

STREET FURNITURE IN EAST CROYDON

1. Having heard concerns expressed about new street furniture in East Croydon, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons organised a walkabout in the area for community representatives and relevant Council officers on Friday 31st March.

2. Those present were:

Councillors for Addiscombe: Sean Fitzsimons, Patricia Hay-Justice and Mark Watson.

Council officers: David Wakeling (LBC parking services manager), Sane Roberts (LBC Conservation Officer),

Council Consultant: Roger Ward

ECCO residents: Ann Douthwaite (Cedar Road), Angela (Ann's neighbour), Jerry Fitzpatrick (Blake Road)

TACRA residents: Neil Englefield and Jason Hinton (both Addiscombe Court Road)

Canning and Clyde RA resident: Gordon Thompson (Clyde Road)

HOME RA resident: Kate

3. The main concerns expressed by residents were as follows:

- The number of new items of street furniture
- The placement of street furniture in inappropriate locations, for example a few inches beyond a resident's front boundary and in front of their window
- Failure to use existing street furniture where possible for signage
- The failure to remove items of redundant street furniture

4. Residents received the following response from Council officers and consultant:

- It had been necessary to replace the old parking meters, which has been installed when the CPZ had been created about 25 years ago
- In order for meters to be legally enforceable, information about them had to be clearly visible to those parking in the bays
- New signage was needed to identify the area as a 20 mph zone
- Existing street furniture should be used for signage wherever practicable
- Better consideration needed to be given to where street furniture was placed; however, street furniture near to the pavement is sometimes quickly destroyed through inexpert vehicle manouevres
- There appeared to be an unnecessarily large number of 20 mph signs
- Once the new meters were live, redundant meters would be removed

5. The Council employs far fewer staff than it once did. There appears to be insufficient oversight of how projects are implemented, and therefore insufficient joined-up work between the Council and its contractors. Kia has the contract to install and remove and maintain the parking meters, and their managers liaise with statutory undertakers to ensure that meters are placed appropriately. Other contractors install other items of street furniture, for example Skansia in relation to the street lighting poles.
6. Realistically, it is the Council which needs to have sufficient oversight of projects to ensure that what is delivered maintains as harmonious a streetscene as can be achieved. This must entail that the Council sets out appropriate parameters for contractors and ensures compliance with those parameters.
7. I understand that Mr Wakelin will be reporting back to councillors and residents as to actions taken in response to the walkabout. Residents will be particularly anxious that the promise to remove redundant and supernumerary items of street furniture is honoured speedily. Residents will also hope that lessons have been learned from the defects in the way the recent projects have been rolled out, so that in future more careful consideration is given to residents' reasonable desire to live and work in a visually and spatially harmonious environment.
8. The Council officers were open to criticisms and suggestions. I am grateful to the councillors for organising the walkabout and attending on a Friday morning and to the Council officers for their attentiveness to concerns. Of course, residents will now expect that promises will be translated into action.
9. I will report back to ECCO as and when I received feedback from the Council.

Jerry Fitzpatrick

jerryfitzmsp@gmail.com