

Sustainable Development Select Committee

Report title: Public Realm Technical Manual

Date: November 2023

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: Bellingham, Blackheath, Brockley, Catford South, Crofton Park, Deptford, Downham, Evelyn, Forest Hill, Grove Park, Hither Green, Ladywell, Lee Green, Lewisham Central, New Cross Gate, Perry Vale, Rushey Green, Sydenham, Telegraph Hill

Contributors: Director of Inclusive Regeneration, Director of Public Realm, Director of

Law, Director of Finance

Outline and recommendations

1. Outline

- 1.1. The current Lewisham Streetscape Guide outlines what we consider to be the principles of good streetscape, as well as specific guidance to show how those principles can be met.
- 1.2. Urban Movement were appointed earlier this year following a competitive procurement process to deliver an updated Public Realm Manual for the borough.
- 1.3. The Public Realm Manual will act as a reference document for designers and developers operating within the public realm and private developments across the borough.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Sustainable Development Select Committee is recommended to note the project updates contained in this report.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

July 2018 - Studio Egret West architects were appointed to develop a draft Catford Masterplan for public consultation. On 14 July 2021, <u>Mayor & Cabinet</u> adopted the Catford Town Centre Framework.

November 2022 – Director for Inclusive Regeneration s approved officers to undertake a procurement for a suitable consultant to undertake and deliver an updated Public Realm Manual to support the delivery of the Catford Town Centre Framework.

December 2022 – Director for Inclusive Regeneration approved appointment of Urban Movement following a competitive procurement exercise.

March 2023 – Director of Inclusive Regeneration approved the extension to contract was awarded in December 2022 to expand the Public Realm Manual for the entire borough following the Levelling-Up Fund award.

The project has made steady progress and a first draft of the document is expected by the end of this year in December 2023.

The project team is in the process to commence an informal consultation with key external stakeholders in Winter 2023.

1. Reasons for lateness and urgency

- 1.1. Lateness: This report was not available for the original despatch because officers were completing final checks to ensure there were no legal implications in regard to planning.
- 1.2. Urgency: The intention is to seek Mayor and Cabinet approval to launch a consultation in January 2024 to allow consultation to complete before the pre-election period commences for the London Mayoral election in late March 2024. Officers would welcome feedback from the Sustainable Development Select Committee on the report ahead of this decision making.
- 1.3. Where a report is received less than five clear days before the date of the meeting at which the matter is being considered, then under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100(b),(4) the Chair of the Committee can take the matter as a matter of urgency if he is satisfied that there are special circumstances requiring it to be treated as a matter of urgency. These special circumstances have to be specified in the minutes of the meeting.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The current Lewisham Streetscape Guide¹ outlines what we consider to be the principles of good streetscape, as well as specific guidance to show how those principles can be met. This guide is now over a decade old and does not reflect upon the current thinking around Healthy streets, sustainability approach towards materials selection, our aspirations around encouraging active travel, and climate resilient spaces.
- 2.2. Urban Movement were appointed earlier this year following a competitive procurement process to deliver public realm guidance for Catford Town Centre due to the scale of

¹ Lewisham Streetscape Guide, 2011 https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/roads-and-transport/roads-and-pavements/lewisham-streetscape-guide

- development expected. This was expanded to cover public realm for the borough as a whole considering the Levelling Up Fund projects and other large developments expected building on existing TfL and outdated LBL guidance.
- 2.3. The Public Realm Manual will act as a reference document for designers and developers operating within the public realm and private developments across the borough. The Manual will take into account various existing supporting documents (Lewisham Streetscape Guide, Catford Framework, New Local Plan, Transport Strategy, emerging Tree Strategy, Climate Emergency Action Plan etc).
- 2.4. The Public Realm Manual will set out our vision for Lewisham's streets and public spaces where we want to reimagine the borough's roads and streets to create nicer streets for residents, reduce air pollution and congestion, improve road safety and encourage more people to walk, cycle or use public transport.

3. Recommendations

3.1. The Sustainable Development Select Committee is recommended to note the project updates contained in this report.

4. Policy Context

- 4.1. Public realm helps to meet several cross-cutting and thematic policy areas such as:
 - Climate change and environmental management
 - Open space and biodiversity
 - Waste management
 - Building a sustainable community
 - High quality design for Lewisham
- 4.2. The Public Realm Manual contributes to the implementation of the Council's Corporate Priorities as detailed in the "Corporate Strategy 2022-2026" document which are:
 - Cleaner and greener
 - A strong local economy
 - Quality housing
 - Children and young people
 - Safer communities
 - Open Lewisham
 - Health and wellbeing
- 4.3. Lewisham Council also declared a climate emergency in 2019, committing to reach an ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030. Change and growth must be positively managed, to build green infrastructure and harness opportunities for walking and cycling alongside more sustainable forms of development in the borough.
- 4.4. The National Planning Policy Framework includes a number of key themes which support the delivery of public realm to enable a number of outcomes including:
 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - Promoting sustainable transport
 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

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- 4.5. Development within the borough is guided through the adopted Core Strategy and various supplementary planning documents. The council is progressing the development of a new Local Plan which has completed Regulation 19 consultation. Both documents set out areas of growth, including Catford and Lewisham town centres.
- 4.6. The Lewisham town centre local plan was adopted in 2014 and provides a guide on where and how development should take place in the town centre. The Catford town centre framework was adopted in 2021 and sets out the aspirations for growth and improvement for the town centre. All these documents are supported by more detailed guidance such as the Lewisham Streetscape Guide which is now considered to be out of date.
- 4.7. There is a wealth of existing policy and guidance on many aspects of street and public realm design. This includes policy and guidance at a borough, London-wide and national level. For example, Transport for London's (TfL) Streets Toolkit, The Healthy Streets Approach, DfT's LTN1/20. Lewisham's transport strategy sets out key objectives, all of which have implication on street design and public space. Council's Sustainable Streets Programme, and Healthy Neighbourhoods also aim to create better streets for our residents.
- 4.8. Lewisham Council is currently progressing an Active Travel Strategy. This document will integrate existing policies within Strategic Transport and Highways, alongside other local, regional and national strategies, policies, and guidance into one overarching strategy with an associated delivery plan. The aim for this strategy is to provide a clear direction for the delivery of active travel improvements throughout the borough over the next 7–10 years.

5. Background

- 5.1. Streetscape, or public realm, includes the things you see at street level when you travel around any built-up area, from paving to street lighting, road signs to litterbins, kerbs to bus shelters.
- 5.2. Streets account for 80 per cent of London's public realm. Raising the ambition for streets with a collaborative, design-led approach is key to achieving new standards of excellence and recognising the fundamental role our streets and places play in improving the public realm and providing an enhanced quality of life.²
- 5.3. Lewisham's public realm is currently delivered via:
 - The Lewisham road network e.g. residential streets, side streets
 - TfL road network e.g., South circular, red routes
 - Town centres, highstreets, shopping parades, public squares etc. e.g., Deptford High street, Albany square
 - New developments residential and commercial
 - S106 / CIL / S278 contributions to future improvements e.g., interface between public and private space
- 5.4. Lewisham's public realm is maintained by the Council as adopted Highway, or by Parks if it's a public open space and is privately maintained on developments that are on private land.
- 5.5. All current development within the borough is guided by existing Planning policies, the

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² TfL Streetscape Guide, 2022

- Core Strategy along with various supplementary Planning documents and our Local Plan which has completed Regulation 19 consultation.
- 5.6. The current Lewisham Streetscape Guide³ outlines what we consider to be the principles of good streetscape, as well as specific guidance to show how those principles can be met. This guide is now over a decade old and does not reflect upon the current thinking around Healthy streets, sustainability approach towards materials selection, our aspirations around encouraging active travel, and climate resilient spaces.
- 5.7. There is a wealth of existing policy and guidance on many aspects of street and public realm design. This includes policy and guidance at a borough, London-wide and national level including Healthy Streets Approach, LTN1/20, Streets Toolkit and Lewisham's Transport Strategy/ LIP and Healthy Neighbourhoods and Sustainable Streets Programme.
- 5.8. Key challenges facing our public realm include (but are not limited to):
 - the use multiple types of materials and street furniture
 - Integration of green / blue infrastructure
 - Missed opportunities for collaboration between developments/existing context
 - Enforcement and street cleansing

6. Healthy Streets Scorecard

- 6.1. The Healthy Streets Scorecard⁴ ranks London Boroughs on how healthy their streets are according to various indicators. This includes 'input indicators' which help to deliver Healthy Streets, including:
 - low traffic neighbourhood schemes
 - 20mph speed limits
 - Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs)
 - physically protected cycle track
 - school provision, including School Streets and STARS scheme
 - bus priority on all routes 24/7
- 6.2. It also includes 'outcome indicators' which are outcome indicators, including:
 - the proportion of trips made by sustainable modes (walking, cycling, public transport)
 - active travel rate (the proportion of residents walking or cycling more than five times a week)
 - collisions resulting in serious or fatal injuries for active travellers, per million journey stages
 - car ownership rates, to ascertain the level of reliance on cars.
- 6.3. By combining the indicator scores, each borough is given a final Healthy Streets score. Lewisham has the second lowest score of any of the inner London boroughs and in 2023 was 14th with a score of 4.7. For context Southwark scored 6.3 and Lambeth

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³ Lewisham Streetscape Guide, 2011 https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/roads-and-transport/roads-and-pavements/lewisham-streetscape-guide

⁴ Healthy Streets Scorecard 2023, https://www.healthystreetsscorecard.london/

- scored 5.8, but Greenwich only scored 3.7.
- 6.4. The Lewisham section of Cycleway 4 has now been completed and School Streets are being rolled out. Around 30% of the bus routes in the boroughs are prioritised through bus lanes. More generally, change in favour of active travel is now largely stalled and Lewisham has the lowest level of any of the inner London boroughs in terms of controlled parking, with just 21% CPZ coverage final score, whereas six inner London boroughs have scores over 90%. The borough will benefit from TfL's planned expansion of 20mph speed limits on its Red Route roads across south London in autumn 2023. The Sustainable Streets programme discussed below aims to deliver on the various indicators across Lewisham. This will be supported by the Public Realm Manual once complete.

7. Sustainable Streets

- 7.1. The Sustainable Streets programme⁵ aims to create better street for residents, reduce the number of car journeys made in Lewisham and encourage more people to walk, cycle or use public transport, in order to reduce traffic and pollution, improve road safety and lower carbon emissions.
- 7.2. With unrestricted parking on 75% of our roads the highest of any inner London borough improving parking management and introducing more sustainable transport measures are both crucial for reducing the number of unnecessary car journeys and tackling traffic, congestion, and pollution. To tackle this the programme the council is proposing to introduce new parking permit schemes to discourage unnecessary journeys and ensure onstreet parking is prioritising for residents and businesses.
- 7.3. Alongside the introduction of parking permit schemes, our Sustainable Streets programme proposes a series of improvements to local streets and investment in sustainable transport measures, including more street trees, safer crossing points, electric vehicle charging points, secure cycle storage and car club bays. As well as reducing unnecessary car journeys, the introduction of parking permit schemes will provide the space and funding needed to invest in these sustainable transport measures and improvements to local streets.

8. Active travel and cycling

- 8.1. Lewisham Council is currently progressing an Active Travel Strategy. This document will integrate existing policies within Strategic Transport and Highways, alongside other local, regional, and national strategies, policies, and guidance into one overarching strategy with an associated delivery plan. The aim for this strategy is to provide a clear direction for the delivery of active travel improvements throughout the borough over the next 7–10 years.
- 8.2. There are several programmes being delivered by the Strategic Transport team which will improve provision to active travel in Catford town centre and across the borough.
- 8.3. The Council has recently launched its partnership with Lime in order to support cycle hire schemes and the growth in micro-mobility that has been observed both in the borough and London. Through this partnership, the Council will be introducing marked bays for designated parking of e-bikes.
- 8.4. The cycle hangar programme aims to deliver more secure cycle storage across the borough in order to provide residents with a safe place to keep bicycles. Locations

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⁵ Sustainable Streets Programme, 2023 https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/roads-and-transport/sustainable-streets-programme

- identified for cycle hangars are based on demand to ensure that the facilities are well used. There is a form on the Council's website for residents to log their <u>requests for a cycle hangar.</u>⁶
- 8.5. Areas with the highest number of requests will be prioritised, however there is recognition that several wards have a low number of hangars, including Catford South and Rushey Green. Locations within these wards have been identified and will be rolled out in 2023/24. The cycle hangar webpage will shortly be updated to explain the process for identifying locations for new cycle hangars.

9. Public Realm Technical Manual

- 9.1. Urban Movement were appointed earlier this year following a competitive procurement process to deliver public realm guidance for Catford Town Centre due to the scale of development expected. This was expanded to cover public realm for the borough as a whole considering the Levelling Up Fund projects and other large developments expected building on existing TfL and outdated LBL guidance.
- 9.2. The Public Realm Manual will act as a reference document for designers and developers operating within the public realm and private developments across the borough. The Manual will take into account various existing supporting documents (Lewisham Streetscape Guide, Catford Framework, New Local Plan, Transport Strategy, emerging Tree Strategy, Climate Emergency Action Plan etc).
- 9.3. The Public Realm Manual will set out our vision for Lewisham's streets and public spaces where we want to reimagine the borough's roads and streets to create nicer streets for residents, reduce air pollution and congestion, improve road safety and encourage more people to walk, cycle or use public transport. The Manual recognises that some of our challenges in creating better public realm are around missed opportunities between service areas, integration of nature based solution to many urban public realm issues and multiple types of materials and street furniture that make management and maintenance of the spaces difficult.
- 9.4. It is expected that the document will be used by a range of teams within the council including Planning, Highways/Transport, Capital Delivery, Climate Resilience and Green Scene. The document will be publicly accessible to provide guidance for developments and planned improvements across the borough. It will also guide Sustainable Streets and LIP projects, as well as renewals and section 278 works. The document will highlight cross-cutting work areas such as green infrastructure.
- 9.5. The work includes updating Lewisham Streetscape Guide considering public realm as a whole to create a boroughwide Public Realm Manual. This document will set out the principles, guidance and standards for works within the existing and planned public realm in Lewisham. This includes streets, public squares, parks and green spaces, and planned public spaces. The manual will also include spatial layout principles and standards that will help identify opportunities and also suggest a basic palette of materials.
- 9.6. Key objectives of the Manual are:
 - To Enhance Lewisham's Character: The Manual will improve consistency, simplicity and legibility of Lewisham's public realm by agreeing a basic palette of materials
 - Create well-functioning streets and public spaces: Ensure that streets and public spaces perform well for users including businesses and communities by

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 $^{^{6}\ \}underline{\text{https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/roads-and-transport/cycling/cycle-storage-for-hire}$

- suggesting streetscape principles (road geometry)
- Help achieve other health, biodiversity, transport and sustainability objectives: To utilise the role of public realm in our ability to encourage active travel and lifestyles and supporting local nature and ecology.
- 9.7. The Manual will set out the following areas:
- 9.8. Principles for streetscape composition:
- 9.9. A connected, inclusive, accessible and intuitive pedestrian experience is likely to be key to the success of Lewisham's public realm that will also help to achieve the top priorities around active travel and sustainability. This section will explore and resolve scenarios for a good streetscape composition that will be accessible and create room for trees, people, cycles, places to dwell etc.
- 9.10. This section will also outline the various surface materials, unit sizes, material finishes and composition of such materials and how they are combined to ensure a distinctive and lasting ground plane is established for Lewisham into the future. A set of guiding principles for surface materials will be outlined, supported by illustrative material composition studies. These represent the standard details and layouts expected within the Lewisham's public realm.
- 9.11. Principles for furniture/ placement (Street Furniture):
- 9.12. Street furniture will provide a range of opportunities to pause and participate with the public realm of Lewisham. This section will identify the elements of furniture that contribute to the street scene and considers their placement and distribution. It is the intention that such items provide a good quality, convenient and comfortable experience to all users who engage with them and do not clutter the public realm or impede movement and activities.
- 9.13. The Manual will consider the placement, available surveillance, robustness of the specification, and a range of options. A set of guiding principles for furniture placement will be outlined, supported by illustrative studies and descriptions of furniture elements and key criteria for specification.
- 9.14. Principles for Planting and Greening:
- 9.15. The future public realm within Lewisham provides a number of opportunities to introduce trees, planting and other nature-based solutions to various urban public realm issues. It will be of vital importance to establish trees and planting within this new urban environment.
- 9.16. Lewisham is likely to support schemes that seek to increase natural biodiversity, improve environmental conditions such as air quality and safeguard the contribution of the natural environment through Sustainable Drainage Solutions over the coming decades as climatic factors continue to change. Therefore this section will establish principals for sustainable long term growth of trees and other green infrastructure within Lewisham.
- 9.17. Whilst much emphasis is rightly placed on the significant contribution of green infrastructure to the character of the public realm, successful planting that will contribute in the long term comes with its own challenges. Below ground conditions and an array of service utilities present a considerable challenge to attaining appropriate root volumes for planting, particularly for trees. This section will identify the technical requirements and considerations for successful plant selection and implementation focusing on growth habit, vigour and irrigation demand
- 9.18. Principles for incorporating SuDs within all the technical principals:
- 9.19. This section will demonstrate how sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) can become an integral part of the streetscape within Lewisham. It should take innovative approach to

communicating the opportunities and complexities of SuDS in the Lewisham context through cut-away illustrations of recognisable streetscape scenarios and opportunities. This section will not be meant to be viewed as an alternative to the CIRIA SuDS Manual.

9.20. A summary of the types of information which will be included in the Manual can be found at Appendix 1.

10. Stakeholder engagement

- 10.1. Engagement with relevant community groups and local stakeholders will be carried out in the coming months to inform the first draft of the manual, in advance of public consultation in early 2024.
- 10.2. The community groups and local stakeholders engaged will include representatives from communities that are more likely to be impacted by streetscape design, such as disabled people and older people.

11. Public consultation

- 11.1. The project intends to carry out public consultation in early 2024 to gain the views of residents, businesses and the wider community on the draft manual.
- 11.2. Next steps are to develop a consultation and engagement plan to carry out borough-wide public consultation for a six-week period. Consultation will be carried out through a combination of surveys and in-person consultation events. To maximise participation, consultation materials will be available online and in paper formats.
- 11.3. Pre-consultation engagement with key stakeholder groups will help to inform the consultation materials. These include groups such as Climate Action Lewisham, Lewisham Cyclists, Positive Aging Council and Living Streets. The stakeholder list will be developed as the consultation plan progresses.
- 11.4. The comprehensive report from Lewisham Disabled People's Commission already provides valuable detailed insight into some critical challenges whilst navigating Lewisham. These challenges include the state of pavements, roads, and crossings when navigating on foot or by wheelchair. Further engagement with the various key access groups can help to develop suitable solutions.
- 11.5. Potential consultation activities and promotion could include:
 - Dedicated web page with information about the consultation and links to the draft manual and a summary document
 - Consultation survey, available online and in paper format
 - Virtual stakeholder briefings
 - In-person drop-in sessions for residents and businesses, advertised in advance
 - 'Pop-up' consultation events in locations with high footfall (e.g. high streets, town centres, markets)
 - Press release and news article for the Council's website
 - Attendance at local ward assemblies
 - Advertising on JCDecaux boards around the borough (subject to budget and availability)
 - Posters in parks, libraries, leisure centres and community centres
 - Promotion in the Council's resident and business e-newsletters
 - Promotion in the Lewisham Life magazine

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- Promotion through the Council's social media channels
- Promotion through the Council's internal channels (e.g. all staff email, Viva Engage, posters)

12. Next steps

- 12.1. Engagement with relevant community groups and local stakeholders will be carried out in the coming months, as set out above.
- 12.2. A draft consultation plan will be developed in conjunction with the Communications and Engagement team.
- 12.3. It is expected that a Mayor and Cabinet approval to commence consultation will be sought in early 2024. Following this, public consultation will be conducted.

13. Financial implications

13.1. There are no financial implications for this report.

14. Legal implications

14.1. The Public Realm Manual is not intended to become a supplementary planning document but will be supporting document that acts as a reference document for council departments and designers and developers operating within the public realm and private developments across the borough. Where appropriate, relevant provisions from the Public Realm Manual could be included in contracts, planning or highways agreements between the Council and developers.

15. Equalities implications

- 15.1. The Council must have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This requires all public bodies, including local authorities, to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 15.2. The Council's Single Equality Framework 2020-2024 provides an overarching framework and focus for the Council's work on equalities and helps ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 15.3. An Equality Impact Assessment is currently being drafted for the Public Realm Manual.
- 15.4. The Public Realm Manual aims to set out vision for Lewisham's streets and public spaces where we want to create nicer streets and public spaces for residents- streets and spaces that are walkable, wheelable, green, and safe. Therefore, we hope that Most groups will have a positive or neutral impact overall as the improvements will help deliver environmental, health and road safety benefits to all residents and visitors to the area.
- 15.5. Public consultation and engagement will help to provide a suitable evidence base to support analysis of the impacts on any of the identified groups.
- 15.6. The consultation plan will endeavour to mitigate against all barriers to participation

to encourage and enable everyone in the community to participate.

16. Climate change and environmental implications

16.1. Improving quality of public realm that aims to create a people friendly, green environment so that it is easier to walk and cycle will contribute to addressing the climate emergency.

17. Crime and disorder implications

17.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

18. Health and wellbeing implications

- 18.1. The Public Realm manual will uphold an ambition for creating people friendly streets by promoting well designed streets and public realm for Lewisham.
- 18.2. The Manual will also suggest seeking out opportunities within existing streets to include greening by way of rain gardens and tree planting.
- 18.3. These interventions aim to promote better health by providing an environment where users can feel safer and more encouraged to enjoy the benefits of walking and cycling.

19. Background papers

- 19.1. Lewisham Streetscape Guide 2011, https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/roads-and-transport/roads-and-pavements/lewisham-streetscape-guide
- 19.2. Appendix 1 Example sections of the Public Realm Manual. This includes key examples of design principles.

20. Glossary

Term	Definition
TfL	Transport for London are the integrated transport authority responsible for meeting Mayor Sadiq Khan's strategy and commitments on transport in London. They run the day-to-day operation of the Capital's public transport network and manage London's main roads.
GLA	Greater London Authority

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