

Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: 12th November 2013

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Scrutiny Review – Cycle Routes

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration

Lead member: Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability & Regeneration

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

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Recommendations:

- A. That Sustainable Communities O & S Panel notes the council's progress in relation to the implementation of cycle routes, the potential for new routes moving forward (as documented in the council's 'mini-Hollands' submission) and the approach to enforcement matters.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an overview to Members regarding the council's progress with respect to the implementation of new cycle routes and the potential for future routes.

2 DETAILS

Policy Context

- 2.1 The Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) sets out the transport vision for the capital and details how Transport for London and partners, including boroughs, will deliver the plan over the next 20 years.
- 2.2 Cycling is a key priority within the MTS – the Mayor of London has an objective to increase the overall modal share for cycling to 5% across the 20 year lifetime of the document, in order to create a cycle 'revolution' in London.
- 2.3 At a local level, encouraging sustainable transport, particularly via increased walking and cycling are important themes within the borough's Community Plan, Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

Challenge

- 2.4 Within Merton, the current modal share for cycling is approximately 2.5%, so in order to achieve this step-change and necessary 'lift off' to create the environment to significantly improve the conditions for cycling will inevitably require substantial investment and improved co-ordination across the south sub-region. The borough has an ambitious target to increase the cycle mode share in the borough to 6% by 2031.

Funding

- 2.5 The council utilises a variety of funding sources to improve cycle facilities in the borough. The council's annual LIP programme is generally utilised to introduce cycle-specific projects, such as new cycle routes. In addition, cycling is given a high priority as part of the development of the council's town centre regeneration projects, including the current projects in Mitcham and Colliers Wood. Such town centre projects involving the use of multiple funding streams.
- 2.6 Whilst the council has been very successful in securing funding for cycle related improvements in recent years, it is clear that there will be increased pressure on borough LIP funding moving forward, which may increase the challenges associated with scheme delivery.

Successes

- 2.7 Merton has unprecedented success in the last few years with respect to securing funding and delivering transport and public realm improvement projects. This is principally due to the adoption of a multi-disciplinary project management and delivery structure that has enabled resources to be pooled efficiently and projects to be delivered effectively. Successful projects have increased external confidence in Merton's ability to deliver, which has enabled significant levels of external funding to be secured, principally via Transport for London.
- 2.8 Examples of projects with cycle related elements include the following:

South Wimbledon Business Area Streets for People Scheme

- 2.9 The project involved significant improvements to the streetscape within the South Wimbledon Business Area, principally focused on Lombard Road. Key elements of the scheme include the introduction of a contra-flow cycle lane and substantial improvements to the parking layout and enforcement. The project won in the category of 'Most Effective Enforcement & Road Safety Project' at the London Transport Awards 2012.

Merton High Street

- 2.10 The council is in the final stages of introducing significant cycle improvements along Merton High Street, between South Wimbledon and Colliers Wood, which will provide an important connection to Cycle Superhighway 7 (CS7). Innovative solutions have also been adopted to prioritise cycling at the junction of Merton High Street / Haydons Road

Railside Path

- 2.11 The path provides an important 'quietway' connection between Wimbledon and Raynes Park, and has been cleared and improved over the last 3 years to provide a safe and comfortable traffic-free route for cyclists.

Opportunities

- 2.12 Moving forward, there are a number of transport related projects that the council will be taking forward that will have an impact on cycling, in order to build on previous success and meet the challenges discussed in the report. Key projects and associated areas of work are as follows:

“Mini Hollands”

- 2.13 All 20 outer London boroughs were invited by the Mayor of London to bid to become “mini-Hollands”, which is a project designed to focus a very high spend on cycling, concentrated over a relatively small geographical area. The funding is designed to achieve transformational change for those living and working in the area, with the projects intended to act as cycling exemplars for other towns and cities to aspire to in the future. Up to four boroughs are expected to be successful, with overall funding within the region of £100million.
- 2.14 All 20 boroughs had the opportunity to submit an ‘Expression of Interest’ application, in order to make the case for why their borough should be considered for the money.
- 2.15 A copy of the council’s ‘Expression of Interest’ has been included in Appendix A, and the document provides a high-level articulation of the council’s vision for cycling along with the potential cycle measures that the council would like to pursue moving forward.
- 2.16 On 30th August 2013 the Mayor’s Cycle Commissioner, Andrew Gilligan, confirmed in writing that Merton is one of six boroughs that have been selected to go forward to the second stage of this process. This second stage involves TfL providing each of the selected boroughs additional ‘seed’ funding to further develop the proposals put forward in their respective ‘Expressions of Interest’ bids. Once this stage of the work is complete TfL will make a decision in February on the final 3 or 4 successful boroughs that will share the “mini Hollands” funding.
- 2.17 If Merton is successful, it would have access to unprecedented levels of funding for cycling over the next 5 years.

Town Centres

- 2.18 The council’s town centre projects offer a significant opportunity to improve conditions for a number of transport modes, including cycling. The following projects are being taken forward independently from the ‘mini-Hollands’ submission.

Mitcham Town Centre

- 2.19 The council has pooled a variety of funding streams, including TfL LIP, TfL Major Schemes, S106, Outer London Fund and Merton Capital funding, with a project value of approximately £6m, to regenerate the town centre and improve public transport facilities. The second stage of the consultation has recently finished and is currently going through the determination process.
- 2.20 As part of this work the council is affording a strong priority to cycle improvements, to enable cyclists to have clear, safe and direct routes, avoiding the need to cycle around the existing gyratory.

Colliers Wood & South Wimbledon

- 2.21 To complement the significant improvements to the Brown and Root Tower the council has pooled a variety of funding streams, including TfL LIP, S106, Mayor's Regeneration Fund and Merton Capital funding, to enable the delivery of a £3 million public realm scheme. This project will be delivered in partnership with TfL and the GLA, with a particular focus on enhancing the quality of the public realm and improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. In terms of cycling, particular elements include a further extension to CS7 towards South Wimbledon and increased cycling parking facilities at Colliers Wood station. The main consultation in relation to the works is due to take place in November 2013.

Morden Town Centre

- 2.22 Merton has ambitious, but realistic plans, to comprehensively redevelop Morden Town Centre. The borough is working collaboratively with TfL and a planning brief is currently being developed for the station site, which is intended to act as the catalyst for future public realm and regeneration activities in the town centre. Again, prioritising cycle movements within, and through the town centre, will be fundamental elements of a future scheme.

Enforcement

- 2.23 Whilst the council has ambitious plans for improving cycling facilities in the borough, it is acknowledged that modal conflict, particularly between pedestrians and cyclists, remains an important issue in some locations.
- 2.24 Footway cycling is an offence under Section 72 of the Highways Act and is an operational matter for the Police who have the ability to issue fixed penalty notices of £30.
- 2.25 As part of the 'mini-Hollands' submission the council has pledged to facilitate cycle access where possible. However, this must be done in a safe manner and the council is committed to investigating solutions where problems persist. One such example is in Majestic Way in Mitcham Town Centre, where issues with pedestrian / cycle conflict have been prevalent, particularly during the summer period. As part of

the Rediscover Mitcham project the council is proposing to introduce a dedicated cycle lane through this area, to provide a level of segregation between cyclists and pedestrians.

- 2.26 Segregating cyclists and pedestrians may not always be the most appropriate solution, particularly where space is constrained. In such locations the council would look to seek innovative solutions to 'design out' conflict when possible, which could involve a number of potential solutions depending on specific circumstances, such as improving on carriageway conditions (to dissuade individuals from choosing to cycle on-street) to widening footways and reducing carriageway widths to facilitate shared use.
- 2.27 Targeted safety campaigns have been undertaken in the past and will continue to have a role moving forward in locations where issues prevail. This will usually involve collaborative enforcement and awareness training, via the council's Road Safety Officers and the Police / PCSO's.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Not applicable – this report is for information only.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 N/A

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1 Performance information is monitored annually as a requirement of TfL.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial, resource or property implications arising from this information report. All related services are delivered within existing resources.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report is for information only.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no specific human rights, equalities or community cohesion

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this information report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no risk management or health and safety implications arising from this information report.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A: The Mayor's 'Cycling Mini-Hollands' in Outer London'
Fund – Expression of Interest