


<b>Cabinet</b>  5 January 2016	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Stephen Halsey, Corporate Direct, Communities, Localities and Culture	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Tower Hamlets Cycle Strategy</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Ayas Miah, Cabinet Member for Environment</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Margaret Cooper, Head of Engineering
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	<b>Great Place to Live</b>

## Executive Summary

This report sets out a comprehensive framework for prioritising action to improve cycling in the borough which will involve key stakeholders in its production. A four week public consultation took place in November 2015, on the draft strategy and comments raised are summarised for consideration by Cabinet in considering the final strategy for adoption.

## Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the attached document as the Council's Cycle Strategy 2015-2025.

## 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council's Cycle Strategy, "Cycling Connections" ([http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/transport\\_and\\_streets/cycling/cycling\\_connections\\_strategy.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/transport_and_streets/cycling/cycling_connections_strategy.aspx)) was produced in 2009, to cover a 10 year period and although it was a forward thinking plan for its time, it now requires a refresh to take account of the major step changes in investment in Cycling in London and which have been created by the Mayor for London's Cycling Vision for which we have been a leading borough in respect of early adoption and implementation.
- 1.2 In the 2014 national election campaign the London Cycling Campaign (LCC)

ran a very successful campaign called “Space for Cycling” which made a specific request for one particular improvement in cycling for each ward in London. As a result a motion was put to Full Council in 2014, listing these local Ward Asks and Council resolved, amongst other things to :

- Call on the Mayor and relevant Cabinet Member, following consultation with Ward Councillors, to bring a plan to the September Council meeting detailing the budget feasibility and impact of each of the specific ward based “asks” as set out above and that this plan should include potential options for implementation.
- Following the aforementioned report from the Mayor, that Councillors should consult with residents and cycling campaigners in their wards to prioritise and agree a course of action to best deliver the strategic aims of each pledge.

- 1.3 In regular meetings between Council officers and Tower Hamlets Wheelers, the local branch of the LCC, it was agreed that this motion was best served by the development of a Cycle Strategy offering an opportunity for stakeholder engagement and wider public consultation on the understanding that this would deliver higher levels of commitment and potential outcomes albeit it would take longer to develop.
- 1.4 Subsequently, Overview & Scrutiny Committee held a challenge session in January 2015 looking into the issue of cycle safety and made several recommendations for future action. The final report agreed by Cabinet on 3rd November 2015 specifically recommended that “the council produces an enhanced plan for cycling in Tower Hamlets to ensure that the borough is at the forefront of this agenda.”
- 1.5 This report outlines the strategy developed in response to these recommendations.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Do nothing – not considered to be appropriate given the pressures identified above and the need to ensure coherence and quality in the delivery of cycling improvements.
- 2.2 A more radical cycling strategy prioritising cycling over other road user needs. This is not considered to be appropriate as there are many conflicting road user requirements competing for limited road space throughout the borough and these need to be pragmatically balanced to achieve safety and efficiency of movement for as many people as possible in ways which minimise disruption to the local environment.

### 3. DETAILS OF THE STRATEGY

3.1 The development of a Cycle Strategy was commissioned through the Lot 2 Professional Services element of CLC 4371, the Highway Maintenance and Improvement Works contract.

3.2 The main aims of developing this strategy were to answer the following questions:-

- Where are LBTH now in terms of facilities, safety, accessibility and modal share?
- What are the issues that need addressing to make LBTH a safe and accessible cycle Borough?
- What is the vision for LBTH: i.e. where does the Borough wish to be in 5 or 10 years?

3.3 The consultants produced a series of technical notes which will complement the new strategy as appendices. These provide justification for the inclusion of certain measures in the strategy, and help to understand the potential impact of others.

3.4 The strategy is appended in full to this report. In summary it sets out the following objectives and commitments (highlighted in bold).

#### 3.4.1 **Vision Statement:**

We want Tower Hamlets to be one of the easiest and safest places to cycle in London and to make cycling the natural choice of transport for most people.

A Cycling Borough means:

- A healthier population;
- A less congested road network; and
- A more prosperous place.

To deliver this vision we have established 3 key principles to guide future cycling projects:

- Safer Cycling
- A better cycle network
- Cycling for everyone

#### 3.4.2 **Targets**

The strategy sets out some 30 pledges on work to be delivered which together will contribute to the realisation of 4 over-arching targets.

Achievement is of course dependent on many factors, not least finance, and therefore the targets will be described on two levels – a baseline target consistent with targets set in higher levels strategies, and a more aspirational stretch target. It is suggested that these targets are:-

- To double / treble the volume of cyclists in the borough by 2025
- To increase the proportion of residents cycling to work to 12 / 20% by 2025
- To reduce the risk of cycle accidents by 40 / 60% by 2025
- To increase number of children cycling to school by 25 / 50% by 2025

- 3.4.3 Section 3 of the strategy explains the perceived health benefits of cycling and how it fits in the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy, particularly helping to reduce obesity levels in children.
- 3.4.4 Section 4 summarises the growth in cycling since 2001, demonstrating that the targets could be achievable. 7% residents cycled to work according to the 2011 census, and the borough saw the highest growth in cycling to work (252%) of all London boroughs between 2001-11. Cycling across the Inner London cordon (Commercial St) increased by 362% from 2001-2013.
- 3.4.5 Section 5 reviews the existing cycle network and sets out proposals to help to deliver a better network which can support such growth in cycling. These include:-
- Ongoing commitments to upgrade Cycle Superhighway 2 and Quietway 6 (from the Olympic Park to Aldgate)
  - A radical **redesign of CS3 along Cable Street** to create a Cycle Street where pedestrians and cyclists have priority over traffic, and through traffic is removed from the link by rationalising traffic patterns on Watney Street and surrounding streets, with the aim of addressing many of the anti-social behaviour problems of racing which have been brought to our attention.
  - Promote a **Leisure Loop** along towpaths and park routes for leisure cycling to build confidence in new cyclists;
  - **Reviewing existing routes** to upgrade them to new London Cycle Design Standards
  - Work with Hackney and Newham on new quieter routes along the **Regents Canal alignment and The Leaway**, as well as developing a scheme along **Hackney Road**.
  - Introduce minor "**filtered permeability**" schemes to provide cyclists with convenient backstreet routes which are not available to general traffic, by using road closures or **introducing two-way cycling in some one-way streets**, initially looking at the Stepney Area where a Schools Partnership has identified **potential safer routes to schools**.
  - To overcome the barrier effect of local rivers, the strategy offers support in principle for a Sustrans proposal for a **new bridge between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf** to be explored and to work with neighbouring boroughs (Newham and Greenwich) to deliver **new pedestrian / cycle bridges** over the Lea ( which features in the Housing Zone) and **improve controls in the Greenwich foot tunnel**.
- 3.4.6 Section 6 focusses on **improving cycle safety** and highlights recent trends in cycle accidents. Cyclists were involved in 26% of accidents p.a. which has increased over the last 10 years, but taking the huge increase in cycling into account, an index has been developed to show cycle collisions per 100 cyclists has remained between 2-3 throughout this period, with a slight increase in the trend which is comparable to other cycling boroughs like Hackney and Southwark. The strategy recognises that better cycle design standards, more quiet routes, staff training and complementary measures such as **slower speeds** will all help to improve cycle safety. Potential for

some **new fully segregated routes**, particularly on **Manchester Road and Burdett Road**, is recommended for exploration while the strategy also recognises the importance of working with the Met Police on traffic enforcement and cycle security; supporting safer lorries and more cycle training provision.

- 3.4.7 Section 7 emphasises that the strategy is aiming to make cycling available for all members of the community. It proposes to extend family cycle training initiatives, pool bike schemes and support for the Sustrans-led Bike IT programmes in schools which go beyond training to embed a culture of cycling for life. Sport and Leisure activities also have a role to play and a commitment to continue to work with British Cycling will help to maintain these initiatives.
- 3.4.8 Section 7 also highlights the importance of safe and convenient cycle parking facilities at home and destination and puts forward some pilot schemes for new on-street facilities such as a **Bike Car Port** and **Secure Cycle Hangars** in residential streets, as well as extending provision of cycle stands and estate lockers. This is supported by evidence of how cycling can help to boost the local economy and contribute to better place-making.
- 3.4.9 Finally the strategy illustrates the level of funding which has been available for cycling in the last year and which is likely to be available in the following 3, although this is purely indicative. A **Delivery Plan** will be developed to complement the final strategy and will seek to estimate how the commitments set out in the strategy might be brought to fruition in the next few years in the light of anticipated funding availability.

#### **4. Consultation Response**

- 4.1 A borough-wide consultation was held from 12 October for 4 weeks to 8<sup>th</sup> November. This involved articles in press releases, East End Life and on the website – with a link to a Survey Monkey questionnaire inviting views on the prioritisation of cycling in principle, support for pilot schemes, and seeking comments on others ideas for inclusion. A prize draw incentive was offered to encourage a higher response rate. 428 replies were received to the on-line public consultation, 56% of whom live, work or study in Tower Hamlets. This level of response was more than double that received to the earlier consultation on the borough-wide 20mph limit.
- 4.2 Stakeholders had already been involved in the development of the strategy so they were invited to submit written comments on the draft strategy. These stakeholders included :- Canary Wharf Group; neighbouring boroughs; all Ward Members; Police; Fire Brigade; London Ambulance Service; Living Streets; Sustrans; Tower Hamlets Wheelers; London Cycling Campaign; LBTH officers; London Travelwatch; LLDC; Queen Mary University; London Met; Royal London Hospital; approx. 20 Housing providers; Bikeworks; Cycling Instructor; Maze Partnership; Transport for London.

- 4.3 A Consultation Summary is attached as Appendix One to this report which seeks to report all replies as succinctly as possible whilst clarifying the Council's response to them.
- 4.4 Respondents were asked 3 key questions which covered the main proposals set out in the strategy:
- Which of the main proposals in the strategy they felt to be most important in encouraging them to cycle more;
  - Which network improvements were most important for improving the cycling experience;
  - Which initiatives were most important for improving cycling safety.
- 4.5 Highlighted results show a high degree of support for secure cycle parking in shopping centres ( 80%) and on-street in residential area ( 69%). All network improvements received support, but there was a strong preference ( 85%) for upgrading existing routes and 70-80% of respondents supported improved routes in quieter areas. The initiatives which were considered very important for improving cycle safety by most people were : keeping the 20mph speed limit ( 49%); more targeted Police enforcement (45%) and cycle training for adults (41%) and children (39%). A number of further suggestions from individuals were recorded and these have been assessed in the Consultation Report.
- 4.6 Responses were received from 10 stakeholder groups and overall the support shown for the Strategy was extremely high. Some of the recurring themes raised will be addressed in a revised Strategy Document. These include:
- Add a foreword to demonstrate political commitment;
  - Adding more emphasis on the need for strategic traffic reduction;
  - Considering more ambitious targets
  - Adding more commitment to addressing cyclists' needs in maintenance and enforcement activity;
  - Increasing work to improve safety and security for cyclists and their bikes;
  - Including monitoring and governance of delivery of the strategy;
  - Clarify the approach to Canary Wharf access;
  - Increase importance given to river crossings and services.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 This report sets out a comprehensive framework for prioritising action to improve cycling in the borough which has received strong support from stakeholders and members of the public following a 4 week consultation.
- 5.2 This report includes a report of consultation and identifies, in 4.6, key areas where modifications to the original strategy have been identified to respond to the comments received. The Mayor, in Cabinet, is recommended to approve this Cycle Strategy as a statement of the importance given to making Tower Hamlets one of the easiest and safest places to cycle in London and to make cycling the natural choice of transport for most people.

- 5.3 Should the Mayor be minded to approve, then a Cycling Delivery Plan will be developed to complement the LIP Delivery Plan and identify how this strategy can be taken forward over the next 5 years.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 This report seeks the approval of the Councils' Cycle strategy 2015-2025. The strategy recognises the commitments and aspirations of the Council which will require significant funding for the future.
- 6.2 The majority of the funding has been allocated by Transport for London (TfL) LIP Delivery Plan there is no guarantee that future London mayors will continue to allocate funding at the same levels. The Council has in the past been able to rely on Section 106 contributions, the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will enable greater flexibility and control over developer funded budgets. There will be significant competing demands for funding and therefore the strategy will form an important justification to support funding requests for cycling projects along with development of a Cycling Delivery Plan.

## **7. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 7.1 This report explains the justification and framework for the Council's proposed Strategy 2015-2025, and that the majority of the funding would come from Transport of London (TfL) through the Council's Delivery Plan for LIP, as referred to under paragraph 6.2 above.
- 7.2 The Council's Cycling Strategy takes account of the Mayor for London's Cycling Vision and TfL's Cycling in London, as the Council as a London borough is required to do, as confirmed at paragraph 1.1 above.
- 7.3 The Council's Cycling Strategy also takes into consideration the Council's corporate Strategic Plan 2015-2016, the Council's planning Core Strategy (adopted September 2010) and Managing Development Document (adopted April 2013), which in turn are informed by the Council's Transport Planning Strategy 2011-2031 (2011); the Council's Cycling Connections (2009); the Council's Walking Connections (2011) and the Council's Road Safety Plan (2009)

### **Equalities Duty**

- 7.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, in the exercise of its functions including that of highway authority, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

7.5 The Equality Analysis supporting the new Cycle Strategy clearly identifies the extent to which the Strategy impacts on those members of the community who share a protected characteristic. (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

7.6 Where there has been consultation on a policy such as this, then any representations made should be taken into account before the decision is made. The report attached as Appendix One, together with section 4 of this report, together constitute a full and sound summary of the consultation process and its outcomes.

## **8. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The vision contained in the Cycle Strategy aims to improve access to cycling for everyone. This will involve some bespoke cycling interventions for various groups.

## **9. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The works and services to be delivered as part of this strategy will be commissioned through competitively tendered contracts to ensure value for money in delivery. Wider environmental, economic and health benefits delivered by the strategy further demonstrate best value drivers for the approach.

## **10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

10.1 The focus of this strategy is to encourage more people to cycle as part of their daily activity. In so far as cycling can become an efficient mode of travel to work, school or leisure, it offers an alternative to private car use and can therefore be seen as an essential part of a Sustainable Transport strategy, making a positive impact on reducing use of the private car and improving air quality.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Any risks will be addressed via the strategy implementation and project management structures adopted by the Council. The strategy itself seeks to deliver safer cycling with minimal impact on other road users.

## **12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The strategy introduces the concept of “filtered permeability” for cyclists which aim, in part, to close more routes in residential areas to through traffic whilst retaining access for cyclists. This has the potential to tackle areas where anti-social circuit racing takes place, by blocking the circuit to racers. It should



however be noted that this could increase the ability of criminals to use cycles as getaway vehicles.

### **13. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 All providers of cycle training to children will be appropriately tested and qualified under the terms of their contracts with the Council.
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#### **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

##### **Linked Report**

- None

##### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Cycle Strategy Consultation Summary Report
- Appendix 2 – Tower Hamlets – A cycling Borough
- Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment

##### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

- None

##### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A