



Croydon Infrastructure Coordination Pilot

Croydon Lane Rental Industry Publication



Introduction

London is growing; with the population set to reach 10 million in the next decade, the requirement for new homes and infrastructure to support this is more important than ever. In order to achieve this, large amounts of construction and roadworks need to be undertaken.

In 2016, it was estimated that the cost of congestion to London's economy equated to £6.7bn, with around 15 per cent of this being caused by road and street works. These works are often done in isolation, with just one utility provider or highway authority involved, resulting in the same road space being dug up multiple times. To keep London moving, it is vital to have an efficient road network and if utility companies and others worked more closely together this could reduce the overall time spent onsite.

With help from our project partners Fluxx (innovation Consultancy) and Atkins (Design consultancy), the London Borough of Croydon set out to build upon a GIS web tool used by Thames Water (Thames Connect) that could holistically map all their infrastructure projects, and expand on this by using work plans from other utility providers, along with Croydon's own resurfacing program to quickly identify areas of overlap and highlight potential collaboration. This could then be used to develop methods for overcoming the barriers associated with collaborative works and record this with case-study evidence in a way that could be passed on to other organisations and allow the practice to become far more widespread within boroughs across London.



The Project

The project involved three main aspects,

- Translating the Thames Connect tool to a Croydon Connect version managed and maintained by LB Croydon.

This was a largely technical exercise with specifications provided by LB Croydon officers and the coding and transferring of the tool undertaken by Atkins, who provided training to officers to allow them to maintain the tool in the future. The provision of data that would make up the tools interactive section was provided by SGN, Thames Water and LB Croydon.

- Identifying the current barriers to collaborative and coordinated utility working both between utilities and the local authority.

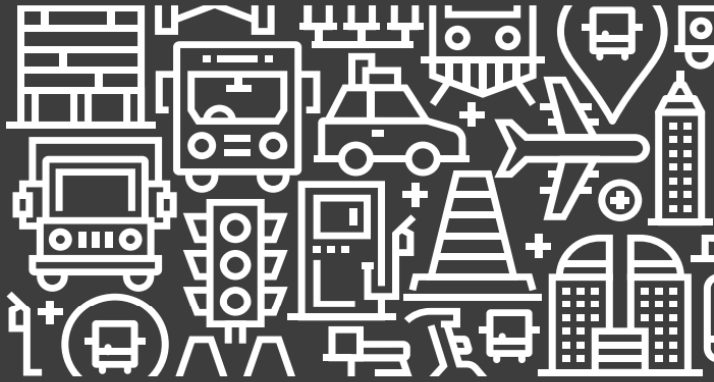
This involved seeing if these issues had been raised before and what previous studies or measures had been attempted to address them in the past. Extensive research, interviews and workshops coordinated by LB Croydon and Fluxx/Atkins were undertaken to determine what the issues involved, what legal restrictions there were and evaluate proposals for overcoming them. Where previous efforts had been made, these were also consulted to determine what may still be applicable and why these efforts had not gained wider circulation. This was then shaped into strategic options to enable collaborative and coordinated works. These were then revised, checked and refined in further rounds of consultation until several realistic pathways had been established.



- Identify overlapping areas of interest for all involved parties so that the pathways would be tested in a live environment

Using 'Croydon Connect', an area was identified and the work requirements for each party were established so that the outputs of the research could enable a practical trial. This would then provide a direct output for the project, as well as provide an evidence base for the suggested pathways to collaborative working and a case study from which net benefits could be calculated and refined, where necessary, to ensure the final outputs were tangible.

The final aspect of the project would be to collate this information into a handbook which could then be made available and distributed widely, with ownership of the handbook as a living document transferred to the GLA for further development.



THE COLLABORATION HANDBOOK

A guide to the coordinated delivery of utility infrastructure

Outcomes

While some unexpected delays meant the overall duration of the project was longer than anticipated, the overall objectives were met, making the project a success. The final output consisted of three primary aspects:

- The delivery of the Epsom Road trial, which saved 98 days of disruption and resulted in multiple hundred thousand pounds in savings to the economy and local community, as well as significant savings to Thames Water, SGN and LB Croydon as compared to costs associated with operating 2 mains replacement projects and a full-road resurfacing independently of each other in the area.
- The completion of the 'Croydon Connect' tool, which continues to be used at the LB Croydon for co-ordination and collaboration purposes.
- The delivery of the collaboration handbook, which lays out the existing barriers as well as evidence-based ways to overcome them to attain various levels of collaborative works successfully and with a positive impact on all stakeholders. This document is available online and in physical form upon request.

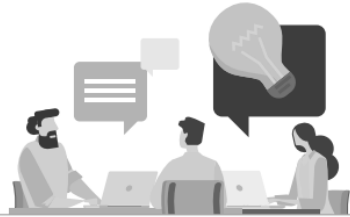


DATA MEANS DIALOGUE

Early visibility through data is the key to surfacing opportunities. Approach this in a spirit of trust, open communication and flexibility if plans change.

PEOPLE NOT PROCESS

With a positive, problem-solving mindset and by leaning on the collective expertise in your team, you'll overcome challenges.



ONE CUSTOMER

Recognise that all parties have the same end customer: the public. Let them be a unifying force.

FAIRNESS = WIN-WIN

The benefits of collaboration are multiple and diverse. Fairly outlining and communicating where parties benefit and make concessions will ensure success.



Conclusion/ Recommendations

Overall this project was successfully concluded with realised benefits for all stakeholders. It kept to budget and was able to deliver achievements in line with the stated goals at the outset, albeit that this took a few more months to achieve than otherwise planned. It is recommended that other local authorities and utility providers use the outputs of this project to kick-start their own efforts as much of the time and resource consuming work in identifying a clear path to collaboration has now been done and is publicly available.

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TfL Lane Rental Scheme

Optimising customer journeys through the delivery of safer, innovative and sustainable roadworks

