

2014

Cycling in Croydon



**A report by the
Croydon Council
Streets &
Environment Scrutiny
Sub-Committee**

PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY – CYCLING IN CROYDON

A REPORT BY
THE STREETS & ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE – PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

To receive information about cycling in Croydon and the motivations and inhibitors to cycling for commuters, families and leisure cyclists.

The Committee heard that a considerable amount is known about the level of cycling in Croydon and the significant potential for cycling in the borough. There is however a lack of information about why this potential is not being realised although the Biking Borough Study in 2009-10 provided some information and conclusions.

A potential Strategy to help the council frame its activities to aid and encourage cycling was produced for the Committee's consideration and it is intended that this be refined as research is undertaken and knowledge and understanding grows. The council has at the same time embarked on an externally audited and facilitated Bicycle Policy Audit and it is envisioned that this process will inform the draft strategy and a delivery plan progressed.

This was therefore pre-decision scrutiny.

The following pages provide a summary of the information received and considered by the Committee. The full list of papers, representations and presentations from contributors is attached in Section 7 of the report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Committee swiftly and unanimously concluded that the current low levels of cycling (less than 2% of journeys are made by bicycle) in the borough were untenable and all forms of cycling needed to be encouraged. Members of the Committee were enthusiastic that a modal shift towards cycling be encouraged so that current inequalities between road users are reduced. In addition the potential for reductions in the pressure on road and public transport infrastructure was noted.

The Committee was therefore supportive of the process of developing a strategic vision to improve cycling outcomes.

Members accepted that cycling provides a fast, cheap and easy means of enabling people to get about. In addition the benefits of active travel and cycling can make to health and lower levels of pollution were acknowledged by the Committee.

The Committee was keen that segregation between modes of transport should take place where possible and that where this is not possible safe cycling routes - including through our parks - should be developed.

The Committee was supportive of plans to improve cycling in the town centre by tackling the 'Croydon donut'¹ and including the removal of out of date, confusing and redundant signage. The development of a series of Quietways would help deliver the Mayor of London's vision for 'villages in the city' and create direct cycle routes running parallel to main local travel routes.

The Committee noted that introducing area-wide 20mph limits was a contributor to cycling safety although on its own it would not deliver a safe cycling environment.

Following information received, the Committee identified some 'quick' wins which it asked officers to consider implementing. Members were also eager that temporary installations of permeable cycling infrastructure, such as road closures, be trialled as part of an evolutionary approach to delivering better cycling and improved neighbourhoods.

The Committee recognised that the approach to creating liveable neighbourhoods, such as Members saw on its visit to Hackney, was heavily reliant on effective cross-department working, shared budgets and high level support from Members and officers in the borough. This included the development of supportive planning policies and the development of schemes to deliver cycle storage to residents with the housing service. The Committee was desirous that this type of co-operation be pursued in Croydon.

Members noted that investment in cycling-friendly infrastructure would be needed and that other London boroughs – including Hackney – had traditionally spent more per head of population than Croydon. The Committee heard that there were opportunities to bid for funding, including from Transport for London and asked that consideration be given to supporting cycling when funding is allocated. It was noted that in Hackney improvements to roads and infrastructure (including investment in cycle storage and pumps) were seen as an asset. Maintenance costs were minimal, were absorbed into existing budgets and were not therefore used as a reason not to make progress.

Finally, the Committee was keen that all facilities should be able to accommodate all groups of cyclists including those with disabilities.

¹ A circle of unlinked cycle routes which surrounds the town centre.

3. CYCLING IN CROYDON

3.1 Where are we now?

The Biking Borough report found that the level of potential cycle trips in Croydon is in the highest quartile of outer London boroughs. The Mayor of London hoped to see 5% of the capital's journeys being made by bicycle while the London Assembly's Transport Committee was even more ambitious stating that the target should 10% of journeys. In Croydon just 2% of journeys are by bike.

Croydon has been identified as being a focus area for short car journeys and has an estimated 30,000 potentially cyclable trips with an origin or destination in the town centre. This combined with the projected substantial population growth forecast for the town over the next decade presents considerable opportunity to increase the potential demand for cycling.

The potential for cycle trips in Croydon is therefore amongst the highest in outer London boroughs with the opportunity to cycle particularly high in the north of the borough, the town centre and Purley town centre.

3.2 The benefits of cycling and active travel

The Committee heard that there are many benefits to cycling including:

3.2.1 Improved health outcomes including tackling obesity and increasing levels of physical activity by building exercise into everyday lives.

3.2.2 Cycling as a mobility aid for disabled people. Members heard that cycling is the second most popular form of exercise for disabled people.

3.2.3 Improving mental health, a sense of well-being and tackling social isolation including in older people.

3.2.4 Reductions in air pollution and CO₂ levels.

3.3 Barriers to cycling

The Committee heard that there are a variety of barriers to cycling that inhibit take-up and that these include:

3.3.1 Safety issues relating to cycling including interactions with vehicles (especially at junctions) and the poor condition of the roads are of concern to many. There has been an overall increase in cyclists seriously injured on Croydon's roads in recent years and although the numbers are small some attribute the increase to driver behaviour including speeding. As cycling increases in propensity, more people will be injured though it was noted that the relative risk to cyclists also reduces

- 3.3.2 High fixed costs of car ownership make cycling unattractive to car owners and this, combined with nervousness that proposals that support cycling are a threat to car use, reduces support from the car-lobby.
- 3.3.3 Signage in the town centre was seen by Members on the walkabout to be confusing, out of date and ambiguous in places making it difficult to navigate cycle routes.
- 3.3.4 More widely, Members heard that there is a lack of cycling infrastructure to provide safe routes for cyclists including children and families and which take account of the needs of disabled cyclists. The Croydon 'donut' – an area surrounding the town centre - is difficult for cyclists to penetrate and cycle through legally and safely despite reasonable routes to and from the outer reaches of the Borough. Contributors at the meeting stated that narrow residential roads when combined with motor vehicles also makes for a difficult cycling environment.
- 3.3.5 Members also heard that geography (ie. hills) plays a role. Non-cyclists are intimidated by the prospect of hills (such as South Norwood hill) although electric bicycles offer an increasingly accessible option. They also heard that although regular cyclists are not put off by tackling such hills, a safe cycling environment needs to be created as parked vehicles are a particular hazard on hills.
- 3.3.6 Cycle security and a lack of secure cycle storage facilities at key destinations including for bikes used by disabled cyclists, parents and cargo cyclists is a significant barrier to cycling.

3.4 Opportunities for Croydon

Members heard from contributors at the meeting that despite these barriers there were significant opportunities to encourage more cycling and that these include:

- 3.4.1 The development of a Cycling Strategy for Croydon in the context of all transport modes and with a view to developing better neighbourhoods for all residents is a good start.
- 3.4.2 A range of infrastructure improvements including protected spaces for cyclists on roads and at junctions (a Mini Holland approach) to create a network of segregated routes was needed. In addition, a number of opportunities to help make Croydon town centre calmer, better for all and easily accessed by bike were outlined in the draft Strategy presented to the Committee and Members asked that consideration be given to using S106 contributions from the Westfield Hammerson redevelopment to help achieve these. Members also noted that removing through motor traffic to some roads including 'rat runs' such as Benson Road and Albert Road could help create better neighbourhoods for people to live in.

- 3.4.3 A Quietway network would offer opportunities for direct, well sign-posted and pleasant, interesting and safe places to cycle. These cycle highways delivered to international standards could provide high quality routes for cyclists around the borough and into Central London. Using parks and commons as natural cycle routes, including at night by rescinding byelaws if necessary should, the Committee felt, be considered.
- 3.4.4 The Committee heard that encouraging more car club use was not only a rational motoring choice but would help relieve pressure of space on the carriageway.
- 3.4.5 Introducing area-wide 20mph limits would increase road safety for all road users including cyclists.
- 3.4.6 Members heard that one head teacher in the borough had banned children from cycling to school as he felt that cycling was not safe enough. The Committee heard that introducing safe routes to schools for parents and children presents a significant opportunity to increase cycling and active travel in the borough.
- 3.4.7 Removing old, broken, confusing and 'Cyclists Dismount' signage wherever possible and introducing a rationalised signage scheme including imagery appropriate to disabled cyclists where possible would help encourage cycling.
- 3.4.8 Introducing secure cycle parking and storage including 'better than minimum' cycle storage for new developments and the introduction of on street lockers in housing estates was needed.
- 3.4.9 Aiming to deliver some quick wins identified those attended by the meeting including those relating to permeability, Quietways, separated travel along main roads and cycling through parks could help 'kick start' delivery of the Strategy.

3.5 Funding and choices

The Committee heard that there are large 'pots' of funding available for transport infrastructure and public realm projects but that smaller projects could be funded from very small budgets.

- 3.5.1 Members heard that pan-London funding of £100m for Quietways across London would be available over the next 10 years and that Croydon was seeking funding from this source.
- 3.5.2 Local Implementation Plan funding (£2.8m per annum) has traditionally chosen to use a large proportion of its annual Corridors, Neighbourhoods and Supporting Measure funding to deliver public realm improvement at district centre high streets. This is the type of project Major Scheme funding is available.

- 3.5.3 Funding from S106 contributions arising from the town centre redevelopment (Westfield Hammerson) and the S278 agreement to re-design of Wellesley Road corridor presented opportunities for integrated transport infrastructure investment including cycling.
- 3.5.4 The Committee heard that there were opportunities for funding from separate sources including Public Health and housing to be amalgamated to create better neighbourhoods for all residents.
- 3.5.5 On a much smaller scale, Members heard that separated routes have been quickly and inexpensively created in Wandsworth through the installation of planters (circa £600 each).

3.6 Quick wins

The Committee sought ideas from contributors for some 'quick wins' and the following list (which is not prioritised) was the result:

- 3.6.1 Implementation of the Upper Norwood Cycle to School Partnership report (at a cost of £300,000) including assisted crossings and road closures.
- 3.6.2 Creation of wide separated cycle routes along the A23.
- 3.6.3 Use of parks and open spaces in the borough to create a network of safe, direct Quietway cycle routes.
- 3.6.4 Introduce Quietway routes:
 - From Dingwall Road to Waterloo
 - Mulberry Avenue to the town centre
 - Epsom Road and Croydon Road junction
- 3.6.5 Introduce area-wide 20mph limits across the borough and other traffic calming measures.
- 3.6.6 Aim to introduce the ambitious plans set out in the failed Mini Holland bid.
- 3.6.7 Introduce legal cycling routes between Croydon Minster and North End in both directions.
- 3.6.8 Encourage car-sharing and car club use as a rational choice for motorists.
- 3.6.9 Contraflow cycling along one way roads.
- 3.6.10 Use of planters to provide separated road use as a trial in the Arena School area.

4. THE HACKNEY MODEL

A Committee visit to Hackney took place on 19th November 2014 and Members had the opportunity of talking to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and lead on cycling, Councillor Feryal Demirci and its Principal Transport Planner, Ben Kennedy.



4.1 A holistic approach

Members learned that Hackney had made cycling a priority in 2000 as part of its holistic approach to creating liveable neighbourhoods, reducing inequalities between road users and had seen huge increases in cycling as a result. The borough has one of the highest levels of cycling in London (7% of all journeys 7 days a week) in addition to high levels of walking and public transport use. It is the only place in the UK where more residents travel to work by bicycle than by car.



The council aims to make the whole road network permeable and accessible for cyclists and pedestrians.

4.2 Continuing investment

These changes have been effected by decades of political support, an evolutionary approach of making changes incrementally and a sustained investment in public realm.

Members heard that the council installs infrastructure as a temporary measure and then develops it over time to stretch the funding and help change perceptions of residents. It also considered improvements to roads and infrastructure to be an asset and the minimal maintenance required was readily absorbed into existing budgets.

4.3 Cross-department co-operation

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Hackney's lead on cycling informed members on the visit to the borough that cross-departmental co-operation was crucial as it enabled 'joined up' thinking and the sharing of 'pots' of money to deliver better neighbourhood solutions for all residents.

Members heard that regular meetings between Public Health, Sport and Leisure and Transport teams take place and are leading to a comprehensive and coherent pathways to different types of cycling activities and services.

4.4 Cycle Storage

Members heard that the council aims to make provision for cycle parking everywhere for all journeys and is reallocating parking spaces to permanent carriageway cycle parking ranks. Examples of cycle storage investment include:

- Car-shaped bike ports installed on a permanent basis when requested – there are two in the borough currently
- Planning officers and Planning Committee members working together to seek 'better than minimum' cycle storage in new developments and the placement of cycle storage and lockers around the borough without the need for Planning Permission
- Investment in 440 cycle lockers in the borough and its housing estates where the transport department match-funds investment in lockers with other agencies



4.5 20mph limits

Members heard that Hackney had established borough-wide 20mph limits on all residential roads and that there was a stated intention to establish 20mph on its main roads in the foreseeable future.

4.6 Education and training

Members were informed that the council worked hard at educating road users (all its HGV drivers completed a Safer Urban Driver course), it offers free cycle training for all and has developed long term collaborative relationships with schools as part of its strategy to encourage cycling in the borough. Hackney has also introduced a 'try before you buy' scheme with approximately 30% of participants purchasing a discounted bicycle through the scheme at the end of the trial period.

4.7 An opportunity to learn from Hackney

Members attending the walkabout on 19th November saw that many of the measures in Hackney would be appropriate to replicate in Croydon as many of its streets were similar to those across the borough and that much could be learned from their experiences.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Committee reached a number of conclusions including that:

- Current levels of cycling participation in the Borough are poor, there are considerable opportunities to increase cycling participation as a means of travel and for leisure and that Members of the Committee were enthusiastic that a modal shift towards cycling should be encouraged
- Croydon needs a strategic vision to improve cycling outcomes by:
 - Creating a network of joined up cycle routes including Quietways, access to parks and permeable infrastructure improvements
 - Creating safer streets for cyclists and offering residents the opportunity of choosing to cycle
 - Encouraging cycling by ‘normalising’ it as a means of travel to work or school and as a leisure activity
 - Creating quieter neighbourhoods for residents whether or not they cycle
- The development of a Cycling Strategy for Croydon, guiding principles and a delivery plan will help ensure that cycling is integrated into broader travel plans for the Borough
- Area-wide 20mph limits would help all road users feel safer although lower speeds alone would not be sufficient to encourage more cycling
- As cycling increases in propensity, more people will be injured though it was noted that the relative risk to cyclists also reduces
- A Hackney-style model of introducing infrastructure measures on a temporary basis and then evolving these into more permanent structures could be trialled as the Cycling Strategy is implemented
- Increased cycle parking and storage at destinations (including district centre, railway stations, hospitals, schools, libraries etc.) is important and should also include parking for cargo cycling, parent cycling and non-standard cycles wherever possible
- Infrastructure needed to support the Cycling Strategy should be seen as a valuable asset to the council and the minimal maintenance required (eg. to Sheffield stands for cycle parking) should not be seen as a financial burden or a reason not to proceed with installation
- Education and training for cyclists and motor vehicle drivers is needed to encourage road safety and mutual respect among all road users
- The Committee identified some ‘quick wins’ that could be considered for implementation in the short term including:
 - Trialling road closures eg. Benson Road, Albert Road
 - Trialling separated road use using planters for example in the Arena School area
 - Implement the Upper Norwood Cycle to School Partnership report
 - Introduction of wider separated travel and cycle lanes along sections of the A23
 - Access to parks and the potential linking of cycle routes through parks and country parks by rescinding bylaws
 - Quietways eg. Dingwall Road to Waterloo; Mulberry Avenue to Croydon town centre
 - Two way cycling between Croydon Minster and North End
 - Contraflow cycling along one way roads

- In addition to Local Implementation Plan funding from Transport for London, there are opportunities to allocate additional sums from Section 278 and Section 106 payments and budgets allocated to the town centre redevelopment (Westfield Hammerson) to deliver integrated transport solutions.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee resolved to:

- Recommend to the Cabinet that a Cycling Strategy for Croydon including the guiding principles included in the draft strategy presented to this Committee be adopted
- Recommend that consideration be given to increasing the funding allocation from the Local Implementation Plan (provided by Transport for London) and allocating funding from Section 278, Section 106 and town centre redevelopment (Westfield Hammerson) 'pots' in order to implement the rolling delivery plan of the Cycling Strategy for Croydon
- Recommend that the strategy be reviewed and updated regularly as circumstances change
- Recommend that Cabinet Members and officers across the council work collaboratively to seek opportunities to combine separate 'pots' of funding with the aim of creating better neighbourhoods for residents
- Recommend that the housing service works with the transport service on the installation of cycle lockers where residents want them
- Recommend that Cabinet instructs the planning department and conservation officers to work with transport officers to review planning policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance to remove impediments such as the need for planning permission for cycle storage and lockers whenever and wherever possible
- That some of the 'quick wins' identified by the Committee be considered as a first step to trialling the temporary installation of permeable cycling infrastructure as part of an evolutionary approach to delivering a Cycling Strategy for Croydon
- Note that introducing area-wide 20mph limits would be a useful contributory factor in enhancing cycling safety
- That the discriminatory images against disabled cyclists be balanced by issuing images of disabled cycling on all publicity and presentation material and that the Cycling Strategy shows evidence of a disability focused Equality Impact Assessment.

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Information submitted to the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee for its meeting on 2nd December 2014 is available at the following link: www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/scrutiny

Meeting date	Tuesday 2 nd December 2014
Minute number	A16/14 - Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Cycling in Croydon
Present for the committee	Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair) Councillors Karen Jewitt, Michael Neal, Stephen Mann, Paul Scott and Donald Speakman
Also in attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Kathy Bee, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment • Councillor Robert Canning, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment • Peter McBride, Transport for London • Angus Hewlett, Crystal Palace Transition Town • Connie Junghans-Minton, presenting the case for active travel in Purley and Coulsdon • Austen Cooper, Croydon Cycling Campaign • Isabelle Clement, Wheels for Wellbeing • Kristian Gregory • Vince Hemmond

The Sub-Committee received a report from council officers on Cycling in Croydon including a possible cycling strategy for the borough (report AR06A), a report relating to the committee 'cycling day' on 19th November (report AR06B) and written contributions from Crystal Palace Transition Town and Croydon Cycling Campaign (report AR06C).

Additional information was supplied and circulated at the meeting including PowerPoint presentations made at the meeting by Peter McBride, Transport for London, Connie Junghans-Minton, presenting the case for active travel in Purley and Coulsdon and Austen Cooper, Croydon Cycling Campaign.

All documents are available on the council website at www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/scrutiny