



WIMBLEDON CYCLING REVOLUTION & GREEN RECOVERY

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
MHCLG CITIES & LOCAL GROWTH UNIT JUNE 2020





Covid-19 has given rise to exceptional challenges – to the overall economy, to businesses and to the lives of individuals. Merton Council welcomes the invitation for proposals by MHCLG’s Cities and Local Growth Unit to consider shovel-ready capital projects which can be delivered within 18 months.

Merton Council adopted its Active & Healthy Transport Response to Covid-19 on 15th June 2020. This plan sets out a range of temporary measures to boost strategic cycling infrastructure across Merton.

Our bid for Wimbledon’s cycling infrastructure project would transform Wimbledon town centre’s streets to be cycle friendly, improving access to local amenities and promoting a more sustainable town centre in every sense of the word; economically, socially and environmentally.

Should our bid be successful, we seek to formalise our temporary cycle interventions with wider ranging permanent changes to our streets utilising capital funds.

Merton Council considers our proposals to be shovel-ready as the plans are drawn from our previous work with Transport for London on a ‘Mini-Holland, cycling in outer London bid’. Whilst this bid was unsuccessful due to competition for the funds, the body of technical feasibility, design, cross party political support and community consultation that was undertaken is still relevant; perhaps more relevant than ever as we need to rethink our High Streets, local economies and capture the recent uptick in walking and cycling brought about by Covid-19. Our plans are ready to deliver for a greener town centre and greener economy.

The Wimbledon cycling infrastructure project aligns with the Government’s overarching objectives– driving up economic growth and jobs and supporting green recovery – by enabling:

- town centre modernisation through targeted infrastructure investments unleashing longer-term economic potential;
- investment in physical connectivity to improve the functioning of the local economy;

The attached document sets out our proposals to transform Wimbledon town centre’s public realm for the benefit of cyclists, pedestrians, local businesses and above all else; people, who are at the heart of what we do.

Cllr Martin Whelton

Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing & Transport
London Borough of Merton.

Contents

4	Context
7	Economic Benefits of Cycling
10	Why Merton
12	Wimbledon Town Centre
17	Programme Management and Team Structure
17	Performance Monitoring
18	Equalities
18	Costs
19	Transformational Change and Green Recovery
21	Testimonials





Context

The London Borough of Merton wish to be considered for the MHCLG Capital Programme to drive up economic growth and jobs and supporting green recovery – by enabling:

- the modernisation of Wimbledon town centre through targeted infrastructure investments in cycling and the public realm, unleashing longer-term economic potential set out in the Future Wimbledon masterplan;
- investment in physical connectivity to improve the functioning of the local economy and enhance accessibility of Wimbledon town centre, Merton's main economic engine and a global brand in its own right.

Cycling is an essential ingredient of the way people will live and work in the borough. We are committed to the transformation of Wimbledon so that all residents can enjoy a better quality environment.

Recent temporary measures to create pop-up cycle infrastructure has gone some way to satisfy the demand for cycling brought about by Covid-19. However, as we plan for places post-covid, sustaining the modal shift to more sustainable travel choices requires capital investment for the long term recovery of our high streets.

Merton Council have a record of delivering successful and award winning public realm regeneration schemes. We have completed extensive public realm regeneration projects in Mitcham and Colliers Wood town centres, therefore this funding focuses solely on Wimbledon. In the council's FutureWimbledon masterplan, a predominant theme of our resident's feedback was to improve cycling infrastructure in the town centre, which is a missing link in the borough's cycle network. There is high demand to reimagine Wimbledon's road space as 'streets for people' not traffic. The announcement from MHCLG's Cities and Local Growth Unit opens up the opportunity to accelerate the delivery of public realm improvements identified in the FutureWimbledon Masterplan. By investing in cycling and that public realm upfront, we position Wimbledon town centre as a place of jobs growth and investment for the future.

Investing in Wimbledon is investing in a place of global renown. By investing in Wimbledon, our project will be a show case for government investment and communicating globally what can be achieved!





Growth potential of Wimbledon town centre (FutureWimbledon Masterplan)



Planned public space investments (Future Wimbledon Masterplan)
Some of which will be accelerated through government investment.

The economic benefits of cycling

This is widely understood amongst planners, urbanists and those in the field of placemaking and economic development. Investment in walking and cycling helps encourage more people to travel in a greener, healthier way. It also brings significant benefits to local economies.

<p>Boosting the high street and local town centres: walking and cycling improvements can increase retail spend by up to 30%.</p>	<p>Reducing absences and increasing productivity: People who are physically active take 27% fewer sick days each year than their colleagues.</p>	<p>Attracting employees and businesses: Businesses see walking and cycling as key to attracting and retaining the staff the need to thrive</p>
<p>Keeping the city moving for business: New cycle lanes in London have helped some streets carry up to 5% more people at the busiest times.</p>	<p>Wider Economic Benefits: Investing in walking and cycling can prevent billions of pounds worth of health and environmental damage.</p>	<p>Helping everyone share the benefits: Active travel is accessible and inclusive. Making it easier to walk and cycle means that more Londoners can enjoy the benefits</p>

Walking and cycling is good for the high street. People who support their local economies visit high streets more frequently and spend more money there compared to people in cars. Town Centres that are comfortable to walk, cycle and spend time in generate higher footfall and attract more shops and businesses; this in turn makes town centres more economically viable and vibrant.

HIGHER SPENDS



Walking and cycling helps create
thriving high streets



As well as more customers, this brings benefits to the local community



Making it easy to walk and cycle to high streets means that more Londoners can enjoy these opportunities

SOCIAL VALUE

45%

of visitors to London high streets visit for **social and community** reasons



Source: Hall et al, 2017

Improving London high streets for walking and cycling led to a

216%

increase in people **stopping, sitting or socialising**



Source: Carmona et al, 2018

THRIVING HIGH STREETS

Retail vacancy was **17% lower** after high street and town centre improvements...

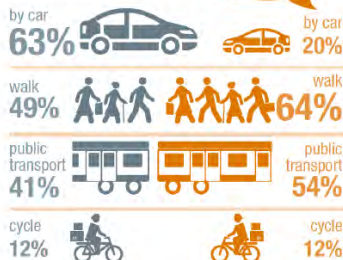


...and retail rental values **rose by 7.5%**

Source: Carmona et al, 2018

Businesses may overestimate their customers' car use

Businesses on Lea Bridge Road think their customers travel to the area:



Source: London Borough of Waltham Forest

However, visitors said they travelled:

What do BIDs say?

9 in 10

say walking and cycling creates vibrant areas

83%

say it attracts more customers

Source: Aldred & Sharkey, 2017





Except for loading

RUSSELL ROAD W19 merton

#Love Local

lovewimbledon

Why Merton?

Merton is unique in a number of respects. It has a long and proud history; the home of the medieval foundation of Merton Priory and the 'Paradise Merton' home of Nelson and Emma Hamilton; while Merton Abbey Mills on the Wandle was the location of the workshops of William Morris and Arthur Liberty.

Contemporary Merton is a borough of contrasts; physically, where inner London meets outer London and socially, with an imbalance of affluence and quality of life between west and east. Merton is a culturally diverse borough with 35% of its residents from an ethnic minority (based on 2011 census). This figure has increased by 10% in just 10 years.

We have one of the highest population densities in outer London, very high cycle ownership and a very high proportion of shorter cycleable trips. The propensity for local residents to take up cycling is greatest in Wimbledon and its surrounding neighbourhoods.

In the 2011 Census, 40% of households in Merton are car-free. These households are concentrated in the more urban north and centre of Merton, areas where public transport is good and is the geographic focus of our plans. Merton is also becoming a younger borough, with 25-45 now our largest age group with a greater propensity to increase levels of cycling.

The borough is an important link between the urban heart of London and its suburban outskirts. Our strength is our strategic location bridging the inner and suburban boroughs. Merton is also a key connection between many residential and employment centres? The borough has good connections with central London and radial links to south west London that we wish to improve.

With an estimated population growth of 10% by 2026 it is essential to focus on accessibility by bike now as the existing day to day challenges of congestion, access to employment and supporting healthier lifestyles are only going to become more challenging in a post-covid world.

Wimbledon is being put forward as the primary town centre as it is a key sub-regional employment centre, has a number of schools and colleges and experiences high levels of traffic and congestion. Destinations such as the Wandle Valley Regional Park, Wimbledon and Mitcham Commons and Wimbledon Tennis are key attractions generating large numbers of trips from within the borough and further afield.

The majority of car trips (59%) undertaken are short and are within the borough. These can be switched to cycling if the holistic infrastructure is in place. Most potential cycle trips in the borough are for shopping, leisure and personal business. Of these, the majority are currently made by car, with a higher proportion in Merton than in London as a whole.

Receiving MHCLG funding will be an opportunity to significantly build on the cycling related improvements that are already taking place in the borough. It will also be an opportunity for innovation, based around connecting communities, addressing localised severance and transforming the borough and its economy.

A summary of Merton's proposed schemes is presented in our 'Tube Network for the Bike' visual. At present, Wimbledon town centre remains a gap in the strategic network that has been developed elsewhere in the borough.



Wimbledon Town Centre

An innovative Wimbledon town centre with segregated cycle facilities through the core centre with links to key destinations.

We propose that Wimbledon is the town centre at the focus of our cycle infrastructure revolution. We have chosen this location because of the centre's size and attraction, its local employment and major interchange. The busy gyratory acts as a barrier to those travelling by bike therefore we will transform this and provide a safe and segregated facility for cyclists of all levels, to access and travel across the town centre with ease.



Photos of the town centre at the moment demonstrate the difficulties that cyclists encounter if they choose to cycle along the busy gyratory, the lack of priority of cyclists and little supporting infrastructure.



Vision for Wimbledon Broadway

We have developed and reviewed five different options for the town centre's gyratory and have discussed these with key stakeholders. Our discussions with stakeholders helped to review the options and highlighted the need for reallocation of road space in the town centre to provide a better space for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users.

The options all help to increase accessibility by bike and they have been assessed in relation to their impact on the following modes / users:

- Cyclists
- Pedestrians
- Bus journey times and reliability
- Vehicular traffic
- Servicing and deliveries



Wimbledon cycling infrastructure and gyratory removal

The borough's preferred option for the town centre has been developed following site visits, using existing models and traffic counts, undertaking additional traffic counts to reinforce available data and via consultation with key stakeholders.

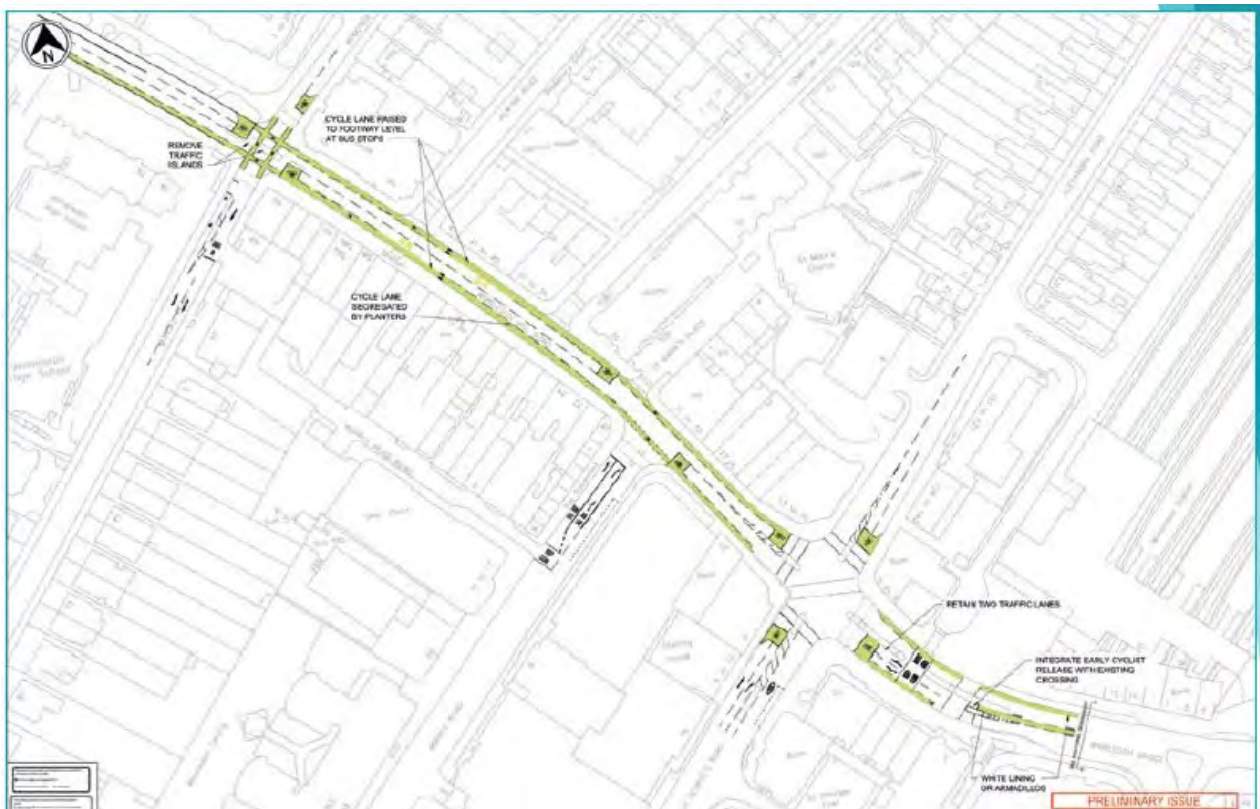
The preferred option is presented above and summarised as follows.

- The main town centre section of The Broadway will be closed to general traffic to accommodate fully segregated westbound cycle lanes and partially segregated eastbound cycle lanes. Bus routing will continue unchanged, with eastbound general traffic rerouted via Hartfield Road.
- Eastbound through traffic entering from Wimbledon Bridge will be routed via Hartfield Road, Sir Cyril Black Way and Gladstone Road, with access to Queen's Road retained. Between Queen's Road and Gladstone Road, eastbound cyclists will share a widened bus lane and westbound cyclists will be fully segregated. Urban realm improvements will facilitate widened footways, cycle parking and reduced severance.
- Westbound general traffic routing will remain unchanged along Hartfield Road.
- Ahead cycle movements at the key signalised junctions along The Broadway and Wimbledon Bridge will be separately signalled.
- Wimbledon Bridge – two-way segregation with westbound traffic lanes reduced from two to one lane, with flare retained on approach to Alexandra Road junction.

- Hartfield Road / Hartfield Crescent – due to insufficient road space for 2-way operation, bus stops I (eastern footway south of Graham Road) and L (north of Hartfield Crescent) to be relocated south of junction. Southbound right turn will be introduced into Hartfield Crescent; car park exit access will remain unchanged.
- Hartfield Road – carriageway to be partially widened by up to 2m to accommodate 2-way traffic lanes and retention of westbound bus lane.
- New signalised junctions with improved crossing facilities will be provided at junctions with Hartfield Crescent and Sir Cyril Black Way.
- Bus station – operation to remain unchanged, with provision of westbound entry turning bay (due to new opposing eastbound traffic) and exit to be integrated with new signalised junction at Hartfield Road / Sir Cyril Black Way. Right turn from Hartfield Road north into Sir Cyril Black Way will be prohibited to retain capacity.

The public realm environment will be significantly upgraded, particularly along The Broadway in response to the reduction in vehicle movements and increased provision for cyclists and pedestrians. This will include high quality materials, with new seating, trees, SUDs and lighting.

The following pages contain general arrangement plans for the highway changes.

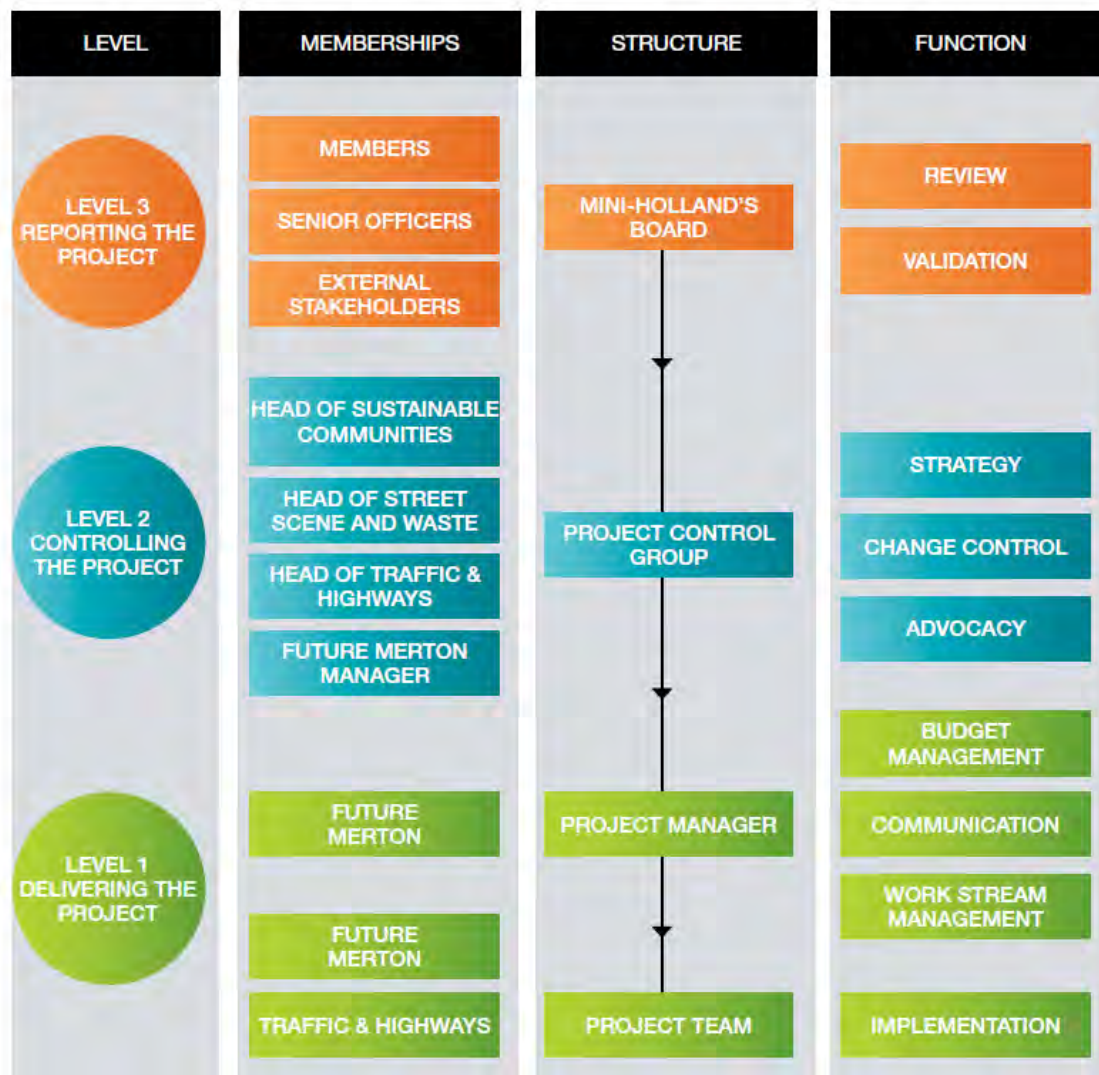


Wimbledon Hill Road to Station



Programme Management & Team Structure

We are very experienced in delivering larger schemes / programmes. If we are successful and receive funding to deliver this programme in Merton the existing steering group will continue to meet to review progress and the delivery, control and reporting will be undertaken as per the figure below.



Performance indicators

There are a number of different forms of evaluation which can be pursued according to particular circumstances surrounding a project or programme. In this situation, as the majority of the works relate to changes to cycling and the public realm, the corresponding assessment methods directly relate to the impact of such changes.

For the Wimbledon cycling revolution programme it is intended to take forward a combination of quantitative and qualitative surveys, allowing for before and after comparisons associated with the impacts.

EQIA

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is an assessment carried out for plans, policies and strategies to identify the likely impact on Merton's diverse communities and to recommend any changes to mitigate against any identified adverse impacts. The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. In 2011 the Act extended protection against discrimination to nine 'protected characteristics' which includes:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex/Gender
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civic Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

We will carry out an EqIA for the proposed schemes included in our bid to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the 'protected characteristics noted above and that where possible, our cycling infrastructure project will promote equality and fairness for all road users.

Costs

We have developed detailed costs for our bid based upon the delivery and outputs of similar cycle infrastructure delivered in Merton with our highways contractor FM Conway. The estimate of costs is also listed in the following table and include estimates for traffic modelling and signal modifications as well as design and delivery.

1	Wimbledon Hill Rd	£ 74,800
2	The Broadway (Centre) and Gyratory	£ 5,800,400
3	The Broadway (East)	£ 68,600
4	Communications	£ 40,000
5	Project Management and Engineering resources	£ 160,000
	Total	£6,143,800

Ensuring Transformational Change and a Green Recovery for Economic Growth

A substantial redesign of the main town centre to make it genuinely excellent for cyclists and to boost access to the local economy.

Merton Council is experiencing an increase in planning application activity for Wimbledon which has not waned due to coronavirus. Wimbledon remains an attractive location for business, currently accommodating 15,000 jobs in the office, retail and cultural sectors.

Wimbledon has scope to accommodate growth of between 6000-8000 new jobs to be delivered via the FutureWimbledon Masterplan. The masterplan's economic assumptions are being reviewed in light of the coronavirus pandemic, but feedback from local business groups is that there is still demand for workspace. Local employment is a key footfall driver that sustains the town's leisure and retail offer. Feedback from businesses and land owners has drawn into sharper focus, the need to enhance Wimbledon's public realm, both functionally and in terms of attractiveness. Greening Wimbledon and providing sustainable travel choices will accelerate the ambitions already set out in the Future Wimbledon plan.

FutureWimbledon Masterplan can be viewed at:

www.merton.gov.uk/futureWimbledon





LoveWimbledon BID said:

“Love Wimbledon is supportive of this initiative in Wimbledon, making it easier for cyclists in the town centre taking into consideration the car, public transport and pedestrians.”

Merton Chamber of Commerce, said:

“Wimbledon is the economic hub of the borough so it makes sense that it’s the transport hub too, and that includes cyclists. I am delighted that the Merton Chamber of Commerce are supportive of the Council’s bid.”

Merton Cycling Campaign says:

“Very constructive meetings with Merton Council give us confidence that they grasp the importance more walking and cycling has for growing local personal and business economies, and the community . The detail will show how these transformational intentions to create routes safe and attractive for active travel to and in Wimbledon town centre. The measures will actively mitigate public health costs arising from obesity and mental health concerns, population growth, and the sad reality of different life expectancy rates experienced across our Borough.

There is huge potential to benefit all Merton’s residents, many of whom work in Wimbledon, and enterprises which is why this bid has cross-party and commercial support. MCC are in agreement that transformational schemes fully and unambiguously aligned with Continental standards of cycling can deliver realisable benefits.



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