

# Proposal from Lewisham Cyclists to improve active travel in Lewisham Town Centre - Winter 2022/3

## New Town Centre

- Allow direct cycle movements - using East-West and North-South paths
- Connect paths with existing crossings
- Ensure path widths accommodate both pedestrians and people with bicycles

## Accessing the new town centre

- Permanent with-flow cycle lanes along Molesworth Street
- New green cycle route linking Sculpture Park with Ladywell Village (Waterlink Way)
- Improved active travel link with Cornmill Gardens and direct crossing to new shopping centre
- Cycle hub offering secure storage and supporting onward travel at Lewisham Station
- Safer and quicker active connectivity in and around town centre integrating with Lewisham High Street Levelling Up
- Docking and geo-fenced areas for hire bikes and secure parking across the town centre
- Charging points for e-bikes

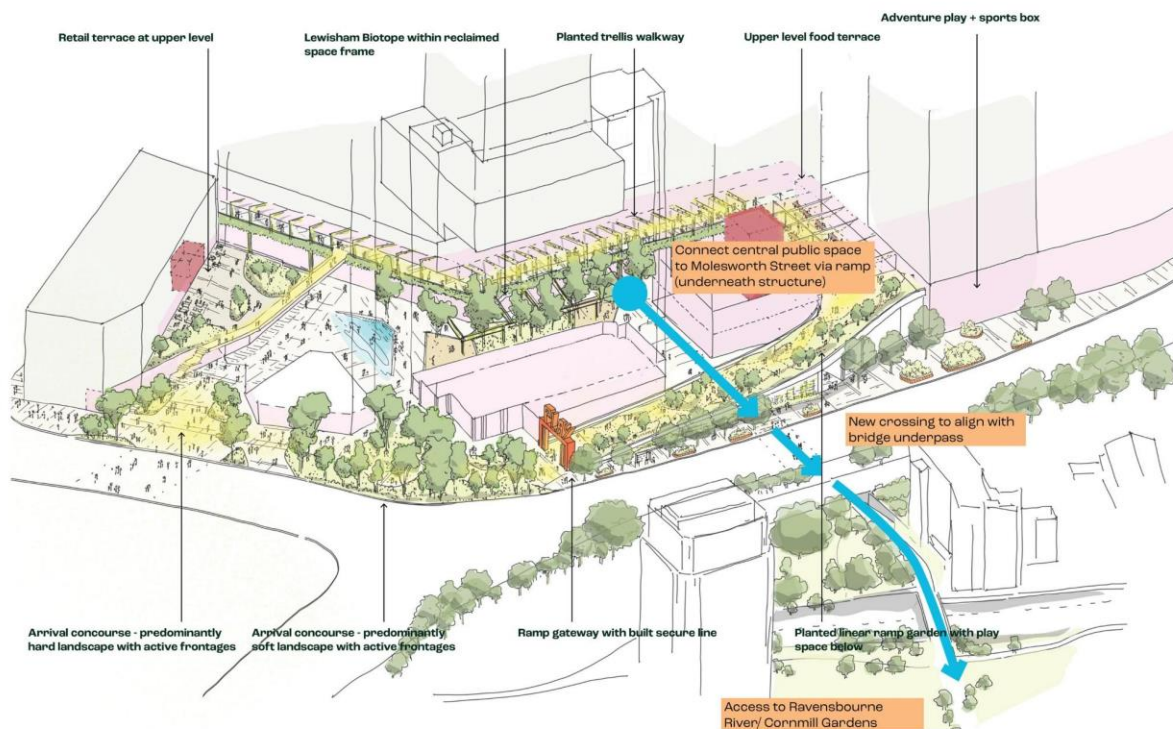
The owners of Lewisham Shopping Centre (LSC) Landsec have been widely consulting on proposed redevelopment of the entire site which opened in the 1970's. We believe they offer a unique opportunity to mitigate the dislocation caused by the current Lewisham Centre and dramatically improve active travel access across the entire town centre from the Gateway to Ladywell.

We need to significantly improve access for all modes of active travel, and overcome the east-west dislocation caused by Molesworth Street (busy dual carriageway) and the LSC itself. Routes for cycling and walking are non-existent or hostile, with cycles being banned from the LSC, and there is nothing to encourage people arriving on the west of town to explore the High Street with its pedestrianised market, cultural offers and public realm.

However, Landsec's proposals offer a much more positive outlook for active travel and show how the traffic blighted busy roads running through the town centre could be calmed and made liveable. Outline design proposals offer a unique opportunity to improve access for active travellers (pedestrians and people on bicycles) right across Lewisham Town Centre. The existing multi-storey car park is to be repurposed, removing conflicts caused by the current entrance and exit ramps. Many people on bicycles are currently deterred from visiting the Lewisham Shopping

Centre because of restricted access (bicycles are banned) and a lack of secure, or even covered cycle parking at the entrances. Also, as we have commented previously, the lack of viable East - West and North - South routes for people on bicycles causes almost total dislocation of the area surrounding the LSC.

Landsec's proposals to add several new east - west and north- south pedestrian and cycle routes in and around the development are very much welcomed, provided they are confirmed as being shared use between pedestrians and people on bicycles. For this to be accomplished it is essential the routes also align with signalised crossings on the major roads enabling connectivity throughout the LSC.



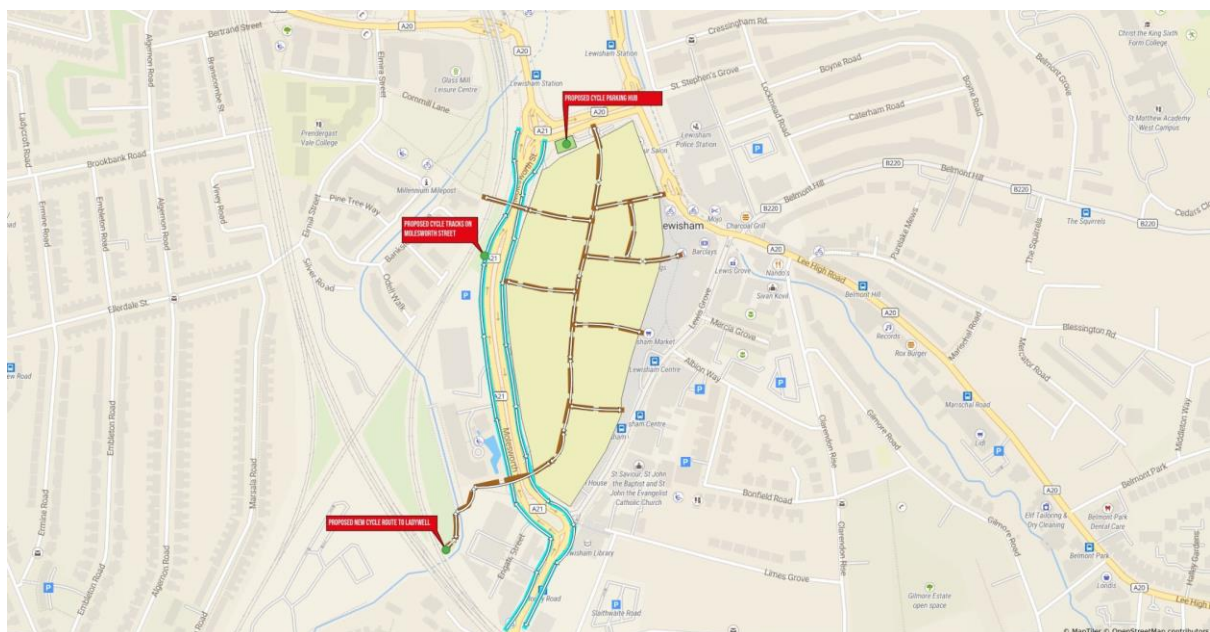
The outline routes displayed need to be wide enough and creatively designed to allow for shared use between pedestrians and cyclists. Shared use sections should be designed to encourage participants to share space safely and with respect. This can best be achieved with signage reflecting that space is shared, and route designs enabling people to move through the space whether walking, cycling or wheeling.

Although Landsec proposals focus on permeability throughout the new development, they also include indicative routes beyond the footprint of the development. These are aimed at maximising active travel access to all points of the compass, and enabling safe active travel corridors which could effectively transform Lewisham as a destination and mitigate much of the dislocation currently experienced throughout the Gateway junction and heavily trafficked main roads.

We urge the Council to work with Landsec and TfL to optimise these opportunities and create new active travel route connections from the development to the A21 (Molesworth Street) Streetspace scheme, and the Waterlink Way. There are a number of potential routes that could and should be developed and these have already been recognised explicitly as a policy objective in the A21 Development Framework:

Molesworth Street is currently part of TfL's Streetscape programme and features two "with flow" cycle lanes from the Gateway junction to Lewisham High Street. We would urge the Council to work with Landsec and TfL in improving and making permanent these active travel improvements, to complement the outline proposed green connection, and proposed new crossing point. We believe increasing connectivity along the A21 in both directions will significantly enhance the centre's economic and cultural appeal, as well as making it a much more pleasant and welcoming space in stark contrast to the current congested road space. This has been identified as a high priority corridor in the TfL Strategic Cycling Analysis and also in Lewisham Council's A21 Development Framework, Corporate Strategy, Transport Strategy and Cycle Strategy.

We propose (see below) a with-flow cycle lane on each side of Molesworth Street as illustrated below using existing space to the east of Molesworth Street. This would allow for some bus storage along the eastern carriageway, and potentially bus stops if required. It may be that the existing median would have to be removed to accommodate these features, which would have to be assessed with TfL (buses).



We also propose establishing a green cycle link on the currently closed riverside walking route from Sculpture Park on Molesworth St (to the south of Riverdale



House) to Wearside Road (via the southern edge of the Council Depot). This has been identified for re-opening as a walking and cycling route in Lewisham Council's A21 Development Framework. We believe this should be included in the Council's plans to optimise Landsec's own proposals and benefit from Section 106 funding as it significantly enhances connectivity for walking and cycling via a more direct and pleasant route from Ladywell. This also has the potential to connect both with the Waterlink Way, and the A21 spine which is currently partially improved for people on bicycles through TfL's Streetscape programme.



This is a unique opportunity for the Council and TfL to generally address the hostile environment of the Gateway/Molesworth Street which will still be isolated from the main part of the town unless remedial action can be taken to address the hazardous approaches for vulnerable active travellers.

The recent award of Levelling Up funds to Lewisham for improved active travel in and around Lewisham High Street is also welcomed. Although this initiative is not covered in detail here, this also represents a significant opportunity to improve active travel connectivity on the eastern side of the town centre. It's critical this project is integrated with other proposals outlined here to optimise resources and impact.

We welcome the proposal for a secure cycle hub within the LSC for safe parking of bicycles and cargo bikes. This would also be an opportunity to provide associated services including a repair workshop and hire bikes (cycle parking to London Plan

and Healthy Streets standards). There may be an opportunity to collaborate with the local Rail Operator to see if a mutually beneficial location could be found for the hub to effectively service both the Centre and the railway station.



We are also urging Landsec to provide:

Visitor cycle parking i.e. Sheffield stands, to be covered - opportunity to introduce green roofs.

Docking station(s) for TfL Santander Hire bikes (or equivalent).

Geo-fenced drop zone(s) for dockless electric hire bikes and dockless hire electric scooters.

A last mile cargo bike distribution depot - in association with local businesses and delivery couriers.

E-bicycle charging points. Secure bike storage for residents - at ground floor entrance level in line with or exceeding London Plan Guidelines for capacity and Type.

**Joint working and funding** - for this project to have any realistic chance of being progressed it will be crucial for the Council to continue its excellent partnership

working with both Landsec and TfL. The three authorities working together have the potential to unlock the opportunities afforded by the development plans, and correct many of the current problems of dislocation and access across the town centre. With the Council working in partnership with the developer and TfL there is a realistic prospect of moving this project forwards. Initially a feasibility study is required which should assess the practicalities of flexing carriageway spaces to accommodate safe routes for active travel. This should be funded by S106 or NCIL resources which are appropriate to be secured from the development. The overall aim is for a three way partnership approach building on these organisation's shared aims to make Lewisham a greener and healthier Borough by enabling active travel to tackle the climate emergency.