# Draft Response from Southwark Cyclists to the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan

Southwark Cyclists

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*Question 6: Do you agree with the overall vision for the Old Kent Road?*

Yes

Comment:

This response is made on behalf of Southwark Cyclists, the borough’s primary cycling organisation, with more than ? members and ? supporters.

Southwark Cyclists welcomes the opportunity to comment on these plans, and its response is supported by expert staff at the London Cycling Campaign.

Confining our response to transport matters, Southwark Cyclists broadly agrees with the overall vision for the Old Kent Road (OKR). This support is dependent upon: Firstly, confirmation that that the vision includes 2.5m wide protected cycle lanes running along the whole length of the OKR itself, and to be delivered in the short-term future (2-4 years). Secondly, that all highway development in the area covered by the Area Action Plan is designed to London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS), with all “Critical Fails” eliminated from the scheme’s Cycling Level of Service assessment (CLoS). We also strongly suggest that all schemes including cycling provision should be of comparable quality to similar schemes at cities with a high modal share of cycling, i.e. with a CLoS rating of 70 or above.

Southwark Cyclists notes that a more efficient use of road space is achieved by allocating it to cycling and walking in preference to private motor vehicles, particularly for journeys of 5km or less. We expect development to be designed to allocate road space for growth in cycling, to accommodate such journeys. As such, and within the previous paragraph’s technical parameters, we would welcome the infrastructure improvements proposed in the plan; improved cycle crossings of the OKR, safety improvements at junctions, extension of the “Santander” Cycle Hire scheme, new east-west links for walking and cycling, the provision of cycle parking (including a mix of indoor/managed parking, rentable lockersm bikehangars, and free-to-use kerbside Sheffield stands), and cycle routes parallel to the OKR. However, these measures must be in addition to protected cycle lanes along the whole length of the OKR itself. In particular, as there are no opportunities to create parallel routes without demolishing existing buildings, and as the Action Plan area will be redeveloped over a 20 year period, significant improvements for cycling in the near future can only be achieved through infrastructure provision on the OKR itself.

More detail on the need for cycling infrastructure on the OKR is described in our response to question 13.

*Question 11: Do you agree that the Bakerloo Line extension should be a key part of our overall vision for the area?*

As a cycle group, our reply is limited to how the Bakerloo Line extension would affect the provision of space for cycling.

The Bakerloo Line will take decades to build and cost significantly more than the construction of protected 2.5m cycle lanes down each side of the OKR. As such, these cycle lanes should be financially prioritised and built within the next 2-4 years. Cycle lane construction should not be planned for after the Bakerloo Line extension, nor should it rely on there being funds remaining after the Bakerloo Line extension’s construction.

Responding specifically to the following on page 25 of the area action plan: “Developments built in advance of the Bakerloo Line extension, particularly those at very high densities which exceed the ranges will need to make a significant contribution towards improving transport capacity in the interim period.” We would like a confirmation that significant contributions to improving the cycling level of service will be eligible as a means of increasing transport capacity. This level of service would include absolute and perceived safety, general journey experience, air pollution, Santander cycle hire expansion, and the provision of cycle parking whether indoor/managed, rentable lockers or bikehangars, and free-to-use kerbside Sheffield stands.

*Question 13:**Do you agree with transforming the Old Kent Road into a modern boulevard with improved public realm for pedestrians, protection for cyclists and improved bus infrastructure along its entire length?*

Yes, within certain parameters. Firstly, that this protection for cyclists explicitly includes 2.5m protected cycle lanes along the whole length of the OKR, delivered in the short-term future (2-4 years). Secondly, that all highway development in the area covered by the Area Action Plan is designed to London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS), with all “Critical Fails” eliminated from the scheme’s Cycling Level of Service assessment (CLoS). We also strongly suggest that all schemes including cycling provision should be of comparable quality to similar schemes at cities with a high modal share of cycling, i.e. with a CLoS rating of 70 or above.

In relation to the wider aims of the Area Action Plan, protected space for cycling will support the aim to make the OKR safer to cross on foot and reduce air pollution adjacent to the kerb. This will reinforce the road’s main function as a high street, increase the quality of the open spaces fronting onto the OKR, and support measures to create a built environment that encourages walking, including walking as a means of accessing public transport. Wherever possible, cyclists and pedestrians should not be unnecessarily delayed – straight-across pedestrian crossings and short waits at lights are key for pedestrian and cyclist convenience. Supporting pedestrian safety and the high street function, in addition to cycle safety, we suggest that 20mph should be the default for the carriageway in this scheme – and wherever possible that should be physically designed for and enforced appropriately.

The OKR is one of the main routes between South East London and Zone 1. The current road layout means that, although the London Cycle design Standards suggest a 400m maximum distance between parallel routes in a network there are currently no direct, parallel routes in the area between Quietway 1 and the A202 (Queens Road). This means that, just as for other forms of traffic, cyclists moving between South East London and Central London are highly dependent upon the OKR. Its strategic movement function includes its being a strategic artery for cycling.

Current cycling levels demonstrate that a large number of existing cyclists would benefit from improvements to the OKR. At rush hour, cyclists already make up 6% of the road traffic, despite the lack of dedicated cycling infrastructure. (This figure is from the Transport for London presentation at the OKR Area Action Plan Community Forum, 14/09/2016.) Many more people would be expected to start cycling if the OKR had safe space for cycling, given the growth seen on existing cycle superhighway routes. Additional protected space for cycling would both mitigating the transport requirements of the new development and encouraging exercise in an area of particularly low existing health outcomes.

Safe space for cycling along the OKR would create protected bike routes in a new part of the borough. Currently, the only existing, comparable-distance and protected route through the area south of the OKR is the Surrey Canal Path. This is severely overcrowded for large parts of the day. The construction of Quietway One, particularly the safe links around the Millwall F.C. stadium, have seen significant increases in cycling along the route. However, the OKR and Quietway 1 are not parallel or adjacent routes, as they have significantly diverged by the time they reach the east of the borough. By providing an alternative protected cycle route to the overcrowded north-south route along the Surry Canal Path and the east-west route through Burgess Park, building cycle lanes to the OKR would take pressure off these existing routes and reduce conflict between park users.

Reiterating our response to question 6, we would welcome infrastructure improvements supporting cyclists to cross the Old Kent Road, safety improvements at junctions, extension of the “Santander” Cycle Hire scheme, new east-west walking and cycling links, the provision of cycle parking (whether indoors/managed, rentable lockers or bikehangars, and free-to-use kerbside Sheffield-type stands), and routes parallel to the OKR.

Reiterating our response to question 11, the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan covers the next 20 years. Although we agree that when new developments are built they should create parallel routes to the Old Kent Road, we cannot wait 20 years for these to arrive. Protected space for cycling along the Old Kent Road is the only way to significantly encourage cycling in the Area Action Plan now.

Overall, this consultation response is based on members of Southwark Cyclists conducting a bespoke survey of the Old Kent Road’s entire length, in addition to longstanding experience of transport issues in the Area Action Plan and wider borough. We would gladly discuss specific locations or issues with those Councillors and council officers working on the Area Action Plan.