

Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub- Committee Agenda



To: Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Chair)
Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Robert Canning, Sherwan Chowdhury, Luke Clancy,
Felicity Flynn and Vidhi Mohan

Reserve Members: Karen Jewitt, Michael Neal, Andrew Pelling, Joy Prince,
Callton Young, Jan Buttinger and Oni Oviri

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday, 1 October 2019** at **6.30 pm** in **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**. **A pre-meet for Members only will take place in room F4 at 6.00pm**

Jacqueline Harris Baker
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www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
Monday, 23 September 2019

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting.
If you require any assistance, please contact the person detailed above, on the righthand side.

N.B This meeting will be paperless. The agenda can be accessed online at www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings

AGENDA – PART A

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Committee.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 as an accurate record.

3. Disclosure of Interests

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality to the value of which exceeds £50 or multiple gifts and/or instances of hospitality with a cumulative value of £50 or more when received from a single donor within a rolling twelve month period. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Democratic Services representative at the start of the meeting. The Chair will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

4. Urgent Business (if any)

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. Cabinet Member Question Time: Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon

Question Time with the Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon, Councillor Stuart Collins.

6. South London Waste Partnership Annual Review (Pages 15 - 32)

To receive an update on the progress of the new South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) Lot 1 contract which commenced for Street Cleansing in March 2018 and Waste and Recycling in September 2018.

7. Update on the Grounds Maintenance Service (Pages 33 - 40)

To receive progress to date following the insourcing of the grounds maintenance service which came back to the Council's control as an 'in-house' service on 1 February 2019.

8. Work Programme (Pages 41 - 44)

To note the Work Programme for the 2019/2020 municipal year.

9. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

"That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended."

Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 9 July 2019 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Leila Ben-Hassel (Chair);
Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Robert Canning, Sherwan Chowdhury, Luke Clancy and
Felicity Flynn

Also Present: Councillor Michael Neal
Councillor Stuar King
Councillor Paul Scott
Ian Plowright, Head of Transport
Yvonne Leslie, Senior Stakeholder Manager, GTR
Rory O'Neill, General Manager, London Overground, TFL
Sam Russell, Communities and Stakeholder Manager, Arriva London, TFL
Ben Craig, Senior Route Planner, Network Rail
Greg Thompson, Public Affairs Manager, Network Rail
Charles bell

Apologies: Councillor Vidhi Mohan

PART A

23/19 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2019 were agreed as an accurate record subject to the following amendment:

Minute 21/19 Para 3, If the notice was invalid, it would be inadmissible in court and the Council would be able to mediate between the landlord and tenant.

24/19 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

25/19 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

26/19 Update from Rail Service Providers

The Chair welcomed Members and invited guests to the meeting to receive an update from the Rail service providers in attendance on actions taken and responses to recommendations since the meeting of the sub-committee on 20 June 2018.

An Officer from Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) was in attendance and gave a presentation on actions taken to date and an update which included the following:

- The implementation programme of the rail timetable had not gone as planned and resulted in major disruption and delays experienced across the network
- A refund of fares in addition to the usual delay repay compensation was put in place following the disruptions caused by the introduction of the May timetable and passengers were paid over £17m in additional industry compensation.
- There had been a year on year improvement experienced and evidenced through the Public Performance Measure (PPM) and over the last three month over 90% of trains had arrived to timescale
- A Passenger Benefit Fund with a £15million pot to be spread across the network for GTR stations was in place. Rail user groups, Council, and the community had been invited to submit suggestions as to how the money should be spent.
- A recent National Rail Satisfaction Survey showed that trust was being rebuilt with passengers with satisfaction figures on 81% for Southern and 83% for Thameslink.
- Worked closely with Network rail on improvement plans and created action plans to address areas of further exploration.

Questions were raised on the contributing factors to failings in the implementation of the timetable and what lessons had been learnt. Members' were informed that a comprehensive report had been published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) which detailed the background, issues experienced with timescales as well as over optimisation which contributed to the failings experienced. A key recommendation from the report was for the programme officer to assess risks and this was done in time for the roll out of the December 2018 timetable.

The sub-committee further learned that there had been two timetable introductions since the initial May 2018 roll out with a strategic timetable team in place constantly gathering data and reviewing the timetable.

A question was raised on how well promoted the passenger refund scheme had been, the percentage of take up and the ability of all rail users to claim as not all transport users use oyster which seemed to be a factor in the claims process. Members were informed that the scheme was promoted via the rail website, on social media platforms such as twitter and also by customer services at stations. It was difficult to measure take up as refunds were based on eligibility.

A Member questioned how prepared the service was during peaks periods such as Summer holidays and Christmas, whether there was a full complement of drivers recruited into position and if there was a reliance on drivers putting in to work overtime to cover a shortfall in staff. The Officer responded that a major recruitment and training programme had taken place and was ongoing. It was agreed that a briefing vacancy rates and recruitment would be provided to Members after the meeting.

Concerns were raised about the impact to passengers when trains arrivals were switched to another platform as the ability for passengers both able bodied and those with disabilities to get to another platform in a short space of time could prove to be dangerous. It was further commented that information on timetable or platform changes as well as delays must be relayed to passengers in ample time. Officers responded that information was shared with all station staff and support volunteers in as timely a manner as possible but agreed that more could be done to improve how quickly information was relayed to station staff as well as passengers.

It was noted that an improvement in attitude and culture towards passengers in particular those with disabilities was needed with a greater emphasis on improved customer service by staff.

It was also noted that the data from the Public Performance Measure (PPM) on year comparison supplied in the presentation showed that over 90% had not been achieved and this should be achievable. The officer responded that over two thousand trains ran each day and to achieve 90% was a task in itself. The figures showed that improvements were being made but it was recognised that there were problems experienced with train reliability and work as ongoing with partners to review and explore the reasons as to why higher figures were not being achieved. GTR was committed to exploring different ways to increase performance and were focused on their own on time internal measures as well as the industry PPM measure.

A Guest challenged the frequency of trains per hour at Norwood Junction which had been reduced from eight trains per hour in 2015 to four in 2018, and highlighted the limited range during peak periods. Further concerns that going forward, less trains would be delivered per hour. The officer responded that this was the maximum that could be achieved from the network as a whole but agreed to explore if any changes could be made in the medium term.

Councillor Stuart King, Cabinet Member for Environment Transport and Regeneration (job share) welcomed the full range of officers in attendance. He raised concerns that West Croydon was not considered for allocation of the Passenger Benefit Fund and asked if there would be consideration and willingness to allow a pooling of funds with the Council providing direction as to where the funds should be spent.

It was further questioned what criteria was used in the categorisation of stations that were selected to receive the funds and had the wider impact of Thameslink services on other stations not selected been taken into consideration. Officers responded that one of the criteria of the selection process was that the station had to be a Thameslink served station which was why West Croydon was not allocated part of the funding. Pooling of funds could be considered as an option as the distribution of the funds would be based on information and suggestions collated from community, councils, and stakeholder. The officer agreed that once all the suggestions had been collated, this option could be further discussed.

The Chair thanked the officer for responses to questions.

Officers from London Overground and Arriva Rail London were in attendance and gave a presentation on service performance, in particular at West Croydon Station and the use of Platform One. The sub-committee was informed of the following:

- Performance was appraised in two ways
- Arriva was subject to pay penalties to TfL for poor performance.
- As an operator, Arriva was held to account in all aspect of their service and were conscious maintain high levels of performance.
- The priority for Arriva was to return any disrupted service to a good service as quickly as possible, in particular at the top of line.
- West Croydon was susceptible to experiencing issues or unintended consequences that had occurred in the service as it was at the end on the line.
- Platform changes did impact on journeys but a balance had to be drawn between operational and passenger needs in the decision making process.

A question was raised as to what could be done to resolve the issues of lack of access for disabled users. There were many challenges experienced by disabled passengers across the network such as delays and changes to routes as well as inability of staff to use ramps adequately. It was further questioned to what extent operational benefit was weighed against loss of accessibility and whether consideration was given to the passenger experience when a decision was made on changes.

Officers responded that there had been investment in training of staff to deal with passengers appropriately and that all staff had general accessibility training, with agency staff also receiving station specific training. They were looking at how to automate communication between stations to make it easier for customers with mobility issues to notify stations of their arrival at the

beginning of their journey. Members were informed that reporting of issues and receiving of complaints when things do not go right was the quickest way to learn. Formal feedback was encouraged at all times as it was crucial to driving change.

Officers informed the sub-committee of the 'Turn up and Go' policy which meant that passengers requiring assistance would no longer be advised to book 24 hours ahead but could get assistance at any time during their journey. A Guest in attendance highlighted that whilst the policy was in place, there were no changes experienced in his ability to receive assistance from staff regardless of whether he had booked or not. The policy in his experience was not effective.

A Guest further highlighted that general communication was poor and staff were not always available at some stations at certain times on the day to assist passengers. It would appear that there were vacancies and shortage of staff at many stations. It was reinforced to the operators in attendance that communication was key to an effective service.

Officers agreed that with the prevalence of Apps, passengers often had more insight as to what was happening across the service than staff and work was being done to improve the use of technology and transmission of information in real time for staff.

A Member questioned the changes that had been made to the platforms at West Croydon by moving the Overground service from platform 4 to platform 1 and suggested that the changes were not needed as the previous system was effective. The new system was not beneficial to passengers and if the changes were due to operational need then ordinary passengers and people with disabilities were severely disadvantaged. Officers responded that the platform was being utilised in the way it was as they could not operate the agreed timetable if the service did not operate in the way it currently did. They agreed the feedback received was useful and would be discussed at greater length at head office.

It was further challenged that when the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was conducted, the evaluation should have shown that the proposed change was not effective as the impact of the issues at West Croydon station was severe and a lot of people with mobility issues were not using West Croydon Station due to problems with accessibility.

There were concerns raised on security of the mobility entrance at West Croydon as well as lack of visibility of staff after 10pm, it was important for all operators to ensure that support staff were available at all times. A suggestion was also made that operators look into electric charging points for wheelchairs at stations. Officers agreed that all points raised would be taken into consideration for further exploration.

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance and responses to questions.

Officers from Network Rail were in attendance to provide an update on the Brighton Mainline Programme.

Members were given a presentation which included the following points:

- The public was consulted on the development proposals of the Railway
- It was hoped that construction of the Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme (CARS) could commence, subject to funding from 2023. The CARS project was key to redevelopment proposals.
- There had been many challenges identified such as issues with punctuality on the BML.
- Looking ahead there would be infrastructure constraints and the underlying infrastructure would require reconfiguration. Additional infrastructure would be needed to enable improvement and the ability to run more trains.
- An operational analysis of London to the South Coast showed that Croydon was governing the bottleneck, was the most complex with the most extensive engineering challenges and works will impact on the passengers.
- A dedicated team is in place working with GTR and passing on information
- Recent Accessibility scheme at Selhurst station due to be completed.
- Longer term proposals include unblocking of the Croydon bottleneck at Selhurst triangle, Norwood Junction and East Croydon.
- Consultation feedback was positive with over 90% of responders agreed with the proposals, wanted the work to be carried out as quickly as possible with minimal disruption.
- This is a non-funded scheme beyond the design work and it was being made clear that funding was a key part to realising the next steps.

A guest congratulated the proposal and work carried out so far and asked if the Norwood Junction element of the proposals could go ahead separately to the whole scheme. Officers responded that due to the infrastructure challenges at other stations on the Norwood junction line it would be difficult for the works to go ahead separately.

It was asked what was being done to improve accessibility at Norbury station which has a separate entrance that had been closed for many years and if this work could be carried out if it was agreed to pool the funds from the passenger benefit fund. Officers from Network Rail and GTR agreed to take the points forward for further discussion.

A Member commended the positive presentation and information received and expressed that it was hoped that the proposals could be achieved given the challenges with funding.

Further information was requested on the 'turn back' idea and it was commented that if there was a turn back at Wallington Station, opportunities should be taken to improve accessibility at Waddon Station. Officers

responded that all works were subject to securing funding from a national prioritisation pot and what was needed was a government commitment on funding for all proposals to be realised.

It was noted that the main aspect of the BML upgrade was to improve connectivity and the work would be carried out at the expense of the local community. Assurance was sought that aspirations to reconnect Croydon with the suburbs was beneficial and would indeed provide better connections with inner London boroughs. Officers responded that extensive works was being carried out with TfL on connectivity on local versus regional journeys and planning was key to metropolisation. How and where was chosen to connect at present was due to constraints with infrastructure.

A Guest said that at the meeting of 20 June 2018, there were two things raised which was for the restoration of the one day tram pass which had now been restored but also that a Councillor raised that there should be a designated space at train stations in particular at Victoria station for people with disabilities in the event of disruptions to the service. Officers responded that this was still being looked into but were pleased to announce that there was now increased seating from 150 to 450 at Victoria and London bridge Stations.

The Chair thanked all officers and guest for their attendance and participation in the meeting.

Govia Thameslink Railway

Information request by the sub-committee

- A briefing on vacancy rates and recruitment for drivers as well as action plan for peak travel periods of the Summer holidays and Christmas.

In reaching its recommendations, the sub-committee came to the following **CONCLUSIONS**:

- I. It was encouraging that GTR was in attendance to answer questions and be held accountable for actions and to provide an update a year on from the introduction of the new timetable which through its unsuccessful delivery caused chaos to the network.
- II. On questioning it was evident that whilst there were still some issues prevalent in the regulation of the service. The service had stabilised and remaining issues were as a result of knock on effects from the initial introduction of the timetable changes.
- III. There was a need for better co-ordination of the service between GTR and Network Rail which would improve interchanges.
- IV. Whilst there had been notable improvements, there were still inefficiencies at some stations in the early mornings and reduced trains in the evenings and Saturdays in many. In Particular there was a big

- gap in the amount of trains between East Croydon at Selhurst where there has been three per hour but there was now only one per hour.
- V. It was evident that there was a need for improved integrated systems and advanced reporting of issues to be communicated to staff at all stations
 - VI. There was a distinct concern that West Croydon was not selected to be allocated some of the passenger benefit fund as this station bore the brunt of knock on effects of issues of the surrounding stations.
 - VII. The Public Performance Measure figures were disappointing and more work was needed to improve the figures.
 - VIII. It was important that advanced planning goes into managing the service during the summer Holiday and Christmas periods which were peak travel times across the country.
 - IX. When trains are switched to another platform, this causes problems for passengers in particular those with disabilities.
 - X. Improvements were needed in customer service, responsibility and ownership by staff.

The sub-committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to GTR that:

- I. Improvements had to be made on interchanges, in particular with the fast service at Norwood Junction which run very close to each other which causes a multitude of issues for passengers.
- II. Changes to be made in the culture of the network and staff with more consideration given to the needs of passengers with disabilities
- III. Nationalisation of appropriate customer service standards across services by staff on concourse and platforms.
- IV. Improvement of information at station in terms of staff availability as well as advance notice of changes to train platforms to enable all passengers as well as those with disabilities to make the necessary changes as safely as possible.
- V. The Operator to look into better use of data to ensure that information is relayed to their staff and passengers in real time
- VI. Feedback be provided on the criteria process for the allocation of the Passenger Benefit Fund and consideration be given to the pooling of the fund for Croydon.
- VII. The Strategic Planning team to look into the loss or reduction of trains at some stations in the evenings and weekends
- VIII. Commitment required for all stations to have available staff support at all times and not just during peak periods.
- IX. All staff to have undertaken wheel chair and ramp use training.
- X. Dedicated areas on platforms with people with disabilities.

Transport for London

In reaching its recommendations, the sub-committee came to the following **CONCLUSIONS**:

- I. Thanks to officers for their attendance and answers to questions
- II. It was made clear by the guest in attendance at this meeting that there were distinct flaws in the 'Turn up and Go' policy and there was a possibility was it was not fulfilling its intentions.
- III. The changes made to platforms 1 and 4 at West Croydon Station did not work as efficiently as the previous system and has resulted in negative impact to passengers with people with disabilities severely disadvantaged.
- IV. It was concerning that there were reports of weekend closures of ticket offices which impacted on passenger safety as well as ability to obtain information as needed.
- V. Data sharing was underutilised and there was a need for exploration of better use of what was in place to enable improvements to services
- VI. Improvements were needed in customer service, responsibility and ownership by staff

The sub-committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that:

- I. The 'Turn up and Go' Policy was not working as it should and a formal response was required on the effectiveness of this policy. Evidence was needed on customer satisfaction of this policy.
- II. Specific remedial or permanent action on reduction of impact of issues with the changes made to platforms 1 and 4 for disabled passengers to be provided.
- III. Consideration be given to the implementation of electric charging points at stations for wheelchair users.
- IV. Commitment required for all stations to have available staff support at all times and not just during peak periods.
- V. All staff to have undertaken wheel chair and ramp use training
- VI. Rationalisation of appropriate customer service standards across services by staff on the concourse and platforms
- VII. The EQIA and TFL's own assessment document be provided to the sub-committee

Network Rail

In reaching its recommendations, the sub-committee came to the following **CONCLUSIONS**:

- I. Thanks to officers for their attendance and answers to questions.
- II. Members were encouraged and positive about the work to be carried out Norwood Junction.
- III. It would be beneficial for a feasibility assessment to be carried out at Norbury Station to improve access arrangements.
- IV. There was concerns about securing funding for the project to be realised and members were not convinced that following consultation

that the community realised that funding was not yet secured for the work to be carried out.

- V. It was important that connections to suburbs be improved.
- VI. It was important for the Council, Councillors and community of Croydon to lobby government for funding of this project.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that:

- I. Timescale to be provided in regards to demolition of the Royal Mail building
- II. It was important that expectations be managed and for it to be made clear to the community that funding was not yet available for the proposed works to be carried out as yet.
- III. An assessment of access arrangements at Norbury Station be undertaken
- IV. To explore the metrolisation, or suburban connection which was needed to provide greater links for Croydon with its neighbouring boroughs.
- V. Consideration be given to the creation of a station team at London Bridge, similar to one that exists at Victoria station to ensure clear visibility of passenger assistance
- VI. Dedicated areas on platforms for people with disabilities.

27/19 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 10.17 pm

Signed:

Date:

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For general release

REPORT TO:	Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub Committee 1st October 2019
SUBJECT:	South London Waste Partnership, Annual Review
LEAD OFFICERS:	Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director – Place Steve Iles, Director of Streets
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Stuart Collins Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Tom Lawrence, Head of Environment

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item has been identified by the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub Committee as an area of scrutiny.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To note the impact that the SLWP contract will bring to the delivery of services

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report sets out the progress of the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) Lot 1 contract which commenced for street cleansing in March 2018 and waste and recycling in September 2018.
- 1.2 This report details the arrangements for the South London Waste Contract with Veolia, and provides a service update showing progress to date with each element of the contract.
- 1.3 Veolia’s solution delivers significant benefits to Croydon over the course of the contract term. In addition to delivering savings in the region of £5M per annum the new contract is underpinned by a set of performance indicators which set the contractor challenging targets aimed at driving up performance in key areas such as missed collections and street cleanliness. With penalties associated with failure to meet these targets, the contractor has also set out a robust monitoring approach to ensure these standards are upheld.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) was formed in 2003 between the boroughs of Croydon, Kingston, Merton, and Sutton and has a proven record of providing improved and more cost-effective waste management services through the procurement of complex waste disposal treatment, recycling and Household Reuse and Recycling Centre contracts. The SLWP itself is not a legal entity and thus procures its contracts through one of the borough members of the Partnership in this case, Croydon Council.
- 2.2 Officers from the four partner boroughs explored opportunities for future delivery of a range of high quality environmental services. An options analysis was undertaken to assess the merits of procuring services in partnership, as opposed to procuring alone, or retaining existing arrangements. The boroughs made an assessment of delivery, procurement options and modelling savings based on joint procurement by all boroughs. The modelling suggested savings in the region of 10% from procuring jointly with the potential to achieve savings in excess of this if the partner boroughs harmonised these services.
- 2.3 On this basis a business case for a joint procurement exercise for the following services was agreed in each of the boroughs between November 2014 and January 2015:

Lot 1 (All boroughs)	Lot 2 (Sutton & Merton only)
Waste collection	Parks and grounds maintenance
Street cleaning	Cemeteries
Commercial waste (optional service)	Highway verge maintenance
Winter Maintenance	Tree maintenance (excluding inspections)
Vehicle maintenance and procurement	Sports and play facilities management

- 2.4 Following an endorsement from the Joint Waste Committee on Tuesday 7 June 2016. On 11 July 2016 Cabinet endorsed Veolia as the preferred bidder for the Lot 1 Contract The Contract was signed in March 2017.
- 2.5 Following contract procurement savings are around 20% and are forecast to save the four boroughs £56m over the next eight years (£47.4m on Lot 1 and £8.6m on Lot 2), based on a scenario where service budgets were inflated at 1% each year.
- 2.6 For Croydon the financial implications of the award of this contract to Veolia will result in revenue savings to the council of £5.1m per annum against a revenue budget of £14.069m. For the full initial 8 year period of the contract the council will save £34.297m against a cumulative budget for the duration of

the 8 years of £98.489m.

3. THE SLWP CONTRACT

3.1 This contract is provided by Veolia and although different boroughs use different waste containment methods, the materials collected are the same, thus harmonising waste collection services across the four boroughs. The new street cleansing service began in March 2018 and the new waste collection service in Croydon began in September 2018. As well as realising substantial cost saving the new contract are underpinned by a robust set of Service Performance Indicators (SPIs).

3.2 The objectives agreed prior to the commencement of the procurement exercise sought to ensure that levels of service delivery would be maintained, with a contribution to the required savings targets and to enhance the environmental performance of the services. These were:

- To target optimum savings on the costs of service provision through lower service costs and increasing recycle revenues.
- To deliver to residents a high performing service, achieving high levels of customer satisfaction.
- To provide improved environmental and carbon outcomes in the way we deliver environmental services.

3.3 Whilst the provider of Lot 1 services is Veolia, who were the incumbent provider of Croydon's waste and street cleansing services, there were key enhancements to the way these services are delivered compared to the previous contract.

3.4 The changes to waste collection service are supported by effective contract management and a programme of education focusing on waste prevention and minimisation to help ensure Croydon reaches its ambitious target of recycling over 50% of its household waste. The new service will also contribute to the wider agenda of improving environmental sustainability and promoting the 'circular economy' within Croydon.

4. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS OF THE SLWP CONTRACT

4.1 The table below highlights the key areas of the SWOT for the SLWP Lot 1 contract.

4.2 The financial saving of this contract is a major benefit, including guaranteed incomes to the boroughs for the recycle, garden waste and commercial waste, as well as the economies of scale that could be negotiated over four borough. The contract itself demands faster rectifications for missed collections of waste and recycling and higher grades of street cleansing than were being achieved under the previous contract. By pooling communications resources, there has

been a strong reach and consistent messages across the four boroughs, helping to establish the partnership brand. The prominence of the Partnership has helped in co-ordinating responses to Government consultations and leading on initiatives such as promoting the circular economy.

- 4.3 There are also some challenges to the partnership approach. For example, it can take longer to reach consensus than if the boroughs were making these decisions alone. The individual boroughs were all collecting waste in very different ways prior to the start of the partnership, meaning they started off in distinctly different places with regard to their contractual performance. This has meant that the rollout of new services will be more challenging in some boroughs – those making the biggest changes – than others, and the impact felt more acutely. There has also been the challenge of integrating the existing ICT systems to reflect the new service as well as setting up new monitoring approaches for contract performance. Croydon and Kingston are at an advantage in this respect as Veolia were the incumbent contractors for these services prior to the partnership, however, much work has been required, and is continuing, in order to ensure the correct reporting mechanisms are in place and the contractor is held to account in the event of any service failures.
- 4.4 The rollout of the new service provided the platform for Croydon to reconsider its bin configuration with a view to minimising waste, improving the recycling rate and generating further cost savings. The bold new solution centred around reducing the size of landfill bins whilst increasing the capacity available for recycling for kerbside residents. In doing so, Croydon recycled 48% of its waste in 2018/19, an increase of ten percent on the previous year, and is on track to meet the target of recycling 50% of household waste by the end of 2019/20.
- 4.5 Operation National Sword in China, is a campaign design to cut down the illegal shipment of waste into China. This is to address the fact that China has long been a favoured destination for those seeking cheap disposal of waste from abroad, often with general waste being falsely labelled as ‘recycling’. The outcome of this is that China will now only accept a maximum tolerance of 0.5% contamination of imported recyclate. Although Veolia do not export recyclable material from the SLWP to China, the effect of Operation National Sword has had a knock-on effect with reproprocessors across the world insisting on low levels of contamination for recyclate, effectively creating a buyers’ market, with reports of material collected for recycling having to be landfilled. The Partnership is in a better position than most to mitigate this as kerbside recycling is collected ‘twin stream’ rather than co-mingled, meaning that the paper, which is the most valuable element, is kept separately from other materials.
- 4.6 Contamination rates are most pertinent to communal recycling from blocks of flats which typically have a lower level of recycling than kerbside properties. Due to the fact that there is no individual responsibility for communal facilities, the rates of contamination tend to be higher than kerbside properties. In 2018/19 the recycling rate from flats was just 20.5%. To help tackle the ongoing issues with waste and recycling the Council will soon be employing a flats officer to help drive up performance, ensure the communal bins are located in easily accessible places, there is correct signage listing the materials that can be recycled and ensuring the lids are locked.

5. STREET SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE (new service operational

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procuring with through SLWP has led to savings of over £5M per annum in contractual costs. • Harmonised collections across 4 boroughs. • Consistency of branding/communications messages. • Has enabled a reconfiguration of waste containment • Higher standards of street cleansing, fly-tip removal and recycling missed collections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making processes can take longer as agreement needed by 4 boroughs. • Localised branding could be lost. • Negative publicity in one borough could reflect badly on all boroughs. • Contract termination would rely on agreement from all boroughs.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing size of landfill bin and increasing provision of larger bins for recycling has led to higher recycling rates and c£1m p.a. in avoided landfill costs. • Opportunity to lead on projects promoting circular economy, waste minimisation, minimising single use plastics etc. • Potential for boroughs to work with Veolia to expand income from areas such as bin hire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The global position re lower tolerances of contamination in recyclates means only high quality recycle is being accepted by reprocessors, may lead to rejection of recycle.

since March 2018)

- 5.1 Fly tips must now be cleared twice as quickly as they were under the previous Croydon contract with Veolia. The new service standard is to clear fly-tipped material within 24 hours of notification, compared to the previous contract's requirement of 48 hours.

- 5.2 Croydon introduced a free bulky waste collection service in May 2018. The impact on this has been that the number of residents booking a bulky waste service has increased from around 1629 per month to 3274 per month, indicating that this is a popular service, particularly for those who don't have access to a vehicle and who can't get to the Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HRRCs). Because a free bulky waste service was not originally part of the SLWP contract, Croydon is still required to pay Veolia the income they would have otherwise received if the service was chargeable. The additional demand for the service has created some logistical issues for the service, which has affected the length of time people booking the service have had to wait for a collection. To tackle this, Veolia have agreed to put in two additional crews

(three in total) between Monday and Friday and three additional crews over the weekend. This has had the effect of reducing the waiting times which are currently 22 working days.

- 5.3 It is difficult to gauge the impact the free bulky waste service has had on fly tipping as in 2018/19 there were 22,184 reported flytips in Croydon compared to 5,977 for Q1 in 2019/20, however there are a number of external factors including a population growth of 3,500. It is equally challenging to accurately compare the number of fly tips across different boroughs as there is a lack of consistency nationally about the way fly tips are reported and recorded. Many local authorities make a distinction between 'abandoned waste' and a fly tip, which Croydon currently do not. As such, the number of fly tips in Croydon is higher than it might otherwise be. That said, over 95% of these fly tips are removed within one working day of being reported.
- 5.4 Street cleansing has changed from being a frequency based service, to being an output based service. Streets are no longer required to be swept on a certain day, they are required to be swept and maintained to a required grade. Streets must be serviced to a grade a standard as detailed in National Indicator 195 (NI195) at the time of sweep and maintained to such a level that they never fall below a grade B. Any reported failure to meet these standards must be rectified within one working day. Whilst the SPI is based on maintaining a service standard, rather than a frequency, there is still a timetable for street cleansing, in each road, based on local knowledge, number of reported issues and known footfall. The idea is that this timetable can be adjusted based on demand, ensuring the service standards are achieved. It is also a contractual obligation for street cleansing sacks to be removed on the same day of production.
- 5.5 In many parts of the borough performance has improved as a result of the new service. Random sampling of streets show that around 85% of streets around the borough are being maintained to the contractual standards. In a borough of Croydon's size, that still represents a lot of streets falling below the standard, and there is work to do, particularly in the known hotspot areas to ensure standards are maintained. With this in mind, instead of all sampling being random, officers will now undertake 50% of their joint inspections in litter hotspot areas, with a view to carry on returning with Veolia to those areas until a sustained improvement has been seen.
- 5.6 Approximately 270-300 street cleansing issues are reported in Croydon each month. Considering the vast size of the borough and the fact that there are over 700 miles of road in the borough, this number is relatively low. 97% of these issues are responded to and rectified within the contractual timeframe of one working day.
- 5.7 Whilst the rate at which street cleansing issues are responded to and rectified is generally high, there is some work to do to ensure consistency of reporting from individual street cleansing operatives. The plan is for Veolia staff and Council officers to take an 'eyes and ears' approach to proactively reporting these issues when they are seen, rather than waiting for residents to report them. Work is underway by the Neighbourhood Safety Officers to produce a dashboard for Veolia's mess rooms showing the number of prosecutions and fixed penalties that have been issued for environmental offences, thereby strengthening the relationship between the two organisations and providing reassurance that the information Veolia's staff are passing on is being put to

good use by the Council.

6.0 **WASTE & RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (new services operational since September 2018)**

- 6.1 Before moving into the new collection arrangements, Croydon recycled 38% of its household waste. Whilst this was above the London average, it was felt that, given the comprehensive range of materials are collected by Croydon's kerbside recycling scheme, where over 70% of household waste could be recycled, there was scope for further improvement and that further savings could be made due to the considerable difference between the cost of recycling vs the cost of disposing of residual waste.
- 6.2 One of the explanations for Croydon's recycling rate not being as high as it might have been was that the wheeled bin for landfill equated to 60% of the total fortnightly waste capacity. This means the size of the landfill bins was far larger than most households should need if they recycle correctly. At the same time, dry recycling capacity was limited to two 55L boxes. Whilst some residents ordered additional boxes or presented excess recycling in plastic bags, the reality for many was that when the recycling boxes become full, any excess recycling simply went into the landfill bin, which had enough spare capacity for this not to be a problem. An additional problem of the recycling boxes was that the lids often became damaged or went missing after being emptied, meaning that material from these boxes often blew down the streets on windy days, meaning the material wasn't captured for recycling and the streets looked untidy.
- 6.3 The disparity between the capacity offered for landfill waste and recycling each fortnight was driving the wrong behaviours, limiting the amount of recycling being collected and in some cases, giving some people the option not to recycle at all. In order to help realise the goal of Croydon being one of London's cleanest, greenest boroughs, a change was needed.
- 6.4 The rollout of the new collection services under the SLWP represented an opportunity to think more holistically about the way in which we collected waste and to reduce the environmental impact of sending large amounts of waste to disposal. Disposing of residual waste is waste is not only more harmful to the environment than recycling, it is also a far more expensive option. By reducing the size of the landfill bins and increasing the capacity for recycling it was anticipated that Croydon's recycling rate would increase to over 50% by 2019/20, making it one of London's top performers and the data so far indicates that we are on track to do so.

In summary the changes were:

- 240L residual waste bin – replaced by a 180L bin
- 55L paper and card recycling box – replaced by a 240L bin
- 55L dry mixed recycling box – replaced by a 240L bin (this will be the existing landfill bin which will be restickered for its new use following the final collection)

- Food bins/caddies – remained the same.
- 6.5 Giving residents larger wheeled bins for recycling, whilst at the same time reducing the size of the residual waste bins encourages recycling and gives residents the incentive to reduce the amount of landfill waste they create, especially as side waste (residual waste that is not contained within the wheeled bin) will not be taken.
- 6.6 There are certain circumstances where residents can apply for a larger bin (240L) for residual waste. For example, households with five or more people or where medical conditions dictate that there is a larger than usual volume of waste being produced.
- 6.7 An added advantage of putting the dry recycling items into wheeled bins is that this has greatly reduced the amount of spillage and windblown litter from the recycling boxes, resulting in cleaner streets and more recycling being captured. Many of the boxes were previously presented for collection without lids, meaning that on windy days, recyclable items were blown out of the boxes and onto the street, causing problems for the street sweepers. During the collection operation the contents of the boxes used to be decanted into larger wheeled 'transfer bins' which in turn, created further spillages. Fortunately such issues have been considerably reduced due to the containment offered by the wheeled bins.
- 6.8 Although the footprint of the new containers is extremely similar to the existing boxes, there were some properties that were not suitable for the new bins. Survey work was carried out to identify these properties and alternative arrangements were made, dependent on property type. Despite not being part of Veolia's contractual requirement, a collection service was arranged for any unwanted recycling boxes. Operationally this proved more challenging than anticipated due to the fact that Veolia were rolling out a similar service change to Croydon in Merton at the time and there was conflicting demand for resources.
- 6.9 In addition to the changes in waste containers, for the majority of households there was a change to their collection day. 78% of residents' collection day changed as the rounds were reorganised in order to make them more efficient and ensure there was a saturation of resource in the same area on any given day and minimise the effect of vehicle breakdowns.
- 6.10 The change in waste containerisation was a bold decision by the Council and was one which went beyond the original plan for the rollout of waste services under the SLWP Lot 1 contract. These changes were necessary in order to help achieve the ambition for Croydon to become one of the top recycling boroughs in London and to reduce the financial burden of sending waste that could have been recycled to be disposed either in landfill or an Energy from Waste facility.
- 6.11 A change of this magnitude which required the delivery of over 250,000 new waste receptacles, the rescheduling of rounds and a change of collection day for over 75% of households in the borough was far from a simple task. It was inevitable that there would be considerable disruption to the services as a result. However, officers worked with Veolia to ensure that the extent of this disruption was minimised and that there was a robust communication plan in place to engage with residents about the service changes before they were rolled out and that alternative arrangements were available for non-suitable properties.

The communication plan included extensive details on the councils website, FAQs, letters and leaflets to all residents, frequent messaging via “Your Croydon”, a series of Roadshows around the borough and a dedicated contact number and email address set up specifically for the new service. These were widely communicated to residents and elected members.

- 6.12 Built into the cost savings in waste disposal has been the employment of six officers who will be based within the Environment and Leisure service area. These officers will work closely with residents and Veolia to assist residents who have questions about the new service and will give support to residents on how to do the right thing with the new service.
- 6.13 Whilst the rollout of the new kerbside brought a number of operational challenges, the level of disruption was kept to a minimum and the hard work of officers and Veolia ensured that a business as usual situation was reached more quickly than anticipated. Communications to residents have reflected this, with the emphasis on the long term benefits the new service will bring. Additional staff were employed to help deal with the extra demand and officers worked intensively with Veolia to ensure operational difficulties were minimised. The success of the new service was recognised nationally and resulted in the team receiving a Special Recognition Award at the Croydon Awards and in Croydon being shortlisted for ‘Best New Service’ at the MRW Awards.
- 6.14 The number of missed collections missed across the borough is less than one percent of all collections made. However, the level of missed collections per 100,000 households is higher than anticipated which is something officers are working with the SLWP and Veolia to resolve.
- 6.15 One area of the service where missed collections has been a particular challenge has been the communal ‘bulk’ collection of refuse from blocks of flats. Whereas the kerbside collection service was rescheduled in September 2018 to a ‘wave approach’ which ensured vehicles and crews were all in one geographical area, the flats collections were strategically not changed at the same time in order to manage the level of disruption. However, commercial waste, which used to be co-collected with communal waste, moved to a self-contained service and was removed from the flats rounds along with some of the vehicles used for the service. The result of this was that the flats rounds were now sparsely packed, meaning that the crews had longer distance to travel between each pickup and struggled to complete their work. In July 2019 these rounds were reconfigured to reflect the ‘wave approach’ of kerbside properties and ensure resource is in similar geographic zones, giving additional resilience and improving service continuity. The rescheduled service for communal properties is still very much in its ‘bedding in’ period, with crews having to learn about the nuances of the new rounds such as access arrangements, bin store locations, keys and fobs etc., however, the signs are encouraging and officers from the service have been working with colleagues in Housing and in the private sector to ensure that residents are aware of the changes and any missed collections are correctly logged.
- 6.16 As yet, there have been no changes for residents living in flats above shops, however, in the coming months plans are in place to provide these residents with different coloured bags for waste and recycling. As commercial waste customers will also be using coloured bags, it will be easy to identify those who are presenting waste illegally –e.g. in black sacks- and Veolia’s staff will be trained in evidence gathering in order to assist the council’s enforcement team

in identifying and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

- 6.17 The Commercial Waste Service is now run and administered in its entirety by Veolia. Businesses are required to have a commercial waste agreement in place, but are not obligated to use Veolia as their service provider
- 6.18 Croydon offers an assisted collection service to residents who are physically unable to move their bins to the edge of the property and have no other person living at the property who could do so on their behalf. Currently 14,140 residents' properties receive an assisted collection, meaning they have their waste collected from their doorstep rather than at the usual point of collection, which is at the boundary of the property. This is a huge number of properties receiving assisted collections and the process of Veolia having to enter each of these properties and pull containers out to the vehicle and then return them to the doorstep is one which adds considerably to the working day. Of course, where people genuinely need this service, the council is more than happy to continue to provide it, however, the extremely high number of assisted collections highlights the fact that these lists have never been reviewed, meaning there are likely to be a lot of people currently receiving the service who no longer live in the borough, possibly because they have moved or have passed away. As such, a survey of all assisted service users is planned in order to gauge the number of people still requiring the service, with an expectation that the numbers will be significantly reduced.
- 6.19 There are currently 14 Neighbourhood Recycling Centres in Croydon where residents can bring their materials for recycling. Due to the comprehensive range of materials that can now be recycled at the kerbside, the future of these sites, which are often hotspots for litter and fly tipping are being reviewed with a view to removing sites in areas with kerbside recycling and carrying out works to reinstate the sites where necessary.
- 6.20 In 2018/19 Croydon undertook 18 educational visits, visiting 7347 primary and secondary school children and delivering educational assemblies. Plans are in place for a further series of visits in 2019/20.
- 6.21 The Street Champions Scheme, whereby residents can commit to helping report environmental issues and organising litter picks and other community clean-ups has 360 Champions. In 2018/19 139 clean up events took place, with 1,189 volunteers collecting over 1,679 bags of waste for recycling which would have otherwise been disposed of. The Street Champions scheme was also recognised nationally when Croydon was awarded a golden litter picker at Keep Britain Tidy's Volunteer Awards, acknowledging that in one month 381 street champions organised 21 litter picks and collected 300 bags of litter.

7.0 SERVICE STANDARDS AND REPORTING UNDER THE NEW CONTRACT

- 7.1 The contractor has a ratcheted set of targets based on reducing the number of missed collections per 100,000 properties for each material stream.
- 7.2 Garden waste is now an all-year round service instead of stopping in the winter as it has previously done. This means that instead of receiving approximately 13 collections each year, residents now get 26 collections per year, only paying

£1.50 extra than they did previously. Currently the service has 19,897 subscribers', showing it is a popular service amongst residents.

- 7.3 Every year, for a two week period at the beginning of January, Veolia will arrange for the free collection of Christmas trees from kerbside residents, for composting.
- 7.4 It is envisaged that some of these service standards will change over time as the contract evolves. There is currently a review of the SPIs underway as part of the contract's Annual Review process in order to ensure they drive the right behaviours, having now had sufficient time to look at performance data.
- 7.5 In order to ensure that the performance of the contract can be managed effectively, it is essential that service users report these issues via the correct channels. Veolia have very specific timeframes with which to respond to rectify service issues such as missed collections, streets below grade and the removal of flytips, however, these are only enforceable if these issues are reported correctly via the Don't Mess With Croydon App and My Account.
- 7.6 Unfortunately many service users currently do not use these reporting channels, choosing instead to direct service issues to individual officers or councillors. In a borough the size of Croydon, the quantity of issues being reported this way makes it impossible for officers to pick these up within the contractual timeframes, meaning that often there is no contractual requirement for Veolia to return and rectify. It also means that the contractor cannot be held to account for these service failures and financial penalties cannot be applied.
- 7.7 Finally, not reporting through the correct channels means that the contract cannot be managed in a proactive way as data which could have otherwise been used to build up an accurate picture of hotspot areas and identify trends is lost. It is therefore of utmost importance that officers and councillors refer service users to the correct reporting mechanisms for these issues.

8.0 LOOKING AHEAD FOR A SUSTAINABLE CROYDON

- 8.1 In May 2019 a small delegation of officers and Cllrs visited the City of Ingolstadt in Germany, meeting with Johannes Volhalls, Head of Waste Services. Ingolstadt currently recycles close to 70% of its household waste, with almost all of the remainder being used to generate energy through thermal treatment.
- 8.2 The service model in Ingolstadt differed to Croydon in that the Waste Services department, whilst still being a council-based service, is run as a separate not for profit company. At the end of the year if the company makes a profit, this is fed back into the Council and, if it makes a loss, the deficit is funded by the Council. Rather than waste services being part of the wider 'council tax', the service is kept separately and residents are charged annually on a sliding scale based on the size of their refuse bin. There is no charge for the collection of recycling. The result of this is that the majority of households opt for a ninety litre bin, collected fortnightly. Comparably this is much smaller than what local authorities in the UK are offering and forces people who don't want to pay extra for a larger container for their rubbish, to recycle as much as possible.8.4One of points of note was that with the right recycling facilities in place, the majority of households were able to get by with just ninety litres of residual waste capacity per fortnight.

- 8.3 The visit to Ingolstadt also included a visit to an anaerobic digestion plant, used by the City treat their compostable waste, an underground communal waste and recycling area in a block of flats, a supermarket reverse vending facility and a reuse shop run by the City in partnership with the charity xxxx and used to provide training opportunities for the long-term unemployed. The delegation also met with the Heads of Audi's Environmental Sustainability Team with a view to Croydon tapping into some wider opportunities for match funding via their Environmental Fund.
- 8.4 The Council is particularly keen to implement some of these ideas back to Croydon, particularly having a reuse shop in the borough where residents can access good quality furniture and clothing. To this effect, officers are looking into the possibility of working with local charities to facilitate the diversion of high quality white goods and furniture from the bulky waste stream and into service for the homes of care leavers and other vulnerable residents.
- 8.5 Also, with the number of new properties being built in the borough and space at a premium, underground recycling could play a part of creating a space saving solution which allows greater volumes of waste and recycling to be stored on site.
- 8.6 Other areas that the Council are currently investigating include:
- Installation of water fountains at key hubs across the borough, and linking the borough with the 'Refill' App so residents can find their nearest free refill site.
 - Supporting the 'Plastic Free City' initiative by phasing out the use of disposable coffee cups in Council buildings and beyond
 - Ensuring all council staff are using reusable coffee cups and phasing out the use of disposable cups in Council buildings and working with local businesses to do the same.
 - Working with supermarkets and manufacturers to introduce refill stations for cleaning products such as washing liquids, fabric conditioners

9.0 ADDITIONAL SLWP CONTRACTS

Contract	Contracting parties	Annual contract value	Contract length (and date of termination/potential extension if applicable)	Description
Waste disposal - Beddington ERF	LB Croydon and Viridor	£21.5m	25 years (2044)	25 year contract for waste disposal, including construction of an Energy Recovery Facility in Beddington
Household Reuse and Recycling Centres	LB Croydon and Veolia	£3.5m	7 years (2022)	Operation and management of the boroughs' six Household Reuse and Recycling centres
Transport and Residual Waste management	RB Kingston and Viridor	£1.6m	15 years (2022)	The two contracts were linked through a 2014 DoV and cover:

Marketing of recyclates and treatment of green and food waste	RB Kingston and Viridor	£2.7m	15 years (2022)	<p>Residual - (now historic) use of waste disposal via landfill,</p> <p>Recycling - Receipt, haulage and recycling of commingled dry recycling.</p> <p>Garden waste - Receipt, haulage and composting of garden waste.</p> <p>Food waste - Receipt, haulage and composting of food waste.</p>
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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

NONE

APPENDICES:

Appendix A, Definition of litter grades
 Appendix B, Map of New Collection days

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Appendix A- Definitions of Litter Grades

GRADE A - no litter or refuse

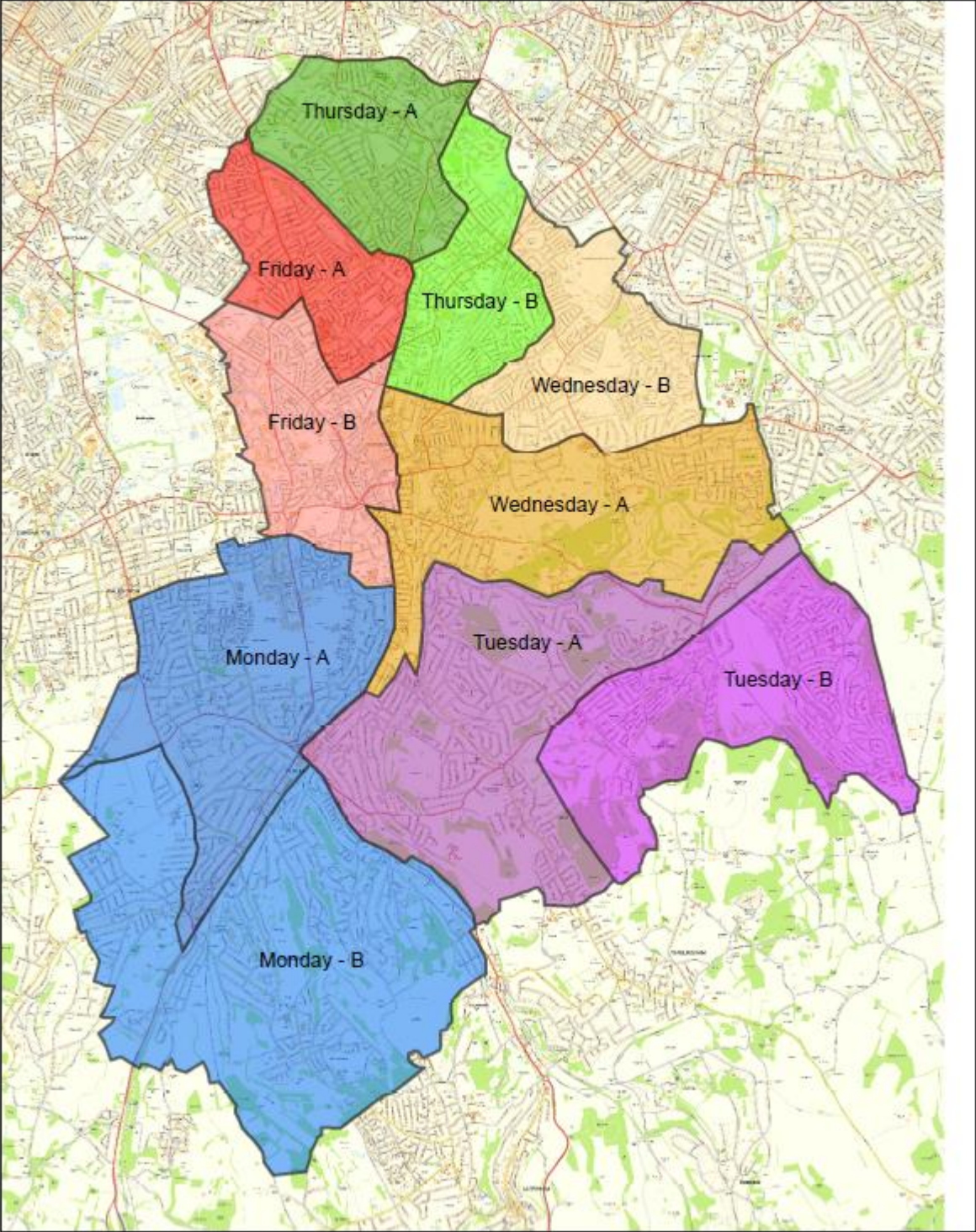


GRADE B - predominantly free of litter and refuse except for some small items



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Croydon Day/Week Rounds



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For general release

REPORT TO:	Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub Committee 1st October 2019
SUBJECT:	Update on the Grounds Maintenance Service
LEAD OFFICERS:	Steve Iles, Director of Streets
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Stuart Collins Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Tom Lawrence, Head of Environment

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	This item has been identified by the Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub Committee as an area of scrutiny.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To note the progress to date for bringing the Grounds Maintenance Service In-house.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report sets out the progress to date following the insourcing of the grounds maintenance service which came back into the council's control as an 'in-house' service on 1st February 2019. Prior to this the service was contracted out and run by Idverde Services Ltd (previously Quadron Ltd).
- 1.2 The mobilisation of an in-house service followed the announcement by the Administration that the Council would not be extending the contract with Idverde which was due to expire on January 31st 2019.
- 1.3 The Grounds Maintenance Service is one of a number of services supporting the strategic development and maintenance of parks and open spaces (Facilities Management, Active Lifestyles, Safety etc.) and the new in-house service continues to be integral in activating and sustaining Croydon's assets.

The Active Lifestyle service oversee the 'Client' function for parks and as such are currently leading a number of programmes of work such as natural capital accounting (quantifying the health and wellbeing capital of Croydon's parks), masterplanning, launching outdoor active spaces, regenerating playgrounds and working in partnership with leisure

providers, GLL, to activate and invest in Croydon's parks and leisure facilities. The service also co-ordinates the biodiversity and land management for nature conservation across the borough, through supporting over 40 Friends of Park Groups, who provide in excess of 5,000 volunteer hours per annum and a number of successful partnerships, including Croydon TCV and the Downlands Partnership. Both organisations deliver conservation volunteering, conservation grazing and land management functions to assist the council in looking after 2 SSSI, 4 Local Nature Reserves, woodland, heathland, ponds and lakes. The Service also manages the funding relationship with Natural England and Rural Payments Agency with regards to Stewardship Agreements for high value conservation sites.

The Live Well agenda (promoting healthy lifestyle choices to residents) underpins all of these work streams and the in-house grounds maintenance service will continue to add value to these agendas where applicable.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The grounds maintenance (GM) function encompasses a wide range of services in relation to Croydon's 127 parks and open spaces as well as the highway verges. These include; planting, grass cutting, hedge trimming, and 'legging up' (cutting of basal growth up to 1.8m) of trees, locking and unlocking of parks, sweeping, general grounds maintenance including the maintenance of planters and litter bin emptying in parks.
- 2.2 The previous contract for the Grounds Maintenance service was let to Quadron Ltd, who later became Idverde following a takeover. The contract price was £2.9M p.a. At the time of going to tender, the council placed a cap of £3M on the amount bidders could price for their services.
- 2.3 The contract was let for an initial period of 5 years with an optional extension of 5 years with the mutual agreement of the council and Idverde. The initial contract term ended on 31 January 2019.
- 2.4 There were elements of the contract specification that, whilst outcome based, were overly prescriptive and not achievable with the level of resource employed. An example was the requirement for the majority of grassed areas in the borough to be maintained to between 20-50mm at all times.
- 2.5 The result was that large portions of the borough's grassed areas were often out of specification, in some cases even straight after they had just been cut, and the council's monitoring officers were torn between managing to the letter of the contract and taking a more pragmatic view.
- 2.6 In the summer of 2017 the number of defaults and rectification notices issued by the council's monitoring team for contractual breaches, including grass cutting, constituted a 'termination event'. Whilst the council chose not to pursue this option, and tried to work with Idverde, it was clear that the level of performance had fallen below an acceptable level.

- 2.7 The council commissioned consultants Ricardo Energy and Environment (Ricardo) to work alongside council officers and carry out a review of the current ground maintenance service and value for money against other suppliers in the marketplace, benchmarking with other London Boroughs. Their Key findings were:
- That despite the horticultural work generally being of a good standard (there are nine green flag parks in the borough), the Borough's green spaces were let down by the poor performance of grass cutting operations
 - Based on the evidence of the value-for-money assessment that the cost of the grounds maintenance operations being carried out within the Borough was cheaper than both our private sector market cost and in-house services could provide the same level of service for.
- 2.8 The work done by Ricardo had indicated that due to the cap that had been placed on bidders when the original contract had been procured that all the possible options for the reprocurement of the grounds maintenance service would have been more costly to the council.

3. THE IN-HOUSE SERVICE

- 3.1 Following the announcement that the service was coming back in-house, which was also a commitment in Labour's 2018 manifesto, work began on mobilising the in house service. Representatives from the key service areas formed a Project Team which met regularly to ensure the transition between the two services ran as smoothly as possible.
- 3.2 Whilst an in-house service is not cheaper (the cost is around £3.9M p.a), it is more robust, with a greater degree of flexibility. The fact that there is no longer a contract gives officers more control and adaptability in running the service which perhaps was not possible when the service was contracted. The increased cost also reflects the fact that the new service is compliant with the London Living Wage which has resulted in twenty three members of staff who were previously being paid below the LLW being brought up to the LLW standard as a minimum.
- 3.3 Many of the tools and machinery used by Idverde were assessed to be in good working condition and were purchased by the council in order to ensure continuity of service from day one. Buying much of this equipment new would have involved a longer lead time than was available due to the proximity of the 'go live' date for the new service.
- 3.4 Arrangements for the servicing of vehicles is carried out by Veolia in their workshops at Stubbs Mead Depot as part of the South London Waste Partnership Contract.
- 3.5 New hand tools were ordered and arrangements were made so that the contracts for internet/electricity at Central Nursery at Conduit Lane could be novated into the new service.
- 3.6 The plan is for the in-house service to operate using the same number of

staff as the contracted service. However, only sixty of the seventy two employees who were on the TUPE list transferred over to the council. Two notable members of staff who opted not to transfer across were the Contract Manager and a Supervisor. Work is currently underway to recruit into the vacant posts and in the meantime, the Head of Environment and Leisure is working closely with the Deputy Contract Manager who is acting up into the Manager position, to ensure continuity of service.

- 3.7 The Council will be looking to review the entire service to reflect the changes. For example council's monitoring officers' function will need to reflect the fact that there is no longer a client/contractor relationship, meaning that whilst there will still be a focus on ensuring standards are maintained, the onus will be on these officers to ensure adequate supervision is in place and that performance is recorded and made available for scrutiny.
- 3.8 An induction meeting for the council's new employees was held on 1st February 2019 to welcome those employees to Croydon Council from Idverde. A key benefit of working for Croydon was the chance for employees to join the council's pension scheme, as well as many staff who were previously being paid at an hourly rate below the London Living Wage, being brought up to the London Living Wage.
- 3.9 Staff received induction briefings from the Cabinet Member for Clean, Green Croydon, the Executive Director of Place, Director of Public Realm, Head of Environment and Leisure, Fleet Manager, Head of Health and Safety, Head of Employment Relations and employment relations. After the session there were also surgeries on HR and Pensions which staff could attend. Staff were also provided with branded Croydon Council uniforms.
- 3.10 Staff were briefed about the importance of representing the council and being the eyes and ears for reporting anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, knife crime, etc. It is hoped that by bringing this service in-house there will be much greater scope for ensuring such issues are recorded and acted upon.
- 3.11 Training has been undertaken to consolidate staff's existing training on tractors and hand tools. Staff have also been trained via toolbox talks on key issues such as equalities, data protection and the council's code of conduct.
- 3.12 The new specification for grass cutting is based upon achieving a 3 week cut cycle across the borough which means that whilst there will be some variation in grass height, dependent on seasonality, it should result in a uniform attractive, uniform appearance of grassed areas across the borough .
- 3.13 Prior to the 'go-live' date for the new service, the council met with the various 'friends' groups to ask for feedback on what they would like to see in the new specification, Whilst not all the ideas could be incorporated straight away, as we start to plan for the future operating model, it is hoped that the new service can serve these groups in a way that is more flexible than perhaps the previous arrangements were. The

council also gave assurances that the community payback scheme would be continuing.

4. THE FUTURE

- 4.1 Operationally, the scale of the change has brought several challenges for the new service. Whilst generally speaking, it can be said that the transition into the in-house service was much less eventful than anticipated, there have still been issues setting up new suppliers to the Council's purchasing systems
- 4.2, A full service review is planned over the coming months, however, the original completion date of September 2019 has not been possible due to the demands of getting a new service up and running. As stated previously the Contract Manager from Idverde chose not to transfer across to the in-house service, meaning that the service was without the most senior figure from the previous setup. The Deputy Manager, has been acting up into the role and has done a sterling job in getting the new service off to a good start. Plans are underway to recruit into the role permanently. Additionally a further eleven staff chose not to transfer over to Croydon, leaving a considerable labour shortage which had to be plugged by agency staff. Understandably the focus has been on the immediate operational priorities than to shaping the long-term strategic vision for the service. That said, work is ongoing on a service restructure in which we will be working with the relevant Cabinet Members to establish whether the service is fit for purpose and the potential to explore new technologies, innovations and ensure the 'Friends' groups play an active role.
- 4.3 The Council is keen to explore how current practices may be adapted in order to improve biodiversity. Selective 'meadowing' of some of Croydon's green spaces with wildflowers has the potential to help this aim, particularly in terms of promoting spaces with which the dwindling bee population can thrive. Meadowing would also introduce striking bursts of colour, contributing to an overall visually attractive image for the borough. Trials of wildflower meadowing are planned in the near future in order gauge the impact of this technique and to assess the implications for its more widespread use.
- 4.4 Work is currently underway to incorporate bereavement services (cemeteries) into the Grounds Maintenance service. The cemeteries grounds maintenance services are currently provided by Ground Control Ltd, with a contract value of £292k per annum. This was originally let as a five year contract with an option to extend by 2 years which was exercised in 2017. The current contract is due to expire on 1st November 2019.
- 4.5 The tree works services are currently provided by City and Suburban Ltd. The initial contract was awarded in 2008 for a period of 7 years with an extension of 3 years. This contract was due to expire on 31 July 2018, but has been extended by a further 12 months in order to assess the best way of letting the future contract, and whether there is scope for repackaging some of these services in the future GM contract.

Negotiations are currently take a place to extend this arrangement further until March 2019. The current contractual cost is £709,000 pa.

5.0 RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the meeting in October 2018 the Streets and Environment and Homes Scrutiny Committee made five recommendations. The recommendations and the responses to them can be found below:

1. *That the immediate focus for the Grounds Maintenance Service should be on providing its core services at an acceptable level for the residents of Croydon.*

The immediate focus for the newly insourced Grounds Maintenance service has very much been about establishing a business as usual approach and putting in place a regime, particularly around grass cutting that results in the borough maintaining a uniformly attractive and visually appealing appearance. There have been increased resources for litter picking in parks at peak times, which have resulted in considerably fewer complaints than in previous years. Generally speaking the service provided by the team has been more than acceptable and an improvement on that being delivered previously.

2. *That the business plan should be developed on a park specific level.*

Whilst the service specification contains a schedule of works which is broken down to a park specific level, work is underway to prepare a more detailed annual plan reflecting an approach which is focused around local needs.

3. *That consideration should be given to how to consult with the public in those areas without friends groups.*

Over the next year, the service will be working closely with the District Centres and Regeneration team, who have responsibility for co-ordinating and engaging with the Friends of Parks groups to ensure that wherever possible their views can be taken into account in any future planning. Consideration will also be given to how to engage others in the future of our parks, including use of social media and other platforms.

4. *That the Cabinet Member for Clean, Green Croydon be invited to attend the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 1 October 2019 to provide an update on the Service Review and future plans.*

This invitation has been accepted.

5. *That Scrutiny should be consulted before decisions are made that would change the method of service delivery, such as bring a service back in-house.*

Noted for future.

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Background Documents: None

Appendices: None

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Agenda Item 8

REPORT TO:	STREETS ENVIRONMENT AND HOMES SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE 1 October 2019
SUBJECT:	WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20
LEAD OFFICER:	Simon Trevaskis, Senior Democratic Service and Governance Officer- Scrutiny
CABINET MEMBER:	Not applicable

ORIGIN OF ITEM:	The Work Programme is scheduled for consideration at every ordinary meeting of the Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub - Committee.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To consider any additions, amendments or changes to the agreed work programme for the Committee in 2019/20.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This agenda item details the Committee's work programme for the 2019/20 municipal year.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee has the opportunity to discuss any amendments or additions that it wishes to make to the work programme.

2. WORK PROGRAMME

2.1 The work programme

The proposed work programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Members are asked to note that the lines of enquiry for some items have yet to be confirmed and that there are opportunities to add further items to the work programme.

2.2 Additional Scrutiny Topics

Members of the Sub-Committee are invited to suggest any other items that they consider appropriate for the Work Programme. However, due to the time limitations at Committee meetings, it is suggested that no proposed agenda contain more than two items of substantive business in order to allow effective scrutiny of items already listed.

2.3 **Participation in Scrutiny**

Members of the Sub-Committee are also requested to give consideration to any persons that it wishes to attend future meetings to assist in the consideration of agenda items. This may include Cabinet Members, Council or other public agency officers or representatives of relevant communities.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Sub-Committee is recommended to agree the Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20 with any agreed amendments.
- 3.2 The Sub-Committee is recommended to agree that topic reports be produced for relevant substantive agenda items in the future.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDIX 1

Work Programme 2019/20 for the Streets Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Streets, Environment and Homes Sub-Committee

Meeting Date	Item
2 July 2019	1. Update from Rail Service Providers
1 October 2019	1. Question Time: Cabinet Member for Clean Green Croydon 2. South London Waste Partnership Annual Review 3. Update on the Grounds Maintenance Service To include the outcomes of Service Review
19 November 2019	1. Question Time: Cabinet Members for Environment, Transport & Regeneration 2. Sustainable Croydon, to include Climate Change and Air Quality 3. Responsive Repairs Contract
4 February 2020	1. Question Time: Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services 2. Annual Review of Brick by Brick 3. Budget options for the Housing Revenue Account
17 March 2020	1. Public Realm Improvement & Parks and Place Strategy 2. Review of Local Plan
28 April 2020	1. Housing (Topic TBC)

Others items to be considered for scheduling in the work programme:

1. Review of Housing Maintenance Contract
2. Affordable Homes Programme
3. Accommodation & Assets Strategy
4. Fire Safety
5. Public Realm Strategy / Smart City
6. Community-led Neighbourhood plans
7. Work of the Sustainability Working Group (to be established upon adoption of council motion on Climate Change Emergency)
8. Play Strategy
9. Growth Zone (cross-cutting cabinet members portfolios)

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