

Southwark Cyclists - Climate Safe Streets Campaign

Report for SC AGM, 9th Nov 2022

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Introduction

For the May local elections, the LCC campaign focused on Climate Safe Streets. This was because CO2 from transport emissions is high (27%) and is not coming down. To meet the GLA's net zero by 2030 target, an accelerated shift towards active travel is essential. LCC local groups lobbied for cycling improvements on the back of a wider agenda of active travel and climate change.

May elections

CSS Champions were recruited across most boroughs. I stepped up as the Champion in Southwark, to be joined by David Stoker and Rose McNamee, and supported by Tom Harrison and Jeremy Leach (also representing Living Streets).

We campaigned on four key "asks", which aligned closely with SC's Vision:

- LTNs (now called Streetspace Schemes) across 100% of the Borough
- A full network of cycle routes on main and side roads
- Borough-wide CPZs and parking charges that reflect the true impact of driving
- More secure bike storage - end the waiting list

... all to be implemented by 2026 - essential for the Borough is to meet its net-zero target

These were emailed to the main parties and the existing Councillors.

We did not have resources to arrange separate hustings, but participated in the one organised by Living Bankside (@livingbankside).

There was concern that the "anti-LTN" campaigners would attract voters in wards like Dulwich Village. This did not happen, and the Tories lost ground across the Borough. Results:

- Councillors: 52 Labour (+4) and 11 LibDem (-3)
- Labour now controls 19 Wards (+1)
- The LibDems now control four Wards in the north: Borough & Bankside, N Bermondsey, St Georges, and Surrey Docks (lost Lon Bridge & W Bermondsey)

We are pleased that the Council retained the 10 Street Space Schemes (LTNs) that were installed during the pandemic - but progress on more schemes is very slow. Similarly, the Council has said that it's doubling the number of cycle hangars, but the reality is that there is still a long waiting list.

Subsequent campaigning

A small group - myself plus David Stoker, Tom Harrison and Jeremy Leach - has continued campaigning work.

After the summer, we had meetings with Kieron Williams (Leader of the Council) and Catherine Rose (Cabinet Member with responsibility for Leisure, Parks, Streets and Clean Air), and separately with James McAsh (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development). Both meetings were positive and we hope that we can exert a positive influence on

the Council's plans for active travel. Our aim has been to build a positive relationship that allows us to bring pressure in a constructive way. We are chasing a follow-up to the meeting with Cllr Rose.

In mid September, the Council signed off its Delivery Plan 2022-26, "Fairer, Greener, Safer" (see [Fairer, Greener, Safer Southwark's Council Delivery Plan](#)). It's encouraging to see that this commits to making Southwark "a Cycle Friendly borough". The Council is committing to doubling the number of cycle hangars, rolling out more segregated cycle lanes, extending cycle hire, offering free cycle lessons for all Southwark residents, and creating new ways for residents on low incomes to access an affordable bike. They plan to introduce two more Streetspace Schemes (LTNs) per year. All this is good, but the plans do not go far enough or fast enough.

In September, we saw a re-start of the Cycle Stakeholder Group meetings, which had taken a back seat during Covid. We have indications that, along with other groups, we can be involved to give input to new schemes while they are at an early stage. We have also offered to give input to the new Cycling Strategy and Movement Plan that the Council is updating.

As part of our campaign work, we reached out to allied local groups, including XR Southwark. In the summer, the [Southwark Climate Justice Coalition](#) (SCJC) was formed. This is a network of groups and individuals based in Southwark that aims to act as a grapevine and amplifier for climate justice action and education in our area. The members have their own agendas, but share common ground around the need for action on climate change.

We aligned with this group, and I seek the support of Southwark Cyclists to formalise this involvement.

The SCJC gave further feedback on the Council's Climate Action Plan as modified following the Citizens' Jury. This multi-partner engagement has been far more effective than SC could achieve by itself, and is pushing for the actions we want from the Council. The feedback document can be viewed here [Southwark CAP feedback Oct 2022.pdf](#). In a meeting with Councillors and Officers, the Council gave detailed feedback to 71 suggestions in a longer version of this document, and dialogue continues.

Future

We will continue to focus our lobbying through:

- Meetings with Cllr Rose and relevant Officers and follow-up actions regarding our "Asks" and specific proposals and consultations, as well as the new Movement Plan. We want to "turn words into actions"
- The Cycle Stakeholder Group
- Co-working with the Southwark Climate Justice Coalition