

Lewisham Borough Cycling Strategy

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Introduction

We want Lewisham to be one of the easiest and safest places to cycle in London, where cycling is a natural and easy choice of transport for anyone. More people cycling brings benefits for all, as congestion and pollution decrease. In busy urban spaces, where greater concentrations of population can bring dangerously crowded roads and polluted streets, cycling offers added benefits. Pressure on overloaded public transport is reduced, creating more space for those who need it. Local businesses gain too, as people who ride bikes tend to shop more frequently and locally.

Cycling improves public health and wellbeing, as active transport choices result in increasing levels of fitness in the population. To fully realise these benefits, cycling must be an integral component of any modern local authority's transport planning.

At present, within the borough only about 2% of journeys are made by bicycle. This figure is lower than comparable boroughs and reflects the relative lack of quality routes and infrastructure that would result in more people cycling. About 2.6% of journeys to work are made by cycle, but fewer (1.8%) journeys overall originating in Lewisham. (2011 Census results). This is lower than in neighbouring boroughs, Lambeth and Southwark, so the potential is clearly there to increase this quickly. But the number of people cycling in Lewisham will not increase without action. There are many barriers currently in existence which deter more people from choosing cycling when making short, urban journeys. These barriers need to be clearly identified and then action taken to remove or reduce their impact. This action needs to be directed and prioritised in a planned fashion to ensure that the most important barriers are overcome and limited council resources are employed effectively. We see this strategy as fundamental to:

- Identifying and evaluating the barriers to cycling in Lewisham.
- Setting out priorities that give clear guidance on the best, most efficient and most economical ways to invest in cycling, resulting in significant increases in both journeys made by bike and the number of residents choosing cycling over other methods of transport, thereby ensuring maximum value for money for the borough over the next decade.
- Creating a clear and structured approach to planning for cycling, which is necessary to securing maximum future funding.
- Collating, assessing and using available data on cycling in London in order to inform funding and planning.

Lewisham has already taken the important step of adopting a Borough-wide 20mph speed limit. This helps make our roads safer for all vulnerable road users, but much more is

needed if significant numbers of people are to be persuaded to seriously consider cycling over the other transport modes.

Existing Barriers

The major deterrents to cycling across the borough are:

- unsafe junctions
- complete lack of any main road cycle routes
- pinch points with no provision for cycling at rail, river or A road crossing points
- poor access into town centres
- lack of route continuity
- poor integration with routes across borough boundaries in Southwark, Greenwich & Bromley
- poor signage of existing cycling network
- vehicles parking across cycle routes, especially around barriers inhibiting access

Existing Incentives

The council already operates a popular and successful bike loan scheme and free training to all residents.

Some secure bike parking exists, but this has not been rolled out as quickly as in some neighbouring boroughs such as Lambeth. This needs extending, especially in areas where most residents live in apartments, in order to ensure people feel their bike is secure and convenient to use.



Easily accessible and secure cycle parking can make the difference between people getting on their bike or getting in their car

The national cycle route 21, the Waterlink Way, runs the whole length of the borough and offers a good North-South route already, mostly traffic free. It can become congested at peak times, feel isolated at night, and would benefit from some upgrading at key points, but

overall it is popular and well used. However, it does not extend to the east or west of the borough, which are under provided with well linked, quality routes. More fundamentally, there are no modern on road cycling routes featuring segregated facilities as seen increasingly in neighbouring boroughs. If Lewisham is to seriously incentivise more people to cycle regularly, this shortfall in provision will need to be addressed.



Good cycling routes feel safe, are pleasant and attractive to ride, easy to follow and go to places people want and need to go

Considerate cycling is allowed in all parks and the council has developed a green way route through the east side of Beckenham Place Park, which extends another North-South cycle route through the borough.



Beckenham Place Park is a beautiful route on a nice day, but is not suitable 24 hours a day

The large numbers of people that use the most popular routes, such as LCN 22 connecting Bromley and Catford to Southwark via the Eddystone Road railway bridge and the Waterlink Way show that, where it is made easy and pleasant, people will ride bikes.



Much of the Waterlink Way is wide, well-surfaced and well-lit, making it an excellent leisure route for all cyclists.

However, many other cycle routes are poorly signed, involve junctions that are difficult to negotiate, or need effective crossing points across railway lines and busy roads. The South Circular, and main roads in Grove Park, Whitefoot and Downham wards, are particularly deficient in safe crossing facilities, making cycling along whole routes impossible for all but the most confident of cyclists.



Barrier to cycling where an otherwise excellent route in Lewisham crosses Southend Lane

Major transport routes through the main centres of population currently have no safe routes through them and lack segregated space, even where there is room for it, and motor traffic speeds and density are so high that most residents are effectively deterred from considering cycling on such routes. These include the A21 through Downham, Catford, and Lewisham, and routes from the east of the borough into and through Catford, Lewisham and New Cross.



The A21: opportunity to make more effective use of carriageway space to create space for cycling

The Main Principles

To deliver this vision we have established three key principles to guide future cycling projects:



A fully joined up network can provide safe cycling for everyone (photos courtesy of Cycling Embassy of Great Britain and Box Bike London)

1. A fully joined up cycle network – consisting of both:

- 1.1 a high capacity, segregated direct route connecting Deptford, Lewisham and Catford towards Bromley
- 1.2 ... and an integrated network including Quietways, Greenways and Cycle Super Highways (CSH's)

2. **Safer Cycling** – ensuring that no one is deterred from cycling by perceptions of danger

3. **Cycling for everyone** – enabling a real choice to take up cycling as an alternative means of getting around.

The immediate targets of this strategy by which we will measure its success are:

- To double the volume of cyclists in the Borough by 2020
- To increase the proportion of residents cycling to work to 10% by 2020
- To reduce the risk of cycle accidents by 40% by 2020
- To increase number of children cycling to school to 15% by 2020

By applying all the actions outlined below in the strategy and with sustained investment, these targets can be achieved in Lewisham. High rates of cycling are already being achieved on some of the principal commuter routes such as Lee High Road and parts of Lewisham High Street. With the right support and facilities, larger number of trips by people within the borough as well as commuting trips, can be made by bike. We need to work hard to attract external funding to make long term improvements to Lewisham's streets.

The Main Principles in More Detail.

1. A fully joined up cycle network

This is crucial to making cycling a viable and popular transport choice. This would comprise some non-segregated routes, well signed, on roads made safe by low speeds and the use of filtered permeability, closing roads to motor vehicles wherever possible, whilst leaving passage for cycling and walking. These routes on quieter roads should also link to a high capacity, direct, segregated route connecting Deptford, Lewisham and Catford, as indicated in the route maps provided in the Appendix to this document.

In addition, other roads in the borough, which carry higher volumes of motor traffic at higher speeds, should be considered for segregation, or semi-segregation.

1.1 Segregated Routes

A21 Cycle Superhighway

Central to the creation of a cycle friendly borough is a major route along the A21. There is space here to create a segregated route along its whole length, linking to Bromley borough in the south right through Catford, Lewisham and Deptford. In the north of the borough it would link to Cycle Superhighway 4, which is already in the final stages of planning and due to commence construction soon. This presents an opportunity for Lewisham to create a flagship cycle route, which would make cycling a real possibility for many residents who do

not feel able to ride through these areas at the moment, linking the main town centres of the borough, as well as linking the borough to other key parts of London. This would entail creating safe routes for cycling through the very busy junctions at Catford, Lewisham and Deptford Broadway.



The A21: opportunity to create space for cycling whilst maintaining space for other road users, as has been demonstrated in other parts of London.

Cycle Superhighway 4

This will provide a commuting link from the north of the borough into Central London. Given the scale of development along Lewisham's riverside it is important to ensure this route is of very high quality and well connected to the new developments. Given the relative paucity of rail services in the area, reflected in very low Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) scores, often severe congestion on local roads, and high levels of pollution from motor vehicles that are already a cause for residents, it is imperative that as many of the new residents arriving in Deptford as possible choose cycling rather than other transport modes.

1.2 Low motor traffic 'Quietway' routes (with possible light segregation where required)

With clear and safe North-South routes through the borough comes the need to link other areas of Lewisham, particularly to the East, to these routes. There is even more scope to increase cycling levels in Eastern wards, which, at the moment, have lower numbers of cyclists and cycling journeys than the northern wards. There is already in existence parts of a cycling and walking route to link Downham, Grove Park and Whitefoot wards to Beckenham Place Park and the Waterlink Way. It is not well used by cyclists due to a difficult bridge crossing, unnecessary barriers and poor surfaces. But there is huge potential to produce a good quality route to link the east of the borough with the north south links that will increase those cycling in the borough substantially, by removing barriers that exist on existing routes as well as the use of filtered permeability wherever possible to make routes safe enough for all ages and abilities to cycle.



Barriers like these near Grove Park must be removed from cycle routes: This is potentially an immensely useful route which would encourage many people living nearby to choose cycling, linking this part of the borough to other cycle routes, local amenities and town centres.

1.3 Safer Junctions & Crossings

Understanding that road junctions represent the biggest barrier to safe cycling, we will identify a priority list of junctions that need adaptation to be brought up to modern day safety standards for cycling. Too many junctions have already been re-designed with no thought for safer cycling, representing a wasted opportunity. Schemes that only benefit pedestrians should also be avoided. Improvements should be made as and when the next round of improvements or adaptations are enabled in various highway maintenance and refurbishment programmes. Junction improvements are still worth making even if they do not lie on a specific cycle route.

Priorities will be identified and mapped by consulting with Lewisham Cyclists members, and with other stakeholders of the Council, but are likely to include both major junctions (e.g. Catford Town Centre) and “second tier” junctions such as the Tiger’s Head (A20/Burnt Ash Road), South Circular A205/Burnt Ash Hill, and others. In this way, modified layouts and traffic light sequencing can be adapted from within the existing junction footprint to eliminate dangerous “left hooks” and enable much safer cycling movements protected from fast moving traffic.

Strategic reviews of major junctions should not preclude short term “fixes” to improve safety.

1.4 Maintenance

Maintenance and refurbishment of the existing network is crucial to retaining its attractiveness for cycling and other users. This includes sweeping and grounds maintenance programmes, as well as occasional surveying and updating of signage, entry gates and barriers, and periodic re-surfacing. Lewisham will undertake to ensure that all cycling routes,

both on road and off-carriageway, are included on the borough's highway maintenance programme.

2. Safer Cycling

Ensuring that no one is deterred from cycling by perceptions of danger

2.1 20mph safe speed limit

This will be crucial. Publicity and enforcement will be the key to making this a success. We must work closely with police to ensure its enforcement.

We should also work with TfL to promote the introduction of 20mph on the TLRN in the borough.

2.2 One-way streets

All one-way streets should be converted to two-way for cycling unless there are very strong safety reasons against conversion.



One-way street with contraflow cycling facility on Stanstead Road near Forest Hill.

2.3 Walking and cycling integral to transport planning

All road schemes should consider walking and cycling first and how individuals already negotiate the area in question on foot or by bicycle and then investigate and implement wherever possible ways of improving the walking and cycling experience in that area with a view to increasing the numbers of people walking and cycling there. There are a number of aids for planners and engineers in this process, including the CLoS (Cycling Levels of Service) and staff will need training in the use of this. Working together with Lewisham Council, Transport for London and Network Rail, secure cycle parking needs to be incorporated into all new housing developments and also through creation of cycle hubs at major transports interchanges throughout the borough (including stations such as New Cross, Forest Hill, Catford, Hither Green, Lewisham and Grove Park).

2.4 Cycle training & bike hire

The council should continue to fund cycle training and its loan bike scheme. More confident riders ride more safely. The council should also make funding through all planning and budget streams available to extend the Transport for London Santander Cycle Hire Scheme into the borough.

3. Cycling for everyone

3.1 Training

The council already offers free cycle training to any resident who wants it, as well as running a programme of cycle training in schools and should expand work with children, parents and teachers. However, we risk wasting the money, time and expertise spent on excellent training programmes, especially for children, if there is no provision of safe space where they can ride.

3.2 Safe school routes

Children that cycle to school benefit from the exercise and start the day as more alert learners. Traffic congestion associated with children being dropped at the school gates is costly and polluting and should be discouraged through families choosing healthier options such as walking or cycling. Lewisham will support schools to implement sustainable travel plans and identify and create safe routes school, along with secure cycle parking, and training sessions for cyclists.

3.3 Cycle Loan Schemes

The council, already operates a successful loan scheme with London Cycling Campaign in order to make safe good quality bicycles available to all at an affordable price and will continue this scheme.

3.4 Promoting change in behaviour by example

The council should support and promote cycling activity within the borough. Cycling councillors should be visible in the community and the council should support and promote local cycling organisations, especially those concerned with getting children and young people cycling and those who offer rides and training in the borough to new or beginner riders. The council's cycling champion should be involved with local community cycling events.

3.5 Diversity & community

Develop, support and encourage directly or through community groups working in cycling, programmes that encourage a wider diversity of people, including young women, older and disabled residents, black and ethnic minority community groups, and businesses, organisations, cultural and religious groups to cycle. Through the network of Local Assemblies the Council could encourage community cycling schemes through the community grants programme. This could help fund local route signage, community rides, and secure storage.

3.6 Wellbeing & health

Both the Council and Lewisham Cyclists will continue to promote the wellbeing and health benefits that result from active travel choices. In particular Lewisham Cyclists will promote and lead regular rides for all abilities, encouraging more people to take up cycling. They will also work with other agencies and community groups including Wheels for Well Being to encourage participation by all, and organize Mend & Ride sessions to help people look after their own bikes.

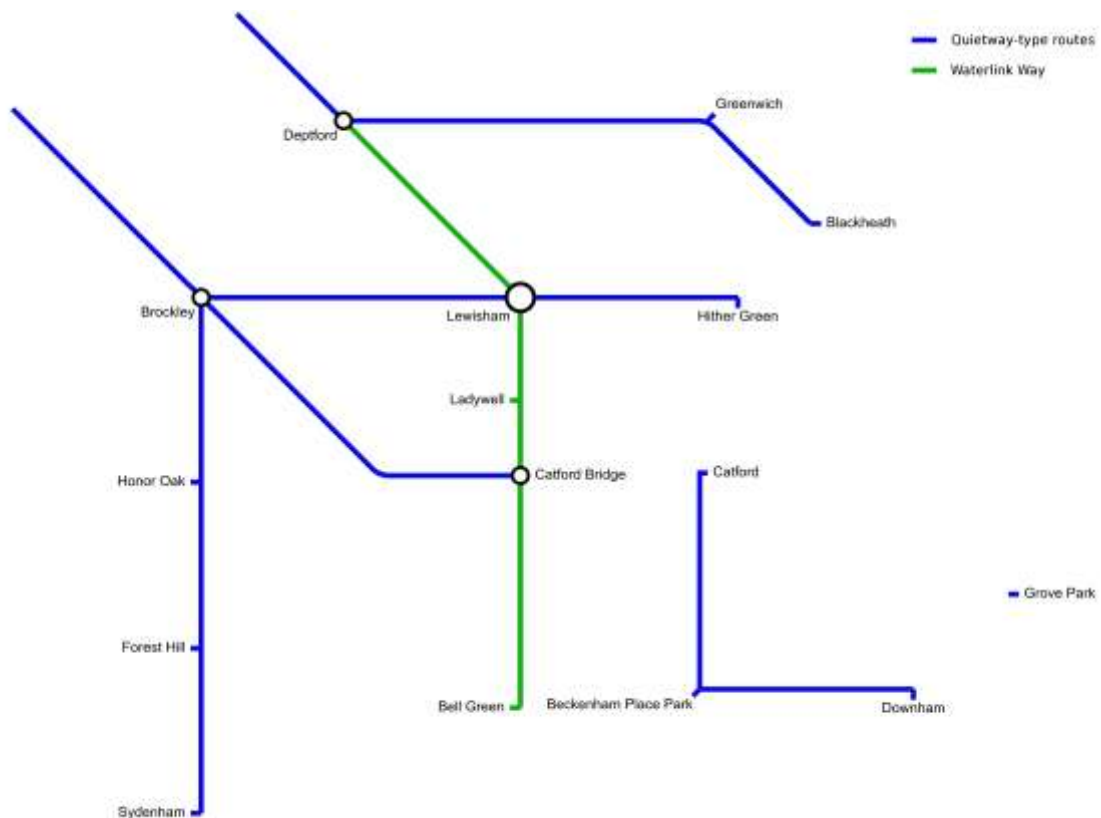
Commitment/Conclusions

Both Lewisham Cyclists and the Council are committed to this strategy. By working together we believe we have a much better opportunity of bringing real improvements, which will make Lewisham a better place for all its residents. Lewisham Cyclists will continue to maintain and update this strategy document, in consultation with its members, agreeing any changes and updates with the Council annually.

Appendix – Cycle Route Schematic Maps

The following two maps show cycle routes schematically in a similar design to the classic Tube map. They are therefore neither geographically accurate nor do they show the good or the bad of cycling in Lewisham in any detail. Rather, they aim to clearly demonstrate how disconnected some parts of the borough are in terms of cycling provision and how this would be remedied through the implementation of the fully joined-up cycle network described in this strategy document.

The first map shows current cycle routes in the borough that are, on the whole, safe and pleasant. None of these routes are perfect, but they are of a high enough standard to attract a wide variety of users.



The second map show how the current disjointed set of routes could be turned into a fully joined up network based around and linking to the proposed A21 Superhighway.

