

Tramlink has
improved the quality
of life essay



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Hypothesis:

‘ Tramlink has improved the quality of life for most groups of people in the local area.’

The idea of bringing trams back to Croydon for the first time since 1951 can be looked to a study which was undertaken by London transport and British rail, and published in 1986, covering the whole of the greater London area. From 1990, the London borough of Croydon and then London transport worked together to promote the Tramlink scheme.

During 1991 a large public consultation programme was done seeking people’s view about possible routes for the system. There was a lot of public support for the scheme; with over 80% of those responding thinking that tramlink was a good idea. This positive response resulted in the London Borough of Croydon and London transport promoting a bill in parliament asking for powers to develop operates the scheme.

The main objectives of the tramlink were:

- * The opening up of the radial that join Croydon to Wimbledon, Beckenham and Elmers End with a line connecting New Addington to central Croydon for the first time
- * Exploitation of lightly used or previously disused railway lines and their linkage ‘ on street’ in a way which makes the system far more accessible on the public

- * Provision of an environmentally friendly system which reduces traffic congestions and encourages public transport usage
- * Accessibility for all users particularly those with impaired mobility
- * Integrations with London's ticketing system including travel cards and freedom pass.

Trams are not new to the Croydon area as there was an old London tram service that used to run through the town along the A23, which was London Road, North End and High Street. The trams continued until 1951 when they were closed and cleared away to make room for buses and cars.

It wasn't until 1986, when London Transport and British Rail, that the re-introduction of the tram was seriously considered undertook a study of Greater London transport. Central Croydon was suffering from huge increases in motor traffic and the New Addington area had been highlighted as having poor public transport.

In 1990 Croydon Council and London Transport began working together to promote the Tramlink project. The public consultation carried out during 1991 showed considerable support for the project with over 80% of respondents thinking that Tramlink was a good idea.

In November 1991 the Croydon Tramlink Bill was submitted to Parliament and received Royal Assent on 21 July 1994, allowing London Regional Transport to facilitate the construction of Tramlink.

Whilst Parliament was considering the bill, Croydon Council, LT and three private companies worked together to start the design process. This group was disbanded in 1995 when Tramlink went out to tender across Europe. As with many new schemes, the contract available was a Design, Build, Finance and Operate Concession. The successful consortium was Tram track Croydon Limited (TCL) who now has a 99-year concession to run the system.

The Tramlink system commenced in 1997 and the trams have been fully operational in Croydon since May 2000.

The Government gives a proportion of the cost of Tramlink, and the running of the system is in the hands of TLC. Work began in 1997 and was completed in spring 2000.

In my coursework, I will be studying to see if the Tramlink has improved quality of life for most groups of people in the local area.

To collect the information that I needed I went on a field trip on the Tramlink and questioned local people and did neighbourhood surveys. I used primary and secondary data to find out about the Tramlink. The primary information came from the field trip and the secondary data from the Tramlink booklet.

The results of my questionnaire are not only my results; they are the results of the whole geography G. C. S. E group.

The tramlink project development group was established in 1992 to carry out the design of the scheme and develop a performance specification, which would be used to support a discounted agreement for London Transport and provide a basis for tendering

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The Tramtrack Croydon limited consortium (TLC) was formed to bid for the franchise.

TLC was successful and was awarded a 99- year concession in 1996. Under the concession, TLC is responsible for designing, building, operating and maintaining the system in accordance with the performance specification.

Proportion of the total cost of tramlink is contributed by central government. This amount reflects the benefit to other road users by easing traffic congestion and they're by reducing their travel time. It was in July 1996, that Steven Norris MP the minister of transport for London at that time, announce that the government considered that Tramlink was very good news for Croydon and for south London, and that they would be contributing half of the capital cost of around £200m, plus an amount for the diversion of Utilities, making £125m in total.

In January 1997 work started to relocate and divert the statutory and utilities and underground equipment on activity commission directly by London transport. This work was completed in the summer of 1998. Work to construct the tramlink system commenced in august 1997 and the system was completed in spring 2000.

Environmental issues:

Overhead Power

Tramlink is much less intrusive than conventional railways, as it does not need wide sections of segregated track. Trams can climb steeper gradients and handle tighter curves, thereby fitting in around existing buildings and

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spaces. Long stretches of the routes use converted railway tracks, which are no longer in use, minimising visual and noise impact.

Noise Impact

One of the outstanding features of Tramlink is the quiet and smooth running of the trams. Powered by electricity wires overhead, modern trams generate none of the engine noise of cars, lorries or other road vehicles. In fact Tramlink has been designed with sound reduction in mind. In order to minimise noise, wheels are lubricated to reduce squeaking and track is continuously welded and mainly set in ballast. At depot, all practical steps have been taken in accordance with the 1990 Environmental Pollution Act.

Air Quality

Existing modes of transport are significant sources of air pollution. Exhaust fumes are thought to cause harm to health, particularly to those already suffering from respiratory illnesses. Motor vehicle gases also contribute to global warming – about half the current warming effect is due to carbon dioxide (CO₂). The Croydon Environment Audit 1995 estimated that vehicles in the Croydon area emit nearly 880, 000 tonnes of CO₂ every year.

Although the generation of electricity needed to run trams has the potential to create air pollution from the power station, this is subject to strict government controls and trams do not emit fumes or pollutants.

TRAMLINK SYSTEM

After a two to three year build up period tramlink expects to carry more than 25 million passengers in a full year.

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More than 1.2 million motorists are expected to switch from car to tram journeys.

The tramlink system initially has 24 trams, with 21 in service during the peak period.

The system, as originally set out 28km (just over 18 miles) long.

Each tram is powered by electricity at 750 volts DC and is able to travel at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour.

Each tram is able to carry over 200 people.

Tram Facts At A Glance:

Track Gauge

1. 435m

Length Of Tram

30. 40m

Width Of Tram

2. 650m

Height Of Tram

3. 360m

Seats

70

Standing Spaces Approx.

138

Total Capacity Approx.

208

Doors On each Side

4

Maximum Speed

80km/h

Weight Approx.

36 tons (empty)

TRAM STOPS

There are 38 tram stops on the tramlink system, with the option to add more to serve new areas as required.

Each stop is easily identifiable, and consists of a platform that is:

- * 2m longer than the length of the tram (initially about 32. 2m)

- * A maximum of 350 millimetres above track level

- * Easily accessible for wheelchairs, prams and shopping trolleys

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- * Not less than 2m wide to allow easy circulation

On-street platforms have been integrated into the pavement, with the pavement raised and a slope at each end of the platforms section.

Where Tramlink uses former Rail track platforms they have been lowered, (except at Wimbledon and Elmers End where the track was raised), from their present height of over one metre, to provide level boarding.

INTEGRATED TRANSPORT

RAILWAYS

Tramlink interchanges with main line railway services at:

- * Wimbledon
- * Mitcham Junction
- * West Croydon
- * East Croydon
- * Elmers End
- * Beckenham Junction

FREE PASSES

London Boroughs elderly, disabled and blind persons Freedom Passes are valid for free travel throughout Tramlink.

A number of other ticketing initiatives, including period ticket and through-tickets to national rail and London Underground destinations are being developed.

SAFETY

A great deal of thought has been given to designing a tram system that is safe and secure for everyone. Tramlink has been designed and constructed in accordance with guidelines provided by the Health and Safety Executive's HM Railway Inspectorate. These guidelines aim to ensure that the tram system has been designed and constructed to provide an acceptable level of safety for the public, passengers, employees, contractors and others.

Is Tramlink Environmentally Friendly?

One of the main objectives to rebuilding the Tramlink was to make it a mode of transport that was environmentally friendly.

In the Government white paper on transport, 1997, John Prescott briefly mentions, ' that people want a better public transport system that wont let them down, they want better protection for the environment, and they want less pollution'

TRAMLINK MEETS THE CRITERIA STATED IN THE WHITE PAPER

Obviously the most environmentally friendly modes of transport are cycling and walking, however these two things aren't always practical when needing to travel to long distances. Light rail systems, such as the Tramlink are classified as the best public transport regarding the environment. They

provide an alternative to using a car, which helps reduce fuel consumption and traffic congestion.

Trams are electrically powered equalling minimal fuel and minimal pollution.

Has Tramlink Reduced Traffic Congestion And Made It Easier To Use Public Transport?

Traffic has reduced a considerable amount since the trams have been running. A couple that was questioned said that they live on a main road close to Croydon town centre, and area, traffic has reduced, especially during rush hour times of the day.

To accommodate the trams certain Traffic arrangements have been made

E. g. a bus bridge has been constructed across the Park Lane underpass to enable busses to take a more direct route to Park Street. The significant reduction at the George Street/Park Lane junction ensures priority for tramlink and busses.

Has Tramlink Benefited Local Businesses?

The businesses have benefited tremendously from the Tramlink being built mainly because the trams bring people in from other areas, efficiently.

Wimbledon and Croydon have benefited most of all because, being well known, built up shopping areas, people have more opportunities going with the tramlink providing an easy route to get there.

Facts About The Tramlink

- * Senior student and people with disabilities who currently receive free travel from their London Borough can use their permits and freedom passes on Tramlink.
- * Tramlink is included in the London Transport Travel card scheme.
- * Trams take less than 25 minutes from the end of any branch line into the heart of Croydon- even surprisingly in rush hour!
- * Croydon last had a tram service in 1951
- * There are 21 trams running on the system out of the fleet of 24.
- * Tram links white and red trams came from Vienna
- * A 30-metre tram can carry up to 200 people, nearly 3 times as many as a double Decker bus.
- * Trams run on a one – way basis, clockwise around Croydon centre
- * Similar tram systems have been built in Manchester and Birmingham
- * A tramlink tram is 30. 2 metres long
- * Maximum speed is 80 km/h (50 miles per hour)

Method

In order to find out about this specific topic I collected primary data by travelling on the tramlink from Wimbledon to New Addington.

For our actual fieldwork we went on the tram for the day. We started our trip in Wimbledon and ended in New Addington.

Land use analysis:

This was the first piece of work we accomplished and carried it on throughout the project. A land use analysis is when you analyse the land used on both sides of the tram track.

I asked local people for their views on the way the tramlink had affected them and how they thought it affected other people.

Then once we arrived to Morden Road we did a neighbourhood analysis sheet, this is a sheet were we commented on the housing, environment and the services. We also repeated the procedure at Mitcham, Lloyd Park, and New Addington. We also gave our overall views.

We carried on with our land use analysis and then we got off at Ikea in New Addington where we questioned various types of people. We also went Croydon and New Addington and carried out a questionnaire. All of the year group's results were covered and put into a number and percentage. The results will be shown throughout the coursework.

I used secondary information e. g. I watched a video, read articles about the tramlink and I used my IT skills by exploring appropriate websites on the Internet.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

In the area already a lot of transport is available.

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In Wimbledon you have:

- * Underground
- * Local railway
- * Bus routes
- * Vehicles (as it is a busy area)

In Croydon you have:

- * Local railway
- * Bus routes
- * Vehicles

In New Addington you have:

- * Hardly any bus routes
- * More vehicles are used as it is on a carriage way

A lot of people have benefited from the tramlink, you can see this by looking at the questionnaire results, and you can also see which area has benefited you.

South West London is well served by public transport and there are also many car users. Each type of transport has advantages and disadvantages.

In my results, and when questioning the people I discovered that disabled and older people benefit from the tram, as it is extremely easy to travel on. I questioned a disabled women aged 78 and she said

‘ When I travelled by tram I felt so comfortable, in many transports I find myself having difficulties getting on, however it was easy getting on the tram’

How often is the tramlink used?

On the average you can se that only a certain majority use the tram.

Here you can see a lot of people use the tram quite a lot, this question was asked near the tube station, therefore the working class uses it most.