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## 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.

### **LC response to London Borough of Lewisham's (LBL) commonplace consultation on 'Designing streets and public spaces in Lewisham' March 2024**

<https://designinglewisham.commonplace.is/>

Although we are broadly supportive of these design principles we feel that, given limited financial resources, LBL should still focus on measures that can quickly benefit local residents wishing to walk, wheel and cycle. The key objectives being to reduce pollution, encourage people towards active travel for its health benefits, reduce road danger for vulnerable users and address the Climate Emergency. Therefore LBL should continue to implement relatively low cost measures such as modal filters, speed humps, safe main-road crossings, upgraded cycle routes, contra-flow cycling, cycle parking, as these collectively can have significant positive impacts.

In our view, because of the additional cost implications, these design principles are most appropriate to more holistic projects like major public realm improvements and significant new area-wide developments e.g. Catford Town Centre.

#### Responses to individual Commonplace tiles

##### Greening & Planting

We generally agree with more planting, however it is important to choose shrubs that don't grow out blocking pathways and cycle tracks - this narrows paths triggering conflict between pedestrians and cyclists while also causing a lot of maintenance in cutting back. We believe the focus should be on trees, grasses and wildflowers, rather than the shrubs we have seen in the past. Aiming for bio-diversity and flowering plants to benefit birds, bees etc.

##### Pocket parks:

Pocket parks are a great idea. Our residential roads are far too dominated by parked motor vehicles. Releasing some parking space for pocket parks would very much improve the public realm.

##### Street tree build-outs – traffic calming measure:



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It does make much more sense to have trees in buildouts in the carriageway rather than locating them on pavements which are as a result narrowed. Also reduces root disturbance to pavements. So we do support them, however they are unlikely to be that effective in reducing vehicle speeds, so we still believe speed humps will be needed in most cases.

Planted raingardens (SuDS):

Agree these are a great idea.

Pavement widths:

Strongly supportive of action in this area. Lewisham really needs to dramatically reduce pavement parking. This applies to both illegal parking requiring more enforcement, but also there is far too much unnecessary legalised pavement parking. Pavement parking effectively widens roads and encourages drivers to go faster. It damages pavements and obstructs pedestrians and the disabled. 'Pavements are for people, not vehicles' should be the mantra.

Street furniture and clutters:

We agree that LBL should use the highway for electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking (good examples of suitable racks have recently been installed in Hither Green Lane shopping area). Removing 'clutter' should however not be an excuse for reducing cycle parking as it needs to be adjacent to the natural destinations like local grocery stores, libraries etc.

Creating space for nature:

Fully agree as long as this does not impinge on space for walking and wheeling.

Additional comments on pavements:

LBL need to actively discourage conversion of front gardens into parking areas and ensure that any that are converted have fully permeable surfaces. Vehicle movements across the cross-overs are a safety hazard for people walking on the pavement and people on cycles passing in the road. Cross-overs consume street space that could be more usefully used for pocket parks etc. Front gardens are often paved with impermeable surfaces which cause dramatically increased rain water run-off.

Segregated cycle infrastructure:

We broadly agree with these principles. It should be made clear that segregated cycle lanes will have priority at side road junctions.

Contraflow cycle facilities:



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We strongly agree that one way streets should generally be enabled for two-way cycling with any road engineering being the minimum necessary for the specific levels of motor vehicular traffic.

#### Cycle Streets:

Broadly agree with the principle, but think their effectiveness is a bit unproven. Experience in other London Boroughs shows that it is usually more effective and cheaper to use modal filters to dramatically reduce vehicle volumes across a whole area.

#### Additional comments on cycle facilities:

On residential streets the most effective way to make the roads safe for aged 8 to 80 cyclists is often to introduce modal filters which dramatically cut back traffic such that it is predominantly local residents and visitors.

#### Carriageways (Roads)

##### Repurposing road space:

Agree with this approach.

##### Creating space for nature:

We very much agree with the idea of creating more space for nature around highways. However this should only happen once suitable provision has been made for cyclists and pedestrians. There are many examples in Lewisham where this hasn't been done e.g. Molesworth Street, and more recently Crofton Park shopping area. The opportunity to install proper segregated cycle lanes has been missed and now LBL are faced with the need to remove trees, planters etc. to install suitable provision.

##### Traffic calming measures:

Although not opposed in principle to these alternative traffic calming measures, we are concerned that, although they may look good, they are expensive and ultimately not likely to be as effective as full-width speed humps. We're also not convinced they work that well unless traffic volumes are dramatically reduced in these residential areas through e.g. filtering.

##### Additional comments:

We would really like to see LBL eliminating speed 'cushions' from Lewisham roads, and only installing full-width speed humps or speed tables. These cushions are usually ineffective in reducing vehicle speeds and are the cause of much hazardous conflict between motor vehicles and cyclists. Drivers usually try to straddle the cushion and end up coming towards cyclists on the wrong side of the road or overtake and cut across in front of cyclists when passing from behind.



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## Junctions and Crossings

### Continuous footways:

We fully support the idea of continuous footways over side roads.

### Courtesy Crossings:

Agree with these. But LBL need to be careful about planters on build-outs obscuring pedestrians e.g. young children, from drivers' view. Also avoid critical road widths where car drivers may consider there is enough room to transit the road-narrowing even if there is an oncoming cyclist.

### Additional comments:

Ensure Toucan crossings are wide enough to accommodate cycle and pedestrian flows without conflict, similarly Tiger crossings.

## Traffic Management

### Speed humps:

Disagree. Full width speed humps and speed tables have been demonstrated to be very effective at reducing vehicle speeds while other approaches are unproven. We do want to see many more rain gardens, pocket parks etc but we are not yet convinced they are an effective way to reduce vehicle speeds.

### Road narrowing:

Broadly agree, but proper provision should be made for cyclists to avoid the road-narrowing and any bypass needs to be wide enough to be swept and kept clear of glass etc.

### Modal filters:

Modal filters are urgently needed in many residential areas in Lewisham which are suffering from unsustainably high, and increasing, levels of through traffic. LBL should be careful not to over-engineer the initial implementation of modal filters. Just use clear signage, road markings and a camera so they can be quickly implemented. This is cheap and effective and still allows access for emergency services and other exempted vehicles. Pocket parks, rain gardens etc. can be added subsequently when finances allow.

### Additional comments:

The biggest priority in Lewisham's residential streets is to dramatically reduce through-traffic by modal filtering. Then more people will use their streets creatively for socialising, walking and wheeling. Demands will then come in from residents for pocket parks, places to sit on the street and other green spaces.



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As with most Council policies this will be most effective if adopted by all Council departments, not just urban design and transport. It's vital that across the Council all Councillors and Officers are fully informed to enable these improved design concepts to be applied across the whole portfolio of Council services including community, planning, health, leisure and parks, housing and education.

**Tim Collingridge (LC Secretary) pp LC Committee (19/4/24)**