Cycling, cars and congestion in Sutton and beyond

Ten things you need to know

1. Traffic in Sutton is rising at an annual rate of nearly 3 per cent, equivalent to a doubling every 25 years.

2. Nearly all traffic growth is on minor roads: up by 6 per cent per annum, ie a doubling every 12 years. These roads are usually residential streets never designed for, and unfit for the purpose of, carrying large numbers of vehicles.

3. Increasing numbers of vehicles registered to Sutton addresses, a growing number of driving licence holders with SM postcodes and projected rises in Sutton's population all point towards continued growth of traffic on Sutton's roads.

4. Almost 60% of all car journeys are under five miles with a substantial proportion less than two miles. Very many of these could easily be cycled (or walked) instead.

5. There is huge potential for more people in Sutton to travel by bike, whether for commuting, shopping, to school or leisure purposes. Currently, just 3 per cent of residents cycle at least three times per week, a percentage less than half that of Greater London's residents and below that of England's.

Unless urgent action is taken, there is the prospect of more congestion and widespread gridlock. More people cycling can play a key role in averting this.

6. One person is killed or seriously injured on Sutton's roads every week with many more slightly injured, excluding those not reported to the police.

7. Car availability is very heavily skewed against lower-income households. Those in the bottom fifth are three times as likely not to have a car (or van) than those in the top fifth. Likewise, those from ethnic minorities are much less likely to have a car (or van) than their white counterparts.

8. Around two-fifths of those eligible for a driving licence in the borough do not have a car (or van). The proportions are far higher in some parts of the borough than others.

9. The effects of congestion range from more air pollution and accelerating climate change - because of low speeds and idling engines - to the huge economic costs which businesses often have little choice but to pass on to consumers. It is estimated that drivers spend nearly three hours each week in Greater London's traffic jams at a cost of £4.9 billion per annum: an average of more than £10 per week for each of the capital's men, women and children.

10. Active travel brings enormous physical and mental health benefits to individuals ***and*** significantly reduces pressure on the NHS. Regular physical activity such as cycling reduces the risks of:

    - Dementia by up to 30%
    - Hip fractures by up to 68%
    - Depression by up to 30%
    - Breast cancer by 20%
    - Colon cancer by 30%
    - Type 2 cancer by up to 40%
    - Cardiovascular disease by up to 35%
    - ALL-CAUSE MORTALITY by 30%

References:

1. Figure based on traffic growth between 2009 and 2020, prior to Covid-19: Road traffic statistics - Local authority: Sutton (dft.gov.uk)
2. Figure based on traffic growth between 2009 and 2020, prior to Covid-19 and Road traffic statistics - London region (dft.gov.uk)
3. Vehicle licensing statistics: 2019 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) table veh0105, Population projections for local authorities: Table 2 - Office for National Statistics and GB Driv ing LicenceM Data - data.gov.uk
4. Mode of travel - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) table NTS0308
5. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/walking-and-cycling-statistics-cw table CW0302

6. Casualties involved in reported road accidents (RAS30) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) table RAS30038. NB the figures relate to those reported to the police only.
7. Travel by vehicle availability, income, ethnic group, household type, mobility status and NS-SEC - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) tables NTS0703 and NTS0707
8. Local Area Report for areas in England and Wales - Nomis (nomisweb.co.uk)
9. Traffic jams cost the UK £6.9bn last year | Auto Express and Population estimates by local authorities of Great Britain, mid-1981 to mid-2019 - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
10. Cycling and walking plan for England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) page 9

Statistical sources

A wide range of statistics are available relating to cycling, traffic and travel, with many providing detailed commentary to accompany the figures, including:

- A very useful source, giving answers to many common queries about cycling: Cycling UK's Cycling Statistics | Cycling UK
- Vehicle miles travelled by vehicle type, road category and region: Road traffic statistics - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Department for Transport's National Travel Survey monitoring trends in personal travel: National Travel Survey - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Data and statistics about road congestion and travel times on the Strategic Road Network and local 'A' roads: Road congestion and travel time - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Transport use by mode during the Covid-19 pandemic: Transport use during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Annual reports providing statistics and detailed commentary about trends and developments in travel and transport in Greater London: Travel in London reports - Transport for London (tfl.gov.uk)
- Department for Transport Road Casualty statistics: Reported road casualties Great Britain, provisional results: 2019 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- A free interactive mapping tool providing information about the type and severity of casualties and vehicles involved by location for over 20 years: CrashMap
- Statistics and factsheets about road safety in Greater London: Road danger reduction dashboard and data - Transport for London (tfl.gov.uk)
- Santander Bike Hire scheme statistics including daily number of bikes hired: Number of Bicycle Hires - London Datastore

********** *Last updated 25 June 2021* **********