

Transforming Fiveways Croydon consultation (September 2017)

A response from Get Sutton Cycling (London Cycling Campaign in Sutton)

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Get Sutton Cycling is the Sutton borough group of the London Cycling Campaign. There are currently around ninety LCC members residing in the borough, with many additional supporters. Although the group's aims are the furtherance of the charitable objectives of the LCC in the London Borough of Sutton, we work closely with the groups in neighbouring boroughs including the Croydon Cycling Campaign.

Fiveways Corner, in the London Borough of Croydon, is located just 300 metres from the boundary with the London Borough of Sutton. Given the proximity of Fiveways to Sutton, changes made at this busy intersection are likely to have consequences on the transport choices, and the trips made, by residents across Sutton. This, in turn, could have implications of traffic volumes, especially perhaps on the A232 through the nearby towns of Wallington and Carshalton.

In 2015, Get Sutton Cycling commented on the initial proposals for Fiveways (see [Transforming Fiveways Croydon](#)¹, Get Sutton Cycling, March 2015). We now welcome the opportunity to comment on the latest proposals, as detailed in [Have your say on transforming Fiveways Croydon](#)² (TfL Consultation Hub / Croydon Council, July 2017).

A summary of our response

The Fiveways Croydon scheme (July 2017) is not supported.

In our view, the proposals:

- Fail to fully deliver on the Healthy Streets Approach
- Focus on increasing the capacity for traffic while not providing capacity for movement by bicycle, and thereby contradict the main aspirations of the mayor's new Transport Strategy
- Provide only limited and partial improvements for cycling, which neither facilitate safe cycling along the dominant flows or recognise the potential for enabling cycling for local journeys

It is recognised that the Fiveways project is about increasing capacity to reduce congestion, improve journey times, and provide for future traffic growth. It is also noted that this major project includes elements of regeneration and new public realm. However, given the increasing emphasis on the role that transport can have on improving health and quality of life (Healthy Streets for London, TfL, February 2017), and the recognised need to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport over private vehicles so as to reduce our dependency on cars (Mayor's Transport Strategy, Draft for Public Consultation, GLA, June 2017), there would be the expectation that, from now on, all projects and schemes would include interventions that helped to deliver on these important and inclusive outcomes too. Simply providing more road space, without taking the opportunity to include high quality, fit for purpose, cycling infrastructure, may work in the short-term. But will future generations thank us for it? This is outer London, and this is challenging, but we have to start somewhere. Why not start at Fiveways, Croydon?

In rejecting these proposals, we hope that TfL will look again at the situation at Fiveways, and bring forward some plans that will work for everyone.

¹ <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/03/26/transforming-fiveways-croydon/>

² <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/fiveways/>

Before detailing the shortfalls, as we see them, of the latest phase of the project, it is appropriate to set some context.

Aspiring to Healthy Streets

The Healthy Streets Approach is the system of policies and strategies to help Londoners use cars less, and walk, cycle and use public transport more. *Healthy Streets for London* (TfL, February 2017)³, recognises that London is facing an inactivity crisis, and that this is, in part, linked to car dependent lifestyles. Consequently, there is a need to design physical activity into our everyday lives.

“Car dependency brings with it road danger and air pollution. It limits opportunities to walk and cycle, and damages the reliability of our bus services. Above all, it has tied us into living inactive lives, a situation that has contributed to one of the most serious health challenges London has ever faced”.

“Providing more appealing walking, cycling and public transport options is the best way to reduce car use”.

Aiming to deliver on the Mayor’s Transport Strategy

The *mayor’s Transport Strategy, Draft for public consultation* (Mayor of London, June 2017)⁴ is the statutory document that sets out the policies and proposals of the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to reshape transport in London over the next 25 years. The strategy emphasises the link between transport and the quality of life, and is clear on the challenges ahead.

“People remain dependent on their cars because street environments are not designed to promote walking and cycling, because overcrowded or unreliable services make public transport unattractive, or because parts of London have been planned around car use to the extent that few alternatives are available”.

“...this new draft transport strategy aims to change the way people chose to travel so that, by 2041, 80 per cent of all Londoners’ trips will be made on foot, by cycle or by public transport”.

With these aspirations in mind, in the following section we set out our views on the July 2017 proposals.

Some key elements of the proposals that fail to impress

- There are no plans to provide comfortable and safe cycling movements through any arms of the **Fiveways** Junction. As a result, there are several likely Cycling Level of Service critical issues here, and the junction will remain a hostile barrier to cycling. Advanced Stop Lines are not appropriate.
- Only painted lanes cycle lanes are proposed on the new **Purley Way** bridge over the railway, and cyclists on the southbound lane, not wishing to turn left into **Epsom Road**, are expected to merge with three lanes of general traffic in order to continue their journey south.
- On the widened section of **Purley Way**, between **Epsom Road** and **Stafford Road**, cycling infrastructure is not included in the plans. Instead, it is proposed to facilitate north-south cycle movements along the A23 with “upgraded to ‘toucan’ cycle friendly crossings” and shared-use pavements. This is totally inadequate. Although the carriageway width is to be increased by 50 per

³ <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/healthy-streets>

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/transport/our-vision-transport/draft-mayors-transport-strategy-2017>

cent on this section of the A23 (from two to three lanes in each direction (according to the map, but not according to the illustration)), the volume of traffic travelling southbound will actually decrease here because eastbound traffic will be able to take advantage of the proposed two-way working on **Epsom Road**. This, therefore, would suggest that a third lane southbound was not required, and that the space could be used for robust cycle tracks. If this is not the case, but given that the plans already require the compulsory purchase (and demolition) of certain commercial and residential properties, it would seem relatively straightforward to acquire some land currently used for car-parking in the grounds of the Morrison's store to provide protected space for cycling here.

- On **Stafford Road**, between **Fiveways Corner** and **Epsom Road / Duppas Hill Road**, it is proposed that cyclists will continue to share the part-time bus lane southbound and a new northbound bus lane, and to navigate around inset parking bays. The 2015 proposals provided dedicated cycling infrastructure here, and it is not clear why the 2017 proposals have withdrawn this feature.
- A stated aim of the project is to provide enhanced cycling facilities to link with existing and proposed cycle routes into and out of central Croydon. However, plans on how this will be facilitated are not provided. One clear example of this is the lack of provision for cycling between the two sections of **Epsom Road** at the intersection with **Duppas Hill Road**. Without facilities here, the east-west cycle movement barrier is set to remain.
- All pedestrian crossings will be staggered. Consequently, it will take far too long to navigate through these junctions or simply cross the road when walking.
- The scheme has seemingly been put together with the aim of increasing traffic capacity, with no thought to active travel, or enabling people to travel by bike or on foot.

In conclusion

All the key junctions in this scheme retain unsafe and hostile movements for cycling. Junctions should be designed to enable safe and comfortable cycling turning movements from, and to, all directions.

The provision of shared-use footways, toucan crossings and staggered crossings are unlikely to lead to increased levels of cycling or walking. Cycle tracks, featuring physically separate and protected space for cycling, along with robust signalised junctions, will unlock the potential to make Croydon (and Fiveways) a cycling destination.

The proposals put too much emphasis on helping to meet a likely increase in traffic, and too little emphasis on how to enable a proportion of short local journeys to be more readily made by bicycle.

Healthy Streets are set to underpin the Mayor of London's emerging transport strategy. Unless exemplary cycling infrastructure is provided at Fiveways, the outcome could ultimately undermine the principles behind Healthy Streets and the aims of the transport strategy.

An alternative, revised layout, for Fiveways, illustrating the type of design we would like to see in the area, is presented in Figure 1 below.

