


**Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025**

Indicative Timing: 30 minutes

<b>Report Title</b>	Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025		
<b>Committee</b>	Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee		
<b>Committee Date</b>	7 October 2021		
<b>Committee Chair</b>	Councillor Manuel Abellan		
<b>Report From</b>	Spencer Palmer Strategic Director of Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods		
<b>Report Author(s)</b>	Phil Crockford, Principal Transport Planner, 0208 770 5987  Dimitrios Dikmpasanis, Transport Planner/Planning Officer, 0208 770 4574		
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All wards		
<b>Ambitious for Sutton priorities</b>	Being Active Making Informed Choices Living Well Independently		
<b>Open/Exempt</b>	Open		
<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date</b>	22 September 2021

**1. Summary**

- 1.1. As part of the Ambitious for Sutton vision to make the borough a great place to live and work, a draft new Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) was developed in early 2020, and, following delays due to the Covid pandemic and associated issues, was consulted on in public in early 2021. Following the consultation, the draft document has been amended to reflect comments received, and to include new and updated guidance that has been released during the development of the document.
- 1.2. The new STS replaces the existing strategy published in 2015, and is focused upon providing more opportunities for local residents to walk, cycle and use public transport as their preferred options for journeys, within and beyond the borough. The Council's vision is that transport policy and provision within the borough should contribute to a more sustainable future, a better environment, economic prosperity, an improved quality of life and greater equality and safety, especially for children, families, those with mobility issues and those advancing in years.

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- 1.3. The STS underpins and supports many of the actions set out in the updated Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan, specifically those contained in the themes of:
  - Promoting walking, cycling and public transport use
  - Enhancing streets and public spaces.
- 1.4. It also supports the delivery of our separate, statutory, action plan for air quality improvement.
- 1.5. The new Strategy will have Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) status so will be a material consideration in planning decisions, giving it greater weight and influence in bringing forward more sustainable transport provision throughout the borough, and importantly the developer contributions to fund schemes. It chimes with emerging thinking around living more sustainably in the context of the borough's Climate Emergency declaration and the COVID-19 pandemic, and will be supported by the Safer and Healthier Streets and neighbourhood place-making approach approved by this Committee on 24 June 2021.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1. To agree the updated Draft Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025 (STS) for adoption, including as a Supplementary Planning Document.

**3. Background and Key Information**

- 3.1 The draft new Sustainable transport Strategy was considered and approved for public consultation by the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee on 1 October 2020, and subsequently at the Full Council meeting on 23 November 2020. The final version has been updated to reflect feedback received during the consultation as well as new guidance and plans from the Mayor and Government released during the document's development.
- 3.2 In putting this strategy together and consulting upon it, the Council's ambition is that, as a part of the London economy, Sutton will be a place in which transport (both private and public) is important to facilitate daily life and economic activity; that the greater enthusiasm for walking and cycling which has been experienced across the country through the pandemic is good for the health of individuals and for the environment and should be encouraged; and that the public transport deficit and low level of Transport for London (TfL) funding support from which Sutton suffers will need to be addressed in order that residents and businesses can thrive.

### Consultation

3.3 The draft STS was released for public consultation on 14 January 2021 and was consulted on for a 10-week period, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement for new planning documents.. This included:

- A dedicated web page at [www.sutton.gov.uk/draftsts](http://www.sutton.gov.uk/draftsts);
- Citizenspace consultation hub link, offering multiple ways to take part by online or paper questionnaires or by letter;
- Emails and letters to consultees on the planning policy consultation database who may have had an interest in the policy topic;
- Contacting statutory consultees, such as TfL and the GLA
- Officers attended each of the six local committees to outline the key aims of the STS and encourage members, affiliated groups and those watching the meetings online to participate in the consultation;
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor), a projected reach of over 90,000 accounts across all 3 platforms, with regular posts and 'talking heads' videos with local community representatives about how sustainable transport benefits their activities, and to encourage others to take part in the consultation;
- Comms newsletters, including Sutton Scene, members information bulletins and business/education letters, with just under 39,000 viewings;
- An open invitation made for groups and stakeholders to hold face to face discussions via video conferencing; and
- Hard copies placed in libraries.

### Consultation responses

3.4 515 responses to the consultation were received through the Citizenspace portal, with a further 7 written responses from organisations and individuals including the MP for Carshalton and Wallington, Elliot Colburn, who also met with officers to go through the STS proposals. This represents the highest number of responses to a planning document in the borough other than the Sutton Local Plan. 96% of responses were from Sutton residents. Of these:

- 68% of respondents felt that public transport was important or very important to them
- 51% expressed support or strong support for the STS vision.
- Of the 5 key objectives set out in the draft STS, the majority supported or strongly supported 4 of them
- 55% supported or strongly supported the proposals and planning guidelines for walking, 57.5% for bus travel, 60% for train travel, 47% for trams and 51% for electric vehicle charging

3.5 The consultation was carried out at the same time as a number of high-profile activities under the TfL Streetspace programme, including temporary cycle lanes and road closures as well as School Streets. Many responses made reference to these measures, rather

than to the specific aims and objectives of the STS. Alongside this there were a significant number of comments on the Road User hierarchy, which appeared in the previous STS and is a tool for assessing priority consideration between different types of road users when considering a scheme or intervention. These comments suggested that the hierarchy was simply a means for the Council to implement measures such as road closures and pedestrianisation schemes on a grand scale, and that all residents regardless of ability and purpose of journey would be expected to walk or cycle. This is clearly not the case, but perhaps suggests why just over 45% of respondents disagreed with the hierarchy and a further 14.4% neither agreed or disagreed with it, with 44% opposing proposals and planning guidelines for cycling. To avoid any ambiguity the relevant sections of the STS have therefore been amended to be clearer, and this is also reflected in the individual responses to comments received in Appendix B.

- 3.6 The consultation was designed to permit additional individual feedback for the majority of questions asked, and a large number of respondents took the opportunity to do so. These comments are set out in Appendix B to this report, with officer responses where appropriate. (The table in Appendix B contains a number of blank rows - this is where a respondent did not provide a response to a particular question). Some 15 key themes were identified among the comments, and these are also set out in Appendix B together with a summary of key statistics surrounding the consultation.

#### Amendments to Government and TfL guidance during 2020/21

- 3.7 During development of the new STS, a number of new or amended documents and plans supporting sustainable travel were released by TfL and the Government, such as new Department for Transport guidance on cycle infrastructure design and the Government's 'Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain' plan. Not all these were referenced in the consultation draft and so the final document will now include these, along with updated transport data where available. For the latter, data relating to public transport during the pandemic is not yet available and in any event would not be truly reflective of demand or capacity, which following easing of restrictions is slowly returning towards pre-pandemic levels.
- 3.8 In addition, aside from the Active Travel Fund and TfL Streetspace for London schemes mentioned above, a national trial of e-scooters launched involving some London boroughs in June 2021. E-scooters have been the subject of much discussion in Sutton, with calls from members of the public to permit them being countered by representations from groups representing older people or those with visual impairments, raising concerns about their safety. The Council opted not to take part in the initial trial, but officers continue to work in close contact with TfL, London Councils and participating boroughs to learn the lessons from the trial and ensure that, should use of e-scooters eventually be made legal, they can be rolled out safely in the borough. As part of this there is also the opportunity to include greater reference to e-bikes, and their benefits to encouraging greater levels of cycling for both commuting and leisure, and for people of all ages.

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- 3.9 A number of respondents to the consultation either requested, or included suggestions, that the Go Sutton demand-responsive bus should be brought back as a permanent service in the borough. In July 2021 TfL released its final report on the Go Sutton trial, which ran from May 2019 before being curtailed in March 2020 due to the pandemic. The report identified that, while popular, the operating costs of the service meant that it would not be possible to continue the service without significant and unsustainable additional funding. However, the STS supports the use of the technology to benefit borough residents in other ways, such as improvements to Dial a Ride, community transport solutions and in managing other services, such as the emergency parcel distribution hub set up during the pandemic.
- 3.10 A number of changes have been proposed to the final draft STS to reflect feedback received during the consultation. A detailed schedule of these changes, with references/pages numbers, is set out in Appendix C to this report.

**4. Benefits to Sutton and its Residents**

- 4.1 The Sustainable Transport Strategy, along with the proposed changes arising from the consultation, will deliver key benefits to Sutton and its residents by establishing a clear strategy for sustainable transport, which will benefit Sutton's communities. It will enhance the quality of life for all ages, especially children, families, older people and other people who are vulnerable. The STS will deliver this through:
- increasing the safety of our roads and streetspace through improvements to cycleways, crossings and permitting easier access to public transport;
  - Integrating sustainable travel measures into new developments, such as future new Local Plan housing developments around Sutton Town Centre, to promote it as a viable travel option for residents, visitors and employees from the outset;
  - enabling improvements to the health of residents through improving and promoting opportunities for walking and cycling, including access to the "Green Chain";
  - contributing to key aspects of our refreshed Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response plan, in particular improving air quality by reducing congestion, increasing the number of children walking or cycling to school; and
  - improving the inclusivity of public transport for people with disabilities and enhanced age and dementia-friendly travel options, reducing the number of journeys made by private car.
  - setting out clearly in one place our expectations of developers in terms of their role in contribution to sustainable transport benefits for the borough's residents when preparing planning applications.
- 4.2 The STS directly supports a number Ambitious for Sutton priorities, including:
- Area improvement and renewal schemes, co-designed with residents and businesses delivered in key priority areas across the borough
  - Investment in transport infrastructure across the borough

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- Implementation of the Local Plan to deliver a reduction in pollution, measures to address the impact of climate change and improvements to public transport
- Implementation of selective road improvement schemes to reduce congestion and benefit all road users across the borough
- Improvement to air and water quality within the borough through the development and implementation of action plans
- Work with schools to deliver and promote healthy living habits in young people
- Being an Age Friendly and Dementia-Friendly Borough

- 4.3 The STS brings all the opportunities, challenges and guidance for sustainable travel into one place for the first time. This will allow Sutton's residents and businesses to clearly see the overall vision for sustainable travel and the ways in which the Council and its stakeholders will deliver this. In addition, the STS will give developers and funding agencies a clearer indication and understanding of what their developer funding contributions will be used for, and officers, when working with key stakeholders, will have a resource to be able to demonstrate the need for sustainable transport schemes more easily.

**5. Implications**

- 5.1. A number of responses suggested that there was no need for a new STS and that the present state of arrangements should continue. This approach suggests two potential alternative positions to the above recommendation. These are:

Option 1: Allow existing action plan and STS to expire, and continue using Local Implementation Plan (LIP) 3 and the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) only.

- 5.2. The MTS sets out a policy direction for the borough but does not provide direction or a more localised strategy for promoting sustainable travel. With LIP schemes considered and approved via the six local committees this would result in a piecemeal approach to scheme delivery, with the risk of MTS objectives not being achieved.

Option 2: Replace existing action plan and continue with existing STS.

- 5.3. The existing STS is an iteration of the first document which was produced in 1999 and has been updated every five years. As such it has not kept pace with policy developments at Council, GLA or national government level since 2015, and does not refer to more recent advancements in technology such as electric vehicle charging or demand responsive travel. It would also mean that sustainable travel policy would continue to be spread over several documents, including SPDs such as that for car clubs, which are out of date. In addition, the production of a new action plan would perpetuate duplication of targets and objectives that are now geared around the core MTS objective and borough-specific targets. It would also carry far less weight in planning decision making and appeals.

Option 3: Provide new strategy but not apply SPD status.

- 5.4. A third option considered was to develop a new STS but not apply Supplementary Planning Document status. With changes in funding to London boroughs from both TfL and the GLA, and the historic low level of capital resource allocations to Sutton for transport and other infrastructure which has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is vital to look to developers and partners to contribute towards sustainable travel measures if the housing and population growth projections are to be managed. With no incentive to do so through the planning process, developers would continue to design schemes which do not take responsibility for managing their impact on the borough's transport network, and delivery of transport interventions will be delayed or dependent upon suitable 'challenge' style capital funds from TfL.

#### Equalities implications

- 5.5 The STS vision makes it clear that sustainable transport should be a viable option for anyone living, working or studying in the borough, regardless of age, income or mobility. Access to public transport, safe routes for walking and cycling, clean air and reduced congestion are core policies at national, London-wide and local level. The STS supports these aims and also includes the local priorities such as making Sutton a dementia-friendly borough.
- 5.6 A draft Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been produced and is attached at Appendix D. Selection and delivery of schemes pursuant to the aims and objectives of the STS will be via the borough's Local Implementation Plan (LIP3) which is subject to its own EqIA, as are the proposals for Safer and Healthier Streets and neighbourhood place-making approach previously approved by this Committee, and the Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Response Plan.

## **6. Finance and Legal Commentary**

### Finance Comment

- 6.1. The development of the SPD has involved an online consultation due to restrictions on public meetings and events caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. No further costs have been incurred. Provision has been made within existing revenue budgets to accommodate any residual publication costs, which reside within the Strategic Planning service budget.

### Legal Comment

- 6.2. The document has been prepared in accordance with Regulations 8-16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) regulations (767/2012). No further comments.



**7. Appendices and Background Documents**7.1. Appendices

<b>Appendix Letter</b>	<b>Appendix Title</b>
A	Final Draft Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025
B	Summary Consultation Results
C	Proposed changes to the document following public consultation
D	Draft Equalities Impact Assessment

7.2. Background Documents

<b>Date of Expiry</b>	<b>Background Document</b>
N/A	N/A

**8. Audit and Consultations Trail**

<b>Consultees</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Date of Comments</b>
Finance	Yes	Ramesh Teelock	09/09/21
Legal	Yes	George Chesman, SLLP	26/08/21
EQIA	No	N/A	N/A