

## 2 Strategy context

### 2.1 Introduction

Croydon's economy is in decline having lost 17 per cent of jobs across the Borough over the last 10 years but with its comprehensive transport network and scope to intensify land uses, Croydon has been identified as an area suitable for intensification by the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London [Mayor of London, 2009a]. Studies suggest Croydon will need to create in excess of 19,000 new homes before 2031 and work is currently being undertaken to determine how many new homes will be needed by 2021.

With a third of Croydon's land area protected as green space, options for development are limited to areas within and close to the CMC, along the A23 corridor and within district centres where there is scope to expand. Additional to the availability of suitable land and the supply of sufficient water and power resources, access to education, health, leisure centres and employment opportunities all rely on good transport links, connecting residents to their needs and helping establish viable and attractive places to live.

The following sections describe the main drivers for growth within the Borough and this is followed by an overview of the relevant local, regional and national policies. The single most important impact will be growth from new development but the rising concerns associated with global warming and human health also suggest air quality will be an equally important driver for change over the period of the plan.

### 2.2 Drivers for change

#### 2.2.1 Growth

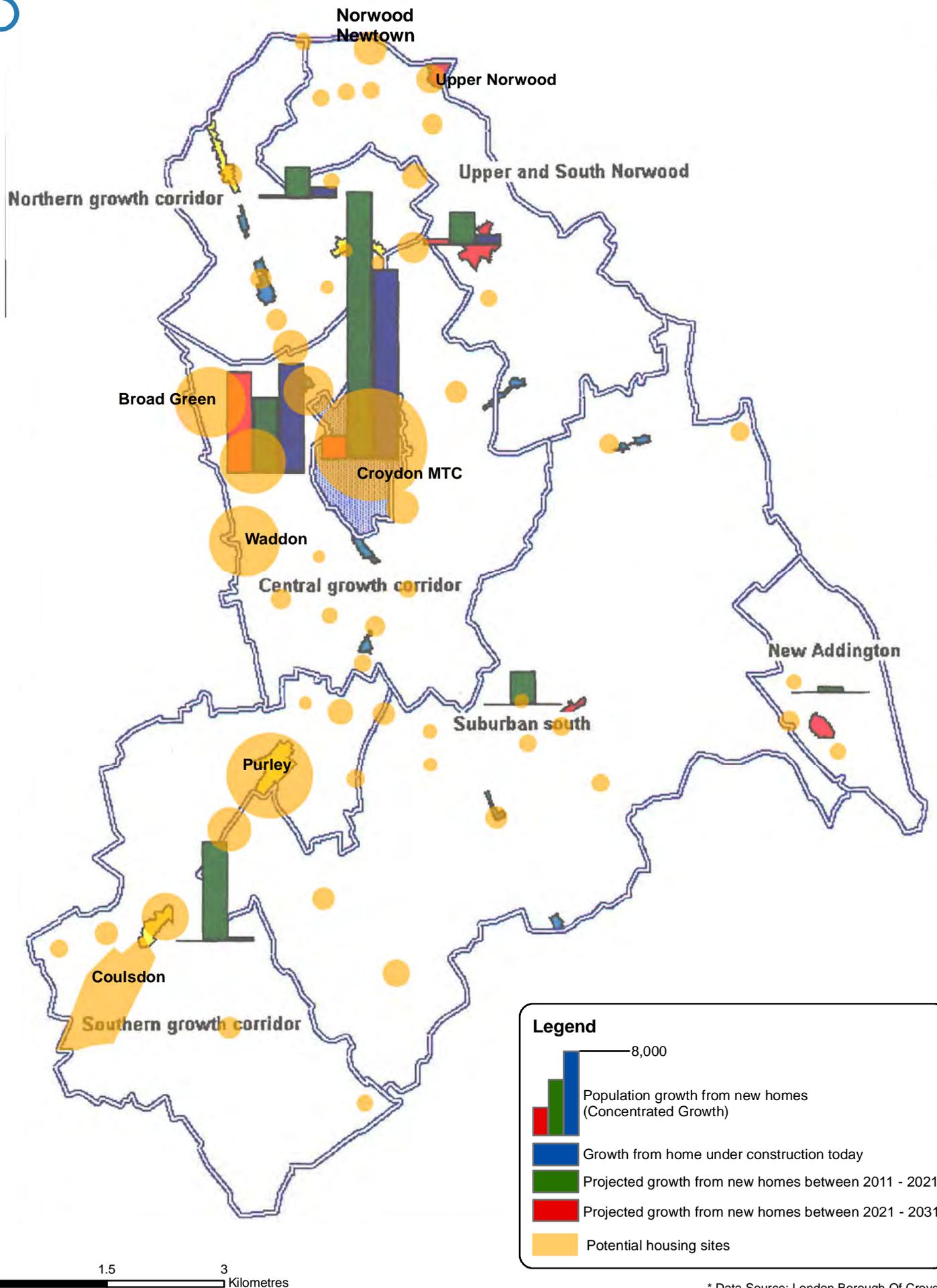
The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has identified Croydon as a growth area. This is further supported by the Draft London Plan [Mayor of London, 2009a] that identifies Croydon as an area of opportunity and intensification with an indicative increase of employment capacity of 7,500 and a minimum of 10,000 new homes.

Residential growth scenarios for Croydon range from a concentrated CMC model to a dispersed Borough wide scenario.

- The **concentrated growth** scenario (growth enabled by investment in infrastructure) focuses new housing and commercial development on the CMC; along the A23 transport corridor; north of Norbury and southwards down through Waddon, Purley and Coulsdon (see Figure 2-1). It is a plan led approach and dependent on increased rail capacity at Croydon West and East stations and enhancements to the A23.
- The **dispersed growth** scenario (growth limited by capacity of infrastructure) promotes development across the whole Borough but within opportunity areas (see Figure 2-2). It is developer led and opportunistic in nature but limited by the capacity of the existing infrastructure and current density thresholds set by the London Plan.

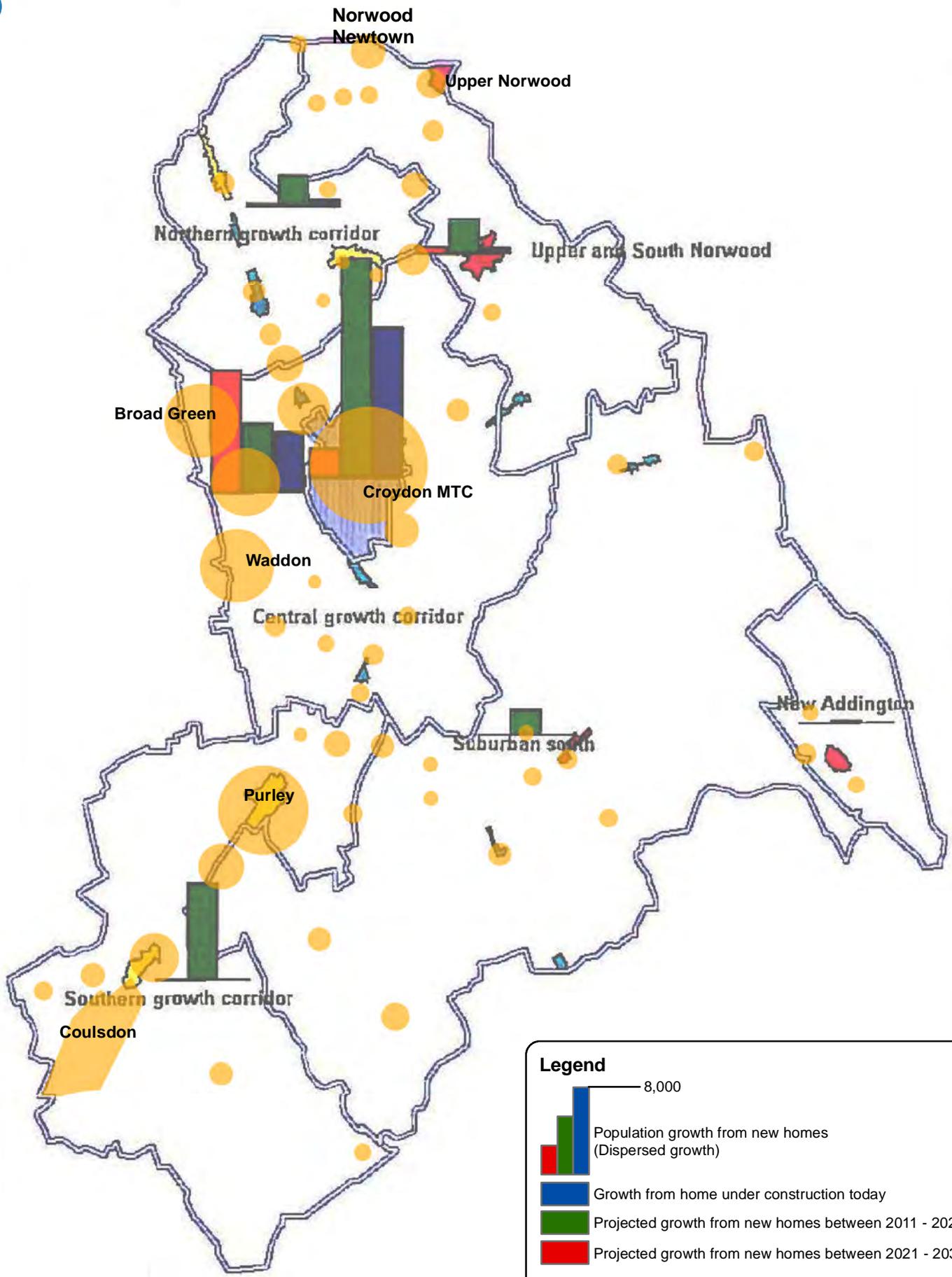
With the dispersed growth scenario there is a risk it could lead to a loss of economic competitiveness and may ultimately require a strategy of managed decline for the CMC. The pros and cons of dispersed growth are set out in the Imagine Croydon document [Croydon Council, 2009] but it suggests this is not the preferred way forward.

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\* Data Source: London Borough Of Croydon

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**Legend**

- Potential housing sites
- Growth from home under construction today
- Projected growth from new homes between 2011 - 2021
- Projected growth from new homes between 2021 - 2031

8,000

\* Data Source: London Borough Of Croydon

0 1.5 3 Kilometres

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### 2.2.2 New development

The CMC is identified as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan, to be allocated for new homes and employment. The Outer London Commission also initially identified Croydon centre for growth as a possible “super hub” and potentially Croydon leading the renaissance of London’s suburbs. There are currently five masterplan areas defined within the CMC along with a number of mayor development sites which potentially bring about a step change increase in land use densities for residential, office, commercial, retail and education.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options report [Croydon Council, 2009], an outcome of the ‘Imagine Croydon’ consultation, provides a vision for Croydon that leads to the identification of opportunities and challenges across the Borough. As a ‘place of opportunity’ it proposes that Croydon should create a sub regional cultural centre; attract university campus facilities; create a destination for business, visitors, conference facilities, exhibition space and hotels; exploit the extension of the East London Line to Crystal Palace, South Norwood, and West Croydon; enhance fibre optic and mobile broad band services; and increase leisure facilities.

### 2.2.3 Carbon emissions

The Low Carbon Trust sets out how the transport sector can contribute to the mandatory 80 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050, as adopted in the 2008 Climate Change Act. Currently transport contributes 21 per cent of UK emissions. This strategy focuses on actions to achieve the 2022 carbon budget of a 34 per cent reduction on 1990 emissions levels. The Government has announced that reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions is one of five goals for future transport policy and infrastructure investment decisions, and consideration will need to be given to how to reduce the significant carbon embedded within infrastructure when designing new schemes.

The DfT strategy to 2022 will be delivered primarily through advances in the efficiency of the internal combustion engine. It is, however, anticipated that new ultra-low emission and importantly mass market vehicles will become available (hybrid, plug-in hybrid, electric and hydrogen powered) which will require new infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points and hydrogen fuelling stations. Over the longer term the Government believes that the route to a low carbon future for transport is electric vehicles powered by a de-carbonised electricity generation system.

### 2.2.4 Air quality

The National Air Quality Strategy [Defra, 2007] establishes ambient air quality policy for the UK. Its primary objective is to ensure everyone can enjoy a level of ambient air quality in public places that poses no significant risk to health or quality of life. The Strategy sets out the National Air Quality Objectives (NAQOs). Those included in Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) are prescribed in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 and the Air Quality (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002.

Where the objectives are exceeded the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and produce an Air Quality Action Plan. Croydon has declared the whole of the Borough an AQMA due to high concentrations of nitrogen dioxide.

Local authorities with an AQMA are required to “work towards” achieving the air quality objectives, but there is currently no mandatory requirement for the objectives to actually be achieved. This is because air quality improvement depends of action at international and national levels as well as the local level. For example, new vehicle emission limits are agreed within the EU.

The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2007 implement the European Union's 1996 Air Quality Framework Directive on ambient air quality assessment and management (96/62/EC) and its ‘daughter’ directives. These are essentially the same as the NAQO values but the compliance date for nitrogen dioxide is 2010 instead of 2005. The onus is on central, not local, government for ensuring that these mandatory limit values are met.

A new Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (2008/50/EC) came into force in June 2008. This allows flexibility where compliance is difficult. The deadline for complying with the nitrogen dioxide limit values can be postponed by a maximum of five years from the compliance date (i.e. to 2015), provided action measures are proposed and agreed with the European Commission. However, current Defra modelling shows that even in 2015, based on the implementation of current national plans, the EU limit value will continue to be exceeded in some areas. This modelling has historically over-estimated the benefits of improved vehicle emissions standards and is widely considered to be optimistic. The UK Government has announced that it will apply to the European Commission for a time extension for a large number of areas in 2010.

Over recent months Defra has launched a review of the local air quality management regime and it has become clear that air quality action plans have not delivered significant air quality benefits. At a recent Air Quality Summit organised by Defra and DfT for local authorities (November, 2009) it was made clear that the councils are expected to take action to improve air quality. It has been suggested that consideration is being given to passing on to local authorities any European fines for non compliance with the Air Quality Directives.

Most AQMAs have been declared in areas to specifically mitigate emissions from road traffic and it is accepted that to meet the national air quality objectives and the EU limit values radical action will be required in many areas, to significantly reduce traffic and enhance the rate of introduction of cleaner vehicles. In particular, there is a need to reduce emissions from buses and heavy goods vehicles and in some areas, taxis.

Making councils responsible for paying EU fines could provide the incentive to undertake some of the measures currently unpopular with voters that are required to move towards more sustainable transport.

### 2.2.5 Health

The effect of encouraging more physical activity within travel through increased levels of walking and cycling plus measures to reduce car use and traffic congestion can have a positive effect on people's health. Increased physical activity will help combat increasing levels of obesity while a reduction in car exhaust pollutants and improved air quality will help reduce respiratory symptoms and disease.

## 2.3 Local policies

Local policy documents related to transport, planning and the environment were reviewed as part of the baseline assessment for this Strategy. The review was intended to gauge current aspirations and assess their relevance and adequacy to meet future challenges. A list and summary of the documents reviewed is provided below.

- Croydon's **Urban Development Plan** [Croydon Council is due to be superseded by the Local Development Framework (LDF) but sets out development related policies on traffic generation, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport facilities and parking standards.
- Croydon's **Local Development Framework** [Croydon Council] provides a Core Strategy, plus supporting Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents for the Borough. The key transport aim is to provide a network able to cope with increased demand and from which the following aspirations are stated: increase traffic flow along the A23 corridor; expand the tram network; provide better links to Heathrow and Crossrail; improve orbital links across the Borough; and reduce the environmental impact of transport making it easier for people to walk or cycle to their places of work, education or leisure.

To achieve these aspirations improvements to East Croydon and West Croydon stations are proposed; provision of park & ride in key locations should be considered; new car parking provided; the Tramlink Extension to Crystal Palace supported; capacity along the A23 increased;

and the potential routing of the A23 through a tunnel to relieve traffic congestion in Purley Town Centre should be investigated.

- The **Croydon Metropolitan Centre Area Action Plan** [JMP, 2009] raised the lack of pedestrian and bus network connectivity; capacity issues at stations; problems with roads severing pedestrian routes e.g. Wellesley Road; and overprovision of car parking spaces as key transport issues to be addressed. The transport requirements for Croydon's town centre will be considered in more detail in a future Transport Strategy for the CMC.
- The **Croydon Local Implementation Plan** (2007 to 2011) is due to be replaced by LIP2's for the period 2012-2017. The first LIP set out specific proposals to achieve the aims of the previous Mayors Transport Strategy. This included; continue the expansion of Tramlink; complete the widening of the A232; seek ways to improve traffic flow and bus movements along the A23 corridor; improve public transport throughout the Borough; support and lobby for an extension to the underground system to the north of the Borough; improve street lighting, car parks and subways in areas of greatest need; introduce localised traffic calming measures aimed at accident reduction; develop and launch a "New Deal for Pedestrians", which will include improving access and safety for pedestrians with impaired mobility; and develop improved facilities for cyclists.
- The **Croydon Community Strategy** [Croydon Council,] set out aspirations to create a safer, stronger and more sustainable communities which promotes public transport and reduces congestion. Key to these aspirations is; the extension of Tramlink; reducing the need to travel; increasing walking and cycling; provision of more bus services; increasing capacity of train stations; converting road vehicles to cleaner fuels; ensuring new development reduces car parking provision; improving the safety of transport infrastructure; and improving integration between transport modes all formed part of the Strategic Partnerships plan to promote more sustainable travel and transport across the Borough. The long-term priority was seen as improving the A23, particularly between Five Ways Junction and Coulsdon where there is a need for significant junction improvement work and a better approach to reducing congestion at Purley Cross.
- The **Croydon Air Quality Action Plan (2007-2010)** [Croydon Council, 2007] aimed to improve air quality in the Borough by 2010 with a number of transport related initiatives to reduce vehicle emissions through stricter controls and the support of cleaner engine technologies.
- The **Croydon Environment and Climate Change Strategy (2009-2011)** [Croydon Council, 2009b] outlined a framework for Croydon's response to climate change. The strategy suggests the key challenge is to promote behavioural change to encourage people to switch from the private car to more sustainable modes of transport. Key initiatives to achieve this include improve the accessibility to environmentally-friendly modes of transport; raise awareness of the impact of transport and travel decisions; reduce the risk and perception of risk of danger from the use of all modes of transport; and promote sustainable growth in terms of economic development and land-use planning.

It recognises it is a major challenge for the Borough to shift towards lower carbon modes of transportation and the Strategy calls for sustainable transportation to be more pleasant, reliable and sometimes faster through use of travel demand management policies, improving the quality of urban design and environment and that the cost of each transport mode reflects its cost in terms of carbon emissions. A long-term consideration within the strategy is to ensure new development reduces the need for car parking provision through the emerging LDF.

Key initiatives needed to support these aims include: increased capacity at railway stations particularly at East and West Croydon; making the stations and stops safer and more hospitable; the promote the extension of Tramlink; increase walking and cycling and extend cycle and pedestrian routes; promote car sharing and car clubs; improving integration between transport modes; increase the number of local schools and businesses with travel plans and improve monitoring arrangements; promote the transfer of freight to the railways through the South London

Freight Quality Partnership; promote improved orbital communications as part of the “Orbit” multi-modal study, particularly public transport services to nearby centres and Heathrow Airport; and provide more buses to outlying locations in the south of the Borough.

- The **Imagine Croydon: Core Strategy Issues and Options report** [Croydon Council, 2009] is the outcome of the Imagine Croydon consultation that presents a vision for the Borough and identifies the opportunities and challenges for Croydon. As a ‘place of sustainable living’ the objectives should be to; considerably increase the capacity of East Croydon and West Croydon Stations; make it easier for people to walk and cycle by creating a ‘green grid’ across the Borough, linked to the sub regional framework for walking and cycling routes; extend Tramlink to areas of new growth in the Borough and beyond (Crystal Palace, South West London, Purley and possibly Gatwick); consider new forms of passenger transit in the CMC to improve connectivity between quarters; provide new orbital and east-west connections across the Borough (e.g. Heathrow) for both public and private transport modes; and relieve traffic congestion along the A23 corridor to reduce severance and pollution impacts on local residents.

Imagine Croydon states that “If Croydon is to establish itself as the main driver of growth within South London up to 2031 it makes sense to concentrate growth in the areas of highest public transport accessibility, with the CMC at its core. This may afford us greater protection for our Green Belt and sub urban areas”.

The above documents range from policy to consultation outputs but are all aimed at some way of improving the efficiency of the transport networks or their impact on the environment.

## 2.4 Sub regional policies

Transport for London is preparing a South London Regional Transport Plan for issue late in 2010. This will cover the Boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth. Boroughs have been directly involved in the development of the Plan, in particular assessing issues and options that relate specifically to network capacity, congestion, orbital travel and active travel modes. The Plan will be tested with new strategic level modeling and analysis.

The Plan will provide a wider area strategy for all travel modes and this Croydon Transport Strategy and the Borough Implementation Plans will need to be coordinated with it in due course.

## 2.5 Regional policies

### 2.5.1 Mayor’s transport strategy

The draft Mayor’s Transport Strategy [Mayor of London, 2009b] sets out six goals. Which are to; support economic development and population growth; enhance the quality of life for all Londoners; improve the safety and security of all Londoners; improve transport opportunities for all Londoners; reduce transport’s contribution to climate change and improve its resilience; and of lesser relevancy to Croydon support delivery of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and its legacy.

Proposals identified within the MTS that relate to Outer London and more specifically Croydon include:

- improvements to the rail network and capacity through Network Rail’s HLOS (High Level Output Specification) programme, offering 10 car capability for South London;
- improved capacity at West Croydon Station;
- development of the East London Line extension to West Croydon;
- improvements to Tramlink as part of a £54m investment in maintenance, renewals, upgrades and capacity enhancement up to 2015;

## Borough Transport Strategy

Draft Final

- investigating the feasibility of providing extra capacity and new routes on Tramlink, but not to be implanted before 2020;
- prioritise improvements to strategic interchanges (such as East Croydon) which have the potential to relieve interchange capacity pressures;
- potential for larger scale cycling infrastructure schemes to be implemented in Croydon;
- potential for road user charging in order to manage roads better. In particular road user charging in Metropolitan town centres might be considered.

### 2.5.2 The London Plan

The London Plan [Mayor of London, 2009a] describes Croydon as:

“Croydon is one of the potential Strategic Outer London Development Centres, Croydon is also recognised as London’s largest ‘Metropolitan’ town centre and one of the capital’s two strategic office centres outside central London. The council’s strategy will need to be built upon to re-brand the offer of Croydon to meet modern commercial needs, realising its competitive advantages and good public transport accessibility. This will entail consolidating its strengths as a strategic office location through mixed-use re-development and enhancements to the business environment. A carefully managed balance must be struck between modernising office provision and encouraging the conversion of surplus capacity to other uses including a significant increment to housing. An integrated approach to a number of sites will be needed, including East Croydon station, Fairfield Halls, Croydon College, Park Place and the Whitgift extension. Rejuvenation of the mix and vitality of supporting uses, enhancement of the environment and improvements to traffic management will help support redevelopment.”

The South London sub-region strategic priorities include:

- optimise the development of Opportunity Areas and Metropolitan Town Centres;
- address areas in need of regeneration and improvements to public realm;
- promote improvements in the national rail network;
- improve orbital movements by public transport;
- make the area an attractive business location; and
- support the development corridor of between Croydon and Gatwick.

### 2.5.3 London freight plan

The London Freight Plan aims to deliver freight sustainably across London using a mix of measures to improve freight movements and also understand issues surrounding freight in the future. Four Key Projects identified:

- Freight Operator Recognition Scheme
- Delivery and Servicing Plans (DSPs)
- Construction Logistic Plans (CLPs)
- Freight information Portal.

DSPs and CLPs will in time be required by Boroughs for all large planning applications for developments.

### 2.6 National policies

There are a large number of national transport and planning policies which will have impact on strategic planning in Croydon. We would note two Planning Policy documents that have specific relevance:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development states that Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development

PPG 13: Transport aims to promote sustainable transport and reduce the need to travel, encourage accessibility to jobs, facilities and services; and support better integration between planning and transport.

### 2.7 Summary

The Council is keen to promote areas of concentrated growth where resources and facilities can be better planned and implemented. This is in contrast to the current dispersed growth scenario which is more likely to have detrimental impact on local areas and communities by placing additional stress on existing resources and facilities but without achieving a tipping point on which to justify step change investment in infrastructure.

Transport is the main contributor of greenhouse gases and emissions detrimental to human health and with air quality being a key driver for change this concentrated growth must be developed in the most sustainable manner. This will require growth areas to be developed that minimise the need to travel and when travel is required to access employment, educational, retail and leisure facilities it can be done without the need for car based trips.

Local transport policies are fairly well aligned when it comes to recommending improvements to the transport network but not necessarily to accommodate the demands placed upon it by areas of growth. There are common themes running through many of the Councils policy commitments which should be no surprise to those who understand the current network. Specific transport aims included:

- Reduce **congestion on the A23** through infrastructure improvements and better traffic management techniques and should include congestion reduction proposals at Purley Cross, Fiveways and the Thornton Heath Pond gyratory.
- Provide better **orbital routes** to key destinations such as Bromley and Kingston for both public and private transport modes.
- Provide **new links to the CMC** from potential new areas of residential development such as Crystal Palace and New Addington.
- Improved **links to other transport nodes** such as Heathrow, Gatwick & City airports, London rail termini and the future Crossrail route.
- Improved **interchange between and accessibility** of public transport networks;
- Improve the **level of service** offered by the rail network.
- Promote **walking and cycling** to reduce the environmental impact of travel.
- Reduce the **need to travel** but if required, with **less reliance on the car**.

## Borough Transport Strategy

### Draft Final

- Improve the **safety** of all transport networks with initiatives to reduce road traffic accidents and improve personal security.
- Improve **air quality** by reducing road traffic based emissions through congestion reduction measures and the promotion of cleaner vehicle technologies.

To achieve these transport aims common schemes include:

- Junction widening, traffic signal co-ordination and grade separation proposals for the A23.
- Road widening and new links on the A232.
- Tramlink extensions to Crystal Palace, Sutton, Bromley, New Addington, Purley, Streatham and Brixton.
- London Underground extension to areas north of the Borough.
- Improvements to East Croydon and West Croydon stations that would increase the level of service at these stations, capacity within the stations, better interchange facilities with tram and bus networks (East London Line extension/ Thameslink upgrade); and better access to them from surrounding areas.
- Traffic calming measures and improved street lighting and car parks.
- Promotion of car clubs.

The challenge for this Strategy is to recommend those schemes that create an efficient transport network, which allows those areas of growth to develop without them causing detriment to the efficiency of the transport network.

