

Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

19 January 2021

Agenda item:

Wards: Boroughwide

Transport Strategy Update

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director for Environment & Regeneration.

Lead members: Cllr Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency.

Cllr Rebecca Lanning, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health.

Contact officer: Paul McGarry, Head of Future Merton.

Recommendations:

- A. That the panel note the progress of funding bids and project delivery for Active and Healthy Travel measures in response to covid-19.
 - B. That the panel notes the changes to funding and the delivery of the Transport Strategy (TFL Local Implementation Plan 2019-2022)
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a report on 1 September 2020 setting out the detail of the Council's Active & Healthy Travel Response to Covid-19. That report and its appendices should be considered as background context for this report.
- 1.2. On 1 September 2020, the Panel resolved that a copy of the council's communications plan around school streets and low traffic neighbourhoods should be circulated to members for comment. This was actioned.
- 1.3. This report doesn't intend to repeat the report of 1st September 2020 but provides members with an update on project delivery, announcement of additional funding and further project planned for delivery in 2021.
- 1.4. The report also provides an update on the borough's Transport Strategy (TFL Local Implementation Plan). In March 2020, Transport for London suspended all borough's LIP allocations for financial year 2020/21; significantly impacting on the Council's ability to progress road safety and active travel projects. In December 2020, a portion of the LIP was re-instated to delivery projects by March 2021. The revised LIP programme priorities are provided in this report.

2 DETAILS

Active and Healthy Travel Response to Covid-19.

- 2.1. In June 2020 Merton Council adopted an emergency transport response to the coronavirus pandemic. In the short term, the plan focused on making

changes to roads and pavements in the borough to improve road safety, support social distancing and provide more space for walking and cycling.

- 2.2. The emergency changes are followed by longer term work to improve walking and cycling routes throughout the borough. The plans will also look to keep Merton moving safely as travel patterns change and restrictions ease through the promotion of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets.
- 2.3. The plan sets out the Council's ambition and priorities for active travel (in addition to Merton's Transport Strategy) and has acted as a framework for funding bids to deliver the programme.
- 2.4. Pre-pandemic, our borough, and London as a whole, was suffering from poor air quality and traffic congestion. We have ambitious but challenging objectives across a number of Council strategies aimed at reducing emissions and promoting active travel;
 - Merton's Air Quality Action Plan
 - Merton's Public Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - Merton's Climate Emergency Action Plan
 - Merton's Transport Strategy (TFL LIP)
 - Merton's new Local Plan (in consultation)
 - Merton's Air Quality SPD (in consultation)
- 2.5. Whilst the aims and objectives of these strategies remain sound, the context in which the actions sit has changed significantly. Covid has changed how we live, how we work and the way we travel around our neighbourhoods.
- 2.6. During lockdowns our streets are quiet, air quality is improved and our streets feel safer. Merton Council, like others across London, is making changes to try and capture some of these benefits while seeking to avoid COVID-19 traffic congestion as people avoid public transport. The aim is to enhance air quality and road safety. To encourage walking and cycling. To free up space for those vehicle journeys that are actually needed. This report captures the changes we are implementing to promote a more sustainable Merton.

Phase 1: July 2020 – December 2020.

DFT Emergency Active Travel Fund tranche 1 / TFL Streetspace for London programme.

- 2.7. In July 2020, Merton Council was awarded £440,000 deliver phase one of our programme. The funding breaks down as £100,000 from DFT, £340,000 from TFL, which was allocated across six tranches. In addition, TFL also invested in segregated cycle infrastructure on the A24 Colliers Wood High Street, part of TFL's network.
- 2.8. All of the phase 1 projects have been delivered and are now live. The projects are:

2.9. Short Term measures delivered

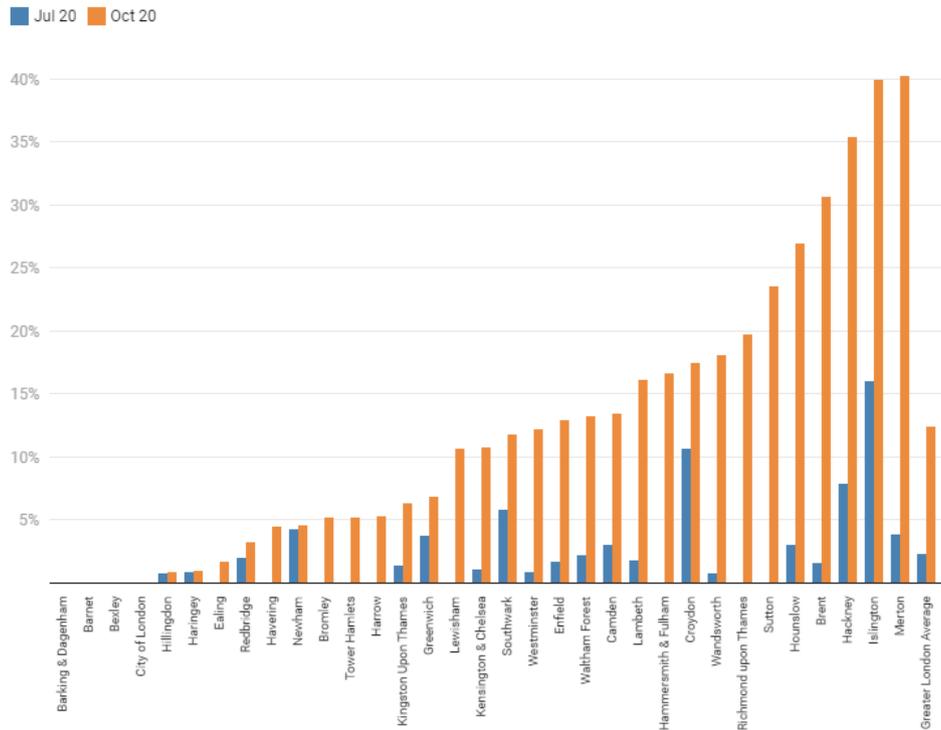
- Mitcham Fair Green (Footway widening)
- Merton High Street (Footway widening)
- Ashcombe Rd Bridge (One-way footways)
- Wimbledon Bridge (Footway widening)
- Haydons Rd Bridge (Cycle lanes)
- London Road, Mitcham (Cycle/Bus lanes)
- Wimbledon Village High Street West (part-time road closure)
- CS7 Colliers Wood High Street (TFL) cycle lane defenders
- Raleigh Gardens Mitcham, cycle lane defenders.
- Merton High Street (protected cycle lanes)
- Plough Lane West (mandatory cycle lanes)

School Streets

- 2.10. To help children to be safe from traffic and high levels of air pollution, we plan to expand the school streets programme.
- 2.11. School streets restrict access to vehicles at drop-off and pick up times and allow children to safely walk, cycle and scoot into school. Reducing vehicle journeys is important for improving air quality, climate change and will help to support a green recovery following restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.12. There were 3 school streets in operation in Merton and utilising our successful funding bids to TFL, and a further 25 were rolled out in September/October 2020.
- 2.13. The council's website has been updated for the school streets programme, all details can be found at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/traffic-management/school-streets-programme>
- 2.14. The School Street experiments will run for up to 18 months and their operation will be reviewed by the end of 2021. Consultations are live on the council's website.
- 2.15. Merton's roll-out of the School Streets programme has led to Merton becoming the top borough in London for the largest programme of School Streets and the highest proportion of schools located on a school street. Research in November 2020 by Healthy Streets Scorecard and Mums for Lungs shows:
- 2.16. Merton is the borough with the highest proportion of schools on school streets (40.3%), followed by Islington (40%) and Hackney (35.5%).

Traffic-free School Streets in operation: July 2020 and October 2020, by London borough

Proportion of all borough schools with a traffic-free School Streets scheme operating on the street/s outside the school in % for each borough and London average, comparing July 2020 and October 2020 Scorecard data.



[View School Streets Interim Report November 2020](#)

Chart: London Boroughs Healthy Streets Scorecard • Source: London borough communication and borough websites • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

- 2.17. A low traffic neighbourhood is a residential area, bordered by main roads (the places where buses, lorries, non-local traffic should be), where “through” motor vehicle traffic is discouraged or removed. Strategic road closures (like bollards or planters) prevent through traffic. Every street is still accessible by vehicle.
- 2.18. There are many ways to design a low traffic neighbourhood, but the main principle is that every resident can drive onto their street, get deliveries etc., but it’s harder or impossible to drive straight through from one main road to the next.
- 2.19. The first phase of LTNs have now been delivered at;
- Seeley Rd – point closure
 - Links Rd – point closure
 - Commonsides East / Grove Rd – point closure
 - Sandy lane – point closure
 - Botsford Rd – Banned turn.

- 2.20. Consultations on the experimental schemes is live and full details can be viewed online at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/covid-19-transport-projects>
- 2.21. **Phase 2: December 2020 – April 2021
DFT Active Travel Fund tranche 2.**
- 2.22. A second tranche of DFT funding was expected in September 2020. The funding was delayed and passed to TFL to also assess and approve borough projects. In November, boroughs were asked to re-submit or clarify projects for tranche 2.
In late December 2020, Merton Council was awarded 100% of its bids to deliver a further 5 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in 2021.
- 2.23. **School Streets**
- 2.24. No further school streets are planned for phase two and the ongoing consultation and monitoring of the phase 1 School Streets will continue.
- 2.25. Members should also note that to support residents, Merton Council has suspended ANPR enforcement of School Streets whilst lock-down measures are in place and schools are closed. This is to provide greater flexibility for people booking online deliveries and to reduce anxiety amongst relatives and carers who may have to visit or look after people in their support bubbles.
- 2.26. **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods**
- 2.27. The Council has received funding to deliver a second phase of LTNs.
- 2.28. Engagement with relevant local ward councillors has commenced and public consultations on the projects will commence in January 2021 prior to implementation in March 2021.
- 2.29. The LTNs proposed in Phase 2 are:
- Merton Park (Church Ln, Aylward Rd, Leafield Rd, Sheridan Rd)
 - Haydon park (Haydon Park Rd, Cromwell Rd, Avondale Rd)
 - Dundonald (Toynbee Rd, Burstow Rd, Fairlawn Rd)
 - Cottenham Park (Cambridge Rd, Avenue Rd)
 - South Wimbledon (Charles Rd, Rutlish Rd – completing the 'Australians' existing LTN)
- TFL LIP**
- 2.30. All London boroughs are required to develop a Local Implementation Plan setting out how they are going to deliver the [Mayor's Transport Strategy](#), its priorities and objectives at a local level.
- 2.31. Merton's Third Local Implementation Plan (LIP3) is the council's main transport strategy and sits alongside the council's Local Plan and other future strategies.

- 2.32. The LIP3 contains an overview of the challenges and opportunities in delivering the Mayors' Transport Strategy within Merton; a set of borough transport objectives; a short and longer term delivery plan and a series of targets set by Transport for London that we are working towards achieving.
- 2.33. LIP 3 can be viewed online at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/lip3>
- 2.34. In March 2020, TFL suspended all borough's LIP funding allocations due to the pressure on TFL finances brought about by the pandemic. This decision has had a profound impact on the Council's ability to respond to road safety matters, promote active travel and deliver against the LIP 3 objectives.
- 2.35. In December 2020, a small portion of the LIP was allocated to Merton. The Future Merton team have re-prioritised the programme based on what would be deliverable by the March 2021 deadline. This alongside the DFT tranche 2 funding places greater pressure on the team to deliver a range of LTNs and other road safety schemes over the next quarter.
- 2.36. **Planned LIP priority schemes for 2021 include (subject to consultation outcomes)**

Accessibility / Local Safety schemes

- Footway widening – Grand Drive Rayne's Park Station southside.
- Footway improvement – ramp access on the footway grass verge within the vicinity of 254 / 252 Bishopsford Road – to accommodate wheelchair users and push chairs and those with mobility problems
- Middleton road cul de sacs – improvements for those with disabilities
- Montacute rd outside school – safeguard area immediately outside school gates to facilitate walking and queuing
- Accessibility – ramps / tactile paving
- Merton Hall Road (junction narrowing to facilitate a wider footway)
 - Oxford Ave
 - Chaseside Ave
 - Chatsford Ave
 - Richmond Ave
 - Quinton Ave
- Dorset Road – zebra crossing
- Martin Way – zebra crossing
- Jubilee Way / Morden Road (TFL) – controlled pedestrian crossings

2.37. Cycle Schemes

- Wayfinding Signage for Northern extents of Western Road- signage and posts
- Lingfield Road contraflow cycle provision- signage and TMO required. This is part of the LIP proposals and visited with the Merton Cycling Campaign. Will require a safety audit & consultation
- Battle Roads and Bygrove Road – signs and footway improvements to prevent mopeds making illegal manoeuvres and facilitate enforcement.
- Burlington Rd –minor improvements to bus stop and cycle lane – in response to an accident involving a cyclist.

2.38. Lorry ban signs around Leopold Rd and Woodside / Wimbledon Hill Rd – to prevent illegal manoeuvres by HGVs

2.39. Speed activated signs for the main roads (Grand Drive, Parkside, Kingston Rd, Streatham Rd) that are now all subject to 20mph & replacing existing faulty signs and re-calibrating some signs from 30mph to 20pmh.

2.40. Air Quality - £20k linked to Mayors Air Quality Fund and school streets

2.41. Cycle hangers. Procurement of 20 hangers for on-street secured cycle storage

2.42. Training and Engagement

2.43. The Road Safety Officer will continue to engage with schools by sending teachers road safety film clips provided by Brake and TfL. High Schools have been offered information and video's on personal and travel safety.

2.44. School Travel Plans for Schools– Obtaining Stars accreditation has been extended to next year and we continue to have contact with schools by providing ideas for children and parents to stay active while at home. We have been providing zoom support sessions with School Travel Plan Champions to help them complete their Plans, and next month will start group sessions so STPC's can share ideas or problems within a group environment. Sustrans have supplied a link to activities called www.sustrans.org.uk/Outsideln which is an extra-curricular resource for children to enjoy, focussed on active travel

2.45. Cycling – Training was provided between lock down periods but has now stopped. We are looking at possibly continuing some training with keyworkers children who are attending schools but this is to be confirmed with head teachers. We hope to provide more cycling sessions for schools and residents in the Easter and Summer holidays. This year we saw an increase in teenagers trained at commuter Level 3. Our web page has links to advice provided by TfL, and we are also promoting the Try Before You Bike scheme via social media, and will soon have details of the LCC cycling buddy scheme for novice cyclists.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1. None for the purpose of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

4.1. Consultations will be conducted on an individual scheme basis as the programmes roll-out.

5 TIMETABLE

5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Allocated funding includes:

- £100,000 DFT Active Travel Phase 1 (Spent in phase 1)
- £340,000 TFL Streetspace for London (Spent in phase 1)
- £390,000 DFT Active Travel Phase 2 (in delivery)
- £390,000 TFL LIP- excl staff resources (in delivery)
- £100,000 LBM CIL funding for Active Travel (for 2021/22 projects)

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Any measures, particularly changes to the highway, must be carefully considered and sit within the existing policy framework and legislations, including our approach to road safety and in response to the Covid-19 public health emergency.

7.2. Although the various highway and traffic legislations continue to apply, certain alternatives are being permitted to enable speedy implementation of the necessary social distancing and active travel measures.

7.3. The use of Experimental Orders, temporary Orders and emergency Orders has been recommended in phase one of project delivery. There is now greater flexibility on this matter for phase 2 and the Council intends to consult prior to implementing schemes. Additionally, in terms of how the Council can communicate its intentions during the statutory consultation, publication of notices in the local newspapers will continue as well as the erection of notices on lamp columns in affected areas and information on the council's website.

7.4. However, since Deposited documents (Traffic Orders) cannot be inspected at libraries and at the civic centre, the Council is now permitted to have the Deposited documents available on the Council's website.

7.5. There is no legal requirement for door to door newsletters, however the council intends to provide newsletters as part of any informal consultation process. The Council is still responsible to consult all statutory bodies such as emergency services

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None for the purpose of this report. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected vulnerable populations, including those living in more deprived areas. Those living in more deprived areas are already more likely to be impacted by exposure to higher levels of air pollution and road danger.
- 8.2. Low-income households are also more likely to work in frontline key-worker roles, which mean they cannot work from home and are less likely to be car owners, so will be most affected by the reduced capacity on public transport.
- 8.3. This plan seeks to provide safe space for walking and cycling and enables social distancing on public transport for those who need to use it most. Providing additional space for walking and cycling will help support those who are less mobile and those who may be new to cycling.
- 8.4. Any interventions to support walking and cycling are designed holistically to ensure that everyone can move around in safety. When making any changes to street layouts, officers will use existing guidance and best practice to ensure that these changes don't detract from current accessibility levels and enhance them wherever possible.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purpose of this report. In Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act both TfL and boroughs are to consider how to reduce the risk of crime, including acts of terrorism, in their plans, projects and activities. Design of temporary streetscape measures will have regard to protecting people in public space and mitigating risks of danger.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None for the purpose of this report – see Cabinet Report 15 June 2020.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

1. None

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. Covid-19 Transport Projects webpage
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/covid-19-transport-projects>
- 12.2. Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny meeting 1 September 2020 (Active and Healthy Travel response to Covid-10)
<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=3725&Ver=4>
- 12.3. Cabinet Report. 15 June 2020.
(Merton's Active & Healthy Travel Response to Covid-19)
<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=3689&Ver=4>

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