

LB Richmond Third Traffic Local Implementation Plan Public Consultation Response by FORCE

Introduction

Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) is a local charity, founded in 2003 and with 568 members (as of December 2018). Our key interests are in the community and environmental value of the River Crane catchment corridors. In LB Richmond these comprise:

- the main Crane corridor runs through LB Richmond for around 5km – and links four upstream west London Boroughs (Hounslow, Hillingdon, Ealing and Harrow) with Twickenham and the Thames
- The Lower Duke's River runs through LBR for 2km – and links the River Crane in Twickenham with the River Thames in Isleworth
- The Longford River – links Feltham and the Upper Duke's corridor with the Royal Parks and the Thames around Hampton

These corridors are already of considerable value as walking and/or cycling routes through LB Richmond, linking residents with major open spaces and urban hubs both within and outside the borough.

There is also though considerable scope for them to be improved and for impediments to be removed, with their public profile increased to deliver a step change in the public use and appreciation of these corridors and their associated open spaces. We have outlined in this document where and how these works might be delivered with key partners.

Observations from LIP Data

This LB Richmond LIP review follows on from FORCE's review of the LB Hounslow LIP last month. In comparison there is much less supporting data in the LB Richmond LIP – for example there are no data on obesity levels and health across the borough or any significant breakdown on the percentages of cyclists and walkers in different parts of the borough. Neither LIP sets out much useful base data on the numbers of cyclists and walkers using individual routes, either through the borough or between this borough and neighbouring boroughs.

We have picked out the following from the data presented:

- At present around 61 per cent of journeys in the borough are made by walking, cycling or public transport. This is typical of an outer London borough
- 32% of journeys are by walking and 6% are by cycling
- Only 15 per cent of "cycle-able" trips are done by bike
- 75% of residences have a car and ownership averages 1.06 per household
- There are 95900 people employed in the borough in 14185 businesses
- There are 4.5 million tourist visits to the borough per annum generating £200m in revenue
- The report references an LBR cycling strategy that targets growth of cycling from 6% modal use to 15% by 2026

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- The report identifies £1.45m per annum of LIP funding from GLA to support the programme of work

The main target in the plan is to increase the modal journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport from 61 to 75 per cent in 25 years.

General Recommendations for Inclusion in the LIP

On the basis of these data, and our own experiences, we make the following general points about the transport strategy in the borough:

1. Transport is closely linked to health and well being. At present though this LIP does not explicitly reference the health agenda or the funding streams that may be available to help support it. Motorised transport causes air quality and noise issues; active (walking and cycling) transport helps reduce road congestion and pollution as well as promoting health and well-being.
2. It is a key desire of the LIP to see a modal shift away from motorised transport (particularly private vehicles) and towards more active transport and FORCE supports this. However, we are concerned that there is not sufficient investment or consideration of the requirements for achieving this modal shift. The lack of a focus on walking is one indicator of this. **FORCE would like to see a separate detailed strategy to support and encourage walking (and cycling) across the borough, linked closely to wider planning and health agendas, and with funding attached.**
3. The borough strategy is entirely focussed within the borough. Transport though is a cross borough boundary issue – and this is just as much for cycling and walking as it is for other transport options. We note the large numbers (4.5m) visiting the borough for tourist reasons as well as the large numbers employed in borough (even though there are no data presented as to cross borough movements). FORCE would like to see the walking and cycling strategy noted above consider how cycling and walking routes link up with the wider walking and cycling network outside of the borough and thereby encourage longer journeys by borough residents using active travel – as well as active travel journeys into the borough from the surrounding communities, with consequential benefits to the local economy
4. The LIP makes no reference to the Capital's network of footpaths; including the Capital Ring, Thames Path and London LOOP – each of which goes through the borough. These are an important resource set up by the GLA and yet no longer supported by GLA funding. On this basis LB Hounslow have submitted an application in their LIP to support the upkeep and improvement of these routes through their borough. **FORCE recommends that a similar request is included in the Richmond LIP. FORCE also requests that LB Richmond lobbies TfL and the GLA (along with other influential partners) for funding to be restored to these routes at a regional level – where the responsibility and benefits more properly resides.** We note that Walk London used to walk each route at least twice per year to identify any maintenance issues and potential improvement options, in association with local community groups and other interested parties. This approach was of great value and FORCE recommends it is applied by LB Richmond. FORCE and other bodies would be willing to support this approach.
5. FORCE has been working to improve local outdoor spaces, and the active travel routes through them, over the last 15 years. Over the last seven years we have been carrying

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out regular use surveys for the spaces we have been working on. These show order of magnitude increases in public use of open spaces and the pathways through them following improvements to the paths, the surrounding landscape and the sense of public safety. Our surveys recorded increases in public use by an order of magnitude or more (from 20 or so people – mostly single males – to between several hundred to 1000+ of all ages and equal genders). **FORCE recommends that our surveys (and others) are reviewed and considered in relation to walking and cycling policy and used to target investment and engagement with travel routes and associated open spaces.** FORCE recommends that further surveys are undertaken by LBR so as to have a better baseline understanding of the numbers using the local open space network.

6. In our experience, the changes necessary to achieve an order of magnitude increase in the public use of active transport through open spaces, can be achieved by medium term cumulative improvements in these spaces, linked to strategic investments in the networks themselves. Improvements are best made by working with local community friends groups and associated third sector organisations that can best engage and motivate local people. Larger investments are often available through third party grants and support – particularly where delivering cross borough initiatives that have wider benefits. Examples in our area include the major GLA funded improvements to Crane Park and the Duke's River pathways as well as the S106 related creation of a new walkway through Twickenham Rough. Funding in the order of £1m+ has been invested in the open space path network through these initiatives over the last five years
7. The LIP makes no reference of blockages and impediments to walking and cycling routes – despite the fact these are widely recognised as a major restriction to their use. The strategy noted in 2 above needs to identify these blockages and restrictions, along with options to remove them. Later in this document we identify blockages and impediments we are aware of.
8. The use of active transport options can be greatly enhanced by more public information on the availability of these options. In practice there is often little information available and many local people are simply not aware these options exist. This can be overcome in part by improved mapping, way-marking and signage – both on site and on line – combined with walking and exploration events, social media coverage and other publicity. FORCE has considerable experience of delivering these activities alongside partners. **Any strategy for creating a modal shift in transport use needs to allocate an appropriate level of resource to mapping, way-marking and signage as well as programmes of supported walking.**
9. FORCE has been working with other land owners, developers and strategic partners on green space issues within and local to LB Richmond for the last 15 years – both in our own capacity and as a part of the Crane Valley Partnership. These partners include: Heathrow Airport Ltd; SEGRO; Berkeley Homes; GLA; Thames Water; London National Park City; Colne Valley Partnership; Thames Landscape Strategy; Brent Valley Partnership; LB Hounslow; Tidal Crane Association; and various developers in LB Richmond; alongside LBR council officers and members. In each case a key objective is to deliver better open spaces and open space linkages that can be used by the communities of west London including LB Richmond. FORCE notes that the LB Richmond transport dept has not been active partner to date in these discussions and developments. **Working in partnership with organisations and institutions like these can deliver much larger and more integrated active travel schemes alongside funding from third parties.**

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10. Over the next five to ten years there are unprecedented opportunities and threats to these open spaces and links. There are also unprecedented opportunities for third party investment - but it will require active engagement by local authorities **armed with a well-considered strategy for active transport. In our view it is essential that LB Richmond engages more actively with these opportunities and threats if it is to have any chance of achieving the ambitious modal shifts it sets out in the LIP – set within a broader objective of protecting and enhancing the quality of life for LB Richmond residents.**
11. The LIP allocates £1.45m per annum for the next three years and some further information is set out in Appendix 1 about how this funding will be spent. At present the allocation appears to be entirely focussed on the road network and with no consideration of off road cycling and walking routes, their identification, improvement and promotion. **This appears to be a major oversight to FORCE.**
12. The LIP report addresses air pollution from the transport network in broad terms but does not mention water pollution. The impact of road run-off in particular on the water quality and environmental value of the urban river network is a major issue. FORCE are engaged with ZSL , Thames 21, TfL and the GLA at a London level to develop an approach to dealing with this problem – including the identification of appropriate interception and treatment systems. The frequency and effectiveness of gully pot maintenance for example is a key control on this issue. **FORCE proposes that this issue is referenced in the report and the council commits to engaging with the issues as they are developed with TfL and other parties.**
13. As well as improving and developing the active travel network there is the major issue of maintenance of the existing network. Over the last ten years we have seen significant improvements in the cycle and walking network along the LB Richmond river corridors, including new routes along the Duke’s River and new pathways linking Twickenham Station into Crane Park. This network will require ongoing maintenance. There is no mention of maintenance in the LIP and it is not clear where the responsibility within the council for off street path maintenance lies and whether there are budgets available to undertake the work. The condition of the network is a major control on public use – as it speaks to issues of perceived safety and permeability. In our view off-road path maintenance is a major issue for the walking and cycling growth forecast in the LIP. **FORCE requests that the issue of path maintenance – including signage and vegetation control – is addressed through the LIP.**
14. There are clear mutual benefits for the transport and the health sectors from better and more well used active travel routes through the borough. FORCE has worked closely with TCV and others to develop volunteer activities that enhance local open spaces, encourage more people to use them and also directly aim to provide health benefits to participants. It has though been difficult to engage with the health sector over the use and support of these initiatives. **This is a major opportunity for close joint working and FORCE would support the council’s transport department engaging closely with the health sector in order to develop joint initiatives and investments for mutual benefit.**
15. There are similar potential benefits for other sectors from better active travel linked to improved open spaces and green corridors. **FORCE recommends that the council engages more closely and develops joint working initiatives with the public, private and third sectors – and around issues such as social cohesion, education and training for example.** This type of initiative is often best developed through

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existing partnerships such as the Crane Valley Partnership – as well other catchment partnerships like Thames Landscape Strategy and comparable groups –eg South West London Environment Network. This approach can unlock considerable additional funding resources as well as new opportunities that are not identified solely within the transport sector

Specific Issues

1. FORCE has been engaged in the delivery of the following schemes over the last five years:
 - New and improved pathway along the Duke's River – the final section along the RFU is due for completion in 2019
 - New and improved pathway linking Twickenham Station with Crane Park. A further section extending the route to Moormead Park in St Margarets is due for completion in 2020
 - New pathway through Little Park. A new bridge over the river linking this park with Pevensey Road Nature Reserve in LB Hounslow is scheduled for 2019
 - LB Hounslow has been delivering improvements to the route along the Longford River in 2018 – however there has been no work on this route through LB RichmondWe have data on the use of these routes, indicating that improvements result in an order of magnitude increase (eg 20 per day to 400 per day along the Duke's River) – and new routes are showing usage of several hundred people per day (eg Twickenham Rough).
FORCE requests a meeting with LB Richmond transport to consider how these routes fit into the wider transport strategy for the borough.
2. There are a number of impediments, and opportunities to improve, the free flow of walkers and cyclists along these routes including:
 - The Meadway Crossing: our surveys show more than 1000 people per day – along with bicycles, push chairs and dogs cross this busy road to go between Crane Park and Kneller Gardens. This is a dangerous crossing and requires improved management of traffic and sight lines
 - Hospital Bridge Road and A316 underpasses: these underpasses are very narrow with a low headroom. More people are now using this route, and children are being encouraged to use it to access new schools in Whitton and Twickenham for example. As a consequence it is becoming a bottle neck. Scheme options to widen and lower the pathways should be considered
 - London Road intersection. This is becoming a significant crossing point for walkers and cyclists as the new pathway through Twickenham Rough is becoming better known. The numbers using the crossing are likely to increase as and when the new riverside route through to Moormead is opened in 2020. The means to access to and from the path/road network and the station are not well defined and this leads to confusion and risk at this intersection.
 - Whitton Dene: the new pathway along the RFU section of the Duke's River is anticipated to result in a significant increase in numbers using this route – from 20 or so to several hundred per day. This route links to an existing pathway through Mogden sewage works – however the road crossing of Whitton Dene (on the boundary of LB Hounslow) is unsafe with poor visibility and high traffic levels

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FORCE requests that these impediments to the free flow of walkers and cyclists are considered for improvement as part of the LIP.

3. Circular routes. This type of route is ideal for walkers and cyclists, those looking for exercise or exploring their local area or seeking an escape from the stresses of urban living. They can also link local communities in new ways with open spaces as well as local businesses. FORCE has produced mapping for a 12km circular route known as the Three Rivers Walk – which uses existing off road path network along the Crane, Thames and Duke’s River through LB Richmond and LB Hounslow. A further walk, known as the Feltham Loop Walk, provides a comparable route through LB Hounslow and adjacent to LB Richmond. There is scope for other such routes, linking existing off road paths and promoting them for recreation, health and enjoyment. **FORCE would welcome council support for these and other circular routes through the LIP**

4. Longford River. This river links the Upper Duke’s River corridor with Bushy Park and Hampton Court (and thereby to the River Thames) through Feltham and Teddington. LB Hounslow has already done some work to enhance the footpath and cycle way along the river. Further improvements would allow additional strategic walking and cycle routes to open up. **It would be very helpful for the aspirations of this project to be included in the LIP**

FORCE would welcome the opportunity to discuss the suggestions and proposals included in this document with the LB Richmond Transport team.