15 Freight deliveries & servicing

15.1 Where do we want to be?

The aim should be to provide a vision that balances the needs of businesses with those of the wider Croydon community. In this respect it should be looking to:

- have an holistic view of freight vehicle activity across the Borough;
- improve the efficiency of deliveries and servicing across the Borough;
- promote local schemes and new ways of delivering goods and servicing;
- encourage the use of cleaner vehicles; and
- encourage local commercial vehicle operators to adopt best practice.

With the CMC likely to be an increasing generator of freight movements it is essential that the emerging Masterplans incorporate facilities for delivery that are easy to access and do not conflict with bus and tram services or movement along the pedestrian and cycle routes.

15.2 Where are we now?

Freight movements form a significant component of traffic flows on Croydon's road network with demand generated from the major retail outlets in the CMC and the extensive retail and business park areas to the west of the Borough. The Borough also has many local and district centres whose businesses rely on deliveries being made on-street from a multitude of suppliers.

Freight and servicing considerations rarely feature in strategic documents pertaining to the development aspirations of a Borough, yet enhancing retail and commercial activity is a central theme in most of the proposed schemes.

As part of the preparation of its LDF, Croydon would like to focus future development on a 'concentrated growth' corridor following the route of the A23 from north to south. Several regeneration projects: Croydon Gateway (Ruskin Square), East Croydon Station, West Croydon Station, Mid Croydon - Park Place, College Green, Wellesley Road and Park Lane, and Purley Regeneration (Purley Town Centre) all seek to improve, among other things, the economic vitality along this line. Once these projects come to fruition, they are likely to significantly increase the demand for goods and services, all of which will require being supported by delivery and servicing activity.

While regeneration development is high on the agenda, there are a number of existing localities that are centres of commercial, industrial and retail activity. The area encompassing Beddington Lane and Purley Way is the largest single 'commercial district' in the Borough, covering retail, industrial, waste management and distribution, while places such as Thornton Heath, Norbury, Coulsdon and Addington have pockets of mixed business activity. This selection illustrates the diversity of economic activity within the Borough.

Croydon is a partner in the South London Freight Quality Partnership (SLFQP), which has undertaken a number of studies into various aspects of freight activity within the participating Boroughs. The key aim of the SLFQP is, 'To develop a common understanding of freight transport issues among the membership and promote constructive solutions which reconcile the need for access to goods and services with local environmental, social and safety concerns.'

There is little data regarding freight activity in the Borough, apart from data collected from research performed by the SLFQP. Two SLFQP studies have elaborated upon some aspects of freight activity

in Croydon, one covering retailers in some of the main shopping areas in Croydon and Sutton, and the other focused on delivery activity in the High Street.

The SLFQP has also produced a helpful feasibility study on the potential to use freight consolidation centres in south London, which indicates that an opportunity is there for Croydon, Sutton and Bromley, but will require proactive involvement, drive and support from industry and local authorities if such facility is to come about.

There is little opportunity for water freight transport for Croydon due to the non-existence of suitable water courses for transport.

For Rail, TfL referred to the sidings at Purley but which are currently occupied by Day's Aggregates and Aggregate Industries are on an active rail freight site. A further location could be the Coulsdon goods yard which is currently occupied by a number of waste management companies.

Across Croydon there is a ban on night-time deliveries (as part of The London Lorry Control Scheme (LLCS)), which for businesses means deliveries have to be concentrated into hours typically extending from 0600 to 1900. Whilst it is important to protect local residents from inappropriate out-of-hours delivery nuisance, it is generally recognised that, "Night-time deliveries represent a cost-effective way to improve delivery reliability, reduce road congestion and, subsequently, reduce the impact of air pollution in urban areas."

15.3 What are the options for change?

15.3.1 Understanding freight activity

To develop a well defined freight strategy in Croydon it is important to have a clear understanding of the factors that influence freight and servicing activity. For example, what are the origins and destinations for commercial vehicles travelling in the Borough, where are the key concentrations of operators in the Borough, how much commercial vehicle traffic is transiting the Borough, why do commercial vehicles need to be in the Borough? Therefore, as a starting point it would be valuable to perform an inclusive data collection project by way of:

- reviewing existing available data;
- exploiting cordon and traffic counts; and
- survey a range of commercial vehicle activity 'hot spots'.

This would provide a baseline on which to develop Borough wide freight and local delivery plans.

15.3.2 Review delivery restriction

Review existing goods vehicle activity restrictions with the aim to synchronize or enhance these such that delivery and servicing companies are able to organise their rounds more efficiently or deliver at times that avoid peak time traffic flows.

15.3.3 Exploit innovative delivery and collection schemes

The prospect of major new development in Croydon CMC offers the opportunity to implement a localised delivery or collection scheme, which will reduce goods vehicle trips into the central area. For example:

- the provision of a central stockholding area for retailers could be considered within the design process;
- a centralised waste collection system (e.g. Envac); and

- drop-off and pick-up points for home deliveries to residents in the central areas.

15.3.4 Freight by rail

As part of the South London Freight Quality Partnership work has been undertaken to investigate and promote the potential for a possible transfer of freight movements from road to rail as a way of contributing to the easing of road traffic congestion, and promoting the setting up of freight consolidation centres and (where relevant) construction consolidation centres.

Freight consolidation centres would reduce road traffic congestion by accumulating freight consignments for a given destination until a single delivery trip can be justified to convey all the accumulated consignments to that destination. This would be a particular benefit for local centres whose businesses tend to rely on small consignments being delivered by a multitude of suppliers.

Construction consolidation centres are similar in purpose, but in respect of construction work or projects, especially where construction sites are geographically close to one another. They are of particular interest to Croydon because of the large scale of overall prospective redevelopment in the Town Centre in connection with Croydon's regeneration proposals, encapsulated in a number of emerging localised Masterplans.

A study carried out by TfL as part of the Mayor's first Transport Strategy identified Reedham sidings as a potential site for a freight or construction consolidation centre and referred to the Days Aggregate sidings as a possible location. Recent discussion there with the site operator indicated that they have no concerns currently regarding train path availability on the Brighton Main Line.

Within the last five years Croydon has worked with the south London Freight Quality Partnership to review an assessment process that Transport for London had carried out under the Mayor's first Transport Strategy. TfL's work identified Reedham sidings as a potential site for a freight transfer capability, and referred to the Days Aggregate sidings at Purley.

The northern part of the BML is an emergency bypass route for Channel Tunnel freight traffic. Wider capacity issues affecting the BML as a whole, and especially those parts of the BML adjoining East Croydon, imply that freight capacity issues for the BML may eventually become more problematic than at present.

15.3.5 Lower emission vehicles

Emission standards for goods vehicles have vastly improved over the last 15 years, but more recently there has been a growing acceptance by commercial vehicle operators (due to technology advances) that all-electric and fossil fuel/ electric/ hybrid vehicles offer an alternative for certain urban distribution. Methods of encouraging uptake could include:

- ensure compliance with the stricter emission targets affecting large van when they come into force in 2012 (see Section 6.2.2);
- Council vehicles be switched to these as appropriate;
- prioritised entry to electric/ hybrid vehicles - e.g. longer stay period or window; and
- provision of on-street fast charging points that are for exclusive use by goods vehicles during the delivery window period.

15.3.6 Maintain and expand the Borough's involvement in the SLFQP

The SLFQP secretariat has been very active in studying the issues related to freight activity in south London and it also provides a good conduit to develop better relations with the local freight and logistics sector. In exploiting the presence of the SLFQP, Croydon could:

- collaborate with companies more closely in determining win-win measure for managing traffic activity across the Borough;
- use it as a means of promoting FORS (TfL's Freight Operator Recognition Scheme) in order to press local operators to adopt best practice;
- inform the construction sector of the requirement to devise Construction Logistics Plans (CLPs) as part of the design and planning process for project in the Borough; and
- inform developers of the requirement to devise Delivery and Service Plans (DSPs) as part of the project legacy.

15.3.7 Delivering options for change

- **Understanding freight activity:** Carryout an in-depth study of freight activity using a range of survey and data capture techniques. **[FDS.01]**
- **Review delivery restrictions:** Carry out a study of current delivery restrictions to identify inconsistencies, ways to balance and harmonise restriction, consider if out-of-hours restrictions can be eased for specific cases or areas as a means of improving delivery efficiency. **[FDS.02]**
- **Innovative delivery & collection schemes:** Working in partnership with developers and retailers investigate ways to incorporate central storeroom and delivery centres into new developments. Similarly, centralised waste collection systems should be examined with developers. **[FDS.03, FDS.04]**.
- **Consolidation centre for construction material:** Work in partnerships with developers and Network Rail to assess the feasibility of a consolidation centre to the south of the borough. **[FDS.05]**.
- **Lower emission vehicles:** The Council should internally investigate the costs and benefits of switching to a low and no emission van and light goods vehicle fleet. Where access restrictions for goods vehicles are being considered in the CMC, a vehicle emissions priority scheme should be considered. **[FDS.06]**
- **SLFQP participation:** Use the membership of this organisation to promote operator best practice etc and being proactive in forming closer relationships with freight and logistics businesses in the Borough - e.g. creation of sub-regional forum. **[FDS.07]**