

REPORT TO:	SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE FOR WORKING AND LIVING IN CROYDON 10th May 2005
AGENDA ITEM:	6
SUBJECT:	Scrutiny Review of District Centres
LEAD OFFICER:	Director of Policy and Corporate Services
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	SCRUTINY
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	n/a
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:	n/a

For general release

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Sub-Committee consider this report and its recommendations and commend them to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report is attached as Appendix 1. The Terms of Reference for this review were agreed at the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Working & Living in Croydon on the 9th November 2004 and a working party was established comprising Councillors Timothy Godfrey, Steve Hollands, Paul Scott, Julian Storey, Martin Tiedemann and Audrey-Marie Yates (Chair).

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The detail is contained within the report itself.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation was conducted with retailers in a wide range of district centres in Croydon, with businesses taking part in the "Bizcomm" exhibition for small businesses held by Croydon Chamber of Commerce on 18th March 2005, as well as with local residents. In addition, a wide range of officers and agencies, named in the report, contributed information on current issues and opportunities. They included Norman Frost, Business Development Manager for Wandsworth Council, and town centre managers Audrey Helps and Nicola Tracey, who provided useful information on town centre management in Tooting, Balham and other district centres in their borough to the working group.

5 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 None for the purposes of this report. The financial resourcing of the review recommendations will be determined as part of the Chief Officer's co-ordination and identified for the subsequent Cabinet response.

6. COMMENTS OF THE SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL

6.1 None for the purposes of this report

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.1 None for the purposes of this report

8. CUSTOMER FOCUS IMPACT

8.1 None for the purposes of this report

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 None for the purposes of this report

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND DESIGN IMPACT

10.1 None for the purposes of this report

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

11.1 None for the purposes of this report

12. RISK ASSESSMENT

12.1 None for the purposes of this report

13. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

13.1 None for the purposes of this report

14. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

14.1 None for the purposes of this report

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

SCRUTINY REVIEW
OF
DISTRICT CENTRES

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
FOR WORKING AND LIVING
IN CROYDON

MAY 2005

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SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DISTRICT CENTRES

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Review of District Centres was conducted to explore the major changes which have been taking place in district centres over the last decade or two, e.g. increased competition from large outlets, changes in local needs, and national policies and initiatives to limit traffic congestion such as Red Routes, and to ascertain what action needs to be taken to maximise the opportunities for regeneration and business growth in these centres.
- 1.2 Terms of Reference were agreed at the 9th November 2004 meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Working and Living in Croydon, and are attached in Appendix A.
- 1.3 The working party conducting this review comprised:
- Councillor Audrey-Marie Yates (Chair)
 - Councillor Martin Tiedemann
 - Councillor Paul Scott
 - Councillor Timothy Godfrey
 - Councillor Julian Storey
 - Councillor Steve Hollands
- 1.4 This review examines:
- The definition of what a district centre constitutes, and how this impacts on service provision in district centres
 - External factors affecting the changing face of district centres such as the changing make-up and needs of the local population, the closure of small post offices and banks, and evolving trends in leisure and catering
 - How various district centres have adapted in response to changing demands from residents living locally or further afield, and the Council's role in enabling or supporting these processes
 - Successful district centres and factors underpinning their success

DEFINITION OF DISTRICT CENTRES

- 1.5 One of the aims of the review was to ascertain what a “district centre” constitutes, and what services it receives. The following national and local planning documents set out a hierarchy of centres based on their size and composition, and definitions for each type of centre:
- The Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (PPG6) which was published in June 1996 and amended in September 2000, and Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), a draft update of this guidance published in late 2003
 - The Croydon Plan, which has superseded Croydon's Unitary Development Plan in setting out the borough's planning strategy and criteria for approving planning applications

- 1.6 The glossary of terms in the revised PPG6 sets out a hierarchy of definitions for “small” centres, which are described further in the Croydon Plan 2nd deposit (para 13.2):
- Town centres
 - District centres
 - Local centres
- 1.7 Members explored a number of issues relating to the classification of centres in planning policy, and expressed their concern about the limited opportunities for development currently afforded to them.
- 1.8 Their concern that existing policy fails to acknowledge the business potential which small centres offer, a view which is echoed by research on the impact of PPG6 on town centre development: research completed by CB Hillier Parker of Cardiff University for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in January 2004, shows that PPG6 has led to a major shift in the location of large scale developments, away from out of town sites, and to a focus on traditional town centres, particularly the top 50 town and city centres.
- 1.9 However, the research states that it has been less successful in re-diverting activity back into smaller town centres, and has yet to deliver any widespread renaissance in the role of smaller town and district centres.
- 1.10 Members also explored issues relating to district centre boundaries. In particular, they discussed the need for appropriate centre boundaries to maximise business development, and examined the effect of the position of a large supermarket on the prosperity of other shops in a given centre.

DISTRICT CENTRES IN CROYDON TODAY

- 1.11 The following section outlines:
- Residents’ views of district centres, outlined in a number of local strategies
 - Statistical trends relating to the local population obtained from census data, which may have an impact on the use of district centres
 - Retailers’ views of the district centres where they work
 - Information on economic activity in district centres
 - Evidence relating to what draws visitors to district centres
 - Evidence relating to what deters visitors from district centres
- 1.12 This report notes that a significant number of local strategies and supplementary planning guidance documents provide useful information on residents’ views and needs.
- 1.13 Common themes expressed by residents involved in the preparation of the above strategies included:
- A concern that their district centre appeared very run down
 - Issues relating to cleansing services and environmental management (borough-wide)
 - Concerns over the incidence of anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in local centres (borough-wide, but particularly pronounced in northern wards)

- Road congestion and heavy traffic preventing easy access to the centre (mentioned particularly in Purley, Coulsdon, Thornton Heath)
 - Problems with parking, mentioned particularly by Purley and Coulsdon residents
 - The poor range and quality of shops in the district centres
- 1.14 However, information set out in an LDA funded study of 13 local centres in the South of London led by Wandsworth Council in June 2003 shows that these themes recur in a number of neighbouring boroughs.
- 1.15 Comparison of 1981 census statistics with 2001 figures highlighted a significant increase in:
- one person households
 - employment among women
 - car ownership - except in Fairfield, which offers easy access to shops, services and public transport
- 1.16 The report sets out the results of a small survey conducted with retailers working in district centres. Key findings were as follows:
- One third of respondents felt that the business climate was good or very good, while nearly a half felt it was poor or very poor
 - Current problems highlighted included parking issues, environmental issues and competition for large outlets
 - Problems with the range and quality of shops in district centres
 - Concerns over business rate payments
- 1.17 Successful businesses questioned included firms with a niche market, as well as restaurants taking advantages of the growing night-time economy and the proximity of local leisure centres.
- 1.18 The need for better local marketing was mentioned by many respondents, but the use of the Internet for such a purpose was still very scarce in district centres.
- 1.19 With regard to statistics on business activity in Croydon centres, set out in Appendix D, Members expressed concerns over the increase in fast food shops, which can have a negative impact on the image of district centres, and on the numbers of void shops in certain centres. They also expressed concerns over the disappearance of certain landmark pubs, such as the Black Horse in Addiscombe, which has recently been knocked down, and put forward recommendations on protecting the buildings themselves, many of which can contribute positively to the appearance of a district centre.
- 1.20 Using information provided by both businesses and officers, the report sets out the key factors which attract visitors to district centres, e.g. supermarket shopping, the night-time economy and local services including leisure centres, while the main deterrents seem to be convenience and accessibility, particularly when visitors have a car and can therefore easily choose the most convenient centre to go to, and an insufficient range of good shops.

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

- 1.21 Members acknowledged the need for various stakeholders to work together to address the complex needs of district centres, and explored various models of town centre management in practice today.
- 1.22 They also met with a number of town centre managers from Croydon and other boroughs. Section 5 of this report outlines both recent achievements in town centre management and the challenges this type of initiative presents, not least in the matter of funding local initiatives and improvements.
- 1.23 Members explored one possible source of funding for district centres, namely the income that would derive from setting up a Business Improvement District (BID), where affected non-domestic ratepayers pay an extra 1% levy on top of the annual business rate for a period of about 5 years to fund local improvements and initiatives. However, this may not be a popular avenue for many small businesses, as shown by the results of the LDA funded study of 13 local centres in the South of London led by Wandsworth Council in June 2003.

FORTHCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTRICT CENTRES

- 1.24 A significant finding of this Scrutiny review is how many new initiatives are likely to offer development opportunities for district centres in the next few years.
- 1.25 The review outlines the following new initiatives, some of which are still being finalised by Central Government:
- Local Development Frameworks, which were introduced in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and will replace borough-wide Unitary Development Plans
 - Local Implementation Plans, essentially transport strategies which will provide a context for yearly Borough Spending Plan funding bids to TfL
 - City Growth, another national initiative, which aims to create local business-led and well researched strategies or action plans to develop and realise the economic potential of clearly defined areas - the plan which will involve Croydon, as well as Bromley and Brixton covers nineteen wards across these boroughs, and a number of district centres
 - Local Enterprise Growth Initiative, providing funding for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas to promote business growth in deprived areas
 - The Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme, which will encourage local authorities to increase partnership work with local businesses and promote economic development by granting them a proportion of their growth in business rates
- 1.26 In addition, Members explored some of the work being carried out by the New Economics Foundation to support local economies, including the use of local supply chains to keep and recycle local income within a community, rather than paying providers outside the community, which are less likely to reinvest income in that locality.

1.27 As the Council is yet to implement many of the above initiatives, which can have a significant impact on the future of district centre, scrutiny of these initiatives will need to take place when they have been running for some time, e.g. a year. Such scrutiny will also have to examine how the introduction of such a number of initiatives in the same time can provide opportunities which would not be available if they were introduced at different times.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Before the advent of large shopping centres and out of town retail centres, district centres such as Purley, Thornton Heath or Addiscombe provided for most of the needs of local residents, and had a wide range of food shops in addition to the hardware shop, the haberdasher's, etc. .
- 2.2 In the last few decades, several significant changes e.g. developments in shopping opportunities and habits, social customs and transport, to mention but a few, have left many smaller centres struggling with increasingly fierce competition. Larger stores offer wider choice, in many cases lower prices, as well as free parking, to customers with increasingly demanding standards and the ability to travel to the stores of their choice by car. In addition, all shops have to face up to the challenges as well as the opportunities presented by the increasing popularity of Internet shopping.
- 2.3 Many small centres nationwide have had to face shop closures*, a lack of inward investment, the introduction of "Red Routes" in key shopping streets to increase public transport accessibility where visitors had previously parked their cars, as well as a deteriorating local environment, as local residents choose to shop in larger stores at the edge of the centre, or further away from it. Indeed the report commissioned by the Greater London Authority, "A City of Villages: Promoting a sustainable future for London's suburbs" (August 2002) acknowledges that while larger town centres have not suffered greatly by out-of-town development, smaller centres are experiencing problems.
- 2.4 The regeneration of district centres can be a challenge: if a local business person, a developer or a local resident wishes to bring about improvements to a district centre, he or she faces the problem of having to deal with a wide range of agencies with different policies and priorities, and of learning to forge an effective working relationship with them in order to have a significant impact on the area in question. Identifying resources to bring about improvements is another challenge.
- 2.5 This review topic on "district centres" was selected by Scrutiny Members in order to ascertain how well centres such as South Norwood, Addiscombe or Coulsdon in the London Borough of Croydon are currently faring, and what initiatives might assist in maximising their attractiveness to visitors from local centres as well as further away, and their prosperity.
- 2.6 This review examines:
- The definition of what a district centre constitutes, and how this impacts on service provision in district centres
 - External factors affecting the changing face of district centres such as the changing make-up and needs of the local population, the closure of small post offices and banks, and evolving trends in leisure and catering

* In a 2002 report, "Ghost Town Britain: Death on the Street", the New Economics Foundation revealed that between 1997 and 2002, specialist stores such as butchers, bakers and fishmongers shut at the rate of 50 per week.

- How various district centres have adapted in response to changing demands from residents living locally or further afield, and the Council's role in enabling or supporting these processes
- Successful district centres and factors underpinning their success

2.7 The findings of this review are based on:

- Meetings with Council officers on 21st October 2004 and 1st March 2005
- A meeting with the town centre managers for Upper Norwood and Beckenham on 18th November 2004
- Visits to Selsdon and Addiscombe (10th December 2004), to Purley (31st January 2005) and to Tooting and Balham with the town centre managers for these centres (14th March 2005)
- A small survey of local businesses conducted in connection with this review
- Discussion with a number of Neighbourhood Care Associations regarding less mobile residents' use of district centres
- Desk research - particularly useful documents were the LDA funded study led by Wandsworth Council on South London Town Centres ("Involving the Private Sector in Regeneration, June 2003) and the Smaller Towns Report produced by the British Council of Shopping Centres ("Delivering retail-led renaissance in towns and smaller cities - 2004), 1981 and 2001 census data (see Appendix C), and statistics provided by the Planning and Transportation Department (see Appendix D).

2.8 The working party conducting this review comprised:

- Councillor Audrey-Marie Yates (Chair)
- Councillor Martin Tiedemann
- Councillor Paul Scott
- Councillor Timothy Godfrey
- Councillor Julian Storey
- Councillor Steve Hollands

2.9 Members wish to extend their thanks to the retailers, local representatives, and officers who took part in this review, and particularly to Business Development Manager Norman Frost, and town centre managers Audrey Helps and Nicola Tracey for a very informative introduction to the town centre management work of Wandsworth Council.

3 DEFINING DISTRICT CENTRES

3.1 One of the aims of the review was to ascertain what a “district centre” constitutes, and what services it receives. The following national and local planning documents set out a hierarchy of centres based on their size and composition, and definitions for each type of centre:

- The Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (PPG6) which was published in June 1996 and amended in September 2000, and Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), a draft update of this guidance published in late 2003
- The Croydon Plan, which has superseded Croydon’s Unitary Development Plan in setting out the borough’s planning strategy and criteria for approving planning applications

3.2 The glossary of terms in the revised PPG6 sets out definitions for different types of centres, which are set out below, and are described further in the Croydon Plan 2nd deposit (para 13.2).

3.3 Members of the Working Group have indicated that while the term “district centre” refers to a specific size and type of centre, as set out below, the review should cover all the three different types of centres described below - all of which need to aim for vitality and for an attractive and safe environment.

3.4 **Local Centres** are described as follows:

PPG6: ‘Small grouping usually comprising a newsagent, a general grocery store, a sub-post office and occasionally a pharmacy, a hairdresser and other small shops of a local nature’

Croydon Plan: “The Local Centres, supported by a network of Shopping Parades, provide for day-to-day needs but have limited goods and facilities.”

3.5 In Croydon, the following centres are classified as Local Centres:

- Hamsey Green
- Sanderstead
- Brighton Road, South Croydon
- South End
- Broad Green
- Thornton Heath Pond
- Pollards Hill
- Addiscombe
- Shirley

3.6 **District Centres** are described as follows:

PPG6: ‘Groups of shops, separate from the town centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore, and non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants’.

Croydon Plan: “The District Centres provide a wider range of goods and complementary services and facilities, including a supermarket or superstore, but they generally have very limited scope for further development or intensification“.

3.7 In Croydon, the following centres are classified as district centres:

- Upper Norwood
- South Norwood
- Selsdon
- New Addington

3.8 **Town Centres** are described as follows:

PPG6: 'In this guidance, the term "town centre" is used generally to cover city, town and traditional suburban centres, which provide a broad range of facilities and services and which fulfil a function as a focus for both the community and for public transport.'

Croydon Plan: "The Town Centres of Norbury, Thornton Heath*, Purley and Coulsdon provide this potential as well as having significant office and service employment opportunities. "

3.9 PPG6 seeks to promote sustainable development by locating major generators of travel in existing centres, where access by a choice of means of transport, not only by car, is easy and convenient.

3.10 PPG6 requires a "sequential" approach to be adopted in selecting sites for new development. In line with this, both local planning authorities and developers need to demonstrate that all town centre options have been thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered for development for key town centre uses. This means that the first preference should be for town centre sites, followed by edge of centre sites and only then out of centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

3.11 The above definitions establish a system of prioritisation for new retail and leisure developments. However, this system does *not* determine levels of priority for other services such as cleansing or policing, where the level of need determines the number of staff employed and the type of service provided.

3.12 For example, as regards street cleansing, some district centres which have a particularly vibrant night-time economy, such as Upper Norwood, will be swept and cleaned at least twice a night, with a further late visit at weekends.

3.13 As regards safety, the level of staffing will be determined by crime statistics. As a result, for example, street wardens have been assigned to areas in Croydon town centre, as well as Thornton Heath and South Norwood, where crime figures are highest in the borough. A summary of crime figures in district centres is provided in Appendix E.

3.14 For the sake of simplicity, when referring to centres other than Croydon town centre, this review will refer to them as district centres, regardless of their status in the Croydon Plan or other policies.

* The High Street end of Thornton Heath. As mentioned in paragraph 2.5, Thornton Heath Pond is classified as a Local Centre

ISSUES RELATING TO THE CLASSIFICATION OF CENTRES IN PLANNING POLICY

- 3.15 In terms of retail development, research completed by CB Hillier Parker of Cardiff University for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in January 2004, shows that PPG6, a key determinant of national planning strategy, has led to a major shift in the location of large scale developments, away from out of town sites, and to a focus on traditional town centres, particularly the top 50 town and city centres.
- 3.16 However, the research states that it has been less successful in re-diverting activity back into smaller town centres, and has yet to deliver any widespread renaissance in the role of smaller town and district centres.
- 3.17 While the PPG6 states that local planning authorities should adopt planning policies to “enable town, district and local centres to meet the needs of residents of their area”, it fails to address the needs of smaller centres, or to encourage investment in them, thus hindering their regeneration.
- 3.18 The “sequential test” (see paragraph 2.11) leaves smaller centres in a vulnerable position, one, because developers are encouraged to focus on larger centres with large transport networks, and two, because it is less complex to acquire the land needed for developments at the edge of centre or out of centre. However, smaller developments commensurate to the needs of such centres do not feature high on planning departments’ list of priorities.
- 3.19 Members involved in this review feel that current policy fails to acknowledge the business *potential* smaller centres offer (which, when well used, may even redefine local need), the specialised niches which many small businesses have found within the local economy, and the place district centres occupy in local residents’ shopping customs, e.g. “emergency” shopping, combining visits to doctors / dentists / hairdressers / services with a few purchases, shopping as part of the school run, etc, not to mention passing trade, which would present greater difficulties in a large town centre.
- 3.20 Definitions of smaller centres make little allowance for the need for innovation which all small centres need to embrace in order to remain vibrant in a climate where banking, shopping and entertainment habits are marked by an increasing use of information technology and by the emergence in the second half of the 1990s of new forms of retailing, such as the increasing sale of non-food goods and services by supermarket. Interestingly, new trends which may help smaller centres adjust to evolving needs are the nationwide emergence of small, specialist food shops, and the significant growth of the leisure economy, and the night-time economy in particular - Upper Norwood being a good example of the latter, with a wide range of restaurants and drinking establishments.
- 3.21 The definition of district centres provided by the Croydon Plan states that these ‘have very limited scope for further development or intensification’. However, scope for development is not only dependent on the size of the centre, but on need or opportunity for regeneration - which are more likely to fluctuate according to local economic cycles. Members expressed their concern that current policy might inhibit the take-up of opportunities for regeneration in smaller centres, regardless of their current needs.
- 3.22 The fundamental rationale of PPG6 is two-fold. It aims to:
- reduce the need for car travel

- increase social inclusion by drawing shoppers to town centres with a good transport network which obviates the need for car usage.

- 3.23 However, if car travel is actively discouraged in the local district centres while large town centre or out of centre retail outlets offer free and relatively easy parking, the outcome is not reduced driving, but longer car journeys to areas which do offer more generous parking facilities, as well as a reduced use of district centre shops.
- 3.24 Moreover, if car users are discouraged from using a district centre, and its clientele - and the products sold to them - become more and more limited, this can have a significant impact on the vitality of local business. Indeed this view was vociferously voiced by many businesses taking part in this review's survey.
- 3.25 "Smaller" centres such as Coulsdon (a "town centre"), Selsdon (a "district centre") or Addiscombe (a "local centre") occupy a specific place in the commercial life of a borough, which is distinct from that of large centres but complementary to them, and should not be underestimated because of their size. In line with this consideration, definitions in the Croydon Plan need to facilitate development suited to the size of the centre concerned, in line with its needs and available opportunities.
- 3.26 In addition, in order to make good use of up and coming development opportunities in smaller centres, planning officers need to exercise flexibility in considering planning applications and consider positively the opportunities presented by such applications and the locations they relate to, as no policy or strategy can make provision for all future needs and opportunities, particularly in smaller sites.

ISSUES RELATING TO DISTRICT CENTRE BOUNDARIES

Where to draw a boundary?

- 3.27 Members discussed boundaries of district centres, and whether they might occasionally constitute an artificial division between two centres with very similar characteristics, e.g. South Norwood and Portland Road.
- 3.28 Members argued that some district centre boundaries are currently drawn too tightly around the actual centres, leaving places recognised by the local community as part of the centre, outside of the defined area. An example of this is Portland Road, much of which is actually part of the 'district centre' but is not recognised as such in the Croydon Plan, and hence may not attract the regeneration and inward investment required. South Norwood and Portland Road are seen as part of the same centre by traders, and both parts suffer from decline and underinvestment in Portland Road.
- 3.29 One possible way of addressing this situation might be to establish different designations for the core area of a district centre and for the transition zones between the core area and the residential area beyond. Hence for example with South Norwood you would have the 'district centre' focused on the high street and the top of Portland Road, and an outer area that would include the middle section of Portland Road and would carry the same status as a 'local centre'.
- 3.30 Opportunities to adjust the boundaries of centres or retail zones arise when the Unitary Development Plan, now called the Croydon Plan, is due for review. For instance, the current Croydon Plan has changed the status of 8 - 11 Purley Parade from secondary to main retail frontages - which means that this area will be dedicated primarily to retail

although other types of businesses are allowed in small numbers. It has also changed the south-western boundaries of South Norwood, which includes Lawrence Road, to adapt to changing circumstances in that area.

The effect of edge of centre supermarkets on other local shops

- 3.31 One additional impact of PPG6 has been the establishment of large supermarkets at the edge of centres, e.g. Tesco's in Purley, Sainsbury's in Selsdon, and Waitrose in Sanderstead. While these establishments might act as "anchor establishments", drawing large numbers of shoppers, usually in cars, current observations show that few tend to visit other shops in the centre. Indeed, the supermarket becomes the new centre for many shoppers. Certainly businesses working in the centres concerned e.g. local chemists, have reported feeling the increased competition and having to work hard to provide a distinctive service and make a profit.
- 3.32 As regards Tesco in Purley, this issue is acknowledged in the Purley Regeneration Strategy, which sets out plans to create a new pedestrian space that links Tesco to the rest of the centre and removes the current obstacle to movement presented by the adjoining road network. However, funding is still being sought to bring about these changes.
- 3.33 On the other hand, it seems from anecdotal observation that supermarkets situated in the very centre of town, e.g. the Co-op in Addiscombe, Waitrose in Coulsdon, and Tesco in Thornton Heath, draw shoppers, offer free parking, and do not present physical hurdles (e.g. roads to cross, underpasses to negotiate) to shopping in other outlets in these centres. A possible way forward for encouraging vitality throughout district centres could be to encourage the establishment of smaller sized supermarkets of the type used by Tesco as well as Marks and Spencer, which would not require a very large site, and might draw food shoppers while allowing other businesses to sell complementary products.
- 3.34 Members and retailers involved in this review both stated that a further way to support the vitality of a whole centre would be to put in clear, effective signage near the entrance to supermarkets, in order to highlight what other shops there are in the centre concerned. This is an approach being used by Purley's fledgling business association, which both acknowledges the role of Tesco as an anchor establishment, and works hard to increase business vitality throughout the centre.

HOW DO CURRENT POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPACT ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN DISTRICT CENTRES?

- 3.35 Clearly, all Planning departments need to have some form of prioritisation to make the best use of their resources and to have the best possible impact on the borough.
- 3.36 However, district centres must be acknowledged as important elements of the local economy as they provide essential products and services and can indeed reduce the need for shoppers to travel a far distance by being situated a short distance away from shoppers' homes.

To do this effectively, district centres need to have a varied range of customers, rather than a clientele composed mainly of shoppers on a low income, to retain a good range of shops, competitive prices, and business vitality. Attention to their needs is therefore an essential task for planning and other departments and agencies.

- 3.37 Croydon's Planning department has taken the opportunity to work with a number of agencies such as Transport for London (TfL) to draw up and implement local regeneration strategies for centres such as Purley and Coulsdon town centres, and attract significant amounts of external funding to do this work. They have also accessed significant amounts of SRB funding in combination with capital funds to improve Upper Norwood (a district centre), and used capital funding to bring about improvements in centres such as South Norwood (a district centre) and Thornton Heath (a town centre). Such decisions have not been determined by the status of the centres as much as by needs and opportunities available at the time.
- 3.38 However, as a result of current policy, far less attention and resources has been given to smaller areas within centres, which may sometimes constitute an important factor in terms of local decline. Indeed, the consultation document on the draft Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) - which is to supersede PPG6, acknowledges that if PPG6 is retained as it is, smaller centres will remain unlikely to capture the investment they need, hindering their regeneration.
- 3.39 People working in various centres in Croydon have worked hard to identify opportunities for improvements, communicate these to the appropriate authorities and make maximum use of their initiative and resources to keep up vitality of their district centre. However, many efforts to address this gap in provision have had little result, as witnessed by retailers' perceived futility of past initiatives to bring about local improvements (see appendix B: Survey of local businesses' views regarding their district centre). Section 5 of this review seeks to explore ways of harnessing this local potential more effectively through systematic partnership work.
- 3.40 The review of the Croydon Plan is next due to commence in July 2006. This could present an opportunity to reassess the definition of centres such as Addiscombe 'local centre', the size and services of which are more in line with the definition of a district centre, and to examine the boundaries of South Norwood and adjust these to reflect trends in retail and maximise opportunities for new development in Portland Road.
- 3.41 The section on town centre management puts forward a range of options which can harness the ideas and initiatives generated by those living and working in district centres in a more effective way than working in isolation.

CONCLUSIONS

- 3.42 Members acknowledged that an element which will impact significantly on the development of district centres is **national policy**, which has limited scope for change at a local level. However, it is the Working Group's view that current planning policy fails to acknowledge the business potential that district centres offer and to make adequate planning resources available to maximise local opportunities - which may be small in scale, but significant in impact.
- 3.43 Members do not agree that district centres - or local centres - have "very limited scope for further development or intensification" as stated in the Croydon Plan. Their views is that difficulties arise not from a limited scope, but from practical reasons e.g. site assembly, accessing services and information, poor environment, etc. Members are keen to help overcome these and maximise the business opportunities

which may be available in district centres. A possible way of addressing these issues is addressed in section 5, "Town Centre Management".

- 3.44 Members welcome the Planning and Transportation department's use of Council and external funding to bring about improvements in a number of district centres as needs and opportunities have arisen in the last ten years.
- 3.45 They also welcome the opportunities presented by the forthcoming review of the Croydon Plan, due to commence in July 2006. This will present an opportunity to reassess the status and potential of district centres in line with their take-up of forthcoming opportunities for development outlined in this report, and to examine boundaries issues in order to maximise the development potential of areas examined in the course of this review.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the review of the Croydon Plan should include a reassessment of the development potential and status of district and local centres to enable them to attract increased interest from businesses and developers.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the review of the Croydon Plan should include a redefinition of the boundaries of South Norwood district centre to include part of Portland Road in view of its retail activity, to maximise opportunities for regeneration in the area.

4 DISTRICT CENTRES IN CROYDON TODAY

- 4.1 What, then, are Croydon's district centres like today?
- 4.2 The following section outlines:

- Residents' views of district centres, outlined in a number of local strategies
- Statistical trends relating to the local population obtained from census data, which may have an impact on the use of district centres
- Retailers' views of the district centres where they work
- Information on economic activity in district centres
- Evidence relating to what draws visitors to district centres
- Evidence relating to what deters visitors from district centres

4.3 Information obtained relates to all centres in Croydon (town centres, district centres and local centres), irrespective of their status in the planning hierarchy.

RESIDENTS' VIEWS OF DISTRICT CENTRES

A number of local strategies and supplementary planning guidance documents provide useful information on residents' views and needs.

- 4.4 The Planning and Transportation Department have produced the following strategic documents relating to specific areas:
- Purley Town Centre Supplementary Planning Guidance 13
 - Coulsdon Area Regeneration Strategy (2004)
 - Valley Park Concept Statement (Draft)
 - New Addington Central Parade and District Centre Regeneration Strategy (Draft)
 - South Norwood Regeneration Plan (1995)
 - Thornton Heath Regeneration Plan (1995)
- 4.5 Building on work carried out in connection with recently completed Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programmes, programmes resourced through Neighbourhood Renewal funding (often coupled with other sources of funding), have brought opportunities for development to a number of areas in Croydon with a high index of deprivation. The following action plans have been produced to record the main objectives identified:
- The Fieldway and New Addington Action Plan
 - The North West Croydon Action Plan, which covers a number of centres, such as Broad Green and South Norwood
- 4.6 In addition to addressing local concerns, these plans aim to reduce inequalities in terms of employment, education, health, housing and crime to ensure that within the next 10-20 years, no one should be seriously disadvantaged by the area where they live.
- 4.7 Through Neighbourhood Partnerships, a number of improvement plans have been drawn up in consultation with local residents, businesses and service providers distilling the main priorities for the following areas, which may not be co-terminous with local centres but do address concerns relating to them, e.g. the Ashburton and Woodside Improvement Plan, the East Croydon and West Addiscombe Improvement Plan, and the Central and East Addington Improvement Plan.
- 4.8 Common themes expressed by residents involved in the preparation of the above strategies were:
- A concern that their district centre appeared very run down

- Issues relating to cleansing services and environmental management (borough-wide)
- Concerns over the incidence of anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in local centres (borough-wide, but particularly pronounced in northern wards)
- Issues relating to the regeneration of key sites such as:
 - the area around Leslie Arms and the creation of the Linear Park in the Addiscombe area
 - the site of the Red Lion restaurant in Coulsdon, which has been shut for a number of years
 - the Whytecliffe Road area near the railway station in Purley
- Road congestion and heavy traffic preventing easy access to the centre (mentioned particularly in Purley, Coulsdon, Thornton Heath)
- Problems with parking, mentioned particularly by Purley and Coulsdon residents
- The poor range and quality of shops in the district centres

4.9 These are by no means unusual concerns. Indeed they are comparable with the issues identified in a study of 13 local centres in the South of London produced by Wandsworth Council in June 2003. The table on page 12 provides an overview of centre users' top priorities for the next twelve months, which bear many similarities to the concerns expressed by visitors to district centres in Croydon.

LOCAL POPULATIONS

4.10 A comparison of census figures from 1981 and 2001 shows trends which may have an indirect impact on the use of district centres, although clear direct correlations cannot be proven between population trends and evolving social customs.

4.11 Appendix C provides information on:

- Population figures in 1971 and 2001
- The number of households in 1981 and 2001
- One person households in 1981 and 2001
- Employment among men and women in 1981 and 2001
- Car ownership in 1981 and 2001

4.12 Unfortunately, it has not been possible to make effective age comparisons between 1981 and 2001 as the figures provided after each census are organised in very different age bands.

TOWN CENTRE AREA	TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR THE AREA FOR THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS
Balham	Cleanliness and tidiness (23%); Safety (15%);

	Greater range of shops (12%).
Clapham Junction	Cleanliness and tidiness (23%); Safety (18%); Security (12%).
Mitcham	Cleanliness and tidiness (27%); Greater range of shops (15%); Safety (13%)
Orpington	Greater range of shops (25%); Safety (17%); Cleanliness and tidiness (9%); More leisure facilities / pubs (9%).
Putney	Cleanliness and tidiness (25%); Security (15%); Safety (14%).
Richmond	Cleanliness and tidiness (16%); Greater range of shops (11%); Safety (10%);
Tolworth	Greater range of shops (21%); Cleanliness and tidiness (16%); Security (13%).
Tooting	Cleanliness and tidiness (39%); Safety 18%); Greater range of shops (9%).
Twickenham	Cleanliness and tidiness (33%); Safety (10%); Greater range of shops (10%)
Upper Norwood	Greater range of shops (20%); Cleanliness and tidiness (18%); Providing more parking (9%).
Wallington	Cleanliness and tidiness (24%); Greater range of shops (23%); More leisure facilities / pubs (7%).
Wandsworth	Cleanliness and tidiness (27%); Safety (21%); More specialist shops (10%).
Wimbledon	Cleanliness and tidiness (28%); Greater range of shops (13%); Safety (9%); Security (9%); Providing more parking (9%).

Table 32, User Survey, "South London Town Centres - Involving the Private Sector in Regeneration" produced by Wandsworth Council (June 2003)

4.13 It is a challenge to establish comparisons between 1981 and 2001 figures as the number of wards has been reduced from 27 to 24, and ward boundaries have changed. In particular, lines have been redrawn around green areas such as Westow Park, Purley Beeches, and Shirley Park Golf Course, which are now classified under a different ward, but have little effect on the population figures set out in this review. Despite the above issues, it is hoped that these figures will provide a useful overview of key changes from

1981 and 2001.

4.14 To make it possible to draw some comparisons, wards were grouped into the following clusters, with a view to minimising boundary discrepancies, and to grouping together wards with as similar socio-economic conditions as possible:

•**Northernmost**

Norbury and Upper Norwood

Was Norbury, Upper Norwood and Beulah

•**North**

Bensham Manor, Broad Green, South Norwood, Thornton Heath and West Thornton

Was Bensham Manor, Broad Green, South Norwood, Thornton Heath, West Thornton and Whitehorse Manor

•**East Central**

Addiscombe, Ashburton, Shirley and Woodside

Was Addiscombe, Ashburton, Woodside, Rylands, Monks Orchard and Spring Park

•**West Central**

Croham, Fairfield and Waddon

Was Croham, Fairfield and Waddon

•**East**

Fieldway and New Addington

Was Fieldway and New Addington

•**South-East**

Heathfield, Sanderstead and Selsdon

Was Heathfield, Sanderstead and Selsdon and Ballards

•**South-West**

Coulsdon East, Kenley, Purley, and Coulsdon West

Was Coulsdon East, Kenley, Purley, and Woodcote & Coulsdon West

4.15 An analysis of census figures for 1981 and 2001 yielded the following results:

- Between 1971* and 2001, the population of the borough decreased in all areas except the “north” and “south-east” areas (7.5% and 25.3% increases respectively). The latter figure can be explained by a significant amount of housing development in the area. The area where the population fell most was “east”, with a fall of 23.9% over 30 years.

* 1981 census figures also provide ward population figures for 1971

- The number of households rose significantly from 1981 to 2001. Particularly large increases were seen in the “north” (32.2%), “south-east” (29.8%) and “west central”(24.5%) areas.
- One person households grew considerably in number between 1981 and 2001, with the “northernmost” and “east” areas registering the highest increases (112.6% and

123.3% respectively).

- Employment has fallen among men. Among women, however, it has risen significantly, and considerably fewer women are to be found in the “other” category, which includes housewives and “non-working” mothers.
- Perhaps the most significant change to be noted relates to car ownership. The number of households *without* a car plummeted in all areas but “east”, where it rose by 0.9%. 2001 census figures also give information about households with more than one car or van. This is becoming widespread in all wards, the area with the highest statistics being “south-east” with 41.8% of households owning more than one car or van. Lowest figures are to be found in the “west-central” group, with 18.3% of households owning more than one car or van. Interestingly, this group contains the one ward where car ownership has remained much lower than in other wards over the last 20 years: Fairfield. Figures for this ward are shown in a different hue in the relevant graphs in Appendix C.

LOCAL BUSINESSES’ VIEWS OF DISTRICT CENTRES

- 4.16 As part of this review, twenty-one retailers working in district centres were interviewed on their views regarding current business confidence, and the opportunities and challenges they faced.
- 4.17 Respondents from seven establishments stated that the business climate was good or very good, five said it was “OK”, and nine said it was bad or very bad.
- 4.18 The problems highlighted by traders could be classified as follows:
- Parking issues (23 mentions), including problems such as the introduction of red routes in shopping areas and problems with goods deliveries
 - Environmental Issues (16 mentions)
 - Competition (15 mentions)
 - Problems with the range of shops and services (14 mentions)
 - Safety (10 mentions)
- 4.19 Safety issues were felt most acutely in Thornton Heath (several cases of burglary and shoplifting were mentioned), South Norwood and Coulsdon. Traders working in other centres stated that safety was not really an issue. Two (one in Norbury, one in Coulsdon) stated that they had received information about the Croydon Radio Against Crime (CRAC) radio communication system which helps protect retailers against crime, but had not progressed onto becoming members. One retailer stated that the business did not have the financial resources to become a member of this network.
- 4.20 Environmental issues were very varied, with no one clear theme emerging except in Thornton Heath and South Norwood, where traders complained about the “litter louts” and the run down appearance of these centres. However, there was a widespread view that cleansing services had improved recently.
- 4.21 Of the seven establishments which said that business was good or very good, two had a local monopoly (a hi-fi shop and a curtain shop, both of which offer a range of related services), two have a café / restaurant (one in Purley, one in Thornton Heath), and the other three (a chemist, a butcher and a pet shop) felt they had good products and good service.

- 4.22 Many mentioned that better marketing and advertising were needed, and acknowledged the growing importance of the Internet in commerce. However, they admitted that they had not got round to assessing its importance or potential for them, or to obtaining any training or information on how to benefit from this resource, thus highlighting an important business support need.
- 4.23 As regards possible action to increase effective usage of the Internet in district centre businesses, agencies taking on such a task would need to provide training and advice suited to the skills and financial resources of the businesses concerned, and might consider bringing together businesses with small local businesses - including social enterprises - offering low-cost packages to set up Internet web pages. "Bizcomm", the small business exhibition held by the Croydon Chamber of Commerce on 18th March 2005, demonstrated that some local businesses can offer very simple and affordable packages to businesses with little experience in this field.
- 4.24 Fifteen retailers stated that they were, or had been involved in some form of networking, but five stated that these were largely a waste of time and that meetings were "talking shops". However, informal networking continues to take place, and one shop stated that it had formed an informal business partnership with two other local shops for mutual benefit.

LOCAL BUSINESSES AND THE BUSINESS RATE

- 4.25 One of the challenges mentioned by local businesses was the payment of business rates, which have experienced regular rises during the last fifteen years, both through yearly increments and rateable value revaluations.
- 4.26 Since 1990, business rate charges have been set by and paid to central government, but collected by local government on its behalf - a fact which is not very widely understood among small businesses.
- 4.27 The yearly business rate charge is calculated by multiplying the business's rateable value by a rate multiplier (which is often referred to as the uniform business rate or UBR) or 'poundage' which the Government sets annually for the whole of England.
- 4.28 Rateable values themselves are revalued every five years - 2000 and 2005 being the most recent occasions - to ensure that rateable values are kept in line with market conditions. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has estimated that the rateable values of shops will be going up by 26% on average in London as a result of this year's revaluation, as opposed to 25% on average in England. Revaluations are usually accompanied by transition schemes to lessen the effects of sudden and significant rises in rates bills.
- 4.29 The table on page 22 shows business rate charges for small commercial properties with a rateable value of £10,000 and £15,000 (the maximum rateable values for small businesses outside, and inside Greater London respectively).

FINANCIAL YEAR	NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC MULTIPLIER	SMALL PROPERTY MULTIPLIER *	YEARLY BILL FOR RATEABLE VALUE OF £10,000	YEARLY BILL FOR RATEABLE VALUE OF £15,000
1990/1991	0.348		3480	5220
1991/ 1992	0.386		3860	5790
1992/ 1993	0.402		4020	6030

1993/ 1994	0.416		4160	6240
1994/ 1995	0.423		4230	6345
1995/ 1996	0.432		4320	6480
1996/ 1997	0.449		4490	6735
1997/ 1998	0.458	0.449	4490	6735
1998/ 1999	0.474	0.465	4650	6975
1999/2000	0.489	0.480	4800	7200
2000/2001	0.416		4160	6240
2001/2002	0.430		4300	6450
2002/2003	0.437		4370	6555
2003/2004	0.444		4440	6660
2004/2005	0.456		4560	6840

Business rate charges for small commercial properties
with a rateable value of £10,000 and £15,000

* Small Property Relief was introduced with effect from 1st April 1997 in the form of a small property multiplier. This measure applied to properties outside Greater London whose Rateable Value shown in the 1995 Rating List was less than £10,000 (less than £15,000 in Greater London). This relief was not extended beyond the 1999/2000 rate year.

Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme

- 4.30 The government has recognised that centralised business rates have weakened the link between local business and the local authority, to the detriment of partnership working for economic growth, and introduced a scheme providing local authorities with financial rewards for promoting local business growth, the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme (LABGI).
- 4.31 Up to 1st April 2005, business rates revenues were collected by local authorities and passed into a central pool. Revenues were then re-distributed on a per capita basis.
- 4.32 Under LABGI, local authorities will now receive a proportion of their growth in business rates, above a predetermined floor and below a ceiling setting the maximum reward amount. The floor is derived from individual local authority's historic growth levels and is adjusted by a national adjustment factor, which allows the Government to maintain the incentive of the scheme by setting realistic and achievable goals for business growth.
- 4.33 If the local authority succeeds in increasing business growth with effect from this financial year, it stands to retain a share of the revenues created, to spend on local priorities.
- 4.34 As little information can be gauged about the scheme's possible impact at this early stage, scrutiny of its progress will need to be scheduled for a later date to examine the processes put in place to maximise business growth locally, and to assess its effect on business vitality in district centres as well as the centre of Croydon (see recommendation 7).

STATISTICS RELATING TO BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN DISTRICT CENTRES

- 4.35 Appendix D provides an outline of business activity in district centres statistics through the following figures, drawn from "health check documents" provided by the Planning and Transportation Department to the Greater London Authority (GLA), and from surveys carried out by Croydon Council in 2002 and 2004:

- Retail units and retail surface area in each district centre
- Supermarkets
- Office space
- Entertainment
- Eating and drinking establishments
- Void premises

4.36 Of particular interest to Members of the working group were the number of void premises, and of eating and drinking establishments pointing to the growth of the night-time economy.

4.37 Void premises, which are often unsightly, are both a sign of decline as well as a visual trigger for further decline, and therefore an important challenge to address. Discussion with planning officers and town centre managers highlighted the following range of solutions to address this issue, in addition to indirect approaches such as safety measures, environmental improvements, etc.:

- The Croydon Plan states that ‘within Shopping Parades, changes of use between Shopping Area Uses (shops, banking and financial services, and catering establishments) will be permitted so long as the retail function and vitality are not undermined and other Shopping Area Uses e.g. banking and financial services, and catering establishments, are not concentrated so as to detract from the established retail character of the parade’. Such flexibility within the planning system can enable a district centre to adapt to new needs and trends.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance has been produced to provide advice to developers converting void shops into residential property in order to make good use of land, although Members of the working party expressed their concerns about the poor quality of some such conversions in Portland Road, South Norwood.
- The town centre manager for Upper Norwood outlined work done with landowners (identifying these if necessary through the Land Registry website) to make the best possible use of such premises and adapt rents to local demand.
- The town centre manager for Upper Norwood has also worked with local landowners to encourage a better use of first floor space, as either accommodation or office space, to make effective use of available premises, and increase local footfall and demand for local goods and services.
- Businesses in South Norwood are exploring the option of knocking two or more shops together to form larger premises to adapt to current retailing trends.
- Members, retailers and officers agree that business vitality and viability will grow out of effective marketing of the centre to developers and businesses, as well as from the type of shops available in a district centre, giving it a unique and attractive image.
- Members also stressed the importance of effective signage in making visitors aware of the range of shops in a small centre. This was echoed by Purley traders, who are keen to introduce signage near the Tesco supermarket, seen as an “anchor” store attracting a large number of shoppers, to encourage them to make use of other shops and services in the centre.

- 4.38 The centres which had the highest number of void premises in 2004 were Norbury and South Norwood (27 empty premises in each centre), while New Addington was the only centre to have no void premises at all.
- 4.39 The other issue discussed by Members of the working group was the growth of the night-time economy and its strengths and weaknesses. Members welcomed this new trend and the vitality it can bring to local centres, as shown by Upper Norwood which offers a wide range of restaurants with a distinctive character.
- 4.40 However, concerns were expressed about the large number of take-away establishments in district centres (about a quarter of all catering establishments), which tends to contribute significantly to local litter and untidiness, and is not seen as a positive contribution to the image and attractiveness of a centre.
- 4.41 In order to encourage and facilitate development which would enhance the image of a centre, Members explored the possibility of introducing planning regulations which would limit the number of take-away premises in a centre, in order to ease the management of environmental services and enable Croydon's planning system to resist the proliferation of establishments which are seen to harm the appearance and attractiveness of a centre to visitors, and thus to have an adverse effect on future business vitality in the area.
- 4.42 In contrast with the growing range of take-away premises, Members expressed concerns regarding the closure of pubs in district centres, which may be due to the significant growth in drinking establishments in Croydon town centre in recent years.
- 4.43 While the figures in Appendix D may not be clearly indicative of such a trend, Members taking part in visits to Addiscombe and Selsdon noted the closure of the Black Horse in Addiscombe and the Stag in Selsdon, both of which have now been knocked down. Other landmark pubs which are closed include the Cunningham in New Addington (which is situated a little outside the district centre), the Red Lion in Coulsdon, and the Leslie Arms in Addiscombe. The large amount of land adjoining the building itself and the declining number of customers have made such establishments vulnerable to redevelopment.
- 4.44 Traditional pubs, and the buildings in which they are situated, are often important landmarks in a district centre and contribute positively to the distinctive image of the centre. Members are keen to preserve such buildings, which constitute an element of the local heritage. While they acknowledge the need for a business to be financially viable, they are keen to preserve important and valued elements of Croydon's environment while welcoming their conversion to other uses.
- 4.45 As English Heritage have stringent rules for classifying buildings of historical interest, which would *not* cover the majority of local pubs, the Black Horse in Addiscombe being one such example, they wish to recommend the introduction of planning regulations through the UDP process which would protect such buildings in future.

WHAT DRAWS VISITORS TO DISTRICT CENTRES?

- 4.46 To sum up, research conducted in the course of this review suggests that the following shops and services constitute the most important attractions to district centres, thus showing how local "needs" have evolved away from the range of products high streets used to offer a generation ago, and how the design of various outlets has developed in

the intervening years:

- **Supermarkets:** this was the key need of residents consulted in the course of this review. 44% of visitors to Purley surveyed in preparation for the Purley Town Centre Regeneration Strategy stated that the main reason for coming to Purley was to do their shopping in Tesco. A trader in Sanderstead stated that while there has been an increase of visitors to his district centre to shop at Waitrose, very few make use of the other shops in the district centre. In contrast, however, neighbourhood care associations reported that many visitors with mobility problems preferred smaller food shops, which were less threatening and bewildering.
- **Specialist shops:** Interviews with specialist shops in the context of this review showed that their business confidence was high. Those retailers interviewed not only had a specialist product to offer (curtains, blinds, television satellites) but also provided installation services. In addition, one company had its own website, through which it could advertise and offer detailed information to customers who might not normally be familiar with the district centre where it was situated.
- **The night-time economy:** while Croydon town centre seems to attract a large number of visitors to pubs, wine bars and night-clubs, some district centres have developed a large range of restaurants and take-aways which keep district centres busy in the evening while they might be far quieter during the day, e.g. Upper Norwood.
- **Leisure centres:** retailers from New Addington and Thornton Heath felt that they benefited from local leisure centres, whose visitors also made use of neighbouring shops and restaurants
- **Local services:** retailers and neighbourhood care associations both mentioned visitors to district centres combined visits to local council offices, G.P. surgeries, opticians or dentists with shopping
- **Local attractions such as Christmas lights and festivals**
Many retailers reported relatively slack business in Christmas 2004 and put this down to the lack of Christmas lights. New Addington and Upper Norwood, however, did have Christmas lights, the former centre also held a pre-Christmas festival, and both reported buoyant business.
- **“Tourism”, e.g. sports tourism and the night-time economy**
Discussion with local retailers and town centre managers highlighted the popularity of the above two attractions. Potential for tourism may be extended further if further investment is put into the environmental attractiveness of Croydon’s district centres, thus making the environment itself a reason to visit a district centre. Many district centres comprise Conservation Areas, e.g. South Norwood and Church Road, Upper Norwood, as well as Local Areas of Special Character, e.g. Station Approach, Coulsdon Town Centre, 206-272 Royal Parade, London Road, Broad Green Local Centre, and Brighton Road, Purley Town Centre.
However, current shop frontages and untidy streets deter from the attractive features of these areas, which were not mentioned by any retailers questioned

4.47 A number of services which once drew visitors to district centres are disappearing, or in decline:

- 14 out of 52 post offices in Croydon have recently closed down in this borough under the Post Office Network Reinvention Programme covering urban areas in England, despite local resistance and appeals against these closures
- As regards the night-time economy, the decline of the local pub, discussed above, has been accompanied by the disappearance of the local cinema (e.g. the Purley Astoria) in favour of large multiplex facilities.

4.48 It is widely felt by Members, town centre managers and retailers that district centres need better advertising and marketing to draw more visitors. Tools for this task include more effective signage (to shops, parking and key services), better networking and informal promotion to prospective developers and customers, and better use of information technology. Increasing numbers of district centres in the south of London are developing their own website to attract more visitors and business, one of these being Purley. As mentioned above, some shops have developed their own website, but many retailers feel that they do not have the means or the expertise to do so. Yet a few simple pages, developed at a low cost by a local designer or by a social enterprise, may be within their means, if the district centre itself does not yet have a website to advertise their firm.

WHAT DETERS VISITORS FROM LOCAL CENTRES?

◆ Convenience and accessibility

- 4.49 The main attraction of a district centre is its proximity, and easy access to key shops and services. Hurdles to this main consideration, added to the availability of alternatives such as edge of centre, or out of centre stores with free and easily found parking, can put a heavy strain on the district centre's business vitality.
- 4.50 One hurdle to access is traffic congestion, a concern in many centres e.g. Thornton Heath, Purley and Coulsdon and Selsdon. Another is parking. This is a key concern for businesses, some of which feel that their ability to attract customers is severely hampered by red routes, long lines of railings preventing access, and insufficient parking. Lack of parking was a key concern to shoppers in centres such as Purley, where 66% of surveyed visitors felt that parking facilities were very poor. Interestingly, while pricing was mentioned as a deterrent by a few retailers, many more were concerned about lack of availability and convenience.
- 4.51 Members acknowledged the overall need to reduce traffic congestion, and, whenever possible, to encourage the take up of alternative forms of transport, including walking and cycling to one's district centre in view of the generally short distance from residents' homes to local shops (usually no more than 2 miles). In particular, they have welcomed initiatives such as the Croydon Society's detailed contributions to recent consultation on bus routes in Forestdale to highlight the needs of local residents and businesses.
- 4.52 However, they have also acknowledged the need for acceptable levels of parking available throughout the day and the evening in district centres to maintain the business vitality of the area, and the fact that lack of parking does not discourage the use of the car, but merely displaces it, and sometimes increases the length of journeys from district centres to more distant shopping centres e.g. Purley Way.

- 4.53 Members of the working party suggested that parking could be improved in district centres by:
- ensuring that the use of pricing policies including controlled parking zones and short-term parking bays facilitate good-value short term parking, which enabled shoppers to park long enough to use a few shops in the locality, while protecting local residents' parking space in the evening
 - making efficient use of signage to highlight parking opportunities, some of which are underused as they are little known to visitors
 - identifying local opportunities for creating new parking places where necessary in co-operation with the Planning and Transportation Department and local retailers
- 4.54 Discussion with Neighbourhood Care Associations also highlighted access difficulties for less mobile visitors and it was felt that a number of centres did not cater enough for walkers, particularly less mobile ones.

◆ **An Insufficient range of good shops**

- 4.55 A number of retailers felt that their centre did not have a wide enough range of shops, or offer good enough quality, to warrant a journey to their district centre. A similar view was expressed by many shoppers interviewed in Purley, who stated that the centre needed better quality shops and that they travelled to other centres for their better range and better quality of shops. However, a visit to this centre by the working party showed that this trend is currently being reversed and that a number of new shops have recently opened in the centre, an observation which is backed up by falling void figures (25 void units in 2002, 13 in 2004).
- 4.56 Members of the working party concur that variety is an important element of a centre's competitiveness, and were very interested in the business networking done by town centre partnerships in Wandsworth to attract "the right kind of shops" to local centres, to give them an interesting and attractive retail character.

◆ **An unattractive environment**

- 4.57 While residents, retailers and local representatives of district centres commented on the run down and untidy aspect of many district centres, no clear evidence was obtained in this review to demonstrate that an attractive environment will of itself improve the fortunes of a district centre. However, the "Smaller Towns Report" produced by the British Council of Shopping Centres (BCSC) in 2004 asserts that there is considerable evidence that the physical environment of a town centre and its image or perception by users and investors determines to a large extent its success as a retail destination. Certainly, if a local environment is attractive, it will become a "local product" attracting visitors in its own right, and is likely to improve footfall and business vitality.
- 4.58 The Croydon Society, which has been taking an active part in local consultation e.g. in local transport developments and in the Purley and Coulsdon regeneration strategies, as well as in this review, has echoed the need for an attractive environment and expressed particular concerns about the public realm of district centres. They made suggestions for a range of improvements to make district centres more attractive and user-friendly, e.g. tree planting, seats, and wide pavements suitable for walkers, children's buggies, wheelchairs and motorised pavement vehicles. Their input will be particularly useful when the Council draws up its Public Realm strategy in 2005-2006.

CONCLUSIONS

- 4.59 This section outlines some of the major changes which have affected district centres during the last twenty years, which have had a significant impact on their local economy.
- 4.60 Significant demographic changes, increase in car usage which easily takes drivers to shopping centres of their choice, changes in eating habits and an increasing reliance on ready prepared meals, a greater demand for services fuelled partly by increased leisure time and disposable income, the growth of very large stores in and out of town which offer a wide range of goods and easy parking, have all presented a challenge to small shops in district centres.
- 4.61 Members have acknowledged the need for centres to evolve with these new developments, and to take up new opportunities as they arise. These cannot be predicted, as it takes an astute business person to identify these, and to act on them.
- 4.62 However, a number of circumstances are needed to maximise these opportunities: convenience, accessibility, and a good range of attractions making the journey worthwhile, including a pleasant environment.
- 4.63 Section 5 explores a holistic approach to the multiple issues which affect business vitality in district centres, in the shape of town centre management.
- 4.64 However, Members also wish to make two recommendations relating to planning issues in district centres, which aim to maximise the preservation of attractive local buildings and to minimise the growth of premises which are responsible for increased litter and dirt in local streets and can harm the image of district centres, with a view to attracting not only a wider range of visitors, but also new businesses and developers.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the review of the Croydon Plan should consider the introduction of regulations and criteria to protect buildings which originally served as pubs in district centres, to preserve important local landmarks and the architectural character of the area while encouraging new uses when the pub is no longer viable

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the review of the Croydon Plan should bring in regulations limiting the maximum number of take away shops within a certain area, in order to minimise the likelihood of local environmental damage and harm to the district centre concerned

5 TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Council, businesses and users all recognise that Croydon's district centres have a wide range of needs, which require the support of several different agencies, officers, policies and procedures in order to be addressed.
- 5.2 These include:

- The need to react effectively to challenges such as competition from out-of-centre shopping and new shopping trends e.g. internet shopping
- The need to galvanise a wide range of stakeholders to implement projects e.g. the regeneration of rundown locations
- The need to develop an attractive and distinctive “image” to attract new visitors and investors
- The need to develop and maintain a balanced and attractive range of shops and services in order to attract a critical mass of visitors
- The need for services to address the needs of a centre e.g. safety and cleanliness, effectively

- 5.3 For users and local businesses to achieve the above, and for service providers to respond effectively to the needs of a centre, it makes sense for its stakeholders to act together and to manage local improvements in a systematic way.
- 5.4 While a number of avenues for improvement are known to stakeholders, and a range of strategies have been drawn up to express a vision for various local centres (see paragraphs 7.1-7.4), a key concern is the need to co-ordinate the implementation of such improvements and to communicate effectively with local residents and businesses to address a wide range of local concerns and opportunities.
- 5.5 These complex needs have underpinned the recent development of systematic “town centre management” in the face of significant challenges to the vitality of towns originating from changing business trends, evolving shopping habits and new national planning policies.
- 5.6 Members of the working party were keen to explore these new developments. To this end, they held discussions with town centre managers from Upper Norwood and Beckenham, discussed Purley’s work in the area of town centre management, and visited the London Borough of Wandsworth, and the Tooting and Balham centres in particular, to familiarise themselves with town centre management in this borough. The findings below are the outcome of this research.

MODELS OF TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

- 5.7 At its best, town centre management brings together the vision and energy of a local champion, the decision-making of a steering group of key local stakeholders backed by the business sector, the support of people living and working in the centre, and the expertise and input of local service-providers.
- 5.8 Town centre management was originally developed in larger centres - indeed Croydon town centre has had a manager for some years - but is now spreading to smaller centres too - e.g. Upper Norwood district centre in this borough.
- 5.9 Discussion with a wide range of agencies operating in Greater London in the course of this review shows that there exists a range of models of town centre management, which reflect different local needs and resources. The main difference between these models lies in the agency or individual taking the lead on this work.

1. In a number of cases, an individual with a commitment to his/her centre has taken on a centre manager role, and has spearheaded a range of initiatives, with varying degrees of help from the local community.

While such initiatives have been very beneficial to the communities concerned, this model can only be sustained as long as the enthusiasm and availability of the individual concerned for this work. Another potential weakness of this approach is the fact that the information and skills accumulated by the individual may not always be communicated to other members of the community, who would therefore find it difficult to follow up the work of their predecessor.

2. A model similar to the above has been adopted by traders' estates, e.g. the New Addington Trading Estate (NATE), which has been formed to bring about significant improvements on the estate, including much improved cleansing and the introduction of CCTV, and much closer co-operation between the organisations working on the estate. Set up with the support of traders' organisations such as SOLOMAN, such associations have developed on the basis of a clear set of shared local priorities, and are run with a very limited amount of administration.
3. A number of councils, e.g. Croydon, Wandsworth and Bromley, have started employing "district centre managers" as part of their strategy to regenerate smaller centres. Their work has both a strategic and a day-to-day problem-solving element, but is based mainly on an agreed business or action plan, drawn up and agreed by the members of a partnership or steering committee, to which the town centre manager reports.

The structure of the town centre management team varies according to the identity and number of the main funder(s), and the number of district centres to be managed. One emerging issue is the balance of resource allocation between support for the manager of the main town centre in a borough, and provision for smaller centres within the borough, as these different types of centres fulfil different but essential roles in the economy of a borough. Some boroughs such as Wandsworth have allocated a town centre manager to each of their district centres. With more limited resources, a borough may choose to give one manager the responsibility of managing two or three district centres.

4. In Enfield, on the other hand, town centre management operates in a more autonomous fashion. Ten local business associations, representing ten different centres, are run by their members independently from the Council. These receive support from the Enfield Business and Retailers Association. Funded mainly by the Council, this organisation provides support to the business associations, in the shape of information on Council processes, initiatives such as Christmas illuminations and hanging flower baskets, as well as administrative and marketing support. The success of these associations has been based on the leadership and effectiveness of the Chair of these organisations, which can galvanise a district centre into action and encourage retailers to contribute resources for local initiatives.

ACHIEVEMENTS OBSERVED

- 5.10 The following achievements were highlighted at the Working Group's meeting with Town Centre Managers for Upper Norwood and Beckenham, and in subsequent discussions:

- **Farmers' Markets**
The town centre manager for Upper Norwood has been working with experienced market managers to bring a farmers' market to Crystal Palace, which is already established in Dulwich and Beckenham. It will be held in Crystal Palace Park, in the vicinity of the bus station, with a view to offering a distinctive shopping experience, which can adapt in size and type to new trends and fashions
- **Local Guides**
The town centre manager for Upper Norwood is working with local businesses to produce a local restaurant guide for the district centre to market its vibrant night-time economy effectively
- **Maps**
Five street plans of Crystal Palace are due to be displayed in key parts of the district centre, and to generate income both for the centre and for the company producing the maps through sponsorship and increased usage of local shops
- **Christmas lights**
In December 2004, the town centre manager for Upper Norwood worked with local businesses and the Council's lighting department to raise funding and obtain low cost Christmas lighting for Crystal Palace
- **Void shops**
Crystal Palace and Beckenham have witnessed a decrease in void shops through a variety of initiatives and contact with local land owners, who can be identified through the Land Registry website
- **Parking**
Parking provision improved in Beckenham after the TCM and Business Association came together to report local problems with one voice and lobby for improvements
- **Partnership working**
Town Centre Managers have worked to improve local business by encouraging the formation of informal partnerships between shops (e.g. a florist's and a funeral parlour)
- **Local business confidence**
Town Centre Management has generated a "feel-good-factor" due to the fact that retailers have easier access to the Council, and to advice and information on its policies and procedures.

5.11 The following initiatives and successes were highlighted during the Working Group's visit to Wandsworth:

- Town Centre Managers for Balham and Tooting have been actively engaged in progressing regeneration projects for fairly small areas which might not constitute a high priority for Planning Departments but can make a significant difference to the attractiveness of a small centre, e.g. the outdoor market area in Hildreth Street, Balham and gating systems in Tooting to curb anti-social behaviour in back alleys
- Town Centre Management makes a good point of contact for starting off various local initiatives giving character to district centres, such as environmental improvements involving a local artist and local schools, funded by Channel 4 television, and a literary festival in Clapham, established as a joint venture between the local town centre manager and Otakar Book Shop

- Town Centre Managers and their steering committees take an active role in marketing their centre, through regular networking as well as through more systematic means e.g. newsletters, web pages, etc.
- Town Centre Management in Wandsworth takes an active part in attracting specific types of businesses to an area to give it a distinctive character. In Putney, in particular, work is being done to attract boutiques which would help the centre to compete more effectively against its competitors, namely shopping areas such as Chelsea and the West End, and some centres have been partly revived through the attraction of key businesses, e.g. the establishment of a Waitrose supermarket in Wandsworth*.

CHALLENGES OF TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

5.12 However, discussion with various officers, complemented by desk research, highlighted the fact that town centre management is not a panacea, and can be a difficult challenge.

5.13 An LDA funded study led by Wandsworth Council involving 13 district centres in South London, including 9 with a Town Centre Manager, produced the following observations on existing practice:

- In some cases, there is no partnership or constitution
- There is no consistent budget formula
- Too much time in certain cases is spent finding funding. If budgets and other resources are limited, this leaves TCM very little power to do anything
- Some business plans are not created in partnership with key local stakeholders. In some cases, they are totally driven by the TCM
- There can be a sense of isolation with lack of credibility amongst certain departments within the local authority and limited private sector support
- If the TCM is not appointed at a sufficient grade, or does not have the necessary experience or skills, he or she may lack the necessary “clout” to have an impact on council officers and local retailers alike

*Other areas have also shown that it is possible to attract a particular type of retail to reduce “retail leakage” of customers to other shopping centres. In Rugby, for instance, the catchment is very affluent, but residents tended to shop elsewhere because the town did not offer a critical mass of fashion and lifestyle shops. The council conducted research to identify what customers felt was missing from the town centre and developed a strategy to create a new shopping experience targeted at these requirements. However, the council wanted to avoid building “just another clone town” and succeeded in attracting over 20 new independent retailers to the town centre. New shops are reportedly performing very well, and “retail leakage” has fallen by 20%.

- Engagement and contribution from the local management can be weak due to lack of experience, lack of understanding and the need to be seen to be prioritising their day job

- Local Authority bureaucracy in planning, administration, consultation, committee work, can create difficulties in making things happen or accessing funds
- There is no standard measurement for the success or failure of each location studied in the Wandsworth study, or the success of the TCM.

5.14 Additional challenges raised by town centre managers in discussions with the Working Group were the need for them to be included in key council decision-making processes, and to work with departments to improve consistency in service provision and enforcement in district centres, e.g. the enforcement of planning regulations relating to the use of pavement space to display goods.

5.15 The recommendations the study makes to maximise the effectiveness of town centre management include the following:

- From the outset, an atmosphere of cohesion, support and full commitment must be agreed between representatives of both the public and private sectors establishing a town centre management initiative. It is no good one side “going it alone”.
- Each partnership must have an agreed constitution to ensure the framework in which the initiative exists, functions and achieves the most effective and efficient management performance (this need not be an onerous task as model constitutions exist which new organisations can adapt to suit their own requirements).
- Town Centre Management must reward the role of a TCM with salaries and packages commensurate with the changing face and multiplicity of the duties the post involves. If not, the required credibility and accountability required will never be achieved
- Business and action plans must be properly structured, focused and costed and measurable to ensure that funding is effectively spent and town centre managers are directly accountable.
- Funding must be in place before an initiative commences. A partnership should be agreed, then a Town Centre Manager appointed

5.16 Key Performance Indicators which should be used to assess the performance of a district centre and its TCM should be kept simple and manageable, with easily collated, existing measures used as benchmarks. The Wandsworth report recommends that these should be:

- Pedestrian footfall
- Business performance
- Numbers of void shops
- Car park usage
- crime statistics

RESOURCE ISSUES

- 5.17 Discussions with several officers have highlighted the fact that town centre management requires a minimum range of resources if it is to have any positive impact on a district centre.
- 5.18 One key “resource” is a common vision and the motivation of a partnership and a town centre manager to work together to achieve certain objectives. However, other more tangible resources are also required.
- 5.19 Town centre management partnerships require good leadership, networking, troubleshooting and mediating skills, and some idea of good practice to be sustainable. Discussion with officers has shown that a number of agencies can support to develop these skills in addition to the town centre manager. The Association of Town Centre Managers (ATCM) provides useful literature on good practice and can provide adhoc advice. Local associations such the Rotary Club provide opportunities for informal networking and support, and organisations such as Soloman can provide significant support to set up and nurture estate associations in their first year, although additional funding would have to be made available to use this service.
- 5.20 Local initiatives in district centre business plans can be, and have been funded through various sources of funding, including Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and section 106 contributions, providing they comply with the requirements of the said funding stream.
- 5.21 Section 106 contributions for developments in district centres may be quite small, but can have a significant effect. For instance, they can fund improvements such as hanging baskets along a high street, representing a relatively small cost, but a major visual impact. Town Centre Managers do therefore welcome the effective collection of section 106 contributions in connection with district centre planning applications, however small, to maximise its resources and its ability to maintain an attractive appearance.
- 5.22 A “well connected” centre may identify a wide range of miscellaneous resources and opportunities e.g. the environmental improvements brought about by a Channel 4 initiative in Tooting and the literary festival in Clapham. If a centre is particularly confident about its future vitality and prosperity, it will invest in itself - this is seen in Tooting, where local businesses spend a great deal of money on the fabric of their district centre.
- 5.23 However, a district centre partnership needs a stable and sufficient medium term budget to implement its key goals, and many town centre managers find that lack of long term funding obliges them to spend a great deal of time identifying and applying for miscellaneous pockets of funding.
- 5.24 One funding option for the future is the introduction of legislation enabling businesses to set up Business Improvement Districts (BIDS). A BID is a local mechanism whereby affected non-domestic ratepayers pay an extra 1% levy on top of the annual business rate, usually for a period of 5 years. This extra levy is ring-fenced to be spent at the discretion of the BID Board, or an approved BID Business Plan of local initiatives to improve the environment and / or services within a precisely defined geographical area (the BID area).
- 5.25 Some interest for creating a BID has been expressed by businesses in Croydon town centre, Purley town centre, and some traders’ estates.

- 5.26 However, there is also some resistance to BIDS, which are seen by some businesses as an additional tax, although participating businesses would have full rights over what to spend monies on. A number of small businesses, which make up the majority in district centres, have expressed particular opposition to these, possibly because their profit margins can be far slimmer than those of retail chains which operate in large town centres. Certainly, a large number of businesses consulted through the Wandsworth study of thirteen centres in South London expressed opposition or lack of interest in this new initiative.
- 5.27 As town centre management is still a relatively new development, and because external resources can be difficult to obtain, town centre management is still largely funded by councils. For example, of the thirteen centres examined in the Wandsworth study, nine have a town centre manager employed and paid by the Council, and only one is employed by its partnership (Wimbledon Partnership). As it matures and businesses grow increasingly confident in its effectiveness, it is possible that more local funding or sponsorship may be made available from the private sector.
- 5.28 Section 6 of this review addresses a range of brand-new initiatives offering new opportunities for encouraging business growth, which may also provide resources to support the establishment of town centre management in district centres.

CONCLUSIONS

- 5.29 The findings of this review point to the many needs for, and advantages of successful partnership working in district centres, which can be organised systematically through town centre management. Where this has been shown to work well, e.g. in Upper Norwood and various centres in Wandsworth, it has led both to a range of improvements, and to a much improved business “feel good factor” in district centres.
- 5.30 In addition, town centre management provides opportunities to network with other local businesses and retail networks further afield, to shape the business offer of a specific centre, and attract appropriate businesses to a particular centre, as has been done effectively in Wandsworth and Rugby.
- 5.31 However, town centre management has been shown to be a challenge to set up and to resource, and can only lead to success if it benefits from well supported leadership, effective skills and sufficient resources to implement key improvements required in a centre. There are several models in existence and it is important to select one which fits in well with the priorities and resources of both local businesses and council departments.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That the Council should evaluate the different models of town centre management outlined in this review, and introduce the model of town management which it feels is most appropriate to the needs and resources of the borough, in order to maximise the vitality of district centres

RECOMMENDATION 6

That development work in district centres should include networking with local businesses and appropriate small developers and attract a wide range of good quality shops of an appropriate size into district centres to improve their distinct image and improve their business vitality

6 FORTHCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTRICT CENTRES

- 6.1 This section provides an outline of new developments which present important opportunities and resources for local councils to encourage local economies. This review has already alluded to the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme (LABGI), which allows councils to retain a share of the business rate revenues to spend on local priorities, if they succeed in increasing business growth.
- 6.2 This section outlines the following developments:
- Local Development Frameworks
 - Local Implementation Plans
 - The City Growth initiative
 - The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
 - The work of the New Economics Foundation on retaining business income in the local economy

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

- 6.3 New planning legislation, which changes the way development plans are prepared, came into force last year. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 received Royal Assent on 13 May 2004; Parts 1 and 2, covering regional and local planning, came into force on 28 September 2004.
- 6.4 A portfolio of documents called the *Local Development Framework* will replace local plans, and *Regional Spatial Strategies* will replace Regional Planning Guidance. The Local Development Framework comprises a set of *local development documents*, which may be *development plan documents* or *supplementary planning documents*.
- 6.5 A *Statement of Community Involvement*, showing how local authorities intend to involve the public in preparing local development documents and in considering planning applications must also be published alongside the Local Development Framework.
- 6.6 The implementation of this legislation is still in its infancy nationwide. However, it is clear that it can provide the Council with opportunities to involve local communities in voicing and shaping priorities for their own locality far more effectively than previous planning frameworks such as the Unitary Development Plan and the current Croydon Plan.
- 6.7 This, however, will place the following responsibilities on the Planning and Transportation Department:
- To inform stakeholders of national policies which will set certain boundaries to local action planning
 - To mediate between conflicting interests within the community
 - To negotiate priorities which can be owned by all sectors of the community

LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

- 6.8 The Local Implementation Plan (LIP) is a statement required by the Mayor of London under the 1999 GLA Act, and sets out the Council's proposals for implementation of the Mayor's Transport Plan for London over the next five years - the period 2006/7 - 2009/10.
- 6.9 TfL guidance sets out the structure of the Local Implementation Plan document and the various topics to be addressed, in accordance with the objectives contained in the Mayor's Transport Plan for London.
- 6.10 Croydon's draft LIP is currently undergoing consultation before being sent in its final form to TfL. However, it will remain a live document aiming to respond to local needs and developments within TfL guidelines, and will be subject to an annual review.
- 6.11 Work on the LIP will take place alongside the preparation of the yearly Borough Spending Plan (BSP) setting out the Council's bid for transport funding, and it is hoped that this strategic approach will ease the process of bidding for transport funding in years to come.
- 6.12 Members sought reassurance regarding the provision of funding to district centres to develop transport infrastructure. While they were informed that £425,000 had been secured for environmental improvements in Coulsdon through the BSP, that further funding bids would be made for improvements in Purley and Coulsdon in the forthcoming year's BSP round, they were also advised that many previous bids for improvements in district centres had been unsuccessful, and that local priorities may conflict with the strategic objectives of TfL, thus possibly jeopardising the provision of funding for local schemes through the BSP.

THE CITY GROWTH INITIATIVE

- 6.13 City Growth (CG) is a new national initiative, taking a business-led approach to economic development, which focuses on the competitive advantages and economic potential of inner cities.
- 6.14 The aim of the initiative is to create a strategy to develop and realise the economic potential of the area, based on research evidence and tested by pilot projects where practical. Previous experience has shown that identifying and developing clusters of businesses leads to significant gains in economic activity and employment in the area. This project will aim to draft a strategy to support, develop and promote existing and future clusters in the area.
- 6.15 In the second phase of this national initiative, the Department of Trade and Industry have sponsored ten projects, three of which are in London. Each of the ten projects will deliver a strategy by March 2006. City Growth: **Heart of South London** is one of these projects.
- 6.16 This project, which involves Croydon, covers 19 wards across three boroughs and includes the district centres of Streatham, West Norwood, Norbury, Thornton Heath, South Norwood, Crystal Palace, Penge, Anerley and Beckenham. These small district centres are situated between the three major centres of Bromley, Croydon and Brixton.
- 6.17 This project has three main areas of activity:
 1. Research to establish the true business base and existing and possible clusters.

2. Evidence through research and pilot projects to establish how a strategy would be able to increase the economic activity and employment in the target business clusters.
3. Prepare a strategy for delivery outlining how the objectives can be achieved funded and success measured.

- 6.18 The project is managed and financial responsibility is exercised by South London Business Ltd (SLB). The project team at SLB will report to and will take advice and guidance from Croydon's Strategic Partnership Strategy Board.
- 6.19 The budget for this project is £250,000. This is to cover all areas of operations and includes secretariat, research pilot projects and delivery expenses. Funding for this budget will be through a grant from The London Development Agency.
- 6.20 Additional funding through grant, donations or 'in kind' may be available from private and public sector organisations. It will be for the project team and strategy board to decide if additional resources are required and from where they should be sourced.
- 6.21 The action plan currently being developed as part of this initiative is exploring a number of possible objectives, the importance of which has been highlighted in this Scrutiny Review of District Centres:
- To encourage a greater diversity of business sectors in our district centres
 - To develop a model for successful sustainable town centre management
 - To lobby for improvements to the existing transport system, and explore ways of achieving realistic parking provision

THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE GROWTH INITIATIVE

- 6.22 In order to foster a more dynamic enterprise culture in the most deprived areas of the UK, the Government is proposing to establish a Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) worth 50 million in 2006-2007, rising to £150 million per year by 2008-2009, subject to confirmation in the 2006 Spending Review.
- 6.23 The aim of the LEGI will be to provide flexible, devolved investment in the most deprived areas of England - determined by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas - to support locally developed and owned initiatives that pursue new or proven ways of stimulating economic activity and productivity through enterprise development. It is hoped that the local projects funded by the LEGI will boost local incomes and employment opportunities, building sustainable communities and helping to overcome decades of disadvantage and poor economic performance.
- 6.24 The LEGI will operate in two ways:
- First, by operating through three rounds of funding, allowing the more advanced to apply first and providing others with more time for development
 - Second, by pump-priming the development of local proposals during 2005-2006
- 6.25 The initiative acknowledges that ...
 "At the local level, local authorities have a key role to play in developing the economies of local areas - working with their regional development agencies (RDAs) - to pursue their well-being power to promote the economic vitality of localities, as provided for in the Local Government Act 2000."
- 6.26 Local areas will have to meet the basic eligibility criteria that they will have to be one of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas. The local authority should also consider the

enterprise potential of the area, as this will also be considered by the Government Offices when assessing applications for LEGI support.

- 6.27 At the time of writing, this initiative is undergoing a nationwide process of formal consultation, which will end on 8th June 2005. The Council will produce a formal response to the consultation document, and aims to prepare for the opportunities the initiative will offer by developing proposals to address the business needs of its two neighbourhood renewal areas, namely north-west Croydon and Waddon, and New Addington and Fieldway.
- 6.28 The LEGI itself will be launched during 2006-2007, to fit in with the broader timetable set by the ODPM Five Year Plan 'Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity'.

THE WORK OF THE NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

- 6.29 Founded in 1986, the New Economics Foundation (NEF) is an independent think-and-do tank which aims to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environment and social issues. Its work on fostering more economically sustainable communities was highlighted on a number of occasions in the course of this review. In particular, Members discussed work done on making the best possible use of monies which entered a local economy.
- 6.30 Particular concern was expressed regarding the fact that much of the money in local economies is spent on services or goods provided by a company which does not have a local presence, and so immediately leaves the area. For instance, money entering the economy through tourism or local retail can leak away through external contractors, distant day care and other services, or large retail chains. More expenditure on local products and services, on the other hand, could keep money circulating within a community, and support its economic vitality.
- 6.31 Members noted the claim by NEF that local authorities could increase the amount of money circulating in their area by 400% by fostering links with local suppliers. This was one of the conclusions of a year-long collaboration between the New Economics Foundation and Northumberland County Council, released on Monday 7th March 2005.
- 6.32 Northumberland's research found that local suppliers re-spend on average 76% of their income from local contracts in Northumberland, whereas suppliers from outside the country spent only 36% per cent in the area. This means that every £1 spent with a local supplier is worth £1.76 *to the local economy*, as opposed to only £0.36 if that money is spent by a supplier located outside the area. That makes £1 spent locally worth almost 400% more, without injecting any additional resources.
- 6.33 An antithesis of such a process is described in "Ghost-town Britain", a document produced by NEF on town centres in Britain, many of which have "cloned" high street offering very similar products and services and no longer have a distinctive personality and a special product to offer visitors. Interestingly, Members found that district centres, on the other hand, tend to have a higher number of independent shops and do not generally attract large numbers of chain stores to their high streets apart from supermarkets, a few branches of Woolworths and Boots.
- 6.34 While a flexible and varied economy, which may include branches of retail chains and some external suppliers, is the best way of addressing changing trends and needs, the above calculation shows the economic advantage of setting up some local supply

chains within a centre, which can also bring about such by-products as a better understanding of local needs, and improved partnership work between local businesses.

- 6.35 The Bizz Fizz initiative is another initiative spearheaded by NEF which may be useful to small businesses in district centres, particularly in the context of the LEGI government initiative. Created to enhance home-grown businesses in disadvantaged areas, it aims to provide:
- Intensive counselling/coaching to enhance the survival rate of businesses
 - An easily approachable counsellor/coach, located in the community, which boosts the take-up rate of business support.
- 6.36 Bizz Fizz also aims to facilitate the creation of useful networks, which may help foster a sustainable business culture within local centres.

CONCLUSION

- 6.37 The implementation of the above legislation and initiatives is still very much in its infancy nationwide, and officers are in the process of familiarising themselves with them and drawing up implementation plans. Detailed scrutiny of this work is therefore difficult to conduct at this stage, with the exception of the Local Implementation Plan, which is due to be examined by the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for a Clean and Green Croydon, and the Council's development of Local Development Frameworks and its Statement of Community Involvement which are scheduled to be examined in the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Working and Living in Croydon.
- 6.38 As the above developments will provide important opportunities for local stakeholders to participate in shaping the future of their locality and for various agencies to access funding for local initiatives, it is important that the Scrutiny function should monitor the Council's implementation of new legislation and initiatives, and adoption of good practice nationwide. In addition, as these developments focus on similar areas, it will be essential for council officers to gain an in-depth understanding of how this current range of new initiatives can best be used by the council and other stakeholders involved in local regeneration, by identifying organisational economies of scale, and ascertaining how these funding streams can best be used collectively.
- 6.39 The Members therefore recommend that the implementation of new developments be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme at appropriate times in 2005-2006.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That an examination of the Council's work on the following initiatives should be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2005-2006:

- City Growth
- The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
- The Local Authority Growth Incentive Scheme
- The work of the New Economics Foundation on supporting local economies

7 FULL LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the review of the Croydon Plan should include a reassessment of the development potential and status of district and local centres to enable them to attract increased interest from businesses and developers

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the review of the Croydon Plan should include a redefinition of the boundaries of South Norwood district centre to include part of Portland Road in view of its retail activity, to maximise opportunities for regeneration in the area

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the review of the Croydon Plan should consider the introduction of regulations and criteria to protect buildings which originally served as pubs in district centres, to preserve important local landmarks and the architectural character of the area while encouraging new uses when the pub is no longer viable

RECOMMENDATION 4

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8 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ken Trench, Purley Business Association

William Safferey (owner of Cape Café, Purley)

Norman Frost, Business Development Manager, Wandsworth Council

Audrey Helps, Town Centre Manager for Tooting

Nicola Tracey, Town Centre Manager for Balham

Neighbourhood Care Associations

Ian Andrews, Soloman

Paul Gist, Chair of New Addington Traders' Estate (NATE)

Respondents to the scrutiny survey of businesses' views regarding their district **APPENDIX A**

SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE FOR WORKING AND LIVING IN CROYDON
9th November, 2004

**Terms of Reference for a Review of
District Centres**

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Sub-Committee is asked to consider, comment on and agree the terms of reference of this review.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Working and Living in Croydon of 15th June 2004, Members agreed to conduct a Scrutiny Review of District Centres.
- 2.2 Working party Members met on Wednesday 14th July 2004 to determine the scope of the review. This report is based on the outcome of that meeting and sets out the proposed Terms of Reference.
- 2.3 As determined at the scoping meeting, this review aims to examine:
- Residents', traders', and service providers' definition of what a district centre is
 - the Council's implementation of policies and strategies underpinning service provision in district centres
 - external factors affecting the changing face of district centres such as the changing make-up and needs of the local population
 - How various district centres have adapted in response to changing demands from residents living locally or further afield, and the Council's role in enabling or supporting these processes
 - Successful district centres and factors underpinning their success

3 DETAIL

- 3.1 The London Borough of Croydon has a large number of urban centres in addition to Croydon Town Centre. These are evolving along different lines, as a result of a number of factors such as:
- changing trends in shopping habits e.g. a growing reliance on large outlets rather than small local shops
 - changes in services leading to the closure of small post offices and banks
 - evolving trends in leisure and catering
 - the impact of transport links to and from these centres
- 3.2 Some district centres have been able to embrace new trends and develop a vibrant local economy - an interesting example being the night-time economy of Crystal Palace. Others have found it difficult to detect new needs and adapt to these, and local

APPENDIX A

residents are abandoning increasingly depressed local centres for new destinations catering for new needs and fashions.

- 3.3 A number of national and local policies and strategies impact on the development of Croydon's District Centres. They include the following key documents:
- The Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 (PPG6) which was published in June 1996 and amended in September 2000, and Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), a draft update of this guidance published in late 2003
 - The London Plan, which provides planning and spatial development policies for centres through London in part 3d, "Enjoying London - Consumers in London" and provides a hierarchical description of different types of centres within Greater London
 - The Croydon Plan, which is to supersede Croydon's Unitary Development Plan in setting out the borough's planning strategy and criteria for approving planning applications
- 3.4 The Working Group will explore the impact of current policies on the life of district centres and how the Council can operate within these parameters to provide support to district centres and encourage sustainable development. In particular, the Working Group voiced a need to scrutinise Class uses and their effect on the development of district Centres. They also expressed an interest in exploring the pros and cons of establishing a detailed planning policy framework for community facilities, to give them some protection in a climate where land and property is much in demand for commercial development.
- 3.5 The Working Group acknowledged the need to understand the influence of external factors on the development of district centres, e.g., the changing dynamics of local and regional populations, the level of business rates charged, and the effect of neighbouring district centres, shopping centres, and leisure facilities on local demand.
- 3.6 Another issue which the Working Group hope to investigate is the management of relationships between agencies providing services in district centres, and service users, local residents' and traders' understanding of how to access services, and good practice in achieving a joined-up approach between different agencies operating in district centres. In particular, the Working Group will study the provision of services such as transport, parking, as well as cleansing and waste management and their impact on the image and development of local centres.

4 STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSULT

- 4.1 Stakeholders Members wish to consult in the course of this review include:
- Council service providers (e.g. the Economic and Strategy Development Unit, the Planning and Transportation Department, Environmental Services, etc)
 - Local trade associations
 - Purley Business Association
 - Shirley Business Association
 - Upper Norwood Business Association

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- Business Support Partners
- Croydon Chamber of Commerce
- Croydon Marketing and Development
- Local residents and service users

5 PROPOSED VISITS AND MEETINGS

5.1 Members are asked to approve the following programme of visits and meetings to observe good practice as well as challenges faced by various local centres:

- A visit to the South of the Borough, covering Purley, Coulsdon, Hamsey Green
- A visit to the North of the Borough, covering London Road and Upper Norwood
- A visit to Shirley
- Visits to other boroughs: Beckenham, Wandsworth, Eastleigh (Hampshire)
- Discussions with local businesses
- Meetings with Neighbourhood Partnerships after visits

6 ANALYSIS

6.1 The work programme will include provision for Members to review the information gathered and to formulate and agree their recommendations. In addition, informal consultation will take place with officers responsible for the planning and delivery of services and other stakeholders, as well as with Cabinet Members who will be responsible for responding to the recommendations.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 A report setting out the recommendations, as agreed by the Sub-Committee, will then go to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for ratification and, if endorsed, will be formally presented to the Cabinet. Recommendations accepted by the Cabinet should result in the production of a programme to implement the changes and include identified dates for a progress follow-up and for a scrutiny evaluation.

8 IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 The Sub-Committee will monitor the progress of the implementation programme and satisfy themselves that the recommendations are being applied, or that there are good reasons for this not being the case.

9 CUSTOMER FOCUS CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 There are no Customer Focus considerations arising from this report.

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10 FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1** There are no financial considerations arising from this report, and the review will be contained within existing resources. The final report will address any resourcing issues arising from its recommendations.

11 EQUALITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1** The Council is committed to providing services which are fully accessible to its diverse community. This Scrutiny Review will make recommendations aiming to make relevant Council services accessible to all residents and businesses eligible to use these.

Report Author: Ilona Kytomaa
Contact Person: As above on extension 47051
Background Documents: None

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DISTRICT CENTRES SURVEY OF TRADERS

SAMPLE

Responses have been received from 21 establishments from the following centres:

ADDISCOMBE	3 establishments
COULSDON	3 establishments
NEW ADDINGTON	1 establishments
NORBURY	1 establishments
PURLEY	3 establishments
SANDERSTEAD	2 establishments
SELSDON	2 establishments
SOUTH NORWOOD	2 establishments
THORNTON HEATH	4 establishments

The range of shops included is wide, and includes food shops, café-restaurants, clothes shops, a hi-fi shop, a toy shop, a butcher's shop, etc.

The age of these establishments varies a lot too:

5 are less than 5 years old

1 is 5-10 years old

8 are 10-20 years old

7 are over 20 years old.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

7 said that the business climate was good or very good.

5 said it was "OK".

9 said it was bad or very bad.

Key problems cited were:

- A poor range of shops and services (8 mentions)
- Insufficient parking for customers (8 mentions)
- Competition from other areas (6 mentions)

In all, the problems highlighted by traders could be classified as follows:

- Parking issues (23 mentions), including problems such as the introduction of red routes in shopping areas
- Environmental Issues (16 mentions)
- Competition (15 mentions)
- Problems with the range of shops and services (14 mentions)
- Safety (10 mentions)

Safety issues were felt most acutely in Thornton Heath (several cases of burglary and shoplifting were mentioned), South Norwood and Coulsdon. Traders in other centres stated that safety was not really an issue.

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Environmental issues were very varied, with no one clear theme emerging except in Thornton Heath and South Norwood, where traders complained about the “litter louts” and generally run down appearance of these centres. However, there was a widespread view that cleansing services had improved recently.

Of the 7 establishments which said that business was good or very good, two had a local monopoly (a hi-fi shop and a curtain shop, both of which offer a range of related services), 2 have a café / restaurant (one in Purley, one in Thornton Heath), and the other 3 (a chemist, a butcher and a pet shop) felt they had good products and good service.

Many were aware of the growing importance of the Internet in commerce, but admitted that they had not got round to assessing its importance or potential for them, or to obtaining any training or information on how to benefit from this resource.

Various mentions were made of factors which attract people into a centre:

- The range of shops and services, which most traders felt was poor within their own centre
- Leisure and sports facilities (mentioned in Thornton Heath, South Norwood and New Addington)
- Good transport (e.g. Tramlink)
- Health establishments

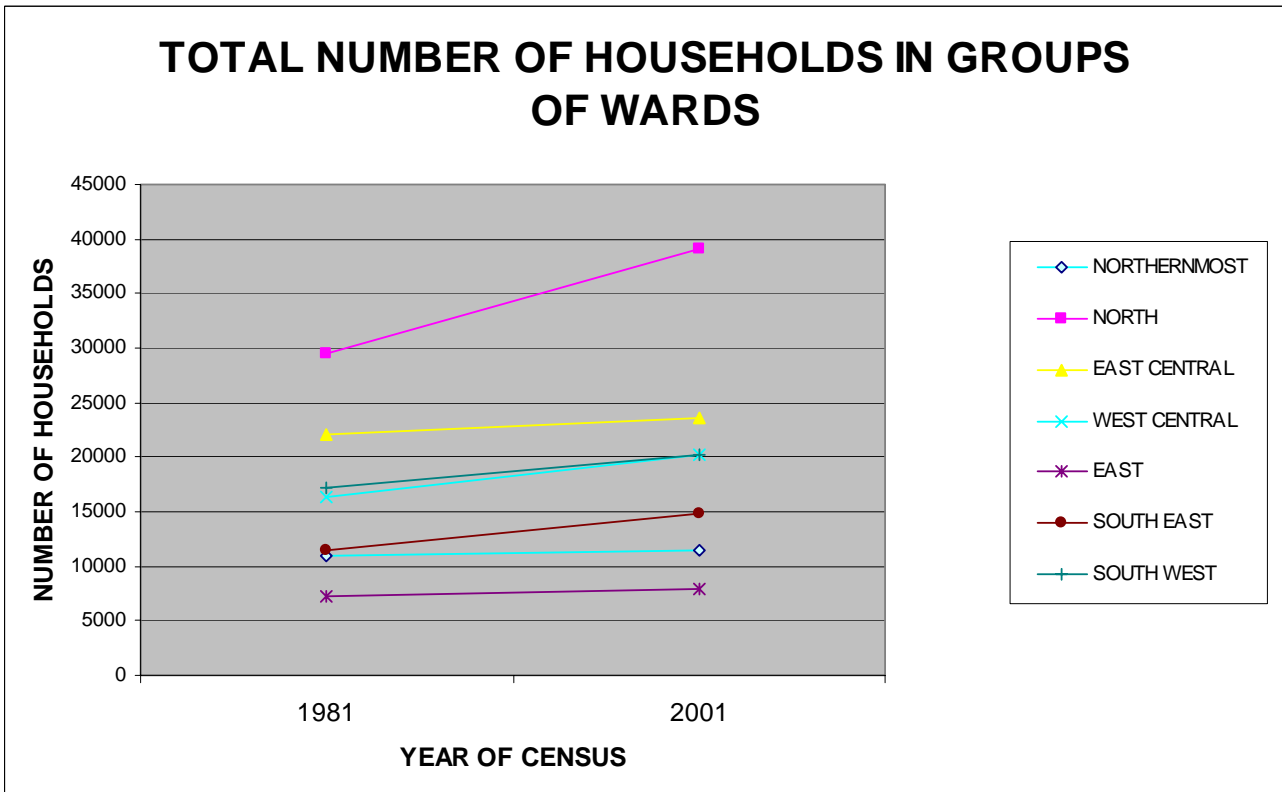
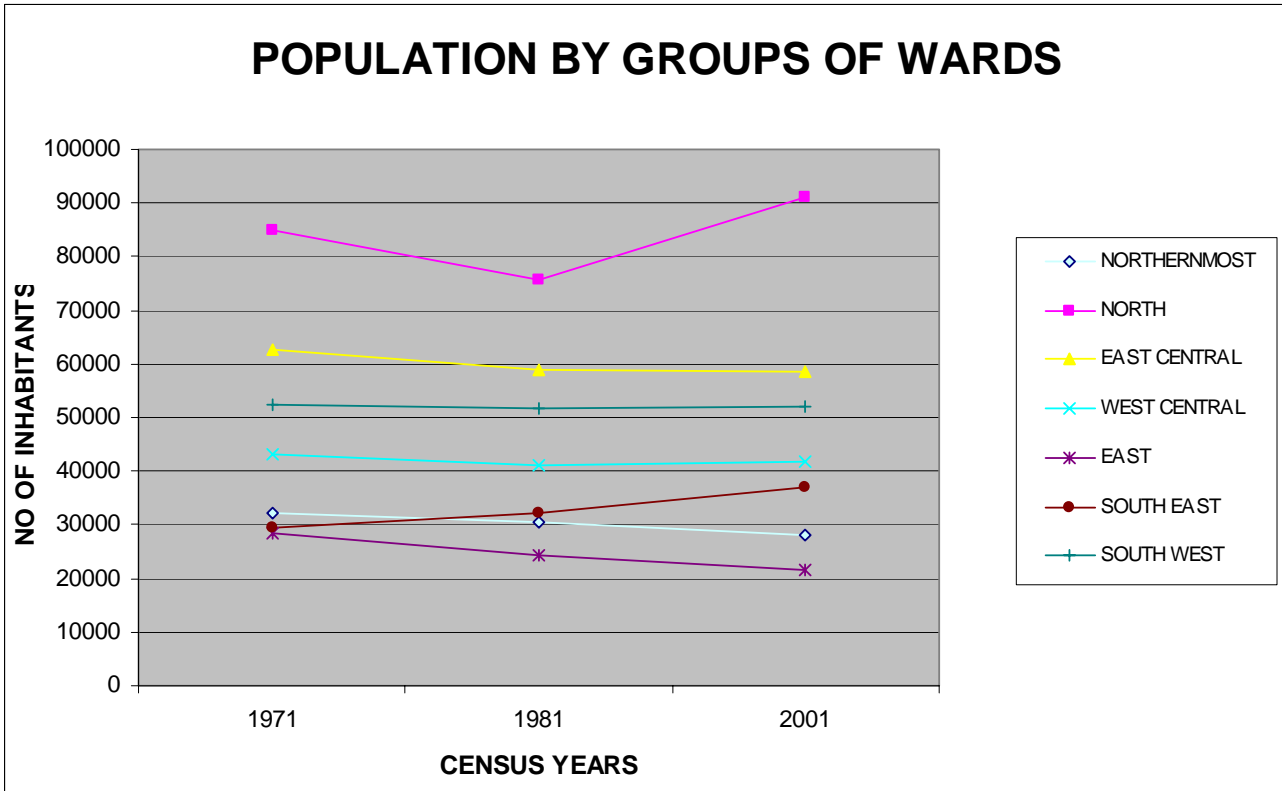
PARTNERSHIP WORK

15 traders stated that they were, or had been involved in some form of networking. 8 stated that they were, or had been involved in formal meetings, but 5 stated that these were largely a waste of time and that meetings were “talking shops”.

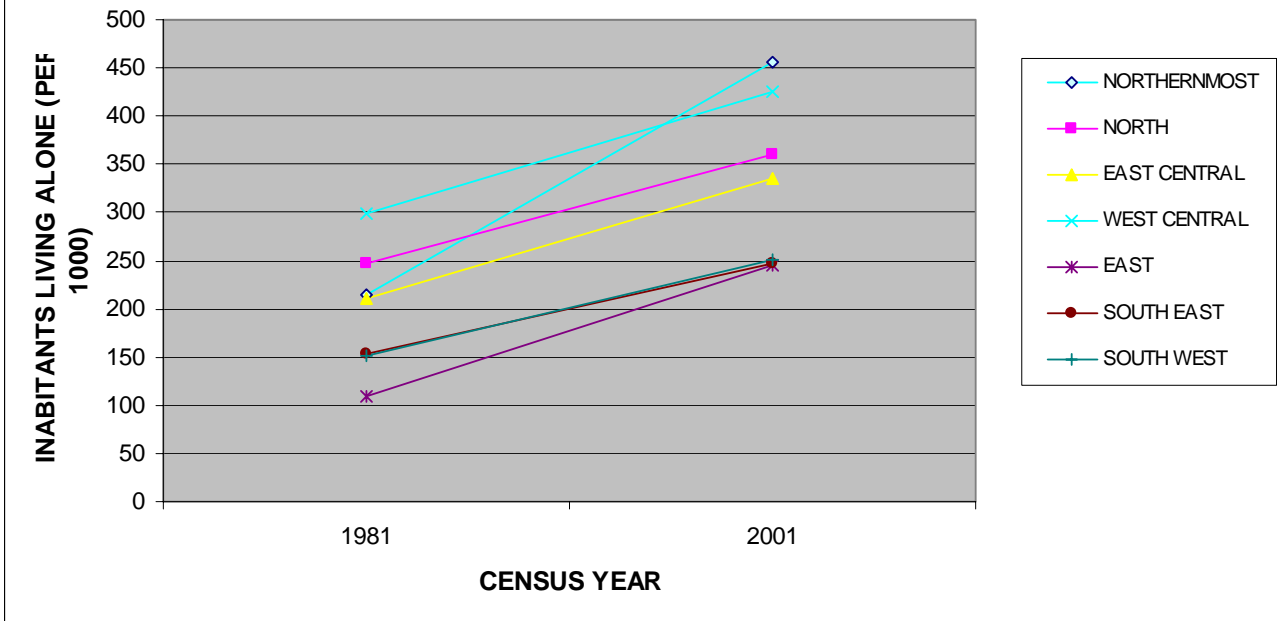
1 trader stated that plans were afoot to launch a group to bring about improvements in the Portland Road area.

Informal networking also takes place, and one shop stated that it had formed an informal business partnership with two other local shops for mutual benefit.

1981 AND 2001 CENSUS DATA



ONE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS PER THOUSAND INHABITANTS



FIGURES;

TOTAL POPULATION

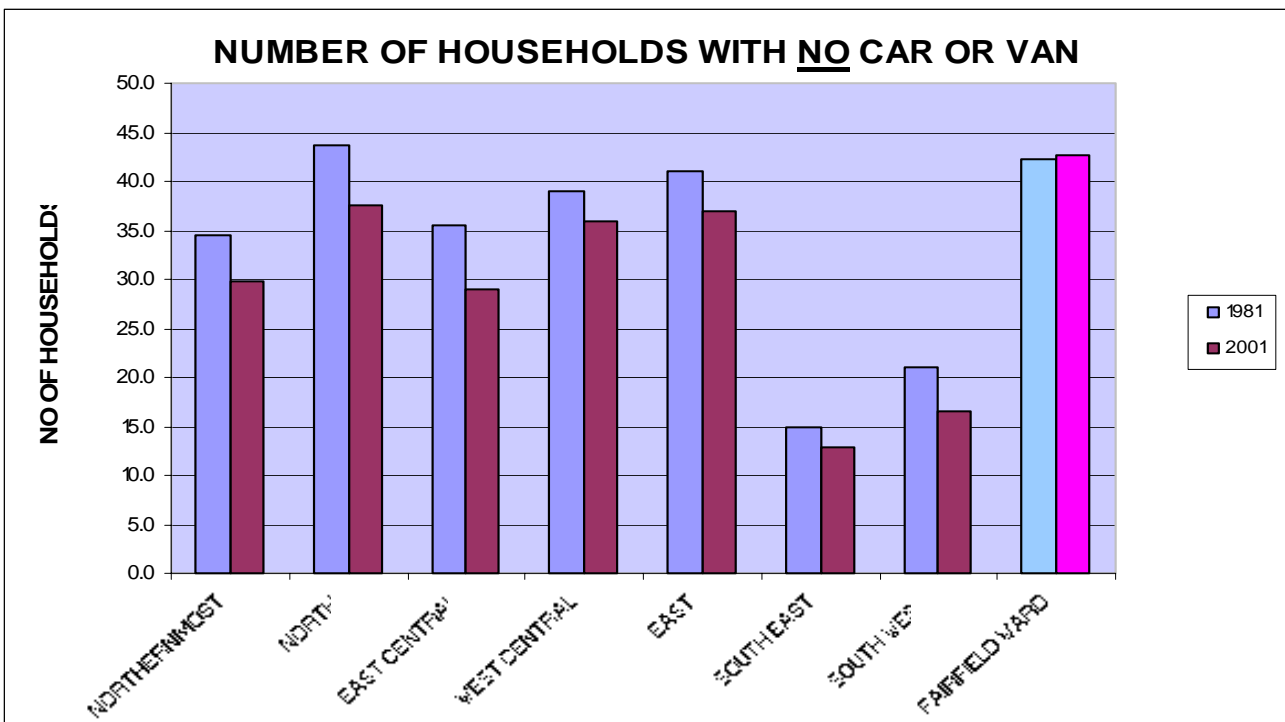
	1971	1981	2001	% CHANGE 1971 - 2001
NORTHERNMOST	32149	30462	28002	-12.9%
NORTH	84910	75702	91239	7.5%
EAST CENTRAL	62675	59041	58655	-6.4%
WEST CENTRAL	43076	40939	41921	-2.7%
EAST	28275	24461	21527	-23.9%
SOUTH EAST	29618	32300	37097	25.3%
SOUTH WEST	52489	51660	51968	-1.0%

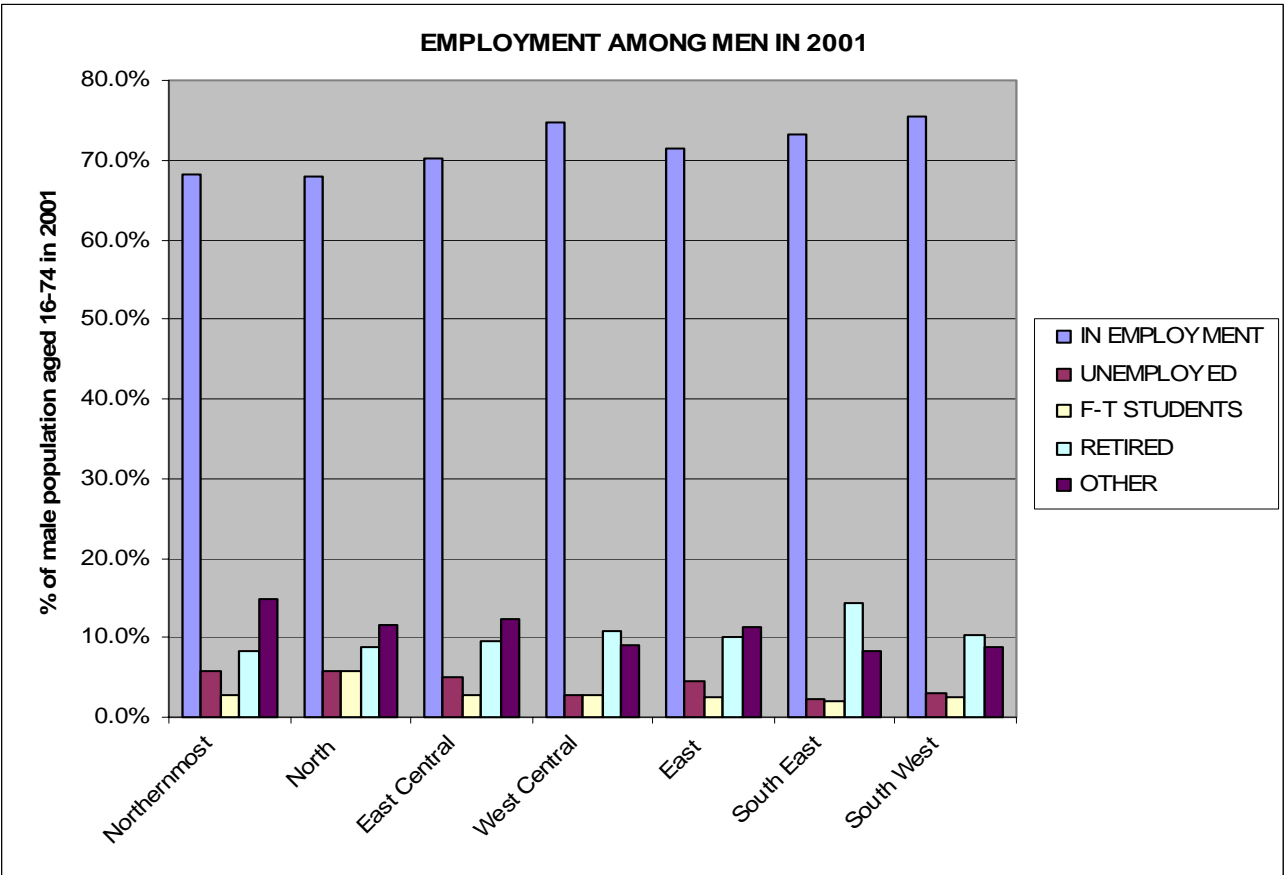
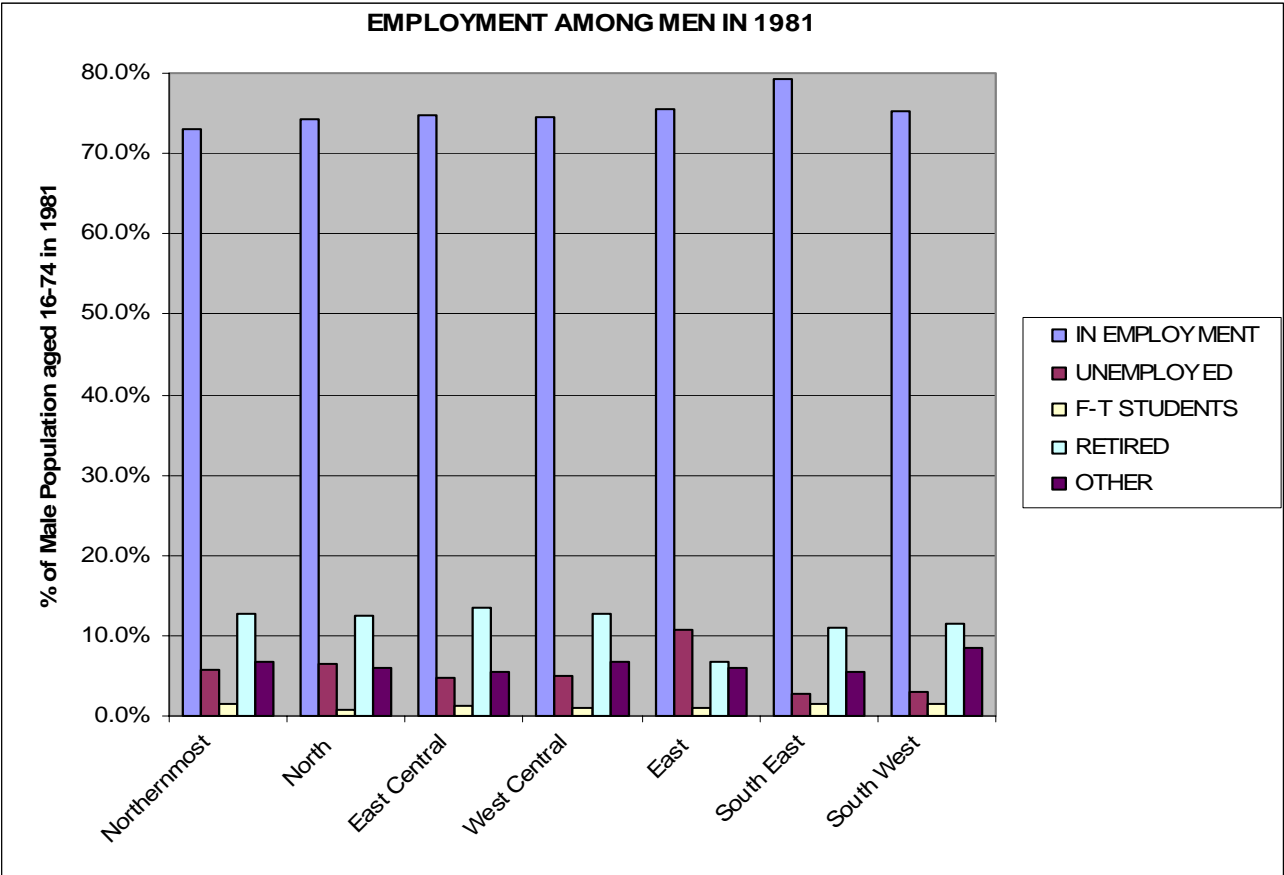
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS

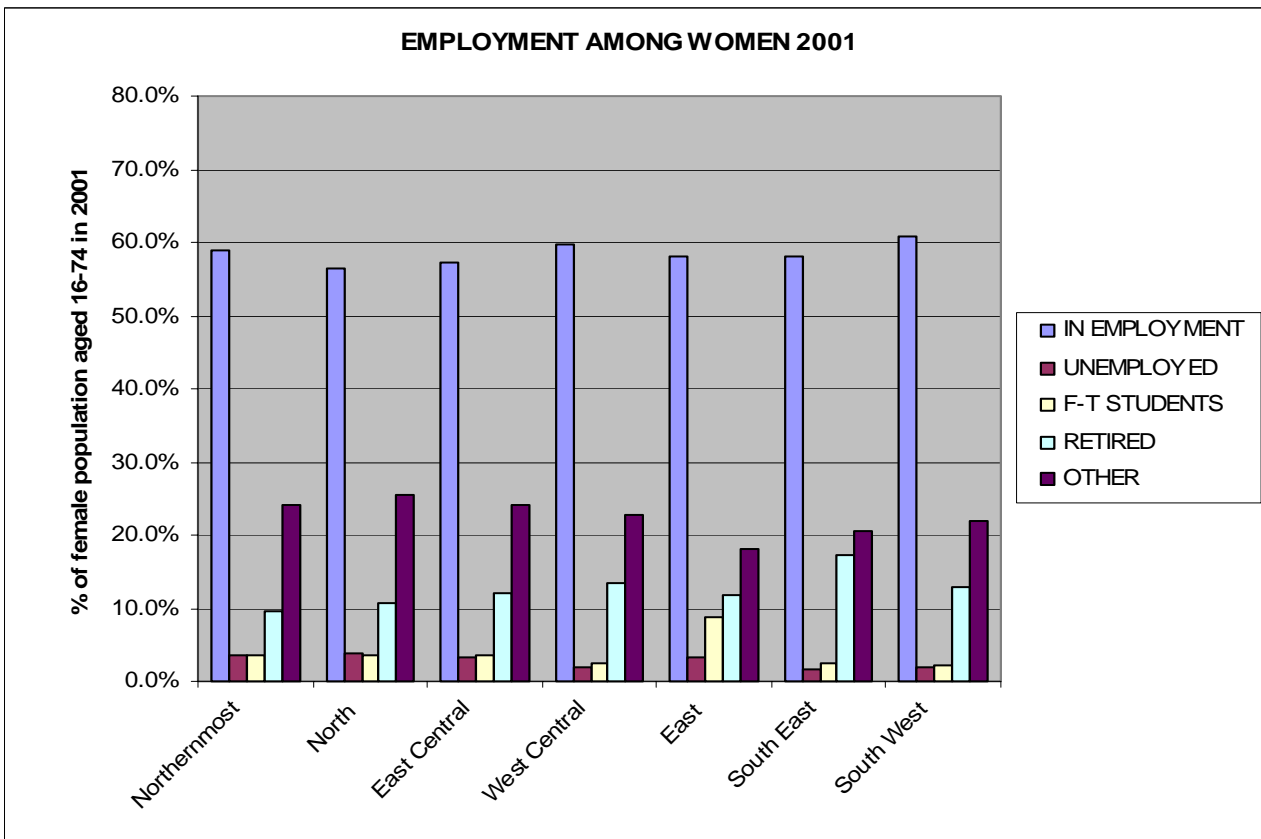
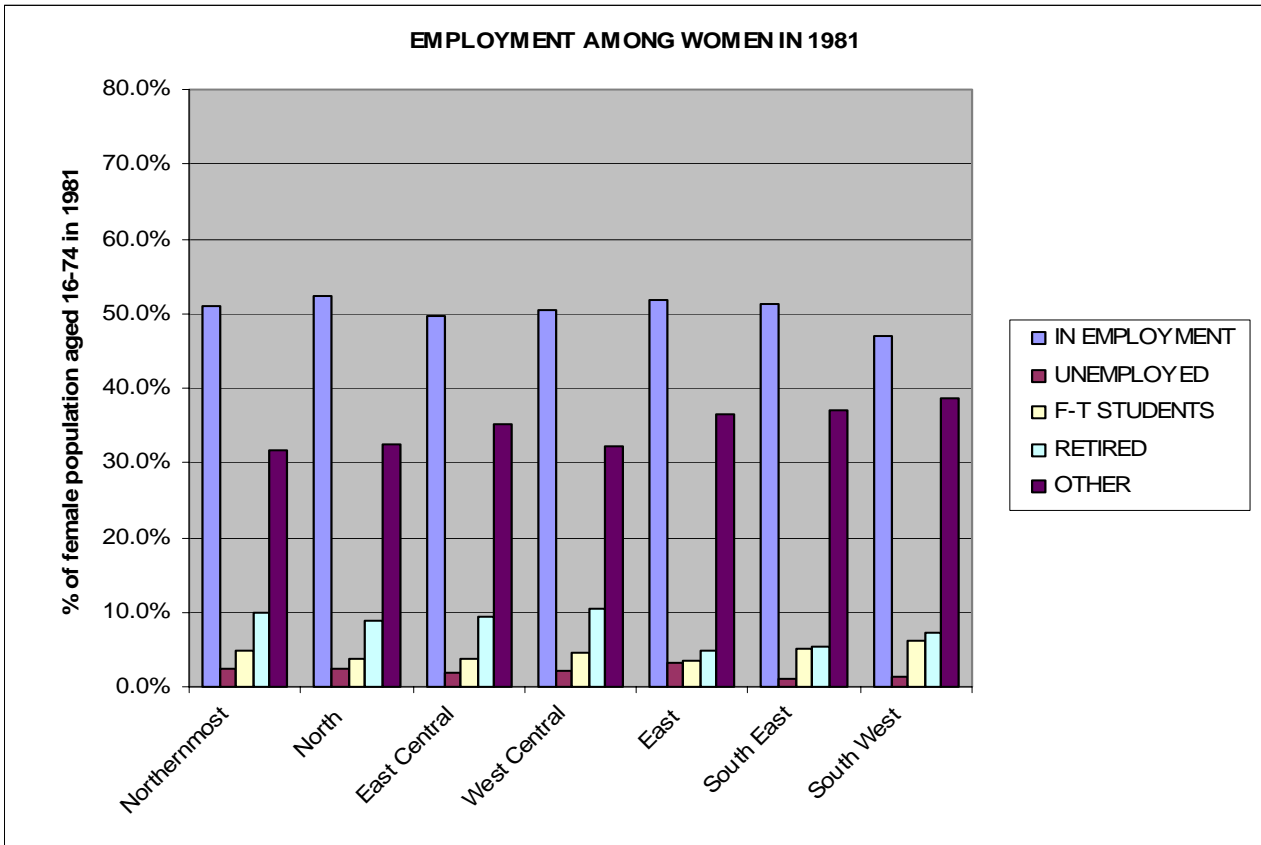
	1981	2001	% CHANGE 1981 - 2001
NORTHERNMOST	10890	11537	5.9%
NORTH	29511	39024	32.2%
EAST CENTRAL	22051	23627	7.1%
WEST CENTRAL	16273	20255	24.5%
EAST	7209	7997	10.9%
SOUTH EAST	11396	14792	29.8%
SOUTH WEST	17267	20163	16.8%

ONE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS (PER THOUSAND INHABITANTS)

	1981	2001	% CHANGE 1981 - 2001
NORTHERNMOST	214	455	112.6%
NORTH	248	359.3	44.9%
EAST CENTRAL	210.6	335	59.1%
WEST CENTRAL	298.3	425.7	42.7%
EAST	109.5	244.5	123.3%
SOUTH EAST	152.7	247.3	62.0%
SOUTH WEST	151.5	251.5	66.0%







RETAIL IN CENTRES ACROSS THE BOROUGH

	COMPARISON RETAIL	CONVENIENCE RETAIL	SERVICE RETAIL	ALL RETAIL
COULSDON TC	47 (5008 SQ.M.)	10 (2430 SQ.M.)	66 (6924 SQ.M.)	129 (14667 SQ.M.)
NORBURY TC	40 (5092 SQ.M.)	23 (3698 SQ.M.)	84 (9320 SQ.M.)	170 (20168 SQ.M.)
PURLEY TC	29 (7026 SQ.M.)	7 (8875 SQ.M.)	77 (7719 SQ.M.)	150 (30369 SQ.M.)
THORNTON HEATH TC	69 (6195 SQ.M.)	25 (9018 SQ.M.)	75 (8558 SQ.M.)	195 (25875 SQ.M.)
NEW ADDINGTON DC	18 (2188 SQ.M.)	11 (2170 SQ.M.)	20 1816 SQ.M.)	49 (6174 SQ.M.)
SELSDON DC	19 (2078 SQ.M.)	7 (5490 SQ.M.)	34 (3263 SQ.M.)	62 (10994 SQ.M.)
SOUTH NORWOOD DC	27 (2582 SQ.M.)	18 (3351 SQ.M.)	76 (6760 SQ.M.)	145 (14400 SQ.M.)
UPPER NORWOOD DC	38 (4759 SQ.M.)	10 (4448 SQ.M.)	64 (8546 SQ.M.)	126 (19372 SQ.M.)
<i>ADDISCOMBE LC</i>	<i>30 (3455 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>15 (1753 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>47 (9988 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>99 (9988 SQ.M.)</i>
<i>BROAD GREEN LC</i>	<i>9 (696 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>11 (1158 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>25 (2568 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>49 (4682 SQ.M.)</i>
<i>POLLARDS HILL LC</i>	<i>12 (1130 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>6 (343 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>25 (2218 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>50 (4257 SQ.M.)</i>
<i>SHIRLEY LC</i>	<i>13 (911 SQ. M.)</i>	<i>5 (575 SQ. M.)</i>	<i>28 (2432 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>48 (4125 SQ.M.)</i>
<i>SOUTH CROYDON LC</i>	<i>14 (1974 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>5 (613 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>56 (7206 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>83 (10492 SQ.M.)</i>
<i>THORNTON HEATH POND LC</i>	<i>23 (1781 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>21 (1838 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>40 (3710 SQ.M.)</i>	<i>89 (7664 SQ.M.)</i>

OFFICE SPACE IN CENTRES

	OFFICE SPACE (SQ. M.)
COULSDON TC	3700
NORBURY TC	11300
PURLEY TC	2500
THORNTON HEATH TC	2000
NEW ADDINGTON DC	250
SELSDON DC	500
SOUTH NORWOOD DC	1500
UPPER NORWOOD DC	2000
ADDISCOMBE LC	0
BROAD GREEN LC	100
POLLARDS HILL LC	200
SHIRLEY LC	300
SOUTH CROYDON LC	200
THORNTON HEATH POND LC	1500

SUPERMARKETS

	SUPERMARKET	SURFACE AREA (SQ.M.)	PARKING SPACE
COULSDON TC	WAITROSE	1,683	75
NORBURY TC	NO LARGE SUPPERMARKET		
PURLEY TC	TESCO	8,471	757
THORNTON HEATH TC	TESCO	8,417	300
NEW ADDINGTON DC	CO-OP ICELAND	NO FIGURES AVAILABLE " " "	NO FIGURES AVAILABLE " " "
SELSDON DC	SAINSBURY SOMERFIELD	3,585 1,300	250 80
SOUTH NORWOOD DC	SAFEWAY	2,029	50
UPPER NORWOOD DC	SAFEWAY	3,493	214
<i>ADDISCOMBE LC</i>	CO-OP	NO FIGURES AVAILABLE	NO FIGURES AVAILABLE
<i>BROAD GREEN LC</i>	LIDL	1,228	324
<i>POLLARDS HILL LC</i>	NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE		
<i>SHIRLEY LC</i>	CO-OP	NO FIGURES AVAILABLE	NO FIGURES AVAILABLE
<i>SOUTH CROYDON LC</i>	SOUTHEND SUPERMARKET	NO FIGURES AVAILABLE	NONE
<i>THORNTON HEATH POND LC</i>	LIDL	1,286	40

ENTERTAINMENT

	CINEMAS / THEATRES	RESTAURANTS / CAFES	TAKE-AWAYS	PUBS AND BARS	NIGHT-CLUBS	SPORT/LEISURE FACILITIES
COULSDON TC	0	12	11	0	0	1 private snooker hall
NORBURY TC	0	20	16	3	0	2 private sports/gym facilities
PURLEY TC	0	16	12	2	0	Swimming pool and gym
THORNTON HEATH TC	0	12	15	7	0	Thornton Heath Leisure Centre
NEW ADDINGTON DC	0	3	5	0	0	1 LA swimming pool and fitness centre 1 meeting hall (ACA)
SELSDON DC	0	3	4	2	0	1 LA hall 1 private The Village
SOUTH NORWOOD DC	0	10	17	6	0	1 LA hall Stanley Halls
UPPER NORWOOD DC	0	24	7	6	0	0
ADDISCOMBE LC	0	7	8	2	0	0
BROAD GREEN LC	0	5	4	2	1 (edge of centre)	0
POLLARDS HILL LC	0	7	4	2	0	0
SHIRLEY LC	0	4	5	1	0	0
SOUTH CROYDON LC	2 comedy clubs	9	8	5	1	0
TH' HEATH POND LC	0	9	7	3	1	0

CAFES, RESTAURANTS, PUBS AND WINE BARS

	TAKE- AWAYS 2002	TAKE- AWAYS 2004	CAFES 2002	CAFES 2004	REST. 2002	REST. 2004	PUBS 2002	PUBS 2004	WINE- BARS 2002	WINE- BARS 2004	TOTALS
COULSDON TC	11	12	5	5	7	8	1	0	0	1	50
NORBURY TC	16	14	5	6	15	15	2	2	1	1	77
PURLEY TC	12	13	2	3	11	15	2	3	0	0	61
THORNTON HEATH TC	13	14	6	6	6	4	6	5	1	1	62
NEW ADDINGTON DC	5	5	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	14
SELSDON DC	4	3	0	0	2	4	2	2	0	0	17
SOUTH NORWOOD DC	15	15	4	5	4	4	6	6	0	0	59
UPPER NORWOOD DC	7	6	7	7	18	19	5	5	1	1	76
TOTALS	83	82	30	33	64	70	24	23	3	4	416

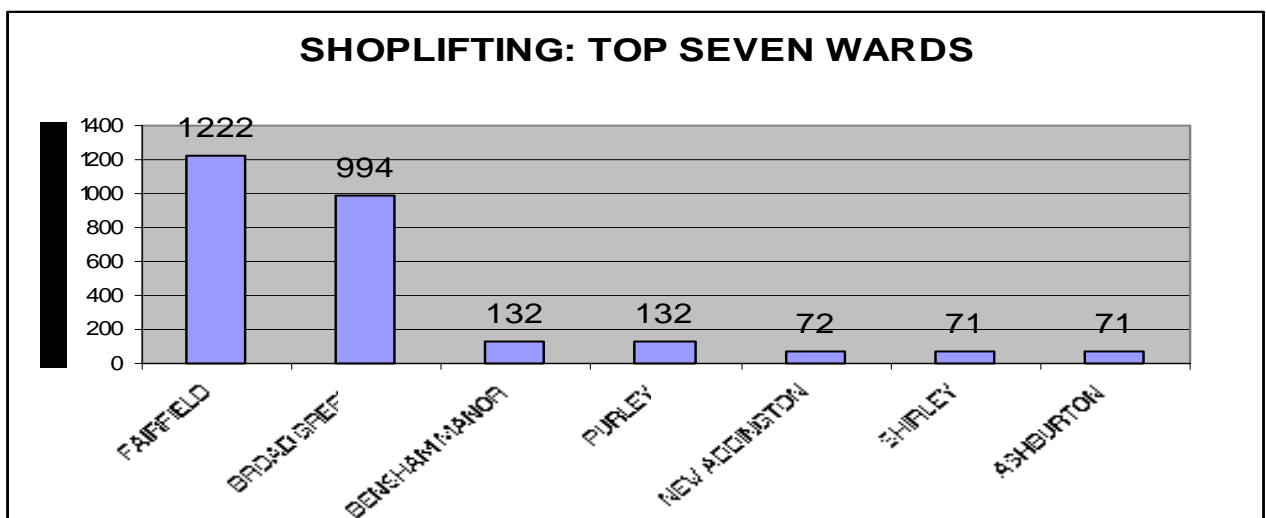
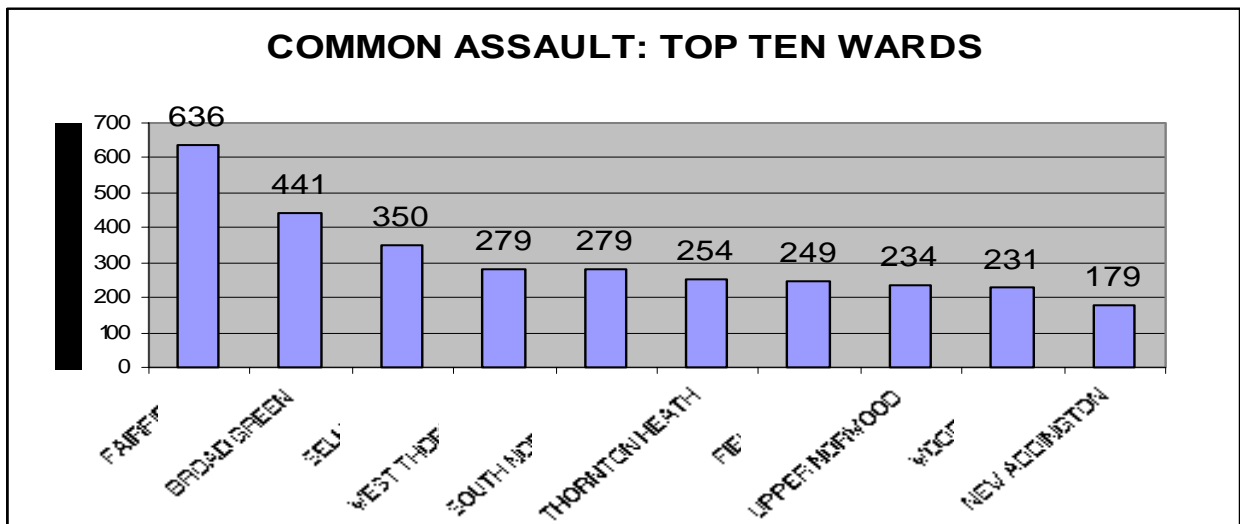
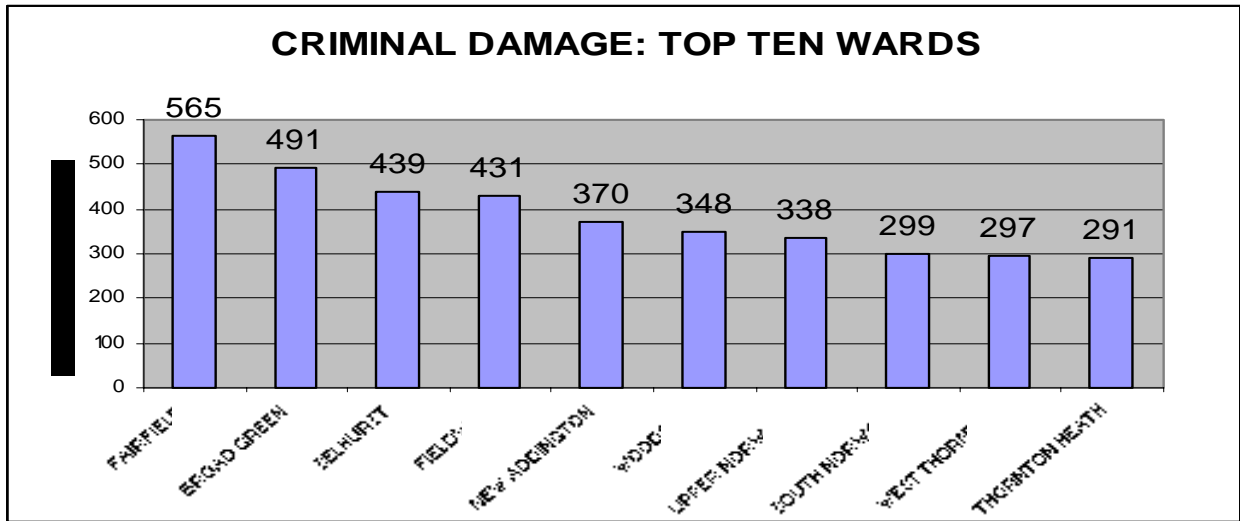
VOID PREMISES IN 2002 AND 2004

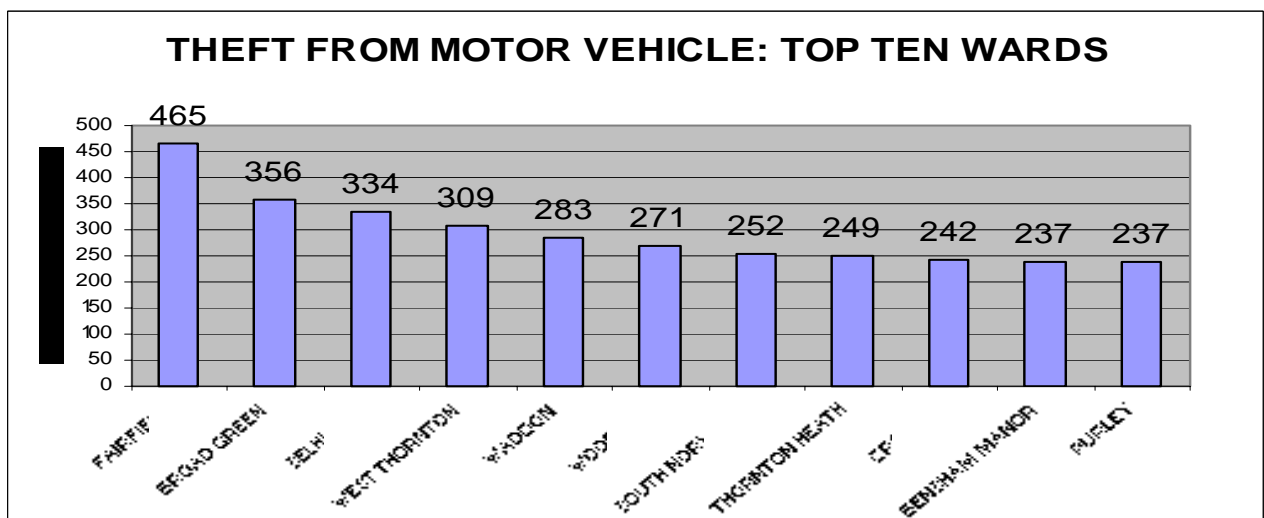
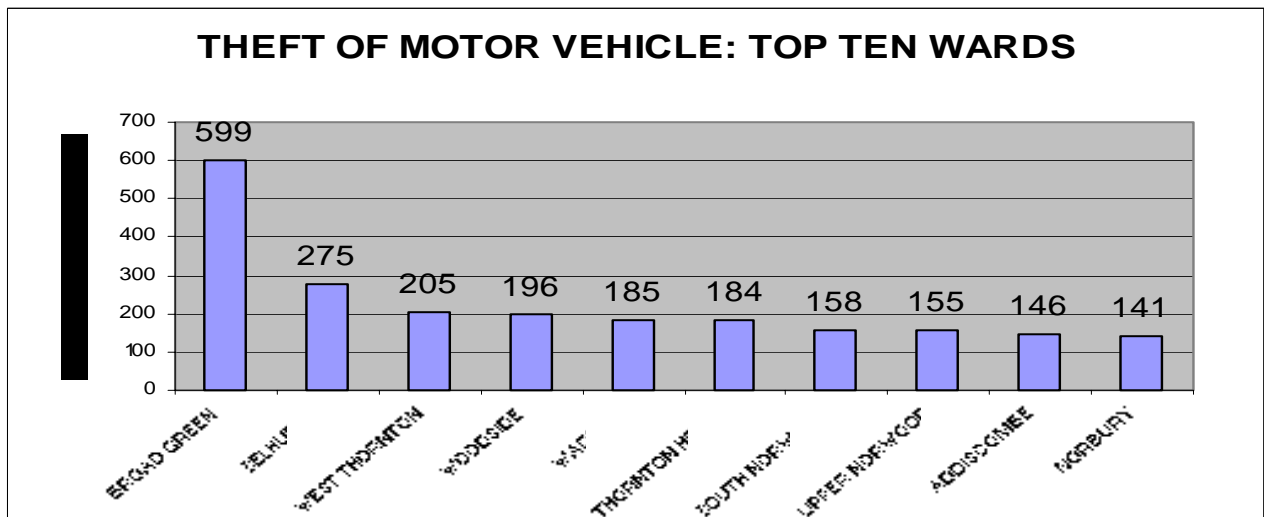
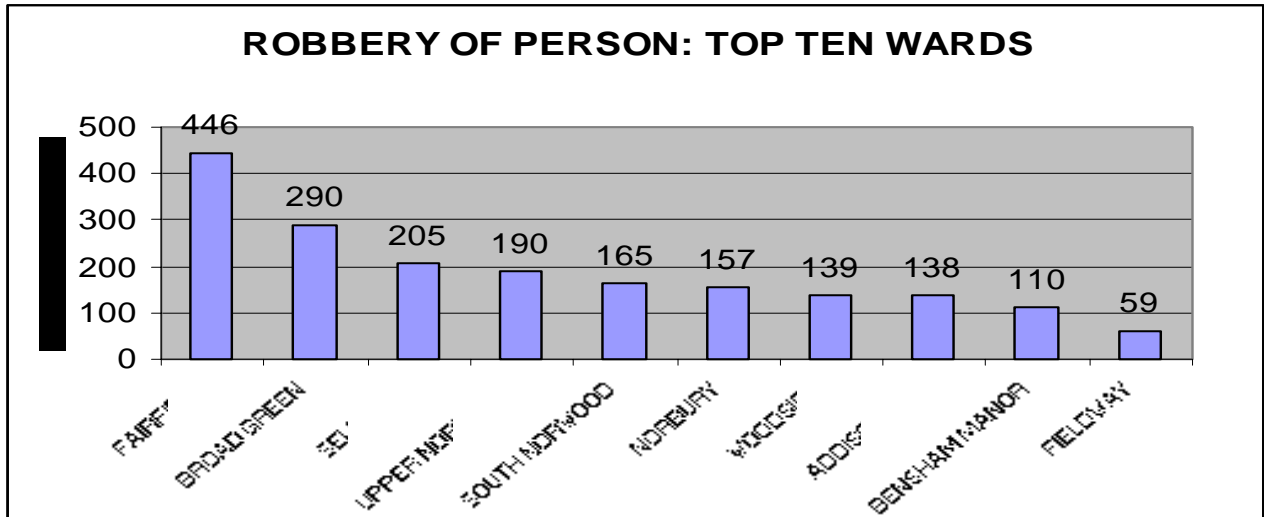
These figures are unfortunately not available for local centres

	2002	2004
COULSDON TC	7	7
NORBURY TC	25	27
PURLEY TC	25	13
THORNTON HEATH TC	18	12
NEW ADDINGTON DC	0	0
SELSDON DC	4	5
SOUTH NORWOOD DC	30	27
UPPER NORWOOD DC	19	18 (3 of these being refurbished)

CRIME STATISTICS 2002/03 - 2003/04

Figures have been adapted from the Safer Croydon Crime Reduction Audit 2004 (Appendix 5) and show types of crime which can take place both in district centres and in residential areas. The number of reports shown relate to whole wards, and not only to district centres.





BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

(Extracts from a paper presented at the Cabinet Meeting of 4th April 2005)

Part 4 of the Local Government act 2003 and the Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004, permit local businesses to set up Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) as part of the borough community strategy.

A BID is a local mechanism whereby affected non-domestic ratepayers pay an extra 1% levy on top of the annual business rate, usually for a period of 5 years. This extra levy is ring-fenced to be spent at the discretion of the BID Board, or an approved BID Business Plan of local initiatives to improve the environment and / or services within a precisely defined geographical area (the BID area).

The regulations require the BID business plan to precisely cost out a range of new or expanded services and works over and above those provided by the local authority. The local authority is in turn required to maintain its existing levels of service within the geographical area of the BID for the duration of the BID in areas such as cleanliness, safety, security, maintenance, planning and environmental health.

The Statutory regulations allow any local business community to set up a BID district, provided that 51% or more of voting business rate payers in the proposed area vote in favour.

In Croydon, Croydon Marketing and Development Ltd have been leading the process to encourage the Croydon business community to consider a local BID. Croydon town centre has been chosen as the first location for a BID in Croydon although opportunities also exist for district centres or industrial estates to set up BIDS. Positive discussions have already taken place with business representatives from both Purley Town Centre and South Wandle Partnership to pursue their interest in setting up a BID area in future.

Although BID initiatives are private sector led, it is important the business community feel that the Council is supportive of the initiative and of the regeneration it aims to bring to an area. There are various ways in which the Council can offer its support throughout the life of a BID action plan. These include:

- Publicly adding its support to all BID communications by CMD to the Business community
- Providing expertise in defining the cost of the various preferred options for services and action within the BID business plan
- Ensuring that the Council maintains its commitment to existing service delivery
- Officers from the Business Rates Section assisting in the provision of the database of non-domestic rate-payers and in setting up the mechanism for collection of the additional levy, if 51% of businesses vote in favour of a BIDS area.