***). In acknowledging the current demographic position within the Borough and identifying how this demographic is expected to change over time we are able to identify where population stress is likely to occur in the future and when it will begin to impact on the Borough (***What are the options for change?***).

These chapters also provide evidence and details of the likely growth scenarios within Croydon over the period 2012 to 2031. Understanding the spatial implications of Croydon's population growth was essential to the development of this Strategy, which will not only provide enhanced transport links to accommodate this growth but also help ensure areas for new housing and employment are located in the most sustainable areas of the Borough.

Current travel patterns and demand are described in Chapter 5 and from the growth scenarios discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 the predicted levels in, out and within the Borough are assessed. This is a prerequisite to understanding the locations of stress within the current transport network but also how future demands may exacerbate problems such as increased traffic congestion, poor air quality or barriers to movement.

Subsequent chapters of the strategy consider the current condition of Croydon's transport networks (via a health check assessment) and from which provides a framework of proposals to enhance these networks to accommodate the Borough's development aspirations.

1.6.2 Health check

Chapter 6 to Chapter 17 review the components of the transport network by setting out for each; aspirations for the future (***Where do we want to be?***); current levels of performance (***Where are we now?***); and proposals for improvement (***What are the options for change?***). Areas covered as they appear in this report include travel demand management, air quality; road safety; general traffic; bus services; rail services; Tramlink; cycling; walking; local centre's & neighbourhoods; taxi services, Freight deliveries & servicing and finally innovative transport options.

A health check for each was undertaken to assess current performance and identify areas for improvement. This process revealed many significant problems, highlighting deficiencies in infrastructure provision and in the case of public transport, in levels of operational service. These problems reduce the efficiency with which people are able to access employment, education and other services and that not only makes Croydon a less attractive place to live and work but also but constrains the ability to grow and prosper.

For many of the issues identified during the health check there exist scheme proposals or at least policy aspirations that would resolve a particular problem if implemented. These proposals vary in scale and development but the implementation for some is held back by political or funding constraints. In areas where the transport network operates well and may even have spare capacity this could be used to highlight areas of growth opportunity with minimal or limited need for additional transport infrastructure. A third part to the health check is opportunity led, where new transport infrastructure or services are relatively easy to procure and implement but current levels of demand may not justify new or enhanced infrastructure.

1.6.3 Gap analysis and scheme identification

The 'Issues & Solutions' spreadsheet (Appendix D) provides an assessment tool for determining the schemes that offer the greatest opportunity to make Croydon's transport network more efficient and provide a means of establishing the priority of schemes to meet Croydon's growth strategy over the next 20 year.

The Strategy seeks to address these existing weaknesses over the immediate (2010 – 2012) and short (2012 – 2017) terms while measures to accommodate the proposed growth scenarios are developed in the medium (2017 – 2022) to long term (2022 – 2031). Making most efficient use of the existing transport networks and encouraging greater use of public transport, walking and cycling are key components of this Strategy.

1.6.4 Strategy development and way forward

Chapter 17 sets out the BWTS for Croydon defined by the above time periods or action plans. Each plan sets out the actions required to delivery the objectives of the Strategy for a particular time period and recommend works to provide the foundations for the successful delivery of subsequent plans. Key themes for each of the action plans will therefore consist of:

- securing funds for schemes/ initiatives to be delivered in the current plan;
- feasibility, consultation and detailed design works;
- scheme implementation, delivery and monitoring;
- scoping works to develop schemes for implementation in subsequent plans; this may include:
 - scoping, feasibility and business case development;
 - consultation, liaison and lobbying of key stakeholders such as Network Rail, Transport for London and the development partners for the CMC.

As a starting point, and catalyst for this Strategy, a period of Planning & Review is proposed (2010 to 2012) whose aim will be to build robustness into the proposed short, medium and long strategies. This is to be achieved through modelling exercises, design works and business case development to ensure all proposals are feasible and appropriate but also through the lobbying of external organisations (developers, TfL, Network Rail) ensure that the Borough's intentions for growth and their associated local and regional implications are fully understood by all stakeholders.

Ultimately this Strategy must be flexible, as growth scenarios over the timescales proposed are potentially unpredictable. To ensure the Strategy remains appropriate and relevant throughout, the short term focuses on fixing what is currently broken while the medium and longer terms aim to deliver the step change solutions to ensuring Croydon's growth is achievable and ultimately sustainable.

Partnership working; managing external resources and lobbying key organisations will be critical to the success of this Strategy and is dependent on Croydon Council's capability to manage the identified programmes of work. A suggested organisational structure to delivery the Strategy is described in Chapter 19 that concludes with this study's recommendations and way forward.