

# Sutton's councillors: welcome to the class of 2022

**When it comes to active travel, and “sustainable transport”, will the class of 2022 be the class to shine and show interest, or the class of indifference and apathy?**

## ***A note from the author:***

*No enjoyment is derived from producing an article that is, at times, largely negative and mildly critical of our councillors and officers. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Having said that, at least the councillors who are individually mentioned (and possibly criticised) in this post have shown an interest. Arguably, it is the councillors who are not mentioned that could really be letting the side down.*

*Writing this piece, telling it like it is, has been difficult and has left me feeling rather despondent. Therefore, my intention now is to publish just three final posts through the Get Sutton Cycling website, of which this is the first. ‘What was delivered for cycling in Sutton between 2010 and 2022?’ and ‘Holding to account’ will complete the trilogy.*

## **Summary of the headline conclusions from this review:**

- **If Sutton ever does become a cycling borough of distinction, the vast majority of councillors who chose to retire in May 2022 will not be able to say that they helped make it happen.**
- **Six of the eight Sutton councillors from the class of 2018, who lost their seats in May 2022, did very little, if anything, for active travel in the borough during their time in office.**
- **There is disappointment that Councillor Ruth Dombey (Liberal Democrat), re-elected in May 2022, and Leader of Sutton Council since 2012, appears to have a history of low ambition when it comes to active travel. It is hoped this will change during her 2022-2026 term.**
- **More aspiration and commitment to active travel will be required from the Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee, Councillor Barry Lewis (Liberal Democrat), and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor David Bartolucci (Liberal Democrat), if any significant progress on cycling is to be realised in the borough by 2026.**
- **The opposition (Conservative) group appear to have little appetite for active travel. It is noted that all thirteen of the returning Conservative councillors in May 2022 had opposed the adoption of the borough’s Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025 and Supplementary Planning Document in November 2021.**
- **Taking all of the above together, it is concluded that apathy and indifference is more likely to win the day over aspiration and delivery between now and the elections in 2026.**

## Introduction

1. In June 2018, we published '[Sutton's councillors: from the class of 2014 to the class of 2018](https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/06/14/suttons-councillors-from-the-class-of-2014-to-the-class-of-2018/)'<sup>1</sup>. The article gave details of the individuals elected to Sutton Council on 3 May 2018, and also reviewed the preceding four years (i.e. the change to the councillor line-up since the elections on 22 May 2014). In January 2022, the article was updated with the addition of a section headed 'What happened next?'. This took into account the changes that had occurred in the councillor line-up since the May 2018 elections.
2. 'Sutton's Councillors: welcome to the class of 2022' continues from where '...to the class of 2018' left off. However, this review is not about the 2022 cohort of councillors as such (or, at least, not about those councillors who were elected in May 2022 \*for the first time\*). Here the emphasis is more on those councillors who were in post between 2018 and 2022 and who either chose to stand down in May 2022, lost their seat in May 2022, or who were re-elected in May 2022. Some councillors (former and returned) receive compliments in this regard, while for others there is some mild criticism.
3. The big question, though, in assessing the ongoing political commitment, is whether the latest councillors to represent us here in the London Borough of Sutton, the class of 2022, will have a sufficient degree of political will to deliver on active travel. Will they shine, and work towards making Sutton a better, healthier, less car-dominated borough? Or will their performance, like many of their predecessors, be lacklustre and potentially result in more traffic, more parking stress, and less attractive neighbourhoods as the borough's population grows? One year on from the May 2022 elections, and it is too soon to say for sure. However, as this review demonstrates, unless there is a rapid change in approach, coupled with a boost in political will, our borough will continue to languish behind the more forward-thinking London boroughs (and, indeed, many towns and cities across the globe) that have taken the lead. Importantly, in considering the options, it is the future residents of Sutton that need to be uppermost in mind - and that, of course, means looking beyond the four-year election cycle.

## Welcome to the class of 2022

4. On 5 May 2022, fifty-five individuals were elected to represent their residents and communities across twenty wards in the London Borough of Sutton (see Table 1)<sup>2</sup>. A total of 193 people had put themselves forward to contest the fifty-five available seats across the borough. Kudos to them all.
5. Note that, as a result of boundary changes following on from [an electoral review](#)<sup>3</sup>, 55 seats were contested across twenty wards in May 2022 (as outlined in Table 1). For many years prior to May 2022, the borough's political map had consisted of 54 seats and eighteen wards (as will be seen in Table 3).

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sutton's councillors: from the class of 2014 to the class of 2018' (Get Sutton Cycling, 14 June 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/06/14/suttons-councillors-from-the-class-of-2014-to-the-class-of-2018/>

<sup>2</sup> Election results (London Borough of Sutton, accessed 23 March 2023): <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/mgManageElectionResults.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> The London Government Boundary Commission (accessed 23 March 2023). A previous link, <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/sutton>, has been discontinued. Archive (marked as "Archived on 8 Mar 2023"): <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230308132221/https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/sutton>

Table 1: Sutton Councillors, by Local Committee and Ward, elected 5 May 2022

<b>Beddington and Wallington</b>			
Beddington	<a href="#"><u>Tim Foster</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Jillian Green</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Nick Matthey</u></a> *
South Beddington and Roundshaw	<a href="#"><u>Edward Joyce</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Patrick Magnus</u></a> ^	<a href="#"><u>Jonathan Pearce</u></a>
Wallington North	<a href="#"><u>Sunita Gordon</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Mariam James</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Barry Lewis</u></a> *
Wallington South	<a href="#"><u>Sam Martin</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jayne McCoy</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Muhammad Sadiq</u></a> *
<b>Carshalton and Clockhouse</b>			
Carshalton Central	<a href="#"><u>Isabel Araujo</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Andrew Jenner</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jake Short</u></a> *
Carshalton South and Clockhouse	<a href="#"><u>Moira Butt</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Tim Crowley</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Amy Haldane</u></a> *
<b>North Cheam, Stonecot and Worcester Park</b>			
North Cheam	<a href="#"><u>Mike Dwyer</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>James McDermott-Hill</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Param Nandha</u></a> *
Stonecot	<a href="#"><u>Rob Beck</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Cumar Sahathevan</u></a>	
Worcester Park North	<a href="#"><u>Tom Drummond</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Joe Quick</u></a>	
Worcester Park South	<a href="#"><u>Martina Allen</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Peter Geiringer</u></a> *	
<b>Hackbridge, St Helier, and The Wrythe</b>			
Hackbridge	<a href="#"><u>Dave Tchil</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Sheldon Vestey</u></a>	
St Helier East	<a href="#"><u>Paul Cole</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Gemma Munday</u></a>	
St Helier West	<a href="#"><u>Steve Alvarez</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Sheila Berry</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Wendy Clark</u></a>
The Wrythe	<a href="#"><u>Bobby Dean</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Patrick Ogbonna</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Colin Stears</u></a> *
<b>Sutton</b>			
Sutton Central	<a href="#"><u>David Bartolucci</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Cryss Mennaceur</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Ed Parsley</u></a>
Sutton North	<a href="#"><u>Sam Cumber</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Ruth Dombey</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Bryony Lindsay-Charlton</u></a>
Sutton West and East Cheam	<a href="#"><u>Qasim Esak</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Luke Taylor</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Christopher Woolmer</u></a>
<b>Sutton South, Cheam and Belmont</b>			
Belmont	<a href="#"><u>Neil Garratt</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>David Hicks</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Jane Pascoe</u></a> *
Cheam	<a href="#"><u>Eric Allen</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Tony Shields</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Vanessa Udall</u></a>
Sutton South	<a href="#"><u>Richard Clifton</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Trish Fivey</u></a> *	<a href="#"><u>Louise Phelan</u></a>
Key to party representation			
	Conservative		
	Independent		
	Labour		

	Liberal Democrat
Key to symbols	
*	Councillors who were re-elected. Note (1) Param Nanda (North Cheam) had represented Stonecot prior to May 2022; Tony Shields (Cheam) had represented South Sutton prior to May 2022.
^	Councillor who had represented a ward in Sutton at some point in the past.

6. Although the Liberal Democrats remained as the majority party after the May 2022 elections, the group lost some ground. Twenty-nine Liberal Democrat councillors, as opposed to thirty-three during the previous term, took their seats. The Conservatives gained two seats, taking the their total to twenty. Labour returned three councillors, as did the Independent Residents’.

7. A profile of councillor numbers, and party representation, for the London Borough of Sutton at the end of May for each year between 2014 and 2022 is shown in Table 2. (Note this is an updated, and corrected, version of the equivalent table published in '[Sutton's councillors: from the class of 2014 to the class of 2018](#)').

Table 2: Political representation of Sutton Councillors by year 2014-2022 (end of May each year)

Year (end of May)	Conservative	Independent	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Vacant
<b>2014</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>
2015	8	2	0	44	0
2016	8	2	0	44	0
2017	8	1	0	44	1
<b>2018</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>
2019	18	3	0	33	0
2020	18	3	0	33	0
2021	18	3	0	33	0
<b>2022</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>

## At the end of the 2018-2022 term

8. Let us remind ourselves of the state of play immediately prior to the May 2022 elections. As can be seen from Table 3, at the end of the 2018-2022 term there was on vacant seat in the ward of Beddington South. This vacancy was a result of the resignation of **Councillor Manuel Abellan** on 30 January 2022. Manuel had stood down from his position as Councillor for Beddington South, and from his roles as Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee, and Deputy Leader, for personal reasons. During the eighteen months prior to his resignation, Manuel had had to endure a considerable amount of abuse from a number of commentators on social media, much of which was focussed on the introduction of an experimental cycle lane and a bus-gate in Worcester Park.

9. For the record, and as previously noted in '[Sutton's councillors: from the class of 2014 to the class of 2018](#)', Councillor Manuel Abellan was a leading light amongst Sutton's councillors. His departure was, is, and will be, a great loss for the future of the borough in terms of enabling the population to chose more active, sustainable, forms of travel.

Table 3: Sutton Councillors, by Local Committee and Ward, at end of 2018-2022 term

<b>Beddington and Wallington</b>			
Beddington North	Tim Foster	Jillian Green	Nick Matthey
Beddington South	VACANT ^	Edward Joyce	Mo Sadiq *
Wallington North	Sunita Gordon	Mariam James	Barry Lewis
Wallington South	Steve Cook *	Jayne McCoy	Muhammad Sadiq
<b>Carshalton and Clockhouse</b>			
Carshalton Central	Jake Short	Jill Whitehead *	Chris Williams *
Carshalton South and Clockhouse	Moira Butt	Tim Crowley	Amy Haldane
<b>Cheam North and Worcester Park</b>			
Nonsuch	Martina Allen	Peter Geiringer	James McDermont-Hill
Stonecot	Jed Dwight	Param Nandha	Ryan Stoneman
Worcester Park	Jenny Batt	Tom Drummond	Drew Heffernan
<b>St Helier, The Wrythe and Wandle Valley</b>			
St Helier	Jean Crosby	Martin Gonzalez *	Annie Moral *
The Wrythe	Nali Patel *	Colin Stears	Sam Weatherlake
Wandle Valley	Benjamin Andrew *	Vincent Galligan *	Hanna Zuchowska *
<b>Sutton</b>			
Sutton Central	David Bartolucci	Rich Clare *	Ali Mirhashem *
Sutton North	Ruth Dombey	Marlene Heron *	Steve Penneck *
Sutton West	Lily Bande	Kevin Burke *	Catherine Gray
<b>Sutton South, Cheam and Belmont</b>			
Belmont	Neil Garratt	David Hicks	Jane Pascoe
Cheam	Eric Allen	Elliot Colburn *	Holly Ramsey *
Sutton South	Richard Clifton	Trish Fivey	Tony Shields
Key to symbols			
^	One of the three seats in Beddington South was vacant following the resignation of Manuel Abellan on 30 January 2022.		
*	Councillors not standing for re-election in May 2022.		

10. Why was there backlash, from some quarters, to the aforementioned cycle lane and bus-gate, and could this have been foreseen? It is all rather unfortunate that, when Transport for London

introduced the Streetspace for London<sup>4</sup> programme during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic - a programme of rapid actions that had the support (and the funding) of the government<sup>5</sup>, Sutton was not in a position to fully capitalise on the initiative. Had Sutton Council (councillors and officers) in the years and months leading up the pandemic, engaged with residents, made the case and faced the challenges<sup>6</sup>, perhaps the outcomes would have been different. As it was, Councillor Manuel Abellan was only supported by one or two other progressive councillors, with everyone else either running to the hills, or shouting from the rooftops in outrage. Meanwhile, council officers appeared to be either unprepared, or were taking an approach that tends to add credence to a consideration that has been put forward elsewhere on this website that some officers are simply opposed to active travel in Sutton<sup>7</sup>. Either (or neither) way, the overall result was that very little progress was made.

11. Although the do-nothing, or the don't change anything, approach may please some, it is important to recognise that "doing nothing" does not equate to "keeping the status-quo". In the real world things move on, so there is no status-quo. Quite apart from any consequences or outcomes resulting from climate change, poor air quality, and inactivity, Sutton's population is continuing to increase (albeit at a slightly slower rate than in the previous decade)<sup>8</sup>. An increasing population could see extra demand both on road space (more congestion) and on parking<sup>9</sup>. So, simply maintaining the status-quo is likely to result in Sutton getting left further behind. And that is why this post, focussing on our elected councillors past and present, is so important. These are the guys who will ultimately determine the borough's trajectory on how we get around, and how attractive Sutton will be for those who live, or work here, in the decades to come. It is time to think, and act, with the longer term in mind.

## Who was in, and who was out, in 2022?

### Part 1: The retiring councillors

12. Of the fifty-three councillors still in post at the end of 2018-2022 term, seventeen made the decision not to seek re-election in 2022. These were Ben Andrew, Kevin Burke, Rich Clare, Elliot Colburn, Steve Cook, Vincent Galligan, Martin Gonzalez, Marlene Heron, Ali Mirhashem, Annie Moral, Nali Patel, Holly Ramsey, Mo Sadiq, Steve Penneck, Jill Whitehead, Chris Williams, Hanna Zuchowska.

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<sup>4</sup> 'Streetspace for Sutton: Setting the scene' (Get Sutton Cycling, 26 May 2020): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2020/05/26/streetspace-for-sutton-setting-the-scene/>

<sup>5</sup> Statutory Guidance 'Traffic Management Act 2004: network management to support active travel' (Department for Transport, May 2020 (updated 1 April 2022)), accessed 23 March 2023: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

<sup>6</sup> 'Time to make the case and rise to the challenges' (Get Sutton Cycling, 15 September 2015): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/09/15/time-to-make-the-case-and-rise-to-the-challenges/>

<sup>7</sup> The degree of ambition, understanding and expertise for cycling from council officers has been discussed and questioned in many previous articles, including: 'No room for bikes: how Tharp Road could show borough-wide failure over cycling' (Get Sutton Cycling, 26 January 2017) and 'The last word on Green Wrythe Lane?' (Get Sutton Cycling, 7 April 2017). A consultation that took place in the weeks prior to the first Covid-19 lockdown 'Cycleway between Sutton High Street and Colliers Wood - Proposals in Sutton' (LBS, Citizenspace, 25 February 2020), focused more on a proposal to introduce a 20mph speed limit than it did on the idea of reducing non-local through traffic. This was despite the findings of community engagement exercise that had taken place in the summer of 2017, to which 65% of respondents felt there was too much traffic in the area.

<sup>8</sup> London Population Projections Explorer (GLA, accessed March 2023): <https://apps.london.gov.uk/population-projections/>

<sup>9</sup> On the subject of parking, a report to be presented to the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee on 23 March 2023, titled 'Highways and Transport Works Programme 2023/24', notes that "The [Council's Highway] network supports walking, cycling and public transport as well as travel by car and also the movement of goods and services", and there is recognition that "School streets provide safe spaces for school children and their parents, carers or guardians as they travel to and from school....". Nevertheless, the report also declares that "There has been a delay in initiating the [School Streets] programme due to resource demands required to meet new target dates for the TfL programme above and the parking strategy". This would suggest that parking is taking priority over the School Streets programme, reflecting the importance of ongoing issues relating to parking. Quite right too, perhaps, especially if demand on parking increases further. But this form of priority appears to be at odds with the Road User Hierarchy published in the the borough's Sustainable Transport Strategy (2015) (Figure 3.1), and further discussed in Sutton's Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025 (Figure 2).

13. As stated in previous articles on the Get Sutton Cycling website, there is no doubt that all elected councillors contribute greatly, in one way or another, to the benefit of the community they represent. There is gratitude for the time and commitment shown by the eighteen councillors who stood down in May 2022.

14. For the record, though, and from the perspective of those of us who have been campaigning to make cycling a safe and convenient option for many more people for some of their journeys, only three of the councillors who chose to stand down in May 2022 are on our radar for their input and contribution to cycling and active travel. They are **Councillor Kevin Burke** (Liberal Democrat), **Councillor Hanna Zuchowska** (Liberal Democrat), and **Councillor Ben Andrew** (Liberal Democrat).

15. Councillor Kevin Burke and Councillor Hanna Zuchowska both supported the Space for Cycling campaign in 2014, and Kevin attended several meetings of the Sutton Cycle Forum<sup>10</sup> prior to Covid-19. Overall, though, their subsequent involvement was not spectacular, and there is nothing really concrete to show for their earlier enthusiasm. For example, there was some disappointment when Hanna, as a newly elected councillor, did not speak up in favour cycling infrastructure proposals for Rosehill roundabout in 2015<sup>11</sup> just a few months after declaring her support for Space for Cycling<sup>12</sup> ('And then there were ten!'<sup>13</sup>).

16. Councillor Ben Andrew, who was first elected as councillor in May 2018 and so was not serving at the time of the Space for Cycling campaign, had taken on the role of vice-chair for the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee in June 2019 (in place of Councillor Richard Clare who had held the post for twelve months), and was elected to Chair of the E&ST Committee at Full Council on 28 February 2022. As Chair, Ben chaired one meeting of the E&ST Committee (10 March 2022). Ben had made it known that he was keen to help support cycling and was a strong advocate for School Streets and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Both Hanna and Ben represented Wandle Valley ward between 2018 and 2022, and it was during their tenure that the Watermead Lane barrier<sup>14</sup> was installed. In this regard, their contribution to active travel is arguably somewhat tarnished.

17. There is little doubt that **Councillor Jill Whitehead** (Liberal Democrat) worked tirelessly for improvements to public transport in the borough during her tenure. In 2012, Jill showed great interest in the 'Love London, Go Dutch'<sup>15</sup> campaign too, declaring that she would like her ward (Carshalton Central) to be the first to 'Go Dutch'. This was particularly encouraging because, at the time (and for many years to follow), Jill was Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee (now the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee).

18. However, that initial enthusiasm was short lived. When an open letter, entitled 'Get Sutton Cycling'<sup>16</sup>, was sent to all serving councillors in the borough on 30 April 2013, including Jill, her response the following day (1 May 2013) was concise. With the subject heading 'Your letter', Jill

<sup>10</sup> Some notes on the meetings of the Sutton Cycle Forum (March 2016 to October 2022) are available from Get Sutton Cycling: <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/category/cycle-forum/>

<sup>11</sup> 'St Helier's decision on Rosehill roundabout – a summary' (Get Sutton Cycling, 2 November 2015) <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/11/02/st-helier-summary/>

<sup>12</sup> 'Space for Cycling: action points for Sutton' (Get Sutton Cycling, 3 July 2014): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2014/07/03/space-for-cycling-action-points-for-sutton/>

<sup>13</sup> 'And then there were ten!' (Get Sutton Cycling, 25 May 2015): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/04/25/and-then-there-were-ten/>

<sup>14</sup> "Whenever barriers on cycle paths are mentioned on social media a high level of engagement is usually generated. However, an acknowledgement to this 3 February [2020] correspondence has yet to be received. Let's hope someone is talking behind the scenes @SuttonCouncil @SustransLondon ^CM" (Twitter @cyclinginsutton, 24 February 2020): <https://twitter.com/cyclinginsutton/status/1231929488721747968>

<sup>15</sup> 'Love Sutton.. Go Dutch... Go Global... give Space for Cycling' presentation to Sutton Cycle Summit, 22 January 2014: [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/lovesuttongodutch\\_cyclesummit\\_january2014.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/lovesuttongodutch_cyclesummit_january2014.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> 'Get Sutton Cycling' (Sutton Living Streets, 30 April 2013): <https://suttonlivingstreets.org.uk/2013/04/30/get-sutton-cycling/>

simply wrote "Thank you for recent letter. We will be responding to you shortly in regard to the points you make. Many thanks." Almost ten years on, and nothing further heard. And, of course, now with Jill's retirement, nothing will be heard. Disappointing, but that is how it goes. This may explain why so few people actually bother to get involved in discussions and debate. (And, in the respect of seemingly being ignored, history appears to be repeating itself - as will be seen in the forthcoming post 'Holding to account').

19. In November 2017, Jill did respond to a question presented to the Council meeting that month asked by Mary Burstow (councillor in Cheam at the time). Mary had asked 'What steps has Sutton taken in the last four years to make cycling in Sutton easier?'<sup>17</sup>. Jill's response was not particularly edifying, and our analysis of it resulted in this commentary: "In truth, what Sutton has done in the last four years is essentially to deliver next to nothing for cycling. What Sutton has not done – or done very little of – is to engage, debate, rise to the challenges"<sup>18</sup>. **The fact that the lack of engagement with residents was highlighted in 2017 is quite telling. Many of those opposing the trial, experimental, projects introduced during Covid-19 in 2020 were essentially saying the same thing - "no one asked us"**.

20. Councillor Whitehead's legacy for cycling will largely be remembered by her overseeing a considerable expansion of shared use paths in the borough's parks - all of which would fail if they were used by any more than the occasional cyclist. It also never seemed to concern Jill, or anyone else, that these paths needed to be linked to one another other than by main roads. Lack of funding was also frequently cited for by Jill for the lack of developing or delivering schemes. Clearly, funding is very important. The good news, therefore, is that active travel funding has increased in recent years. Better still, only local authorities that can show capability and willingness to deliver, and develop schemes that will actually make a difference, will be awarded any significant funding. In theory, this latter point should be music to the ears of the Sutton Tories, talking of whom...

21. ... just to mention **Councillor Elliot Colburn** (Conservative). Elliot has been (and still is at time of writing - March 2023) the Member of Parliament for Carshalton and Wallington since the general election in December 2019, and it was in this capacity, rather than that of councillor in Cheam (2018-2022), that we met with Elliot to discuss cycling related issues in February 2020<sup>19</sup>. During the following two years and two months of his tenure as councillor, nothing more was heard from him.

22. It is worth noting at this point that the entire opposition Conservative group voted against the adoption of the borough's latest Sustainable Transport Strategy when the document was brought to a full council meeting on 22 November 2021 (see Voting Record - Item: Requisition - Adoption of the Sustainable Transport Strategy)<sup>20</sup>. They had their reasons, and fair enough you may say. Well, yes, except they did not hold the Liberal Democrat administration to account on its failings on the existing Sustainable Transport Strategy (and more on this in a forthcoming post 'Holding to account').

23. Furthermore, when Get Sutton Cycling wrote to the four main parties in March 2018 to ask how they would rise to the challenges as outlined in the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy, should they take control of the Council two months later<sup>21</sup>, the Sutton Tories were the only group not to respond. **So, on the one hand the Sutton Tories are highly critical of a proposed**

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<sup>17</sup> 'What steps has Sutton taken in the last four years to make cycling in Sutton easier?' (Get Sutton Cycling, 31 December 2017): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2017/12/31/what-steps-has-sutton-taken-in-the-last-four-years-to-make-cycling-in-sutton-easier/>

<sup>18</sup> 'Time to make the case and rise to the challenges' (Get Sutton Cycling, 15 September 2015): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/09/15/time-to-make-the-case-and-rise-to-the-challenges/>

<sup>19</sup> 'First meeting with Elliot Colburn MP' (Get Sutton Cycling, 14 February 2020): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2020/02/14/first-meeting-with-elliott-colburn-mp/>

<sup>20</sup> Sutton Council, Monday 22nd November 2021 7pm Item: Requisition - Adoption of the Sustainable Transport Strategy (LBS, accessed 23 March 2023): <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/mgListRecordedVotes.aspx?AIID=45289>

<sup>21</sup> 'Sutton and the Mayor's Transport Strategy 2018' (Get Sutton Cycling, 17 April 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/04/17/sutton-and-the-mayors-transport-strategy-2018/>

**transport strategy for Sutton, but on the other hand they miss the chance to outline their thoughts of how they would develop a transport strategy for the borough if the opportunity to do so arose.**

24. So, for the record, it is noted that Councillor Elliot Colburn and Councillor Holly Ramsey (the only two Conservative councillors to retire in May 2022) had voted against the adoption of the new Sustainable Transport Strategy six months earlier, but had not held the Liberal Democrat administration to account on its failings on the previous Sustainable Transport Strategy.

25. In conclusion, when it comes to the seventeen councillors who retired in May 2022, it is probably fair to say this. **If Sutton ever does become a cycling borough of distinction, the vast majority of councillors who chose to retire in May 2022 will not be able to say that they helped make it happen.**

26. We would, nevertheless, extend particular thanks to three councillors who stepped down in May 2022: Kevin Burke, Hanna Zuchowska, and Ben Andrew. It cannot be easy when they were outnumbered by many colleagues and fellow councillors (and possibly officers) who really don't get it (despite "it" being policy). It takes a strong character to push the boundaries, and to push against the backlash. Thanks too, for input from Jill Whitehead. From the amount of involvement she gave during her extensive time as councillor, it is rather unfortunate that we cannot be more appreciative. If only the conversation could have been taken further. At least, as far as can be ascertained, none of the eighteen retiring councillors were fervently against ideas of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods or very much in favour of "more free parking" as was the case with at least one councillor who lost their seat (as will be seen in the next section). But they certainly did little to progress things.

27. If any former councillor would like to get in touch and explain why they think this commentary is unfair, or simply wrong, please do so. Just post in the comments, or write to [sutton@lcc.org.uk](mailto:sutton@lcc.org.uk), and we will include your comments in an update at the end of this article.

## Who was in, and who was out, in 2022?

### Part 2: The councillors who lost their seat

28. Of thirty-six councillors from the class of 2018 who sought re-election in May 2022, eight lost their seat. These were Lily Bande, Jenny Batt, Jean Crosby, Jed Dwight, Catherine Gray, Drew Heffernan, Ryan Stoneman, Sam Weatherlake.

29. We wish all eight former councillors well. Who knows - some (or all) of them may well stand again in 2026.

30. Special thanks to **Councillor Jenny Batt** and **Councillor Drew Heffernan** who, like Councillor Manuel Abellan, had to endure a considerable amount of abuse, largely made through online, social media channels, following the introduction of experimental, trial, reallocation of road space measures put in place during the first year of Covid-19 in Worcester Park (measures as detailed in '[Streetspace for Sutton: The timeline of implementation](#)'<sup>22</sup>). Time will tell, but it would be good to think that Jenny and Drew (and Manuel) will be on the right side of history, and that one day people will wonder what all the fuss was about. We shall see. Either way, Jenny and Drew can leave the scene with their heads held high.

31. Meanwhile, in Sutton West, opinions were also running high around this time (but without, or certainly with less, abuse). **Councillor Catherine Gray** set up a petition (along with fellow **Councillor Lily Bande**) to keep a short, narrow, section of road under a railway bridge on York

<sup>22</sup> 'Streetspace for Sutton: The timeline of implementation' (Get Sutton Cycling, 26 May 2020): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2020/05/26/streetspace-for-sutton-the-timeline-of-implementation/>

Road<sup>23</sup> “open”. Along with campaigning for “more free parking” in the run-up to the May 2022 elections, Catherine appeared to be fervently against the very idea of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods or anything that she interpreted as being anti-motoring.

32. At a hustings event held on 20 April 2022, three prospective candidates were asked what action they would take to help deliver the government’s (sic) Sustainable Transport Strategy in Sutton (to see a large increase in walking, cycling and public transport journeys, and a corresponding reduction in car journeys). One of the candidates at the event, organised by the Sutton Civic Society, was Councillor Catherine Gray. Now, clearly, Catherine cannot be criticised for attending the event. In fact, quite the opposite, as it was good for her to put herself forward and to give her time. Also, who knows what other candidates would have said if publicly asked the same question. Nevertheless, the points Catherine made in response to the question are worthy of closer scrutiny.

33. Catherine began her reply with “The short answer to this question is, I won’t close roads”, before going on to say “**The demographic profile of Sutton doesn’t lend well to cycling, and other forms of active travel**”. This is a seemingly bizarre thing to say in its own right, but especially so given that research has shown Sutton has the highest number of potentially cyclable trips per resident of any London borough<sup>24</sup>. No one would, perhaps, blame Catherine for not being familiar with this research. However, the same research was referenced in the borough’s Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025<sup>25</sup>. Which begs the question, had she actually read the borough’s transport strategy - a strategy, the adoption of which, she had voted against six months previously. (To be fair, Catherine may only have voted this way in order to keep in line with the entire opposition Tory group).

34. Catherine went on to say at the hustings event “...We should walk or cycle if at all possible but **we must make sure what we are asking Sutton residents to do are actually compatible and practical with the lives of the people who live in Sutton**”. This commentary would tend to suggest that Catherine was not familiar with borough’s Sustainable Transport Strategy from 2015<sup>26</sup> either, which noted that “over 50% of car journeys in Sutton are less than 5km”.

35. Another of Catherine’s comments was this: “We put in a cycle lane on Throwley Way and it caused traffic jams and frustrated drivers but we didn’t see an increase in cycling and making journeys harder for car users does not encourage the modal shift that lots of people like to see”. In this commentary, which was a reference to the Covid-19 Streetspace for London initiative, Catherine deployed a classic political tactic. She focussed on something that was not the problem (in this case a trial cycle lane on Throwley Way, the impact of which to traffic was minimal), and avoided the real problem (the need to reduce traffic in order, if nothing else, to avoid the need to build more roads, let alone to avoid increased congestion, pollution, in-activity, climate change and the continued detriment of the public realm). For the full text, which includes

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<sup>23</sup> Google Streetview image of York Road, looking south just to the south of the intersection with Grove Road and Salisbury Avenue: <https://goo.gl/maps/HoivsX8NVkbjxc2A7>. Although the image may suggest the road is quiet, prior to Covid (and again since 2022) traffic flows in excess of 500 vehicles an hour are normal between between 0800 and 0900, as people seek to avoid using the A217 (situated 500 metres to the west), and the A232 (located 300 metres to the north).

<sup>24</sup> Analysis of Cycling Potential 2016 (TfL, March 2017): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/tfl\\_analysis-of-cycling-potential-2016.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/tfl_analysis-of-cycling-potential-2016.pdf). The report notes that “...**the potential for more cycling in London is not constrained to a particular part of the city, to a certain type of trip, or to any individual demographic group**”. However, “Realising the potential is ... down to finding a way to encourage the person making that trip to change their travel behaviour”.

<sup>25</sup> Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025 (LBS, November 2021): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/sustainabletransportstrategy2020-2025\\_spd\\_lbofsutton\\_november2021.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/sustainabletransportstrategy2020-2025_spd_lbofsutton_november2021.pdf). Paragraph 6.14, Figure 12.

<sup>26</sup> Sustainable Transport Strategy 2015 (LBS, June 2015): “**Over 50% of car journeys in Sutton are less than 5km (3 miles). A considerable proportion of car journeys could therefore potentially be replaced with more active and sustainable forms of travel, such as walking and cycling**, which are proven to improve health, levels of physical fitness and reduce rates of obesity, while reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and consequent carbon emissions”. [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/suttonsustainabletransportstrategy\\_june2015.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/suttonsustainabletransportstrategy_june2015.pdf)

responses from the prospective Labour candidate John McGeachy, and Liberal Democrat candidate David Bartolucci, see '[Local Election Hustings question and answers](#)'<sup>27</sup>.

36. Whether the stances Catherine took resulted in loss of her seat on this occasion, is pure speculation. Nevertheless, residential York Road remains open, continues to be used by traffic avoiding main roads, and therefore ensures that active travel in this part of the borough will mainly remain the preserve of the fit and fearless. Despite not being re-elected to Sutton West and East Cheam, Catherine must be fairly happy and satisfied in how things went. The outcome for York Road is actually as she wished. Whether future generations of the neighbourhood will be as happy, when they realise what they have been missing out on, only time will tell of course.

37. So, for the record, it is noted that Councillor Catherine Gray (and Councillor Lily Bande) left the council in May 2022, having voted against the adoption of the borough's latest Sustainable Transport Strategy in November 2021 but not having held the Liberal Democrat administration to account on its failings on the existing Sustainable Transport Strategy.

38. It should be remembered that this was all taking place less than a year after the Conservative Government of the day had published '[Gear Change: One year on review](#)'<sup>28</sup> and '[Decarbonising transport: a better, greener, Britain](#)' the [transport decarbonisation plan](#)<sup>29</sup>.

39. **Councillor Jed Dwight** was one of four opposition councillors who abstained on resolutions pertaining to School Streets as discussed by members of the [Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee on 24 June 2021](#)<sup>30</sup>. The others were Councillor Neil Garratt, Councillor Tony Shields and Councillor Nick Matthey.

40. One conclusion to draw from all of this is that **six of the eight Sutton councillors from the class of 2018, who lost their seats in May 2022**, Lily, Jean, Jed, Catherine, Ryan and Sam, **did very little, if anything, for active travel in the borough during their time in office**. Essentially nothing to help the residents they represented (and by implication, future residents) feel more comfortable to look towards options other than to continue to drive everywhere, for whatever purpose, and for whatever length of journey.

41. Again, if any former councillor would like to get in touch and explain why they think this commentary is unfair, or simply wrong, please do so. Either respond in the comments, or write to [sutton@lcc.org.uk](mailto:sutton@lcc.org.uk), and we will post your comments here.

## Who was in, and who was out, in 2022? Part 3: The councillors who were re-elected

42. Twenty eight councillors from the class of 2018, were re-elected in May 2022. Congratulations to you all: Eric Allen; Martina Allen; David Bartolucci; Moira Butt; Richard Clifton; Tim Crowley; Ruth Dombey; Tom Drummond; Trish Fivey; Tim Foster; Neil Garratt; Peter Geiringer; Sunita Gordon; Jillian Green; Any Haldane; David Hicks; Mariam James; Ed Joyce; Barry Lewis; Nick

<sup>27</sup> 'Local Election Hustings question and answers' (Get Sutton Cycling, 24 April 2022): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2022/04/24/local-election-hustings-question-and-answers/>

<sup>28</sup> Gear Change: one-year-on review (DfT, 30 July 2021, accessed 23 March 2023). Extract from Prime Minister's Foreword (Boris Johnson): "I support councils, of all parties, which are trying to promote cycling and bus use. And if you are going to oppose these schemes, you must tell us what your alternative is, because trying to squeeze more cars and delivery vans on the same roads and hoping for the best is not going to work.": <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gear-change-one-year-on-review>

<sup>29</sup> Sutton's Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025 (LBS, November 2022) Paragraph 1.17 includes the following quote (alluding to The Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan): "**Overcoming the known barriers to cycling (which centre around road safety concerns, lack of infrastructure and lack of confidence) and walking will provide a significant potential for growth in active travel.** There is clear evidence that the provision of segregated cycle lanes and other measures such as low-traffic neighbourhoods drives significant increases in cycling and – after an initial period of adjustment – reductions in motor traffic, both locally and more widely. If cycling and walking are made safer and more pleasant, more people who previously drove choose to cycle and walk, particularly for short trips". <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan>

<sup>30</sup> Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee on Thursday, 24th June, 2021, 7.00 pm: <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=651&Mid=5648&Ver=4>

Mattey; Jayne McCoy; James McDermott-Hill; Param Nandha; Jane Pascoe; Muhammad Sadiq; Tony Shields; Jake Short; Colin Stears.

43. Particular congratulations go to **Councillor Ruth Dombey** (OBE) who, on her re-election, has now held the position of councillor in the borough for twenty years. At the Annual Council meeting held on 23 May 2022, Ruth was re-elected as Council Leader (a role she has held since 2012). Ruth's statement can be viewed on YouTube '[Leader of Sutton Council confirmed as Councillor Ruth Dombey](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wpDJbCi9y0)'<sup>31</sup>, and read in the Sutton Council news item '[Leader of Sutton Council confirmed as Councillor Ruth Dombey](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/-/leader-of-sutton-council-confirmed-as-councillor-ruth-dombey)'<sup>32</sup> (which also introduced Councillor David Bartolucci as Deputy Leader of the Council, and Councillor Barry Lewis as Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee).

44. It would probably be fair to say that progress on cycling has not been as dynamic as we would have liked under Ruth's leadership. In 2015, we were delighted to [present Ruth with a petition](#)<sup>33</sup>, signed by over 400 of Sutton's residents, calling on her to ensure that [Space for Cycling](#)<sup>34</sup> was a priority for the council. Unfortunately, Ruth herself did not officially support the Space for Cycling initiative, and none of the fifty-plus 'asks' have subsequently been delivered. Our town centres are no more cycle friendly in 2023 than they were in 2003. There has been no additional protected space created on main roads or at junctions. There has been no removal of through traffic (and when traffic filtering was temporarily trialled during Covid-19 many of the residents were not ready for it). There have been no developments around providing safe cycle routes to schools (beyond the recent welcomed introduction to ten School Streets, reaching about one in four of the primary schools in the borough). It is true that the odd cycle track has been constructed in the odd park (Carshalton, Cheam and Overton), and a dockless e-bike trial for the borough was launched in late summer 2022<sup>35</sup> (with an earlier trial in 2019<sup>36</sup> having been stopped). Meanwhile, however, Ruth does not appear to think 20mph on all residential streets is of particular importance. We provided her with some [evidence in support of 20mph](#)<sup>37</sup> in August 2018, but did not receive a response to that either.

45. Although, Ruth did not officially support Space for Cycling in 2014, she did pledge to submit a high-quality Liveable Neighbourhood bid four years later as part of the [My Liveable Neighbourhood](#)<sup>38</sup> campaign in 2018. Unfortunately, though, Sutton's bid for Liveable Neighbourhood funding was only submitted at the third opportunity (some background to the

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<sup>31</sup> Leader of Sutton Council confirmed as Councillor Ruth Dombey (YouTube, May 2022): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wpDJbCi9y0>

<sup>32</sup> 'Leader of Sutton Council confirmed as Councillor Ruth Dombey' (LBS, 23 May 2022): <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/-/leader-of-sutton-council-confirmed-as-councillor-ruth-dombey>

<sup>33</sup> 'Space for Cycling petition presented to the Leader of the Council' (Get Sutton Cycling, 30 July 2015): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/07/30/space-for-cycling-petition-presented-to-the-leader-of-the-council/>

<sup>34</sup> 'Space for Cycling: action points for Sutton' (Get Sutton Cycling, 3 July 2014): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2014/07/03/space-for-cycling-action-points-for-sutton/>

<sup>35</sup> 'On your bike! Dockless e-bikes come to Sutton on Car Free Day' (LBS, 22 September 2022): <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/-/on-your-bike-dockless-e-bikes-come-to-sutton-on-car-free-day>

<sup>36</sup> 'The future is green - New electric bikes hit Sutton's streets!' (LBS, 25 July 2019): <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/-/the-future-is-green-new-electric-bikes-hit-sutton-s-streets->

<sup>37</sup> 'Evidence in support of 20mph' (Get Sutton Cycling, 20 August 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/08/20/evidence-in-support-of-20mph/>

<sup>38</sup> 'My Liveable London' (Get Sutton Cycling, 19 April 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/04/19/my-liveable-london/>

delay [here](#)<sup>39</sup>; our anticipation of the bid [here](#)<sup>40</sup>; our response to the consultation<sup>41</sup> (our priorities and expectations for any proposals) [here](#)<sup>42</sup>). The delay in submitting a bid not only showed that the borough was not prepared for such opportunities (despite all the talk of “sustainability” over the years), but the lateness also resulted in the opportunity being lost as a result of the the programme being put on-hold a few months later with the arrival of Covid-19.

46. In April 2022, we wrote an [open letter on climate and active travel](#)<sup>43</sup> to Ruth, as Leader of the Council. Ruth did not respond to that letter, and neither did she respond to our [Climate Safe Streets for Sutton ‘asks’](#)<sup>44</sup>, the campaign for the 2022 elections.

**47. During Ruth Dombey’s tenure as Leader of the Council**, despite good intentions, and despite the fact that Sutton has the highest number of potentially cyclable trips per resident of any London borough<sup>45</sup>, **the proportion of trips made by Sutton’s residents by cycle has flat-lined, from 1% (2009/10 - 2011/12)<sup>46</sup> to 0.8% (2017/18 - 2019/20)<sup>47</sup>.**

48. A target for 2.2% of residents’ trips to be made by cycle by 2017 (a proportion set in around 2013, and restated in the borough’s Cycling Strategy 2015) was not reached, and no explanation for the lack of success has been given to date. Meanwhile, the associated target to reach 4% of trips cycled by 2025 appears to have been dropped, in favour of a target for the proportion of journeys made by walking, cycling, or use of public transport of 56% by 2025 and 63% by 2041<sup>48</sup> (in line with nomenclature in the [Mayor of London’s Transport Strategy 2018](#))<sup>49</sup>. The most recent figure for the proportion of trips made by Sutton’s residents either by walking, cycling, or through

<sup>39</sup> ‘Why didn’t Sutton submit a bid for Liveable Neighbourhoods funding at the first opportunity?’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 7 January 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/01/07/why-didnt-sutton-submit-a-bid-for-liveable-neighbourhoods-funding-at-the-first-opportunity/>

<sup>40</sup> ‘Anticipating Sutton’s first Liveable Neighbourhoods funding bid’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 25 September 2019): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2019/09/25/anticipating-suttons-first-liveable-neighbourhoods-funding-bid/>

<sup>41</sup> Sutton Liveable Neighbourhoods - funding bid (LBS, 9 September 2019 to 3 November 2019): <https://sutton.citizenspace.com/highways-environment-and-planning/sutton-liveable-neighbourhoods/>

<sup>42</sup> ‘Our response to the ‘Sutton Liveable Neighbourhoods funding bid’ consultation 2019’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 31 October 2019): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2019/10/31/our-response-to-the-sutton-liveable-neighbourhoods-funding-bid-consultation-2019/>

<sup>43</sup> ‘Open letter to eight London borough leaders on climate and active travel’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 22 April 2022): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2022/04/22/open-letter-to-eight-london-borough-leaders-on-climate-and-active-travel/>

<sup>44</sup> ‘Get Sutton Cycling: Climate Safe Streets Campaign’ (London Cycling Campaign/Get Sutton Cycling, April 2022): <https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2023/04/sutton-css-asks-may2022.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Analysis of Cycling Potential 2016 (TfL, March 2017): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/tfl\\_analysis-of-cycling-potential-2016.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/tfl_analysis-of-cycling-potential-2016.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> ‘Update on Sustainable Transport Strategy (2015)’; Appendix C ‘Summary of Sustainable Transport Strategy targets’ (Environment and Neighbourhood Committee, 17 October 2019) <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=452&MId=5264&Ver=4>

<sup>47</sup> Public TfL data (‘open data’): <http://planning.data.tfl.gov.uk> (TfL, accessed December 2022)

<sup>48</sup> Sutton’s third Local Implementation Plan (LBS, approved April 2019) set a target for the proportion of journeys made by walking, cycling, or use of public transport of 56% by 2025 and 63% by 2041. In 2018, the proportion was around 45 or 46%. Also see footnote 50.

<sup>49</sup> Mayor of London’s Transport Strategy (GLA, March 2018): <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/transport/our-vision-transport/mayors-transport-strategy-2018?intcmp=46686>

the use of public transport (2017/18 - 2019/20) is 44%<sup>50</sup>. (For more on Sutton's targets for active travel, see '[Sutton's third Local Implementation Plan receives approval](#)'<sup>51</sup>).

49. There is little doubt, therefore, that there is room for improvement (to put it mildly). It is all rather unfortunate if councillors are remembered not for what they do (which may be marvellous) but for what they don't do. There is still time for Ruth to make a difference, and perhaps things will look different by 2026.

50. As noted above, following his re-election as councillor to Sutton Central ward in May 2022, **Councillor David Bartolucci** was elected as Deputy Leader of the Council. Not a lot is known as to where David stands on active travel. However, David was present at the [Sutton Civic Society hustings in April 2022](#)<sup>52</sup> attended by Catherine Gray. David's response to the question regarding what action he would take, if elected, to help deliver the Sustainable Transport Strategy and reduce car dependency, appeared a little muddled. Politicians have to understand that they cannot please all of the people all of the time, and blaming other people for failing to deliver is not a good look either.

51. The May 2022 elections also saw **Councillor Barry Lewis** re-elected to serve Wallington North for the Liberal Democrats, and elected as chair of the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee (E&SC). It was good to receive confirmation in mid-April 2023 that Barry stands by the Foreword to the latest [Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020 - 2025 Supplementary Planning Document](#) (adopted 22 November 2021)<sup>53</sup> as written by his predecessor Councillor Manuel Abellan. (More on this in the forthcoming post 'Holding to account').

52. In Sutton South, **Councillor Richard Clifton** and **Councillor Trish Fivey** returned to serve their residents. In July 2020, Richard and Trish had posted '[Creating quiet neighbourhoods](#)'<sup>54</sup> to their blog. The article explained the rationale behind the temporary, trial, experimental filter on King's Lane. At the [Sutton South, Cheam and Belmont Local Committee held on 11 March 2021](#)<sup>55</sup>, Richard said that he thought School Streets worked well with primary schools but not for secondary schools (referencing Overton Grange). Time will tell on that, but where there is a will there is a way.

53. Meanwhile, fellow Sutton South councillor at the time, **Councillor Tony Shields** - subsequently representing the ward of Cheam from May 2022 - declared, during a (heated) discussion of the adoption of the Sustainable Transport Strategy at the [E&SC on 7 October](#)

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<sup>50</sup> Transport plans (LBS, accessed 24 March 2023): <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/-/transport-plans> "Following the publication of the most recent MTS in March 2018, boroughs were required to produce a new (third) LIP. This needed to cover the period from 1 April 2019 to March 2041. We released a draft for public consultation in November and December 2018. It was approved by the Mayor of London on 12 April 2019.... The LIP also sets out an investment programme for the three years from 2019-2021". Also available [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/lbs\\_thirdlocalimplementationplan\\_final\\_april2019.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/lbs_thirdlocalimplementationplan_final_april2019.pdf) from <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/publications/>; "In responding to the draft LIP [Get Sutton Cycling] recommended that the final version included a commitment to produce a traffic reduction strategy, and that the borough's traffic reduction objectives were clearly stated. We suggested that traffic reduction objectives could include use of the 'modal hierarchy' (from the Sustainable Transport Strategy), as well as proposals to introduce low-traffic neighbourhoods. We suggested that a pledge to work with neighbouring authorities and with TfL to understand best practice, along with evidence of the ability to deliver, would be highly desirable. Our recommendations appear to have been overlooked".

<sup>51</sup> 'Sutton's third Local Implementation Plan receives approval' (Get Sutton Cycling, 27 June 2019): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2019/06/27/suttons-third-local-implementation-plan-receives-approval/>

<sup>52</sup> 'Local Election Hustings question and answers' (Get Sutton Cycling, 24 April 2022): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2022/04/24/local-election-hustings-question-and-answers/>

<sup>53</sup> Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025 (LBS, November 2021): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/sustainabletransportstrategy2020-2025\\_spd\\_lbofsutton\\_november2021.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/sustainabletransportstrategy2020-2025_spd_lbofsutton_november2021.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> 'Creating quieter neighbourhoods' (Liberal Democrat Councillors for Sutton South ward, 11 July 2020): <https://suttonsouth.mycouncillor.org.uk/2020/07/11/creating-quiet-neighbourhoods/>

<sup>55</sup> Agenda for Sutton South, Cheam and Belmont Local Committee on Thursday, 11th March, 2021, 7.00 pm (LBS, accessed 23 March 2023): <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=357&MId=5501&Ver=4>

2021<sup>56</sup> (and it is appreciated this is rather selective commentary, but it does give an idea of his feelings at the time) that: **“This [strategy] will inconvenience absolutely everybody”**; “No one will escape the voracious road closing schemes that this .. thinly veiled paper covers up”; “You want to become London’s most sustainable borough - that equals car free, doesn’t it? And no cars will be allowed for anything less than 3km!”, and **“This [strategy] is going to be the bible for closing down transport in the borough!”**. Oh, joy! The strategy may well prove to be a complete whitewash Tony, but the idea of it closing down transport in the borough - really? Furthermore, the only real differences (albeit quite significant differences) between the new STS (2022) and the one it replaces (2015) is that the latest document has Supplementary Planning Document status<sup>57</sup>, and also more closely reflects the ambitions set out in the Mayor of London’s Transport Strategy of 2018<sup>58</sup>. Perhaps that latter point is the rub.

54. So, what exactly is there to get excited about with the new Sustainable Transport Strategy and Supplementary Planning Document? Perhaps just shouting loud is enough to make people nervous. When people get nervous, and do not have sufficient political will to carry things through, then the brakes get put on, and nothing changes. And so it goes. Less of a problem for us, but possibly more of a problem for those yet to come. Anyway, congratulations to Tony on having been elected now for six consecutive terms and embarking on his twentieth consecutive year as a ward councillor in Sutton. There is also recognition of his considered chairmanship of local committee meetings in recent years. And, of course, Tony cares and is passionate. He cannot be criticised for that.

55. The returning councillor in May 2022 who has engaged with the cycling campaign more than any other is **Councillor Neil Garratt**. There is gratitude for that, with Neil receiving several mentions in this blog. Here are some of those highlights:

- At the full Council meeting held in January 2015, Neil challenged the effectiveness of the conversion of a footway to shared footpath and cycle way on Green Wrythe Lane<sup>59</sup>, and whether this was an example of good cycling infrastructure. He went on to request that all future reports brought to committees, and which propose cycling schemes, include a statement confirming that the proposal meets the London Cycling Design Standards<sup>60</sup>. (Don’t think that ever happened). Neil’s question, relating to the shared footpath, was so good in fact, it also featured in ‘Green Wrythe One - one year on’<sup>61</sup> (December 2015). Note the response provided by **Councillor Colin Stears** (also re-elected in May 2022): “...the council will be more ambitious and that future schemes will be designed in accordance with the London Cycling Design Standards”. Sounds great, but over six years on, and nothing particularly worthy has been delivered. See forthcoming post ‘What was delivered for cycling in Sutton between 2010 and 2020?’.

<sup>56</sup> Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee on Thursday, 7th October, 2021, 7.00 pm <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=651&MId=5649&Ver=4>

<sup>57</sup> “This new Sustainable Transport Strategy replaces the Council’s previous strategy (2015-2020) and has Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) status. This makes it more than just a strategy. It will be a key factor in all future planning decisions and will therefore have “more teeth” than the previous document.”. Extract from the Foreword to Sustainable Transport Strategy 2020-2025 Supplementary Planning Document (LBS, November 2021): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/sustainabletransportstrategy2020-2025\\_spd\\_lbofsutton\\_november2021.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/sustainabletransportstrategy2020-2025_spd_lbofsutton_november2021.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Mayor’s Transport Strategy (Mayor of London/Greater London Assembly, March 2018): <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/transport/our-vision-transport/mayors-transport-strategy-2018?intcmp=46686>

<sup>59</sup> ‘A compromise is reached on Green Wrythe Lane’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 24 March 2015): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/03/24/a-compromise-is-reached-on-green-wrythe-lane/>

<sup>60</sup> London Cycling Design Standards (TfL, 2014): <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/streets-toolkit> (includes twenty guiding principles, the first of which is **“Cycling is now mass transport and must be treated as such”**). Also see ‘What will the new London Cycling Design Standards mean for Sutton?’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 31 December 2014): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2014/12/31/lcds-sutton/>; ‘New cycle route Quality Criteria’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 3 June 2019): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2019/06/03/new-cycle-route-quality-criteria/>; New cycle route quality criteria (TfL, 2019, accessed 23 March 2023): <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/cycling>

<sup>61</sup> ‘Green Wrythe Lane – one year on’ (Get Sutton Cycling, 21 December 2015): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/12/21/gwl-one-year-on/>

- Neil asked a further question at the January 2015 Council meeting, this time relating to the 'Heart of Hackbridge scheme'<sup>62</sup> and why the opportunity was not taken to deliver space for cycling. On the button!
- Neil discussed the Felnex development in Hackbridge<sup>63</sup> at the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee meeting on 27 June 2016<sup>64</sup>, mentioning the disappointing reality of what was being delivered for cycling following the grand hopes of the borough's cycling strategy.
- Neil presented a timely question to the Council in March 2017<sup>65</sup> "It is just over a year since Sutton's new Cycling Strategy<sup>66</sup> was launched [November 2015]... What has been achieved so far as a result of the new strategy? What is expected to happen over the coming year? (referencing Councillor Ruth Dombey's comment in the Introduction to the Cycling Strategy "Taken alongside our Sustainable Transport Strategy, it [the Cycling Strategy] should not be left on a shelf to get dusty, but should be a live document that guides current and future decision making and adapts as circumstances change to encourage sustainable transport in our borough"). Fabulous questions. Six years on, and the response from Jill Whitehead, and our interpretation of that response, makes for interesting reading! Six years on, and we are essentially asking similar questions again (more in the forthcoming post 'Holding to account'). And so it goes.
- Neil's question to the Environment and Neighbourhood Committee in December 2017, essentially asking "why didn't Sutton submit a bid for Liveable Neighbourhood funding?"<sup>67</sup>. Another very good, timely, question!
- Neil's supplementary question to the Council meeting on 26 February 2018 in relation to the council's plans to facilitate environmentally friendly transport<sup>68</sup> (responding, essentially that, despite "these strategies we keep having .... nothing has been achieved to make Sutton look any different for cycling than any other outer London borough" - could not agree more).

56. Since his election to represent Croydon and Sutton on the London Assembly in May 2021, Neil has, quite rightly, spent a lot of time doing what London Assembly members are there to do and that is hold the Mayor of London to account. Neil, along with a fellow Conservative London Assembly Member Nick Rogers, co-hosts the informative 'Inside City Hall' podcast<sup>69</sup>. Topics for discussion often relate to transport issues, and have included topics around bikes, and e-cargo bikes. However, whilst much criticism is regularly levelled at the Mayor in relation to ULEZ, and the prospect of further road user charging, nothing has been said about the draconian cuts to rail services in Sutton that were introduced during September 2022. That is presumably because the decision to cut the level of service (which was already poor) was taken by privatised rail companies at essentially the bequest of the Conservative government (and with no consultation), rather than by a Labour mayor. Who knows - but don't you just love politics?

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<sup>62</sup> 'Heart of Hackbridge and space for cycling' (Get Sutton Cycling, 31 May 2015): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2015/05/31/hoh-and-space-for-cycling/>

<sup>63</sup> 'Felnex redevelopment – an acid test for cycling' (Get Sutton Cycling, 24 June 2016): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2016/06/24/felnex/>

<sup>64</sup> Agenda for Environment and Neighbourhood Committee on Monday, 27th June, 2016, 7.30 pm (LBS, accessed 24 March 2023): <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=452&MId=3975&Ver=4>

<sup>65</sup> 'Timely questions to the Council in March 2017' (Get Sutton Cycling, 19 June 2017): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2017/06/19/timely-questions-to-the-council-in-march-2017/>

<sup>66</sup> Cycling Strategy (LBS, November 2015): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/cyclingstrategy\\_november2015.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/cyclingstrategy_november2015.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> 'Why didn't Sutton submit a bid for Liveable Neighbourhoods funding at the first opportunity?' (Get Sutton Cycling, 7 January 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/01/07/why-didnt-sutton-submit-a-bid-for-liveable-neighbourhoods-funding-at-the-first-opportunity/>

<sup>68</sup> 'Full Council February 2018: facilitating environmentally friendly transport?' (Get Sutton Cycling, 12 May 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/05/12/full-council-february-2018-facilitating-environmentally-friendly-transport/>

<sup>69</sup> Inside City Hall - hosted by Conservative London Assembly Members Neil Garratt and Nick Rogers: <https://www.cityhallconservatives.com/inside-city-hall-podcast>

57. Despite Neil's clear interest in transport, and in active travel, he appears not to have noticed that the borough's former [Sustainable Transport Strategy](#)<sup>70</sup> (published/adopted by LBS in June 2015) and the borough's former [Cycling Strategy](#)<sup>71</sup> (published/adopted by LBS in November 2015) failed to deliver on many of the objectives and targets that they were in place to achieve. Mind you, in this regard, the finger cannot be pointed at Neil alone. These failings appear not to have been recognised, or acknowledged, by any of our elected representatives or officers (see forthcoming post 'Holding to account'). As previously noted, Neil, and all opposition councillors, were too busy opposing the adoption of the latest Sustainable Transport Strategy to note the failings of the strategy that preceded it. (Having said that, there is always the possibility that opposition councillors had noticed the failings but chose to ignore them).

58. Of course, there is some context here in that the policy documents slipped out of sight, and out of mind, at a time when there was controversy over Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs)<sup>72, 73</sup> and the level of engagement with residents<sup>74</sup>. It appears that some (opposition) councillors saw the new Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) as a vehicle for pushing forward with controversial ideas, so may have been blinded by this and consequentially failed to notice the short-comings of the outgoing STS. No excuse though.

59. On the topic of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, Neil had given some recognition to the benefits of the borough's existing traffic filters<sup>75</sup> (partial Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) as reported as recently as November 2022. It is unfortunate that Neil has not given as much passion to holding the current administration in Sutton to account over the 2015 STS, as he has articulated his views on the progressive views of the Mayor of London and the proposed extension of the ULEZ (Ultra Low Emission Zone)<sup>76</sup> to the whole of London. It would not be so bad, perhaps, if those opposing ULEZ extension actually came up with some alternative ideas that will ensure London remains a viable, un-congested, city with clean air, that can be enjoyed by the growing number of people expected to live here in the years ahead. The only alternative (beyond the "do-nothing" approach) that the opposition appears to offer, is to provide "more free parking". No doubt this will be welcome, and will be of help, to some people in the short term. However, continuing to prioritise private car use over any other transport option, is more likely to lead to a need for "more road building" down the line. How likely is that to happen? Please think it through everyone. Please think longer term, rather than short (election-cycle) term.

60. A brief word of thanks to re-elected **Councillor Nick Matthey**. As noted in '[Sutton's councillors: from the class of 2014 to the class of 2018](#)'<sup>77</sup>, Nick was only one (of two) councillors

<sup>70</sup> Sustainable Transport Strategy 2015 (LBS, June 2015): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/suttonsustainabletransportstrategy\\_june2015.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/suttonsustainabletransportstrategy_june2015.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Cycling Strategy (LBS, November 2015): [https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/cyclingstrategy\\_november2015.pdf](https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/cyclingstrategy_november2015.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (We Are Possible, 27 May 2021): <https://www.wearepossible.org/latest-news/low-traffic-neighbourhood>

<sup>73</sup> Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (London Living Streets, accessed 11 April 2023): <https://londonlivingstreets.com/low-traffic-liveable-neighbourhoods/> - includes links to 'Low traffic neighbourhoods - an introduction for policy makers' Rosehill Highways / Living Streets / London Cycling Campaign (2021) and 'A Guide to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods' Rosehill Highways / Living Streets / London Cycling Campaign (2021)

<sup>74</sup> How to talk to people about the future of their streets - rethinking public engagement to deliver better streets for all (London Cycling Campaign / Urban Movement, July 2020): [https://www.lcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/People\\_Future\\_Streets.pdf](https://www.lcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/People_Future_Streets.pdf) "We keep asking residents to make decisions in the wrong place at the wrong time. Given that residents vote for politicians and policies across an area, we shouldn't then repeatedly query those mandates on a street by street basis. It is for politicians and officers, as experts, to work out how to get more people cycling, whether more car parking is a public good or not etc. Residents should instead be empowered to make decisions that involve their specific expertise about where they live: which are the most important short trips, where should planters go, what happens at night on your street, etc. Our current approach means consultation all too often reinforces the status quo rather than promoting the change we (almost) all know we need."

<sup>75</sup> 'Sutton just loves Low Traffic Neighbourhoods...' (Get Sutton Cycling, 22 November 2021): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2021/11/22/sutton-just-loves-low-traffic-neighbourhoods/>

<sup>76</sup> Ultra Low Emission Zone (TfL, accessed 11 April 2023): <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone>

<sup>77</sup> 'Sutton's councillors: from the class of 2014 to the class of 2018' (Get Sutton Cycling, 14 June 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/06/14/suttons-councillors-from-the-class-of-2014-to-the-class-of-2018/>

to reply to our open letter 'Cycling towards 2018'<sup>78</sup> sent to all councillors on 5 May 2016. You can probably guess who the other councillor was. If not, check out the letter. Nick was also only one of nine councillors to comment on our 'Air pollution in Sutton video (Air pollution video – what happened next? (part 1)'<sup>79</sup> in the autumn of 2017. However, Nick has not been in touch with Get Sutton Cycling since.

## Who was in, and who was out, in 2022?

### Part 4: The new intake of councillors

61. Congratulations, and a warm welcome, to the twenty-seven new councillors who won a seat in Sutton in May 2022<sup>80</sup>: Steve Alvarez; Isabel Araujo; Rob Beck; Sheila Berry; Wendy Clark; Paul Cole; Sam Cumber; Bobby Dean; Qasim Esak; Mike Dwyer; Andrew Jenner; Bryony Lindsay-Charlton; Patrick Magnus; Sam Martin; Cryss Mennaceur; Gemma Munday; Patrick Ogbonna; Ed Parsley; Jonathan Pearce; Louise Phelan; Joe Quick; Cumar Sahathevan; Luke Taylor; Dave Tchil; Vanessa Udall; Sheldon Vestey; Christopher Woolmer.

62. It is recognised that many of this new intake may not have a specific interest in cycling or in active travel. everyone has their own priorities. Nevertheless, all councillors, no doubt, have a great interest on how our borough progresses, and will aim to work towards making Sutton a better place to live, work, and raise a family. As part of that, it is hoped that when they engage with the residents in the wards they represent they take the opportunity to promote and discuss Sutton Council's policies on the environment, and on sustainable transport.

63. New councillors should be aware that Sutton Council declared a climate emergency<sup>81</sup> in September 2019, having published an Environment Strategy and Climate Emergency Plan<sup>82</sup> three months previously. Interestingly, the cleaner air targets cited in the Environment Strategy included: "by March 2022, 48% of journeys in Sutton will be made by walking, cycling, or public transport, rising to 63% by 2041" (44% in 2017/18 - 2019/20 as previously noted); and "by December 2021, 24% of Sutton's population will be within 400m of the strategic cycle network, rising to 37% by 2041" (currently, essentially 0%).

64. Get Sutton Cycling's Climate Safe Streets for Sutton asks<sup>83</sup> (which include "safe, inclusive, and accessible cycle routes, built to Local Transport Note 1/20 standards"<sup>84</sup>) fit very well with the council's ambition to deliver on the strategic cycle network and for the whole of the borough to become 'carbon neutral'. Nevertheless, Climate Safe Streets<sup>85</sup> have seemingly been ignored by our Council Leader Ruth Dombey, and currently (March 2023) 0% of Sutton's population live

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<sup>78</sup> 'Cycling towards 2018' (Get Sutton Cycling, 5 May 2016): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2016/05/05/cycling-towards-2018/>

<sup>79</sup> 'Air pollution video – what happened next? (Part 1)' (Get Sutton Cycling, 2 April 2018): <https://getsuttoncycling.org.uk/2018/04/02/air-pollution-video-what-happened-next-part-1/>

<sup>80</sup> Technically twenty six completely new councillors, because Councillor Patrick Magnus (Conservative, South Beddington and Roundshaw) had previously stood as a councillor for Belmont (between May 2014 and August 2018) as Patrick McManus. At that time, Patrick had supported the Space for Cycling ward ask for his ward, "protected space for cycling between Belmont and Sutton town centre" and shortly after being elected in May 2014 attended the June 2018 Get Sutton Cycling meeting which included a presentation entitled 'Waltham Forest mini-Holland: reducing road danger and growing active travel'. The ward ask for Beddington South had been the provision of 'a network of routes to provide safe routes to five schools situated on busy roads" and it would be good to think that Patrick, newly elected for South Beddington and Roundshaw, would support (and help achieve) that ambition too.

<sup>81</sup> 'Sutton Council declares Climate Change Emergency' (LBS, 23 September 2019, accessed 24 March 2023): <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/-/sutton-council-declares-climate-change-emergency>

<sup>82</sup> 'Our environment strategy' (LBS, June 2019, accessed 24 March 2023): <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/-/what-is-the-council-doing>

<sup>83</sup> 'Climate Safe Streets for Sutton' (Get Sutton Cycling/London Cycling Campaign, May 2022): <https://getsuttoncycling.files.wordpress.com/2023/04/sutton-css-asks-may2022.pdf>

<sup>84</sup> Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20) (DfT, 27 July 2020): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

<sup>85</sup> 'Climate Safe Streets' (London Cycling Campaign, May 2022, accessed 24 March 2023): <https://lcc.org.uk/campaigns/climate-safe-streets/>

within 400 metres of anything that could even begin to be described as a strategic cycle network. Is this surprising? Perhaps not, considering that none of our 'Space for Cycling' ward asks from 2014 have been delivered nine years on.

## A reminder that all it takes is political will

65. "Political will". Two words that are so often cited in response to questions around what is a key requirement for delivery and action on policy. Political will is strong when seemingly difficult, unpopular, decisions are made. Whereas, political will is weak when variants of the approaches summarised as "do what is easy, not what is difficult"; "ignore it and it will go away"; "kick the issues into the long grass, and leave them to someone else"; or "it is the short term that matters, who cares about the longer-term?". All demonstrating weak political will, coupled with weak political leadership.

66. Put simply, it is our councillors, past and present, who can significantly determine the shape of our borough for the next generation.

67. Ten of the fifty-five councillors who are currently (March 2023) in post in Sutton were serving as councillors in the borough ten years ago (March 2013). Nine of them have served continuously over that period (Moira Butt; Tim Crowley; Ruth Dombey; Trish Fivey; David Hicks; Ed Joyce; Sunita Gordon; Tony Shields; Colin Stears). The tenth (Peter Geiringer) was out of office between 2014 and 2018. Three of these long-standing councillors (Richard Clifton, Tim Crowley, Ed Joyce) showed support for the London Cycling Campaign's Space for Cycling initiative in 2014.

68. If our councillors, elected in May 2022 here in the London Borough of Sutton, have a sufficient degree of political will **to help the government achieve its ambition to see cycling and walking as a natural first choice for many journeys, with half of all short journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030<sup>86</sup>**, there could be a lot of kudos coming their way in 2026 (and beyond). They may well be remembered as the class to shine.

69. Nearly a year on from the May 2022 elections, it is perhaps too soon to say whether the current administration will be remembered as the class to shine on active travel. What is more certain, though, is that when it comes to enabling active modes of travel in Sutton, nothing will change without full support and leadership from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ruth Dombey, the Deputy Leader, Councillor David Bartolucci, and the Chair of the Environment and Sustainable Transport Committee, Councillor Barry Lewis.

70. A clear conclusion from this review is that, when it come to active travel, many councillors in Sutton (past and present) are either not aware of wider policy, or lack aspiration, or both. They do not have what it takes to deliver, and **what is delivered is taking too long and is nowhere near enough to make a difference.**

71. Therefore, whilst wishing to be positive, regretfully the conclusion at this point of time is that, for the foreseeable future, it looks as though apathy and indifference is more likely to win the day in Sutton. Of course, it would be great to be proved wrong.

72. The story continues in 'What was delivered for cycling in Sutton between 2010 and 2022?', and 'Holding to account'.

*Version 2 (19 April 2023): Note that in version 1 of this article, published on 16 April 2023, Table 3 indicated that Param Nandha and Ryan Stoneman did not stand for re-election in May 2022. This was in error. Param and Ryan, who had both represented Stonecot ward prior to May 2022 (as correctly detailed in Table 3), went on to stand in other wards in May 2022. Param was elected to represent North Cheam ward (as correctly stated in Table 1), but Ryan was not successful with his candidacy for South Beddington and Roundshaw ward. Corrections have subsequently been made to Table 3, and the text has been updated in the summary and in paragraphs 12, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32 and 40.*

*Version 2.1 (28 April 2023) correction made to the spelling of Councillor Tchil's name.*

*Version 2.2 (16 May 2026) correction made to the political party representation for Councillor Louise Phelan (Table 1).*

*Our apologies for these errors, and for any distress and confusion they may have caused.*

*Charles Martin  
12 May 2026 (version 2.2)*

<sup>86</sup> 'Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking (DfT, July 2020): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)