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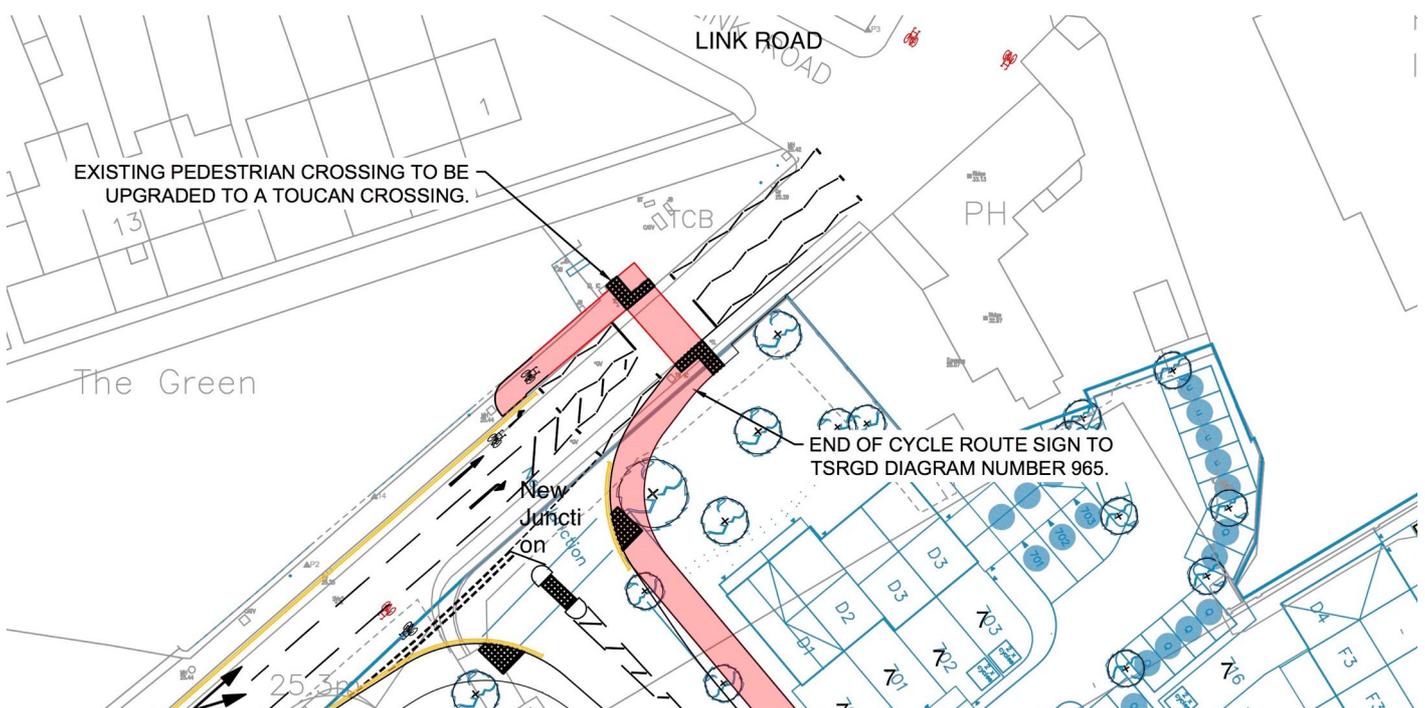
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Borough news and update from Get Sutton Cycling | September 2016

Felnex redevelopment – outdated proposals for cycling

Sometimes we are amazed, almost rendered speechless! Given the aspiration of the former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, to make cycling in London safer, more popular and more normal than ever before, given the 33% growth in cycling on roads across London between 2008 and 2014, and given the pledge by our new Mayor of London, Sadiq Kahn, to make London a byword for cycling, can it possibly be the case that in 2016 a developer (or a consultancy tasked by a developer) could produce such dire and totally inadequate proposals for cycling at a new development, on a brown-field site in Hackbridge, Sutton?

Unbelievably, the answer appears to be yes. Shared footways and toucan crossings do not equate to “a step-change in cycling infrastructure” nor will they deliver a step-change in participation (to quote from the borough’s new Cycling Strategy). If we don’t get this right, what chance is there for cycling in Sutton? Read more on this, with updates, at [Felnex redevelopment – an acid test cycling](#).



Detail from *Felnex Trading Estate, Phase 1, Proposed Cycle Routes, Odyssey Markides (March 2016)*

A ‘Quietway’ for Sutton

When first announced in March 2013, as part of the former mayor’s Vision for Cycling, Quietways were envisaged as routes for cyclists who prefer to use quieter, traffic-calmed streets. Quietways would make use of “filtered permeability” (in other words, restrict through motor traffic whilst maintain full access for people on foot and on cycle), and provided physical separation where they briefly joined busy roads. Is this what can be expected along the proposed alignment of the first Quietway to come to our borough, part of a route to link Sutton with Morden that is currently being assessed?

Detailed proposals have yet to be released, and that is not a bad thing because **quality is more important than speed of delivery**, so the answer is not known. However, there are clearly many challenges associated with the delivery of such ideas as “filtered permeability”. Given that the majority of residents living on these streets almost certainly habitually drive for nearly all of their journeys, what is the most likely response that they will give? “We don’t want it!” Why don’t they want it? Because what’s in it for them? Why should they drive the long way around? What will happen to their parking spaces? And what about traffic levels on other streets, streets that are not filtered? They will just be over-run with traffic!

Traffic counts taken by us along parts of the proposed first Quietway alignment (from Sutton High Street (Sutton Central ward), to Bishopsford Road (St Helier ward), by way of Manor Lane, Nursery Road, Benhill Wood Road, Elgin Road, Grennell Road, Rosehill Park West, Robertsbridge Road, and Newstead Walk) indicate that over **800 motor vehicles an hour** passed through the **Edinburgh Road / Grennell Road** intersection between 8 and 9am on a weekday (term time), with **900 vehicles an hour** at the nearby **Elgin Road / All Saints Road / Grennell Road / Benhill Road** intersection.

Consequently, a reduction in traffic volume is required on the proposed alignment if these streets are to be considered quiet enough to qualify for Quietway status. That is why, when we accompanied a senior planner from Sutton Council, a representative from the charity Sustrans (the Delivery Agent for Quietways) and Cycling Champion Cllr. Manuel Abellan, on a preliminary ride along the proposed Quietway on 14 June 2016, we made the point (again) that an absolutely essential prerequisite was to bring the residents along with the idea first. Residents will need to feel that the sacrifices they are being asked to make when driving in the vicinity of their homes is for a good reason. The case as to why the Quietway is being introduced really needs to be made (on an area-wide basis) first. It may take a while to bring the residents along with the idea, but seeing what has happened in mini-holland boroughs this is an absolute prerequisite. And this is where the Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Cycling Strategy come in.

This Quietway was discussed at the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee, 27 June 2016; see [Update on Sustainable Transport Strategy](#). Our thanks again to Cllr. Garratt, who understands the bigger picture! The first Quietway, linking Waterloo with Greenwich, [officially opened in June 2016](#).

Is there any news on the borough’s Cycling Strategy?

No. As reported in June 2016, Sutton Council released [the final version of the Cycling Strategy](#) towards the end of February 2016, quietly, and without fanfare. As far as we are aware, this document has not been promoted, discussed, or referred to in the nine months since its approval in November 2015. On 22 March 2016 we requested a meeting with Cllr. Jill Whitehead, Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee, to discuss the way forward for the strategy. Purdah (due to Mayoral, London Assembly elections and the EU Referendum), the need to await funding decisions by the new mayor, and the ending of the three-year rolling programme of LIP funding in March 2016, were all cited by Cllr Whitehead as a reason for delaying the meeting. On 11 August 2016 we wrote to Cllr. Whitehead again, with a gentle reminder of our request to discuss the future direction of our streets in Sutton. Given that the new Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has pledged his support for making London a byword for cycling, and given that he has announced his intention to search for a successor to Boris Johnson’s cycling czar Andrew Gilligan, it is clear that the aims and objectives of our borough’s Cycling Strategy remain relevant and important. Will we lead, or be led? Will the tough and challenging decisions be taken now, or put off to some indeterminate future? Essentially, it is time to stop the excuses for indecision and just get on with it.

Is there any news on the ‘Proposed cycle facilities on the Transport for London Road Network’ report?

No. There had been great hopes for this report [when it was first proposed in September 2015](#). It is not known whether a draft version of this report, to be sent to TfL for consideration, has yet been prepared (despite the revised anticipated completion date of June 2016).

Prudential Ride London 2016

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Ewan Crallan, Hackney Cycling Campaign, ably assisted by Gerry Matthews, Tower Hamlet Wheelers, for leading the Sutton feeder ride to central London for the Ride London Free Cycle event on Saturday 30 July. Thanks to you both for coming to our rescue, very much appreciated!

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