

# We are Croydon

This is our vision

# Why a vision?

Most successful towns and cities across the world have an agreed vision of how they aspire to be. Croydon should be no different - and whilst there have always been ambitious plans in place for most service areas in Croydon, until now there has never been a single statement of vision that coherently articulates what the borough's shared priorities for the future are and which Croydon's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other agencies are working towards.

We embarked on our journey to 'Imagine Croydon's long-term vision in September 2008. A visioning workshop was held with representatives from all of the key public, private and community organisations in Croydon to encourage wide ranging debate on the major challenges and opportunities facing the borough, which could impact on Croydon's future. To make the right choices about that future and to have these choices supported by local people we also engaged in the largest consultation exercise ever undertaken in the history of the borough - asking more than 18,000 local people to 'Imagine Croydon'

in 2040. Their responses were thoughtful, creative and inspired.

The outcome is an ambitious, compelling vision that paints a picture of the type of place we all want Croydon to be. It describes a place, indeed by then a 'city', that is re-imagined in terms of its assets and aspirations and prepared to confront any challenges that lie ahead. But it doesn't end there. The visioning process has motivated partners and the community to recognise their place in the wider picture of Croydon's future and there is now a palpable sense of the commitment and energy that exists to help Croydon realise its long-term vision and wider place in the world.

Our vision statement sets out the quality and scope of change that is sought over the coming years. This now provides the touchstone for all other strategies and plans in the borough to ensure that we articulate the same vision and priorities consistently and act together to create a better place in which to live and work.

*'If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else'*

For further information on draft vision document please contact  
Damian Roberts E: [damian.roberts@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:damian.roberts@croydon.gov.uk)

## What did people say?

Imagine Croydon has been a radical process; the biggest and most exciting engagement exercise in the history of the borough. Everyone who has taken part can feel proud of their contribution in shaping Croydon's long term vision. The range of different people that we spoke to was vast - covering all ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and interests. And even though they all contributed an astonishing range of ideas and opinions, there was real consensus around the key priorities for Croydon's future.

One thing that has been clear from talking to local people is that they share a real pride and passion for the borough - its rich diversity, its distinctiveness, its heritage, its green spaces, its connectivity, its enterprise, its inherent confidence, its humour and much, much more. It is these attributes and assets that have helped to define Croydon's long-term vision together with a shared desire and determination to make a positive difference in the future.

In the following pages, we have attempted to set out more specifically the type of place that local people have imagined Croydon to be. Viewed from the lens of Croydon in 2040, it paints a picture of what life might be like. Whether viewed in ten, twenty or thirty years, the aspiration is that Croydon will exhibit progressively more and more of these characteristics.

## We are Croydon

In 2040 we will be London's most enterprising borough - a city that fosters ideas, innovation and learning and provides skills, opportunity and a sense of belonging for all. From market town, to dormitory suburb, to major commercial centre to city in waiting, Croydon has without doubt undergone a series of bold and exciting transformations throughout its history. With only a church, a mill and 365 inhabitants at the time of the Norman Conquest

to today - one of the UK's major commercial centres and London's largest and most connected borough.

Croydon has undeniably been shaped by a legacy of innovation and enterprise, and by trade and tenacity. It is this enterprising and inventive spirit that will secure Croydon's future as one of the UK's most enterprising and sustainable cities in 2040. It will be a unique place within the United Kingdom, a true edge city, with its own distinct identity but also an important economic contributor to the wider metropolis of London and the Greater South East.

Croydon will be renowned as a healthy, vibrant and safe place to live, work and visit where everyone - no matter where they are from - is given the best possible chance throughout their lives to make the most of their abilities. People will be empowered and energised. They won't rely unnecessarily on the state, rather they will be given the support and tools needed to help them realise their potential and ability, always a help-up before a hand-out.

The borough's highly regarded university and education system will help to unleash and nurture this talent and lead to a workforce and community in Croydon that is better skilled, more adaptable and able to achieve greater productivity and well being than ever before.

The borough's innovative nature and enterprising community will ensure that it enjoys a highly deserved reputation as a modern, vibrant city - with a leading role in London and the South East's economy. It will be a hub of knowledge and creativity with a local economy that is diverse and quick to respond to opportunities. The borough's unique location, excellent connectivity and first class business infrastructure and natural environment will help to reinforce its position as a leading city.

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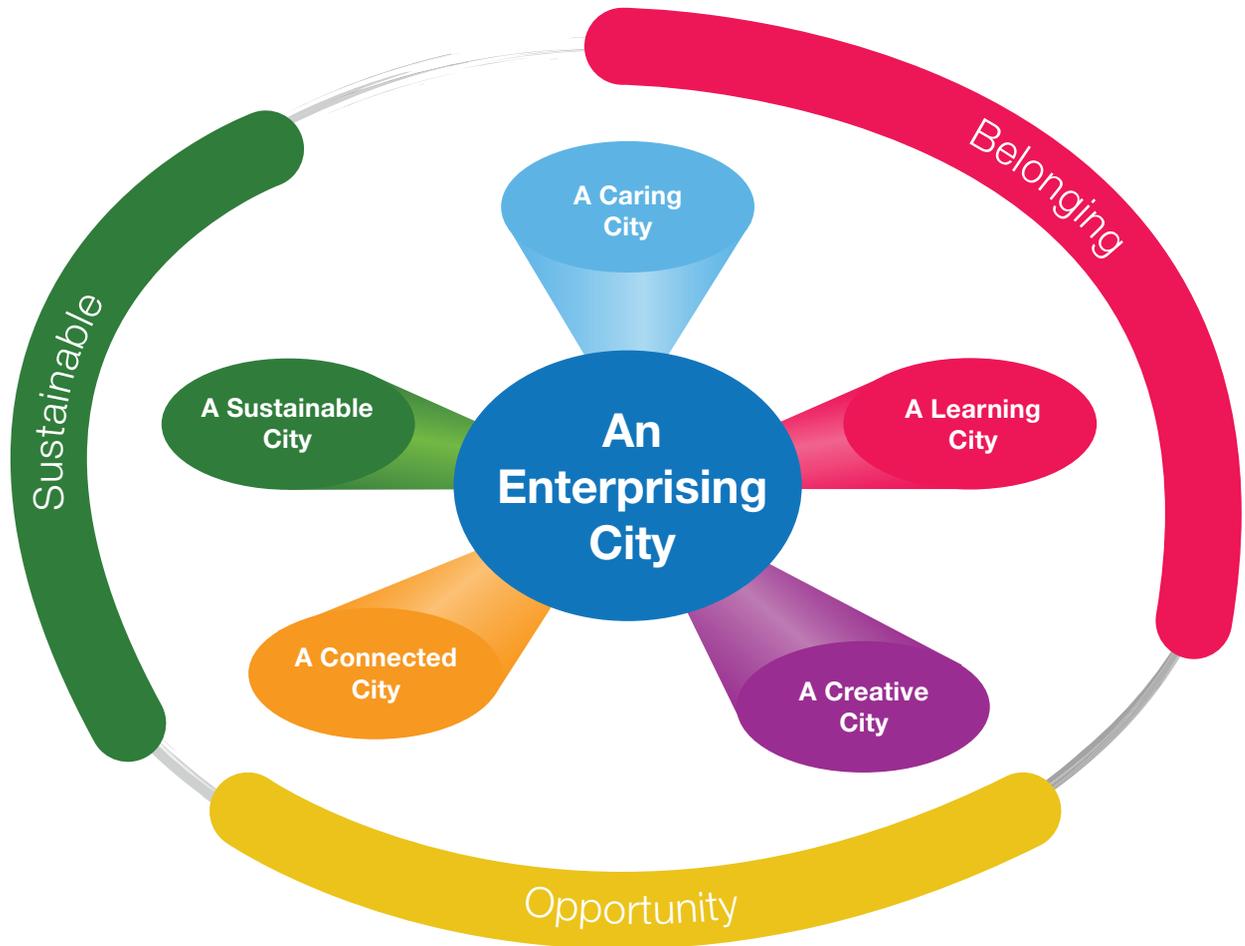
However it will be Croydon's highly skilled and active community that will provide the main draw and who will be at the heart of Croydon's enterprising vision.

Croydon will be a place that generates its own culture and creativity - one of the best incubators of artistic and sporting talent in the country. It will be celebrated as a borough with a welcoming 'buzz' and energy, with streets and open spaces across the borough a hive of activity. And it will also be a place that is defined by its green beauty - with parks, heaths and woodlands offering quiet reflection and respite from the hustle and bustle.

People, young and old, will be motivated to get involved in shaping what happens in Croydon. They will take on responsibility for managing public spaces and community facilities and will organise a whole host of community events, providing plenty of opportunities for residents, workers and visitors alike, to participate in and enjoy the Croydon 'scene'. People will not only remark on the borough's vibrancy and dynamism but also on how well Croydon's communities get along with one another. Croydon people will recognise and respect each other's differences. They will be united by a sense of shared values around freedom, opportunity, fairness and responsibility and will work collaboratively and innovatively with the public, private and voluntary and community sectors to ensure that Croydon is one of the most welcoming, creative and enterprising places to live and work in the UK. ■

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# In 2040 we are...



- **An Enterprising City** - a place renowned for its enterprise and innovation with a highly adaptable and skilled workforce and diverse and responsive economy
- **A Learning City** - a place that unleashes and nurtures local talent, is recognised for its culture of lifelong learning and ambitions for children and young people
- **A Creative City** - a place noted for its culture and creativity - one of the best incubators of new artistic and sporting talent in the country
- **A Connected City** - a place defined by its connectivity and permeability; with one of the best digital, communications and transport networks in the country
- **A Sustainable City** - a place that sets the pace amongst London boroughs on promoting environmental sustainability and where the natural environment forms the arteries and veins of the city
- **A Caring City** - a place noted for its safety, openness and community spirit where all people are welcome to live and work and where individuals and communities are supported to fulfill their potential and deliver solutions for themselves.

# An Enterprising City

In 2040 Croydon will be redrawn as a London's hotspot of knowledge, creativity and innovation. Building on its long tradition of trade and enterprise, it will enjoy a highly deserved reputation as a desirable and competitive business destination, home to international companies and small start-up businesses alike. The borough's influence and reach will grow and expand beyond the region as it both cleverly complements the London economy and capitalises on its links to the international gateway of the modernised Gatwick airport. By driving substantial investment into the transport and communications infrastructure along the London to Gatwick corridor, Croydon will play a pivotal role in London and the South East's economy.

It will be a modern, vibrant city defined by its enterprising economy - diverse, innovative and quick to respond to opportunities and challenges in the global marketplace. As a trading place it will use its diversity as a strength becoming renowned for the strength of its business relationships with growing economies around the world. The borough's unique location, excellent connectivity and first class business environment will help to reinforce its position as a leading city, as well as a crucial contributor to the wider London economy.

Croydon's highly skilled, talented and enterprising workforce will underpin the borough's competitive edge. Croydon's University and schools, colleges and adult training centres will enjoy close links with the borough's business base and will generate a workforce in Croydon that has the skills, knowledge and adaptability needed to compete in the global economy. The increasing number of companies choosing to locate in Croydon - particularly in leading edge technologies and high value growth sectors - will reflect the borough's growing reputation as a highly skilled and enterprising business destination.

But it's not just about inward investment and attracting business into the borough. In 2040, Croydon will be recognised for its achievements in promoting an innovative and enterprising environment that will create a sustainable future for the city. People in Croydon will be motivated and supported to think and behave as entrepreneurs and innovators in their own right, from an early age. The spirit of enterprise will infuse all parts of the education system.

Neighbourhood based enterprise centres and incubator units will provide the space for ideas, innovation and creativity to flourish and new ways to do business will be embraced with new technology enabling a greater realisation of virtual business ventures and patterns of home working. The rich cultural diversity of the borough's entrepreneurs will also provide opportunities for new products and services to be developed. As a result Croydon will enjoy some of the highest rates of new business formation across London and the South East.

In 2040 social enterprises will be seen as vital to the delivery of a range of services in the borough. Private, public and the voluntary and community sectors will work collaboratively to drive enterprising schemes forward and ensure that new talent and opportunities are maximised for the benefit the wider community and the economy.

Such an enterprising place must also provide a thriving retail, leisure and evening offer to all those who work, live or visit the area and the regeneration of the town centre will help drive this forward. In 2040 Croydon town centre will be regarded as an iconic, safe and modern mixed-use European city. It will enjoy a reputation comparable with other major commercial centres thanks to a raft of new, modern office developments. It will provide the principal retail and leisure offer in outer South London (including for visitors and workers arriving from Gatwick Airport) and its tree-

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lined street environment will also compete well against more sterile retail and leisure malls in other parts of London and the immediate South East.

And it's not just the town centre. Thanks to sensible planning between local residents and the business community, Croydon's district centres will also boast a distinct style and character that help to reinforce Croydon's reputation as a diverse and interesting place. The district's independent shops, specialist markets and high quality facilities will meet the needs, tastes and ambitions of local people as well as provide a draw for visitors to Croydon who want to enjoy the borough's unique and eclectic offer. ■

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# A Learning City

Croydon has been known for many things over the years, but as the borough continues to realise its long-term vision, its education offer will be propelled forward. Croydon will be renowned as a city of lifelong learning in 2040 - a place that unleashes and nurtures local talent and generates a workforce and community in Croydon that is better trained, more enterprising and adaptable and able to achieve higher productivity and well being.

A high quality and modern education system that works in partnership with the business sector and wider community will help to foster an innovative learning environment in Croydon that offers greater freedom and choice over how and where people learn. The education system will be responsive and flexible and noted for its excellence in accommodating the different learning styles, needs and aspirations of people whatever their age or life stage.

All schools and colleges in Croydon will be high performing - serving as vital community hubs that promote and facilitate a culture and behaviour of lifelong learning. Students and their families will be supported to excel and to develop the skills, knowledge and capabilities that they will need to prosper in the future. Instilling a culture of enterprise, enquiry and initiative will be a key plank of the curriculum so that local people are better equipped to respond to rapid changes in society, the economy, technology and the environment in an increasingly complex and global world.

Children will be given the best possible start in life in recognition that early intervention and investment in education will be critical in ensuring their overall development and well-being. We will have high expectations of parents within the borough to ensure that, wherever possible, children are born into loving, nurturing families. Professionals will work together with parents, families and communities to provide the help and support needed so that young children

- particularly vulnerable young children - don't fall behind before they even reach school. In these early years, a focus on the well being of the 'whole' child including physical, social and emotional development will be prioritised. In this way parents and teachers will be given a strong foundation on which to build and avoid many expensive problems further down the line.

However, learning will not only be confined to childhood or the classroom - it will take place throughout life and in a range of situations. An integrated learning network will link schools, colleges, businesses, libraries and community centres together, providing easy access to the learning of choice for people of all ages across the borough. Whether it's for professional or personal fulfillment, developing new skills and learning as an adult in Croydon - whether you are 18 or 80 - will be the norm as people retrain and look to build their knowledge, confidence and self esteem. Young and old will learn together. Adult Learning and Training Centres will help to cultivate the culture of lifelong learning and attainment, offering thousands of full and part-time courses, in a range of venues and locations across the borough.

The establishment of Croydon University will consolidate the learning potential of the borough, forged by its schools and further education colleges, and raise the reputation and profile of the borough even further. It will rank as a highly sought-after university attracting students from across the UK, reflecting the dynamism and aspiration of the borough. It will be more than just a building, however. The university campus will be fully integrated into the borough - welcoming and open to all residents with a mix of community facilities and enjoying specialist links with the borough's international business base and creative sector. ■



# A Creative City

In 2040 Croydon's high quality and innovative cultural and creative offer will snap hard on the West End's heels. In fact it will be championed as the 'Little West End' for people visiting from across South London and the Southern Counties who no longer feel the need to venture so often into central London for their cultural fix. Popular attractions and events organised through a single Arts Trust working out of the re-developed Fairfield Halls, will gain national repute and will regularly feature a diverse range of high quality arts, cultural and musical events that cater to every age and taste.

Croydon will be celebrated as a borough with a distinctive sense of place - boasting a creative ambience and enterprising attitude that is both inspired by and finds expression in the energy and talent of its diverse and multicultural community. This distinctive sense of place will be manifest in the borough's eclectic mix of cultural and community events, its striking architecture, its animated public realm, and its parks and open spaces.

It will be renowned as a place that generates its own culture - one of the best incubators of new artistic and sporting talent in the country. The BRIT School and other arts organisations will forge close links with the community and will work in partnership with local schools, colleges and the university to help grow and nurture a thriving collective of artists, designers, film-makers, writers and musicians who contribute a vital creative energy to the city - helping to place it firmly on the map.

Indeed, the creative sector in Croydon will be a key component of the local economy, fuelling the growing number of arts and cultural enterprises that will help to lead the borough's regeneration and reinforce its reputation as London's most dynamic and enterprising destination.

Croydon's service providers will be renowned for their holistic vision of healthy living - encompassing both physical health and cultural, spiritual and intellectual wellbeing. We will promote and support participation in the arts and sport for both health and recreational purposes but also for excellence and accomplishment. Nowhere will this be more true than in the sporting field where our schools and clubs, public and private, will work together to provide a supply line of sporting talent, with a particular Olympic focus on athletics and gymnastics, as well as on team sports. At the heart of this effort will be Crystal Palace Football Club, by then an established top half Premier League team playing in a new state-of-the-art 35,000 seat stadium.

Local people will be at the heart of Croydon's creative vision, with vastly expanded and well-resourced opportunities for all to participate and socialise in a varied network of programmes in community sports, drama, music and the arts, as well as less traditional forms of expression. Informal spaces for people to have fun, meet each other and learn will be a central part of Croydon's town and district centres and will themselves be opportunities for demonstrating our creative talent through a commitment to public art.

Within a borough that prides itself on its work/life balance, there will be plenty of opportunities for everyone to get involved, however casually, in the 'Croydon scene' in 2040 - maybe by singing or dancing at one of the community's many cultural events, playing football in the park, entering an open competition in one of the borough's art galleries or - just as importantly - simply taking time to enjoy the fun on offer throughout the borough. ■

# A Connected City

In 2040 Croydon will be a place defined by its connectivity and permeability. Its modern, state of the art communications infrastructure and technology will be on a par with Central London and Canary Wharf, offering greater flexibility and benefits for residents and businesses alike.

It will be renowned as a borough that pioneers technological advancements and enterprise. Its modern communications infrastructure will ensure that Croydon is a leading centre for digital and creative industries, and their future equivalents - with a local workforce that has the skills and capabilities necessary to match the best in a digital economy. In fact more and more people will work from home in Croydon 2040 with virtual business ventures and Internet entrepreneurs making up a significant proportion of the local economy. Service providers will also be much more responsive in the way that they deliver local services ensuring that they keep pace with young and technologically savvy citizens and the ever-evolving communications landscape.

But its not just virtual connectivity that Croydon enjoys. Its transport links are also the envy of many places. Pioneering transport ventures including having been home to the main London airport at the start of the 20th Century and to the world's first public railway in 1803 have set the foundations for its unparalleled connectivity in the 21st Century.

Increased numbers of passengers arriving into Croydon via the high speed rail services from London, Brighton or Gatwick in 2040 will be able to enjoy one of the capital's most integrated, sustainable transport systems with the widest range of options open to them to complete their journey. These options include a reliable, comfortable and sustainable bus and tram service, which by 2040 will have been extended to connect to the town, district centres and neighbouring suburbs.

An integrated network of safe walkways and dedicated cycle paths will also connect residents to the borough's public transport nodes and expanse of open and green spaces - encouraging some of the highest levels of cycling and walking in the capital. By 2040, vehicular penetration of the city will be much reduced. More people will walk, cycle and travel by public transport, reflecting a healthy shift in the way that people move around and inhabit their environment. And the need to travel will also be greatly reduced with public amenities and local services being located near to where people live.

With excellent communications infrastructure and sustainable transport options, all of Croydon's residents will be connected. From an early age, Croydon residents will be empowered to think globally and act locally - exemplifying Croydon's sustainable approach as a modern 21st century city. As people and businesses embrace the entrepreneurial opportunities and connectivity that the borough provides, they will build their own connections to both the developed and developing world, which in turn will increase the wealth - material and cultural - of our communities. ■

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# A Caring City

Croydon will be held up as a European exemplar of a cohesive, safe and compassionate community - where everyone belongs. Above all, people in Croydon will get along with one another. They will recognise and respect each other's differences and will be united by a sense of shared values around freedom, opportunity, fairness and responsibility. It will be a place that reaches out to all of its communities to provide the support needed to help them lead independent, healthy, and productive lives. The people of Croydon will get the help they need, but they will also recognise that giving back is equally as important. We will place a strong value on freedom of expression and sense of safety for all.

Croydon will be characterised by its different neighbourhoods - each with a distinct identity and responsive mix of services and facilities that meet local needs. They will boast strong, mixed communities with varied housing opportunities, a diversity of uses and a public realm that facilitates a healthy and active social life. More people will take on responsibilities in their neighbourhoods than ever before resulting in some of the highest levels of community involvement in the country.

Residents will also feel empowered and motivated to get involved in shaping what happens locally, including taking on responsibility for managing their local public spaces and community facilities. Neighbourhood allotments, street parties, local arts events and community fun days will be the norm, bringing local people, young and old, together. The borough's rich tapestry of community resources, including streets, schools and places of worship, will be opened up and will form vital neighbourhood spaces for people to enjoy and interact with one another.

Young people and new families will be helped to bring out the best in themselves and integrate

into their communities. We will promote the diverse range of cultural identities but we will strongly discourage groups who seek to separate themselves from the rest of the community and its shared values.

Young people will represent a growing portion of the body of community volunteers in the borough and through this gain a better understanding of the views of older people as they engage in activities side by side. The wide range of communications options in place will allow both young and old to integrate into the borough's political and consultative structures in different ways, be it through hi-tech communications or face to face contact or through other inter-generational schemes or projects. Everyone will be inspired by the belief that they have a right to be heard and feel assured by outcomes of local debate that they hold influence in local decision-making.

Croydon will not be a place where people rely unnecessarily on public services. But public services and public servants will be there to provide support and opportunities so that everyone - in particular vulnerable people and those who support them - can develop and contribute to society within their means and ability. People in Croydon will also recognise that whilst they have the freedom to adopt the lifestyles they choose within clear boundaries, their choices will have consequences for themselves and the wider community. A tough stance will be taken against those who are given a chance but continue to threaten the harmony of the borough. The police will work in partnership with a wide range of agencies and the local community and voluntary sector groups to ensure there is no tolerance of anti-social behaviour.

Croydon will be known as a pioneer in the way we provide services. There will be no

orthodoxy around who is delivering support and interventions - government, business, voluntary or community sectors. Instead, we will be totally pragmatic, focussed on the needs of the citizen. What counts is what achieves the most effective outcome for the resources available. Croydon will demonstrate to others the success of a modern localism and how decentralised decision-making and services shaped by local people leads to innovation and success in meeting local needs. ■

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# A Sustainable City

Croydon is committed to sustainable economic growth. In 2040 more people will be living and working in Croydon. The borough, will, however, have planned its growth carefully so that areas such as the town centre benefit from regeneration while local areas of character are conserved. There will be sustained investment in core infrastructure to enable this growth whilst also helping to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Development will be concentrated near public transport nodes, open spaces, town centres and local community organisations, such as schools and health centres, so as to minimise the need for people to travel to access local services. This will result in a pattern of growth in Croydon that is much more sustainable. The majority of development, including new homes and businesses, will be situated around the city centre, linked directly to significant investment in East Croydon Station.

This new development will complement, rather than overshadow, the existing local character and history of Croydon. A diverse range of high quality architecture in the city centre, including new tall buildings, will be embraced provided they reflect the borough's urban design framework and principles. High expectations of developers in terms of renewable energy, district energy schemes and other green initiatives will be met. This will help bring nature back to the borough's urban areas through an array of green and brown roofs and a higher quality public realm with more trees and shrubbery.

But sustainability is not just about development. Local residents and businesses will also be inspired to take greater pride in their environment and responsibility for their own environmental impact. The community 'reduce, reuse, recycle and recover' imperative will be brought about by greater promotion of the impact of environmental degradation as

well as increased peer pressure and stronger enforcement action locally. This will significantly help to mitigate the impact of climate change and ensure that Croydon sets the pace amongst London boroughs on realising environmental sustainability.

There will be a borough-wide commitment to ensure existing homes and buildings are also made more energy efficient and new homes and neighbourhoods will use renewable energy devices to regularly sell energy back to the national grid. More district energy networks will also be in place with waste being processed for use to generate power locally.

The natural environment in Croydon will also help to facilitate healthy and sustainable lifestyles. From the band of 'green corridors' that embrace and encircle the town centre to the green belt and heath-lands further south - all residents will be within walking and cycling distance of quality open space.

The major boost that the borough's parks have received will see these spaces revitalised and given a much clearer purpose. An impressive mix of spaces will be set aside for quiet reflection and respite, as well as for more active and sporting lifestyles. Improved accessibility and lighting will see these spaces reclaimed by local people with everyone feeling safe and secure. In fact local communities will be more involved in owning and maintaining these spaces as the borough shifts to a greater mix of ownership between voluntary and community organisations and the public and private sector.

Croydon will also lead the way in using suitable green belt land for agricultural or forestry projects that reduces food miles, improves health and fosters community cohesion. Residents of all ages and backgrounds will come together to grow food and learn about food production on allotments and on urban farms. "Working the land" will be seen as a

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popular form of exercise for many in the future. Local food markets and retailers are linked into these projects to ensure that supply chains are shortened and food miles drastically reduced. Trees will play an important role in capturing carbon emissions, providing shade in summer and enhancing our urban realm.

The borough's focus on an integrated and intelligent public transport system, covering rail, bus, tram, cycle and walking will help to significantly reduce travel related carbon emissions. The city's trams and buses will use low-polluting fuels to minimise or eliminate emissions, making them clean as well as quick and reliable ways to travel around, whilst the improved public realm and chain of open spaces will encourage more walking and cycling. Croydon will also be ahead of the curve in promoting the most sustainable private transport options. Cars will still be used but much more sensibly as part of comprehensive network of park and ride and car-sharing schemes that are a result of heavy promotion of travel plans for all local companies. ■

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