

Dear sir or madam **DC/17/102049 – Planning Consultation, Carpetright site in Loampit Vale**

On behalf of Lewisham Cyclists I would like to formally comment on the above proposals as follows:

Although we have some concerns over the scale and proposed massing of the buildings, in an area already subject to intense development, we welcome that the development is not to include any residential car parking. In principle we also welcome the new public space although unless this is designed to screen out the noise and blight of heavy moving traffic, may not be an effective amenity.

We welcome the secure cycle parking for residents within the security of the building, and also the provision of cycle standards in and around the public space for visitors accessing commercial and retail uses. These need to be provided in secure and convenient locations according to the Mayor of London's cycling standards.

In our view, the biggest challenge facing this proposed development is improving access for both people on bicycles and pedestrians to and from the site. The site is very close to the major Lewisham Gateway junction, which is one of the most dangerous junctions in the Borough, and a significant deterrent to active transport because of the continual fast moving and heavy traffic. The Thurston Road/Loampit Vale junction is a pinch point for traffic heading south east through the Gateway Junction for the A20 and A21 leaving London. People on bicycles currently have the option of staying on carriageway through the junction which experienced riders will sometimes choose. Alternatively they may opt to cross Loampit Vale at the Thurston Road toucan crossing, and skirt around the Glass Mills leisure centre on the Waterlink Way shared cycle path before re-joining the A21 in Molesworth Street to continue south towards Catford and Bromley. However, this is not a convenient option for a person on a cycle trying to head south east towards Lee Green or Eltham, or east towards Greenwich and Blackheath. Typically they will wheel their bikes on the pavement around the Gateway until they can remount on the far side and continue their on-carriageway journey. More often than not this inconvenience simply deters people from taking up this mode of transport.

Therefore, we ask the committee to use their powers of section 106 agreements to require the developer to design, in conjunction with TfL, the local authority, and Lewisham Cyclists, improved access for people on bicycles and on foot to mitigate the lack of access, and encourage more sustainable journeys by bicycle and/or on foot in line with the London Mayor's 'Healthy Streets for London' Walking and Cycling Strategy and the Lewisham Mayor's Lewisham Cycling Strategy (currently under collaborative development by LBL Officers, Project Centre and Lewisham Cyclists). This would reduce congestion and pollution, as well as improving the health and local economy of the surrounding area.

Our initial view is this could effectively be achieved with a new shared use foot/cycle bridge across the River Quaggy between a widened and unimpeded Silk Mills path and Thurston Road near to the proposed new station entrance. A detailed site survey would be needed to consider the most convenient and practical location of such a bridge, and whether there is the potential to create an underpass beneath the SE rail line closer to the (new) station entrance than the existing short underpass off Thurston Road to the NE. An improved Toucan crossing could also be envisaged across Thurston Road, and this would ultimately improve access for people on bicycles from the western approaches to the junction, to the station itself, but ultimately across the barriers created by the river and rail routes to the east of the entire Gateway junction.

We would also urge the Council to use its powers to create an effective cycle hub, potentially within one or more of the existing railway arches, to include secure cycle storage, maintenance and repair facilities, and other services aimed at encouraging people on bicycles to use this public transport interchange.

Lewisham Cyclists would be pleased to work with the developer and/or Council representatives to facilitate such a design review, and look forward to hearing from you. If you have any further queries please contact us by e-mail or through Brian Turpin 07541 316961

