



Contact: lewishamcyclists@gmail.com



Website: www.lewishamcyclists.org.uk

About Lewisham Cyclists

Lewisham Cyclists (LC) are the local borough group of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) with more than 3000 supporters of whom over 650 are fully paid-up members of LCC. We speak up on behalf of everyone who cycles or wants to cycle in the London Borough of Lewisham and its adjacent local parks; and we speak up for a greener, healthier, happier and better-connected capital.

Catford Town Centre, changes to South Circular Road - TfL Consultation May 2023

Ref: https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/catford-town-centre?tool=news_feed

We very much welcome TfL and Lewisham Council's plans to realign the South Circular road in Catford and remove the outdated and hazardous Catford Gyrotory.

However we have strong reservations about aspects of the new design. In summary this is a once in a generation project and there are issues of failed active travel connectivity both within and outside of the current scheme extent. We believe the scheme fails to provide infrastructure capable of meeting both existing and future demand for active travel for journeys along all of the scheme's axes.

Background

The Mayor of London Transport Strategy from 2018 (revised in 2022) states that "The Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, and working with stakeholders, will reduce Londoners' dependency on cars in favour of active, efficient and sustainable modes of travel, with the central aim for 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041." and also "By 2041, 70 per cent of Londoners will live within 400 metres of the strategic cycle network."

The Lewisham to Catford corridor is the core of the Lewisham Spine key strategic route in the area and it's subject to an experimental traffic order which includes 24x7 bus lanes, temporary cycle lanes, and lowering the speed to 20 mph amongst other interventions.

This corridor will eventually link to Cycleway 4 and Cycleway 10 in the north of the borough and Downham in the south, creating a vital and desperately needed north/south high-capacity high-quality cycling route. According to TfL's own data the A21 has experienced an increase of motor traffic between 2% and 15% since the end of the lockdown (October 2021 data).

Road incident data from DfT and the Met Police shows that the area from Catford Road to Plassy Road had 1 fatal cycling incident, 7 serious, and 73 slight from 1999 to 2021. During the same period of time there were 288 incidents involving pedestrians.

TfL's own data shows "[Lower speed limits play a critical role in the Mayor's Vision Zero plan to eliminate death and serious injury from the transport network](#)". LC would welcome the implementation of a 20mph limit throughout the proposed scheme extents.

Broader issues with the proposed scheme:

On the east-west axis, the segregated bike lanes along the new road south of Laurence House are welcomed and LC believe will lead to an increase in the number of people choosing to cycle along this section of the A205. However they don't extend into Plassy Road which seems to leave cyclists with no clear and safe route to continue east.

Similarly, although bike lanes (plural) are mentioned north-south along A21 Rushey Green there appears to be provision only for south bound cyclists while those heading north have no segregated space and are in a bus lane. LC believes this does not meet TfL's own cycling quality criteria tool for the volume of traffic on A21 Rushey Green and is not supported by LC. Protected cycle lanes should be provided along A21 Rushey Green in both directions for the full extent of the scheme. This corridor has already been identified in the top 10% of TfL's strategic cycling analysis, top 5% for short term mode shift and [seen increases in cycle traffic](#) as identified in TfL's own interim findings report following the installation of the London Streetspace Programme (LSP) scheme during the Covid 19 Pandemic. Our response to the LSP scheme can be found [here](#).

Similarly, A21 Bromley Road should also have protected unidirectional cycle lanes for the extents of this scheme and beyond, for reasons detailed further below.

All sets of proposed bike tracks need to be extended beyond the current scheme otherwise people will simply be placed in potentially dangerous situations beyond the extents of the proposed scheme. It may be there are other plans afoot to take account of this opportunity, but this needs to be stated. There is currently no reference in these plans to Lewisham Council's long term aims stated in the [A21 Development Framework](#) (LC response to this can be found [here](#)). It would make sense at this stage to seek effective active travel links north along the A21 to Lewisham town centre connecting to the current LSP scheme with potential for permanent improvements. It would seem ineffective to simply propose changes to Catford without addressing the strategic active travel opportunities presented by the recent very substantial 'Levelling Up' award for Lewisham which provides significant funding for town centre active travel improvements concurrently.

A number of other former road spaces released by the re-alignment have previously been discussed as having potential to improve connectivity, but they don't feature on the proposed designs e.g. Brownhill Road. This may be because TfL is primarily concerned with the TLRN network and the Council may itself have responsibility for the more detailed aspects of joining up the details of the scheme within the town centre itself, but we need to see these critical access details in order to provide full support for this scheme. Furthermore, TfL hasn't provided Healthy streets scores for before and after the proposed scheme is implemented. No mention has been made of whether there are plans for the whole scheme to adopt a 20mph limit, falling in line with borough speed limit and TfL Vision Zero ambitions.

Detailed comments - Map A/B:

1. At the junction between Brownhill Road and Rushey Green southbound cyclists approach the junction in a segregated cycle lane. There is no ASL indicated so we are assuming that cyclists have a signal phase to themselves, presumably in sync with northbound cyclists - this is necessary to eliminate the left-hook risk from southbound motor vehicles turning left into Brownhill Road. Please confirm this is the case?

Detailed comments - Map B/C:

Rushey Green southbound cycle track

1. At the junction between Catford Road, Sangley Road and Rushey Green southbound cyclists approach the junction in a segregated cycle lane. There is no ASL or 'Early release' shown so we are assuming that southbound cyclists have a signal phase to themselves. Please clarify the proposed workings of this junction?

'Catford Island' site - during planning discussions with the Developer for this site Lewisham Cyclists have received assurances that cycling will be enabled within the new development. They are providing decent levels of cycle parking for both residents and visitors with a view to encouraging active travel modes. As such the surrounding areas of public realm need to allow riding of bicycles specifically:

1. The east-west 'Improved Town Centre Pedestrian Crossing' should be a shared-use 'toucan' crossing to allow cyclists using the proposed two way cycle track to access town centre.
2. The reclaimed public realm on the north side of Sangley Road from Rushey Green to Plassy Road should be shared use (as is being done on the south side of Sangley Road).
3. The north-south crossing at the west end of Sangley Road should not be staggered, instead continuous as per design of other crossing proposed. It should be a toucan crossing, allowing shared-use to provide cycle access to the bi-directional cycle track on the south side of Sangley Road.

Catford Road/Sangley Road east-west two-way cycle track

1. The two way cycle track ends on Sangley road next to one of the busiest bus stops being proposed in the scheme. This should continue to the junction of Sangley road and Plassy road using reallocation of land from Catford Island and bus stop bypasses.
2. Bollards proposed to stop vehicles being illegally parked need to be spaced appropriately to allow accessible cycles to use the proposed space, including cargo bikes and accessible bikes can use the proposed scheme to access local shops.
3. Engleheart Road should allow contraflow cycling, with parking removal to facilitate this. This can be achieved working with Lewisham Council so westbound cyclists can access the scheme from the East.
4. The southbound feeder link from the two-way track into Bromley Road appears to enter quite abruptly, probably forcing cyclists to pretty much stop, could this entry be made more gradual so cyclists can readily merge with moving traffic.

Detailed comments - Map D:

Previous proposals for a new cantilevered bike track on the south side of Catford Bridge are a long-standing aim of the Council (as shown in the Catford Master Plan) as this is a dangerous pinch point resulting in several serious incidents and a recent fatality.

1. These TfL proposals suggest a two-phase approach to construction with an initial bi-directional track being provided as far as the current underpass under Catford Bridge and a new toucan crossing just east of the bridge. This phase does not solve the extreme hazard caused by the constrained width of the Catford railway bridge which has recently led to the tragic death of Lukas Binkowski, who was cycling and involved in a fatal collision involving an HGV at this location.
2. The second phase involving construction of the bridge itself will presumably be contingent on the proposed redevelopment of the Wickes/Halfords site. Given the uncertainties and likely timescale of this redevelopment project we are against this approach and believe the bridge should be constructed as part of this project. We believe it is more cost-effective as it is a relatively modest proportion of the overall A205 project and should form part of the funding plan being submitted to DfT.
3. The existing underpass is unpleasant to use. If it is going to receive more walking and cycling traffic it needs to be refurbished, signposted etc. Are these works included in the project?
4. Furthermore if the underpass is going to provide access to the new bi-directional cycle track for both northbound and southbound cyclists the one-way section at the south end of Doggett Road (between Holbeach Rd and the Catford Bridge station approaches) needs to be made two-way for cyclists.
5. The reclaimed public space on the north side of the A205 between Doggett Road and Catford Broadway should be shared-use for those on bicycle and foot. This will allow people on bicycles from the Ladywell/Rushey Green area going to/from Catford Broadway for e.g. shopping or leisure trips, to access the area safely without having to join the A205 highway or needlessly cross to the bi-directional track on the south-side. The Catford Framework Plan envisages the areas around Catford Broadway will generally be shared-use so as not to repeat the failings of the existing streetscape. Currently it is impossible to access Catford Broadway on a bicycle without riding on the A205 itself which is clearly unsuitable for the majority of riders (aged 8 to 80).
6. Associated with the above point (5) the new pedestrian crossing on the A205 west of Canadian Avenue and east of Thomas Lane should be a 'toucan' i.e. shared use. This will allow people on bicycles coming from the south to safely access Catford Broadway.

Tim Collingridge (LC Secretary) & Alex Raha (LC Coordinator). 22/5/23