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## **London Cycling Campaign response to Tower Hamlets Bethnal Green Liveable Streets consultation**

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<https://www.pclconsult.co.uk/liveablestreetsbethnalgreen/consultation/>

### **About the London Cycling Campaign**

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is a charity with more than 20,000 supporters of whom over 11,000 are fully paid-up members. We speak up on behalf of everyone who cycles or wants to cycle in Greater London; and we speak up for a greener, healthier, happier and better-connected capital.

This response was developed with input from LCC's borough groups.

### **General comments on this scheme:**

- This scheme will reduce motor traffic dominance and through motor traffic in the area, increasing walking and cycling for the health and wellbeing of residents and those walking and cycling through, and is likely to reduce overall motor traffic levels significantly. As such it is strongly supported.
- Tower Hamlets should monitor the scheme and main roads surrounding after implementation, with a plan to mitigate any significant negative impacts of the scheme, or add to it further.
- We support the more detailed response of our local borough group.

### **Specific comments about this scheme:**

- TfL's Strategic Cycling Analysis showcases the high cycling potential and indeed current demand in this area, and the potential to grow cycling on the main roads bordering this area, particularly Cambridge Heath Road, and Bishopsgate/Shoreditch High Street. Both Bethnal Green Road and Hackney Road also feature high cycling flows and hostile conditions, and should be urgently considered too. Protected cycle track schemes for the main roads bordering the scheme should therefore be brought forward as soon as possible, with all boroughs involved working together with TfL to achieve this.
- At the scheme boundaries there are also other roads that are used as through motor traffic routes that are very hostile for cycling. These either require protected space for cycling, or more likely a further, similar scheme as soon as possible. Vallance Road is the most obvious of these.

- It looks likely that through motor traffic will continue to some extent to use Columbia Road to avoid a stretch of Hackney Road. This may need further motor traffic filtering to avoid this. There is also an opportunity to enhance Columbia Road (either as the scheme is implemented, or once in), improving the cycling, pedestrian and retail environment, with further changes to the carriageway – for instance a pedestrian/cycle only section at the eastern end, less parking and wider pavements throughout etc.
- Redchurch Street also appears likely to remain a through route for motor traffic. Again, further restrictions here should be considered, and again, this would also unlock further opportunities to enhance walking, cycling and the retail environment on the street.
- Cheshire Street and Dunbridge Street also appear likely to remain routes for through motor traffic. These may require further improvements or filtering to deliver the maximum benefit to the area.
- The large number of one-way roads inside the area should be considered as part of the scheme. There is likely an opportunity to return some of these to two-way working, ensuring slower speeds and easier access to the neighbourhood for all. However, as a minimum, cycle contra-flows should be provided for all (new and existing) one-ways inside the scheme boundaries as part of the scheme.
- Several of the roads in the area and bordering it feature rubber speed cushions and indeed roads in very poor state of repair. Where possible and needed after scheme implementation, rubber cushions should be replaced with full-width, sinusoidal profile speed humps and raised tables, and road surface defects should be treated where they are in particularly poor state as a minimum – as these can be hazards for those walking and cycling.
- Similarly, the current speed tables on Columbia Road are jarring to ride over, and act as a barrier to inclusive access. Speed control measures here should be redesigned to be sinusoidal profile, full-width; or motor vehicle speed should be controlled in some other method that is more inclusive to all.
- This scheme is in an area with very low car ownership levels. Less than a third of households have access to a car according to the 2011 census. So it is vital Tower Hamlets council does not listen to a small minority of vocal car owners in the area who are opposing the scheme, in order to deliver benefits for the majority of residents.

#### **General points about “low traffic neighbourhoods”:**

- The area is currently blighted by “through” motor traffic using primarily residential streets to avoid the main road network, creating significant barriers to walking and cycling and enabling far too many unnecessary car journeys, with resulting negative

effects including noise and air pollution, inactivity, climate-changing emissions, collisions and injuries.

- “Low Traffic Neighbourhood” (LTN) schemes, most notably elsewhere (and nearby) in Hackney and Waltham Forest, demonstrate that removing or strongly restricting through motor traffic from primarily residential neighbourhoods has major benefits for walking and cycling, and in many cases public transport, activity levels, pollution, community cohesion, business vitality etc.
- These schemes reduce overall motor vehicle movements across an area, including the main roads, and encourage “mode shift”. And this tends to happen without significant negative impacts to existing main roads and the broader transport network in the medium to long term.
- As such, and alongside main road schemes (such as cycle tracks or other “road diets”), these schemes are a vital step towards enabling active travel and reducing the dominance of the motor car in the borough and across London. It is important the council remains firm on these plans and the principles behind them, and delivers benefits for the broader community, rather than listening to any vocal minority (often car owners) that emerges during the engagement and consultation process.
- It is also important that the council monitors any adverse impacts and mitigates them or adds to the scheme rapidly. Progress towards improving main roads and residential streets in London is never perfect and rarely holistic. It is vital then that councils, rather than reducing rate of progress on schemes on this basis, increases the rate of progress. To do this requires accepting schemes are often controversial and always imperfect, and despite this moving forward those schemes that are significantly progressive in removing overall motor traffic volumes and/or significantly increasing walking and cycling mode share rapidly.
- For this reason, monitoring, both before and after implementation, of air quality, motor traffic volumes and speeds, cycling and walking volumes and potentially even footfall and retail vacancy rates of nearby shops on nearby main roads and residential streets this scheme could impact, would be desirable, up to several years after the introduction of the scheme, sporadically. This would enable the borough and other London, and UK, transport bodies, councillors and officers etc. to build up a valuable evidence base on the results of introducing LTNs, and enable the borough to build schemes to mitigate any adverse impacts as well as reassure residents and shopkeepers of the benefits medium and long-term.
- Physically, modal filters should be constructed so as to provide 1.5m gaps from building line to building line. This width ensures smaller cars cannot circumvent the filter, but that a wide range of cycles can pass through comfortably.

**General points about infrastructure schemes:**

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy relies on a growth in cycle trips to keep London moving. This means infrastructure schemes must be designed to accommodate growth in cycling. Providing space for cycling is a more efficient use of road space than providing space for driving private motor vehicles, particularly for journeys of 5km or less. In terms of providing maximum efficiency for space and energy use, walking, cycling, then public transport are key.
- As demonstrated by the success of recent Cycle Superhighways and mini-Holland projects etc., people cycle when they feel safe. For cycling to become mainstream and enable all ages and abilities to cycle, a network of high-quality, direct routes separate from high volumes and/or speeds of motor vehicle traffic is required to/from all key destinations and residential areas in an area. Schemes should be planned, designed and implemented to maximise potential to increase journeys – with links to nearby amenities, residential centres, transport hubs considered from the outset.
- Spending money on cycling infrastructure has been shown to dramatically boost health outcomes in an area. Spending on cycling schemes outranks all other transport modes for return on investment according to a DfT study. Schemes which promote cycling meet TfL's "Healthy Streets" checklist. A healthy street is one where people choose to cycle.
- All schemes should be designed to enable people of all ages and abilities to cycle, including disabled people.
- Evidence from TfL and from many schemes in London, the UK and worldwide shows the economic benefits, including to businesses, to be found from enabling a wider range of people to cycle more. Further evidence shows how cycling schemes also benefit air quality and reduce climate changing emissions, as well as improving resident health outcomes and reducing inactivity, as mentioned above.
- LCC wants, as a condition of funding, all highway development designed to London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS), with a Cycling Level of Service (CLOS) rating of 70 or above, with all "critical issues" eliminated. Above 2,000 Passenger Car Unit (PCUs) motor vehicle movements per day, or 20mph motor traffic speeds, cycling should be physically separated from motor traffic.