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Borough news and update from Get Sutton Cycling | December 2017

‘Air Pollution in Sutton’ video launch



In early October, Get Sutton Cycling launched what is hoped will be the first in a series of themed short films to get our local politicians thinking. In this instance, the topic chosen for discussion was air pollution. How bad is the air quality locally and could an increase in cycling provision help?

Calling on a vast range of evidence, statistics and documentation, the producers have found plenty to film to show how bad things are. These include air quality failures along the A232 in Cheam, Sutton, Carshalton and Beddington. Elsewhere, there is particular concern in Worcester Park and Wallington. On a positive note, the film highlights a few examples locally, and in other parts of the country, that show how good things could be.

Shortly after the launch, we wrote to all 54 councillors in the borough to let them know about the video and take the conversation forward. We wanted to ensure that our councillors would not be able to say, at some future point, that they were unaware that while they were in office **around one in twenty deaths were attributed to man-made PM2.5 pollution in Sutton each year**. Nine councillors have, so far, responded, including Council Leader Ruth Dombey. The issue has prompted Cllr. Mary Burstow to ask a question at the [Council meeting](#) on 20 November.

Our film is very timely. On 23 October, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, launched the £10 toxicity ‘**T-Charge**’ aimed at older, more polluting vehicles on roads in central London. This will not help residents of Sutton though. So, for a borough that was declared an Air Quality Management Area in April 2013, and with an [Air Quality Action Plan](#) from 2013 that lists a range of measures being taken by the Council to address the issues, including sustainable transport, traffic monitoring, air quality monitoring, and raising awareness, it is time our councillors stepped up to the plate.

‘Air Pollution in Sutton: How It Affects You and How Cycling Can Help’ is [the video you can’t afford to miss](#). View it, and share it, on [YouTube](#).

Quietway – a case of no news is good news?

There had been the expectation that a summary of the responses to the summer's [Quietways Highways Survey](#) would be available from the end of the September. Two months on, and there is still no news on this. Quite why this information has yet to be released is not known.

However, it is known that [Healthy Streets](#) funding will only be made available for this project if the plans developed for [Sutton's proposed first Quietway](#) deliver a low-traffic route. Our [traffic counts](#) on Benhill Wood Road during the summer indicate that over 500 vehicles an hour are driven along the proposed alignment at peak times. Clearly, this level of traffic does not equate to low-traffic by any stretch of the imagination. So, if the reason for the delay on the development of the design proposals is due to getting it right, and ensuring residents see the big picture, then that is fine by us.

Traffic counts - in more ways than one

Traffic counts continue to be carried out across the borough during. Some of our initial findings from 2017 were reported in the presentation 'Traffic counts and modal share' at our [AGM in September](#).

Over on the A24, **London Road**, in the west of the borough it may not be surprising to learn that the hourly traffic rate at the intersection with Trafalgar Avenue at peak times is around **1,800 vehicles**. Interestingly, London Road would also appear to be one of the borough's busiest roads for cyclists, with around **90 people** (predominantly male, in their twenties or thirties, wearing helmets and lycra) observed here in one hour on a warm June morning. This relatively high ridership on the A24 explains our excitement two years ago for [Destination North Cheam!](#) Meanwhile, on **Trafalgar Avenue**, the street that links to the upgraded [Worcester Park cycleway/footway](#), only **six people** were seen on cycles during the same period. That tells you, yet again, that when it comes to providing cycling infrastructure, highest priority is given to doing what is easy, less controversial and costs relatively little, rather than providing high-quality, expensive and more challenging, but worthwhile stuff. That approach may start to change with the [Strategic Cycling Analysis](#) work (although the A24 appears to be missing from the SCA map)! Other A-roads observed include A232 **Croydon Road** (around **1,600 vehicles** an hour) and the A237 **London Road (1,400)**, which has similar volumes to the nearby B272 **Beddington Lane (1,400)**.

But then it gets all the more intriguing. Who would have thought that **1,100 vehicles** an hour use the unclassified **Westmead Road** (part of the LCN 75 and possibly under consideration as a Quietway)? Or there are 1,100 cars, vans and lorries on **Green Wrythe Lane** between 8 and 9am, another 1,100 on **Middleton Road**? Even the delightfully named **Butter Hill** leading to **Strawberry Lane** has around **700 vehicles** an hour passing along it, as drivers seek the shortest route for their journey. Meanwhile, **700** on **Chiltern Road**, **700** on **Oakhill Road**, **675** on **York Road**, **600** on **Demense Road** (another LCC alignment), **550** on **Benhill Road**, **500** on **Collingwood Road**, and **400** on **Grange Vale**. These are residential streets! In fact, it has been difficult to find anywhere in Sutton where the number of vehicles on any given street is low enough (under 200 an hour) to achieve the highest score on the [Cycling Level of Service](#) assessment (a core element of the [London Cycling Design Standards](#)).

With Sutton's population expected to grow by 16% between 2016 and 2031, as referenced in [Sutton 2031 – planning for our future](#), the sooner today's councillors understand the challenges, and set the course that will benefit future residents, the better.

Is Sutton set for its first Liveable Neighbourhood?

20 October was the closing date for boroughs to submit a bid to TfL for funding as part of the new [Liveable Neighbourhood programme](#) in 2018/2019. The Liveable Neighbourhoods programme provides a new funding stream that will make our streets places where people choose to walk and cycle, rather than drive, and thereby improve residents' health and local air quality. It could bring between £1m and £5m to the borough. Whether Sutton submitted a bid is not known, but an announcement on successful borough bids is due in December. Publication of the new Mayor's Transport Strategy is expected in early 2018, with updated [LIP Guidance](#) released alongside this to make sure borough plans are consistent with objectives in the new MTS.

Get Sutton Cycling's coordinator highly commended Campaigner of the Year

Get Sutton Cycling's coordinator, Charles Martin, was one of ten campaigners across London to receive the 'highly commended' accolade for Campaigner of the Year at [London Cycling Campaign's AGM](#) held on 19 October. Charles was delighted to have been nominated, and said that the commendation reflected the work of everyone involved with Get Sutton Cycling in helping to progress the group's campaigning credentials in recent years. The Campaigner of the Year award went to the highly deserving Ruth-Anna Macqueen in Hackney. A full report on the [Campaign Awards Winners 2017](#) is available on the LCC website.

Next Get Sutton Cycling meetings: see the [Next meet-up](#) page on the website for updates

Wednesday 17 January 2018, Lord Nelson, 32 Lower Road, Sutton, SM1 4QP;

Wednesday 14 March 2018, Presidents' Lounge, The Borough Sports Ground, Gander Green Lane, Sutton, SM1 2EY

You can get in touch by email, Twitter, or the website: getsuttoncycling@gmail.com | [@cyclinginsutton](https://twitter.com/cyclinginsutton)