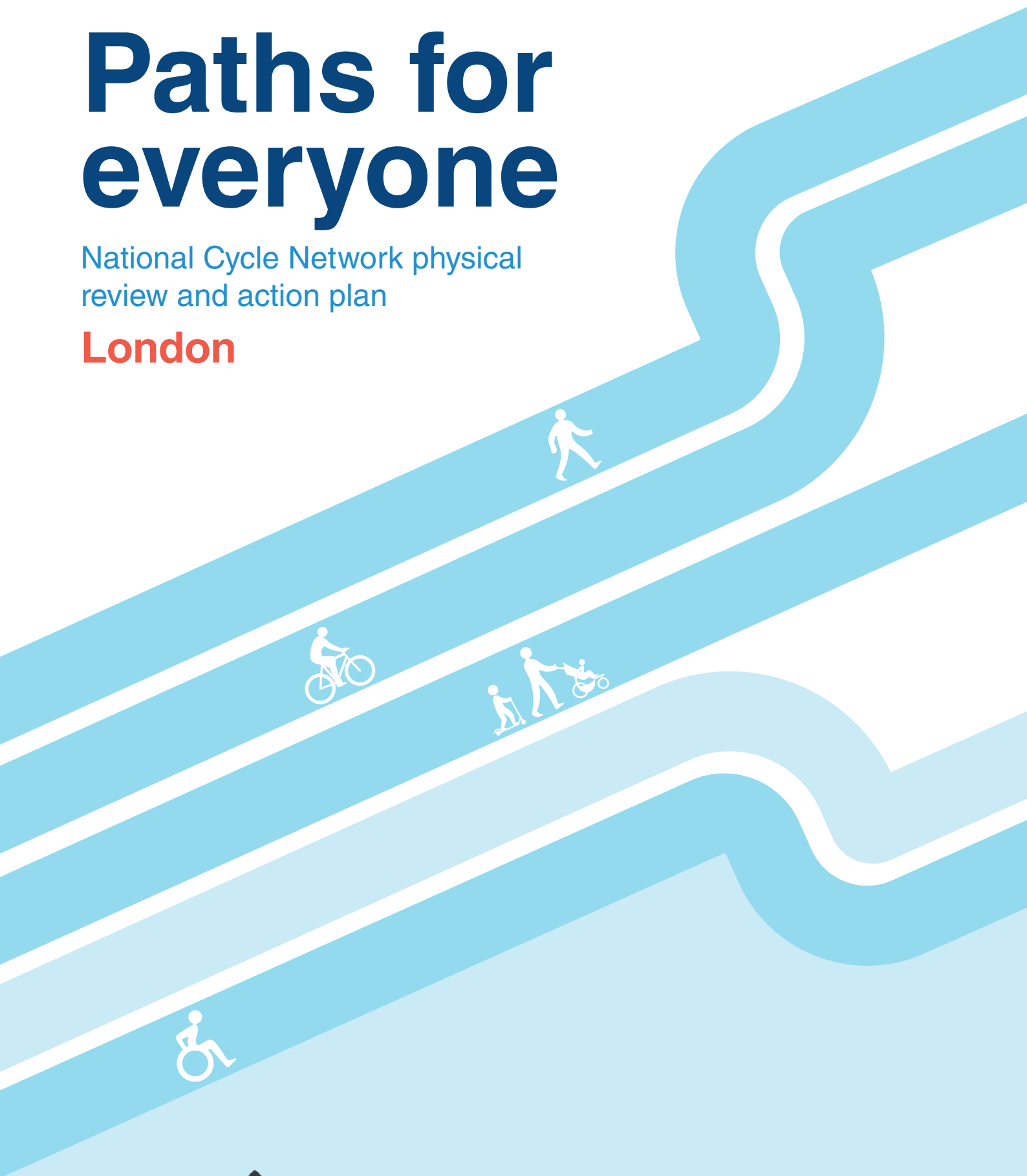


Paths for everyone

National Cycle Network physical
review and action plan

London



Contents

1. Introduction to the National Cycle Network	4
The existing UK wide Network	4
Our shared vision for the UK network	5
Physical audit of the Network	6
Physical review and action plans	7
Network development plans	7
Design principles for the National Cycle Network	7
2. Overview of the Network in London	8
London's strategic cycling network	9
Condition of the Network – results of the Network audit	10
Identifying the issues	10
3. Strategic priorities for London	11
4. Quantifying the ambition for London	12
Closing the gap to Very Good	12
5. UK-wide priorities	13
Accessibility	13
Signage	13
6. Activating the Network in London	14
London's emerging network	14
Major projects and developments	14
Identifying new projects	14
Activation projects for London	15
7. Conclusion	18

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

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1. Introduction to the National Cycle Network

The National Cycle Network is a 23-year-old network of 16,575 miles of signed routes spanning the UK. It is used by walkers, joggers, wheelchair users and horse riders, as well as people on bikes.

It began with a National Lottery Grant (via the Millennium Commission) in 1995 and a pioneering vision to create high-quality, convenient routes for walking and cycling. Since then, we have worked with hundreds of partners to grow the Network into every corner of the UK.

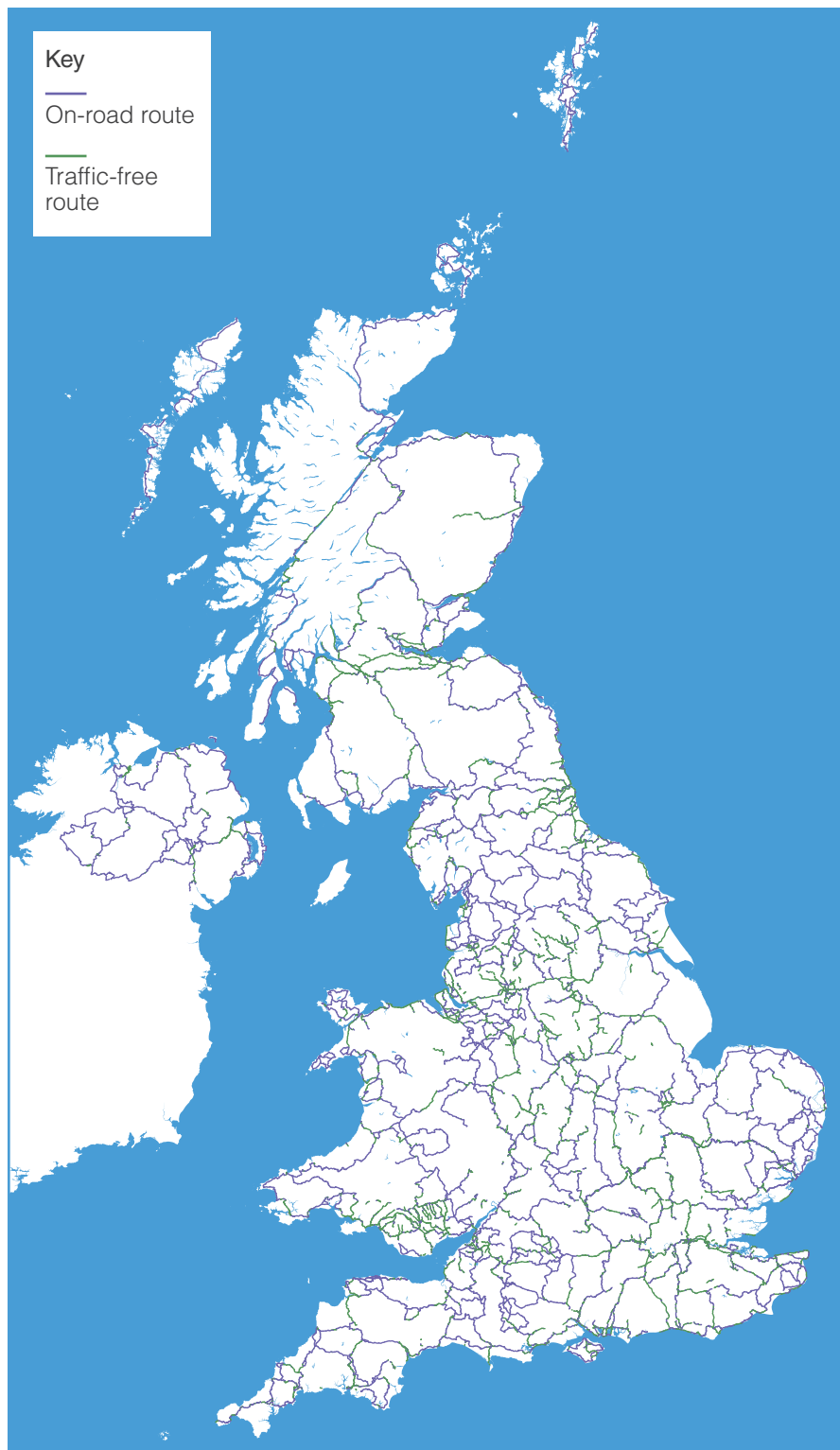
The National Cycle Network is a local asset with incredible reach, connecting people and places across the UK and providing traffic-free spaces for everyone to enjoy.

The Network runs within a mile of over half of the UK population.

The Network is used by a broad range of people – walkers (for over half of journeys) and people on cycles, as well as joggers, wheelchair users and horse riders – but there is a lot more we can do to make it safe and accessible for everyone.

We need to support more and different people to use the Network. Only 4% of those who cycle on the Network are new or returning to cycling, yet its traffic-free routes provide the perfect place to build confidence.

The Network's routes have great potential for improvement. The character and quality varies hugely, and whilst 54% of the Network is Good or Very Good, 46% is Poor or Very Poor.



Our shared vision for the UK Network

For all the money it saves, lives it improves and miles it covers, the Network is certainly not perfect and our partners, funders, supporters, volunteers – and not least users – will be able to tell you where it's fallen short of its potential. Our original ambition for paths on the Network was that they could be used by a sensible 12-year-old travelling alone. That is what the whole Network should be like, but in reality our review shows that many miles of it aren't and do not provide access to people using mobility scooters, wheelchairs or double buggies.

A new vision has been agreed that will define the revitalised National Cycle Network across the UK:

'A UK-wide network of traffic-free paths for everyone, connecting cities, towns and countryside and loved by the communities they serve.'

To achieve this vision this review makes 15 recommendations. Sustrans will now work in partnership with local authorities, private and charitable landowners, national governments, agencies, users, local communities and all the many organisations that make the Network possible to turn these recommendations into reality:

1. Set the tone for harmonious use of the Network by everyone.
2. Remove or redesign all 16,000 barriers on the Network to make it accessible to everyone, with no barriers in place for continuous travel.
3. Transform the Network by replacing existing on-road sections with new traffic-free paths or by creating quiet-way sections so it is safer for everyone.
4. Ensure that where the Network is on a quiet-way section the speed limit is 20mph in built-up areas and 40mph in rural areas.
5. Improve safety at crossings where the Network crosses roads or railways.
6. Adopt a new quality standard to ensure path widths and surfaces are built for everyone.
7. Improve signage so everyone can use the paths without a map or smartphone.
8. Deliver over 50 activation projects UK wide by 2023.
9. Introduce a process for de-designation of parts of the Network that cannot be improved – and a clear process for incorporating new routes that fill gaps or make new connections.
10. Make it easier to feed back on the Network's condition – and use this insight to improve it.

11. Promote the Network to new users.
12. Encourage greater community involvement in designing, developing and maintaining the Network.
13. Provide open data on the Network.
14. Report regularly on the impact of the Network in improving everyone's lives and places.
15. Establish clear governance to bring together land managers, funders, users and others to deliver these recommendations in partnership.

The Network is for everyone. Sustrans didn't build the National Cycle Network on our own and we can't make it better on our own. As custodians of the Network we will lead on these 5 themes. To make them a reality we will need to work together with many partners.

Run it: we will steward the long-term vision and bring partners and users together to deliver it.

Fix it: we will own a living plan that will be used to make the Network safer and more accessible for everyone, and take every mile to good or very good standard by 2040

Grow it: We will grow quality miles by doubling the traffic-free sections from 5,000 to 10,000 miles by 2040 and getting routes off busy or fast roads.

Love it: We will encourage, enable and inspire more and different people to share, respect and enjoy the Network and help communities and users shape and maintain their paths.

Fund it: we will work to raise funds from a wide range of sources that will be needed to secure the future success of this national asset.

Delivering the vision in London

This report sets out how we will do this in London. We will:

- Review the location and condition of the existing network in London as assessed by the national audit of the Network.
- Understand the local context in London and consider how we apply this UK vision to a large urban area and how the Network will complement the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy.
- Outline our strategy for improving the Network in London and our priorities.
- Set out how we will activate the long-term project to improve the Network.

The physical audit of the Network

All 16,575 miles of the National Cycle Network were surveyed by a team of independent assessors during 2015 and 2016 and all key characteristics recorded, including surface type, width, lighting, barriers and signage, as well as road classification for on-road sections.

The data was captured in the field on hand-held devices, then uploaded to our online geographic information system (GIS) for analysis.

The audit data has created a snapshot of the condition of the Network and provides a level of understanding and

overview for the Network that has never been available before.

In order to compare different sections of route, Sustrans has developed a Level of Service Measure scoring system based on four route quality indicators:

- Surface quality
- Way-finding and signage
- Flow
- Traffic-related safety

Surface quality

Is the surface smooth enough for all types of cycle to be used here?

All on-road sections are scored relatively high as they generally have a smooth surface. Traffic-free sections do have poor surfaces in some locations and this is reflected in the score for this measure.

Way-finding and signage

Can this route be followed without a map?

The score reflects whether a section is signed in both directions, one direction or not at all.

Flow

Can a relaxed speed (typically around 8 mph) be continually and safely maintained here?

Path width, pinch points and restrictive barriers are the main constraints under this measure. (A relaxed speed may be lower than 8 mph in some circumstances.)

Traffic-related safety

The question our surveyors had to answer was:

Would most people allow an unaccompanied 12-year-old to cycle here?

This is the most subjective measure as it is based on the surveyor's assessment of whether a section of road is suitable. Due to inconsistencies between surveyors, Sustrans has acquired INRIX traffic data, which gives an objective measure of traffic volume and speed, based on information from commercial fleets, GPS, cell towers, mobile devices and cameras.

This means that we can set threshold criteria for on-road sections and define what would be acceptable for a quiet-way section. The INRIX data was validated

using actual traffic count data for all roads in Cornwall, with thanks to Cornwall Council.

Weighting is applied to the safety measure in order to recognise that a traffic-free route should have a higher traffic-related safety score than an on-road route.

- Traffic-free route +6
- On-road section meeting quiet-way traffic criteria +4
- Other roads -4

Urban Rural Classification	Section Average Speed ¹	INRIX Volume Index ²	Equivalent AADT ³ traffic volume
Urban	<=15 mph	<=11	2,500
Rural	<=25 mph	<=9	1,000

Scoring

Each measure has a four level scoring system either Yes, Perhaps, Probably Not or No, with a score of 3, 2, 1 or 0 assigned.

Score	3	2	1	0
Level	Yes	Perhaps	Probably Not	No

Classifications

The highest possible score for a high quality traffic-free section is 15 points and this is considered to meet the Very Good standard. Lower scores are classified as Good, Poor or Very Poor as below:

Score	15	10-14	7-9	0-6
Classification	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor

1. It is recognised that the use of average speeds only provides an approximate indication of the speed characteristics of a road. As part of the improvement of sections of National Cycle Network designated as quiet-way it will be a requirement for there to be a speed limit of 40mph in rural areas (or 20mph in built-up areas).

2. INRIX Traffic Volume Index - measured on a scale 1-16 with 1 being very low traffic volume and 16 very high traffic volume

3. AADT - Annual Average Daily Traffic is a measure of traffic flow and is the total volume of vehicle traffic of a highway or road for a year divided by 365 days.

Physical review and action plans

Seven physical review and action plans have been developed, one for each of the Sustrans geographical regions and nations of the UK, as a key element of the 'Fix it' strand of the review.

Each action plan defines the state of the Network for its area and outlines the strategic priorities identified for the region or nation.

Network development plans

This physical review and action plan will be backed up with a Network development plan that will set out long term detailed plans for the Network in London.

The Sustrans team in London will develop this plan in partnership with landowners and highway authorities. In London this will mainly be boroughs, managing authorities and Transport for London (TfL), but will also include developers, charitable and private landowners and other local stakeholders where relevant. We will call on the extensive local knowledge of our volunteers and comments from users. Our London advisory panel will help us set the principles to steer decisions. This plan will become the blueprint for the development of the Network in London

A key objective for the London Network development plan will be to identify what is needed to achieve a Very Good standard for the whole of the London Network. This means a standard that offers a predictable, accessible and safe experience on routes that deliver a consistent and high level of service.

Traffic-free sections will be either off-road (away from the road) or on fully separated cycle infrastructure within the road corridor, with all routes being suitable for an unaccompanied 12-year-old to cycle on.

London is a large urban area and some sections of Network will continue to be routed on streets where this is most appropriate. It is important that these are streets where traffic speeds and volumes are low and that users feel safe. Network development plans will identify where neighbourhood-wide projects are needed to reduce through traffic and make it easier to walk and cycle in the whole neighbourhood.

Design principles for the National Cycle Network

The following National Cycle Network design principles have been developed to set out the key factors that make the Network distinctive. These will be used alongside best practice design guidance – in London this will include the London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS) and the Healthy Streets approach.

Routes shall:

- Be designed in accordance with current best practice design guidance
- Be designed in collaboration with the local community
- Provide convenient links to key destinations, connecting cities, towns and countryside

Routes shall meet the following nine design principles:

1. Be traffic-free or quiet-way
2. Be wide enough to comfortably accommodate all users
3. Be designed to minimise maintenance
4. Be signed clearly and consistently
5. Have a smooth surface that is well drained
6. Be fully accessible to all legitimate users
7. Feel like a safe place to be
8. Enable all users to cross roads safely and step-free
9. Be attractive and interesting

Seven level of service measures have been developed to assess the quality of the user experience. These relate to: Traffic related safety; Accessibility; Surface quality; Wayfinding and signage; Flow; Social safety and Place.

2. Overview of the Network in London

London has the shortest Network of all the Sustrans regions and nations with a total of 163 miles.

This includes all the Network inside the Greater London boundary. Greater London includes 32 London Boroughs and the City of London, and borders Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

The Network in London spans 25 boroughs – Havering, Barking & Dagenham, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest, Haringey, Enfield, Islington, Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, Wandsworth, Richmond, Kingston, Merton, Sutton, Lambeth, Southwark, Croydon, Lewisham, Bromley, Greenwich, Bexley and Hillingdon. It also uses roads managed by TfL, towpaths managed by the Canal and River Trust, parks managed by The Royal Parks and privately owned land. Existing routes cross the London

border into the counties of Essex, Surrey, Kent and Buckinghamshire.

In London 41% of the Network, a total of 66 miles is on-road. The remaining 59% of the Network, a total of 97 miles, is on traffic-free paths.

The Network in London includes several high profile long distance routes including National Route 1 that connects Dover to the Shetland Islands and National Route 4 that connects London to Fishguard via Reading, Bristol, Swansea and St. Davids. Furthermore, National Route 1 and National Route 4 through London also serve as part of the EuroVelo 2 route which connects Dublin to Moscow via central and Eastern Europe. The Avenue Verte route between London and Paris includes National Route 20 and National Route 4 in London.



London's strategic cycling network

London is in the process of planning and building a strategic network of cycling routes across the city. This is led by the Mayor of London and London's Cycling & Walking Commissioner, funded by the Mayor through TfL, and delivered by TfL and London's boroughs and managing authorities. The Mayors Transport Strategy has set out the aims below to:

- Deliver a London-wide strategic cycle network, with new, high quality, safe routes and improved infrastructure to tackle barriers to cycling for both shorter and longer trips. By 2041, 70% of Londoners will live within 400 metres of the strategic cycle network.
- Encourage additional local and neighbourhood improvements, such as using physical restrictions to prevent motorised vehicles from using certain streets, to build on and complement the strategic cycle network.

This network is being delivered through TfL's Quietway, Superhighway and Safer Junction programmes. Future route corridors are identified through the Strategic Cycling Analysis. Neighbourhood-centred programmes are being delivered by boroughs through TfL's Mini Holland and Liveable Neighbourhood programmes. Borough-led corridor and neighbourhood projects are funded through the Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

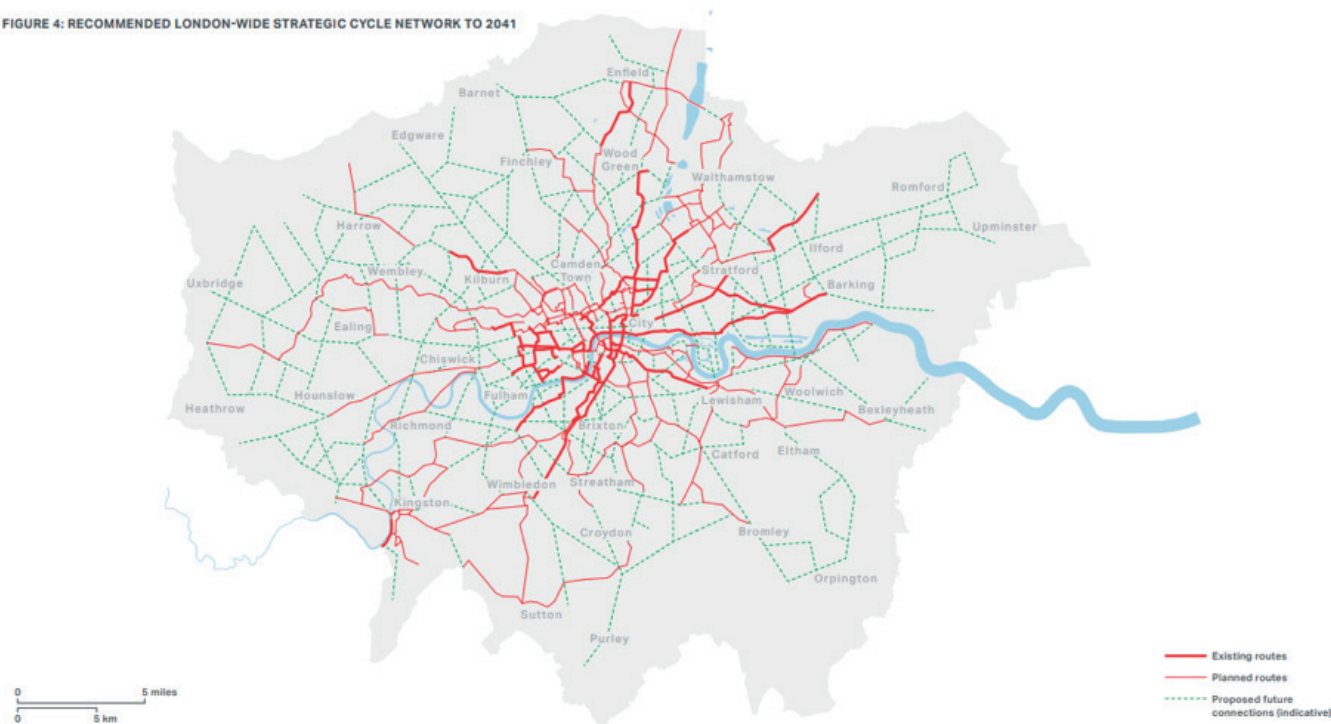
The National Cycle Network in London is separate yet complementary to this emerging strategic cycling network in London. The Network does not aim to replicate a dense city-wide network of routes. Instead the Network will provide an entry point for people to build the confidence to start using London's cycling network. It will show off some of the best places in the city – the well-known and the local. It will both enable local journeys, and inspire Londoners to explore their city. It will link to the Network outside London. As a UK-wide asset it will be recognised throughout the UK.

In London our aim is to provide high quality routes suitable for everyone. We want to improve the quality of the Network rather than growing its size and scale. A key difference is that the National Cycle Network will prioritise attractiveness over directness – a high quality off road route through interesting, iconic or beautiful places will be prioritised over a more direct alternative.

Some of London's planned strategic cycling network aligns with the National Cycle Network, building on work previously done by boroughs, TfL and Sustrans to deliver important and well-used cycling corridors.

There will be opportunities to realign the National Cycle Network to the London strategic cycling network. This will be done where this improves the quality of the route and the user experience.

FIGURE 4: RECOMMENDED LONDON-WIDE STRATEGIC CYCLE NETWORK TO 2041

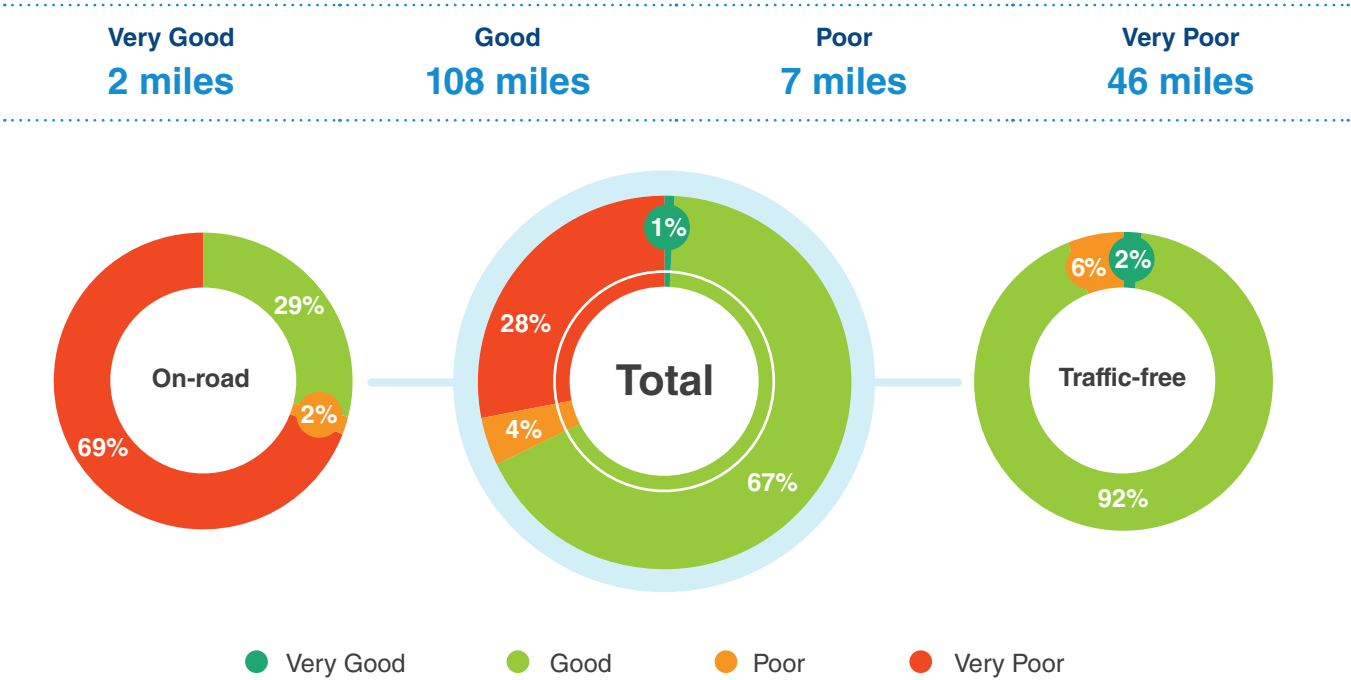


This map is reproduced from the Mayors Transport Strategy and shows London's existing and planned strategic cycle network to 2041.

Condition of the Network

Our analysis of the audit has provided a snapshot of the condition of the Network in London, with all sections rated as Very Good, Good, Poor or Very Poor. Using the audit data the condition of the on-road and traffic-free sections can also be viewed independently as shown below.

In London:

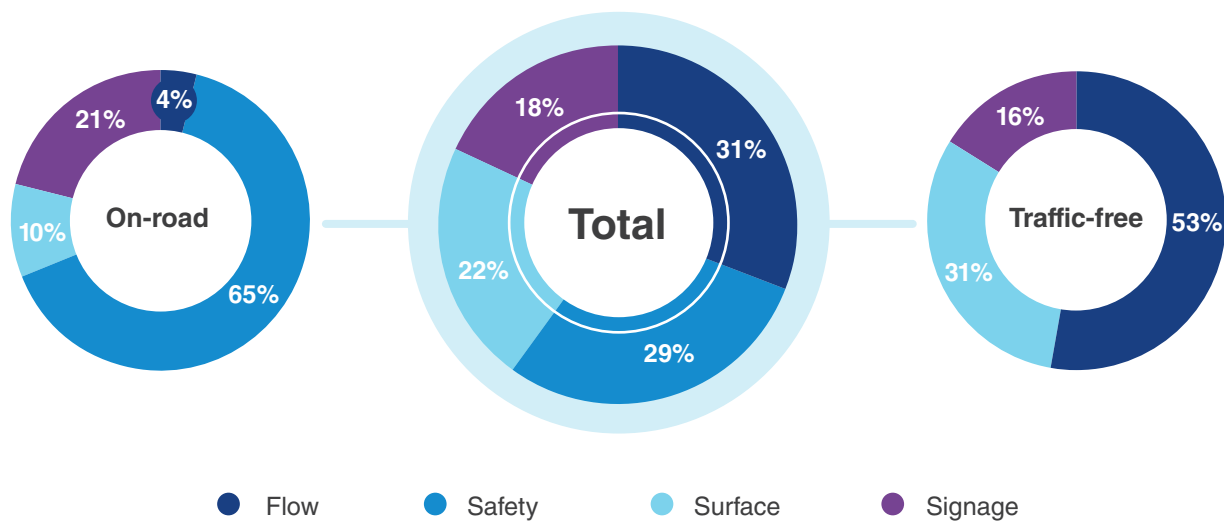


Identifying the issues

The audit categorised issues due to traffic safety, surface, signage or flow. Some sections have issues in more than one of these areas

The majority (31%) of the issues on the Network in London are due to issues with flow, followed closely by safety issues (29%). Surface quality of routes accounts for 22% of issues and problems with signage represent 18% of issues.

On traffic-free sections of the Network the greatest proportion of issues relate to flow (53%). Conversely, the greatest proportion of issues experienced on on-road sections relate to safety (65%).



3. Strategic priorities for London

Hundreds of projects will be needed in London. Many will not yet be priorities for funding. The priorities for the improvement of the National Cycle Network in London are as follows. These are in addition to the UK-wide priorities of accessibility and improving signage that are outlined in Section 5:

Safety

The first priority will be to deal with sections of the Network that are a safety concern. This will include junctions and crossings, and places where traffic speed and volume are too high.

Impact

We will prioritise projects that improve the largest amount of the Network for the benefit of the greatest number of people.

Opportunity

There will be opportunities to complete Network improvement projects as part of other planned and funded projects such as: the development of London's strategic cycling network; new developments; planned borough highways, neighbourhood or parks projects; and public transport projects. We will work with boroughs, managing authorities, TfL, developers and others as relevant to identify these and prioritise when opportunities arise.

For each improvement identified we will need to agree the action needed to progress it. These will include:

- Realigning sections of Network to a better quality route
- De-designating sections of Network
- Adding new sections of Network
- Projects needed with existing borough/TfL/developer priority and funding
- Projects needed with no existing priority or funding

Actions agreed must be in line with the vision for the National Cycle Network and London principles. With this in mind we will bring examples to the London National Cycle Network advisory panel so they can steer the principles used to make these decisions.

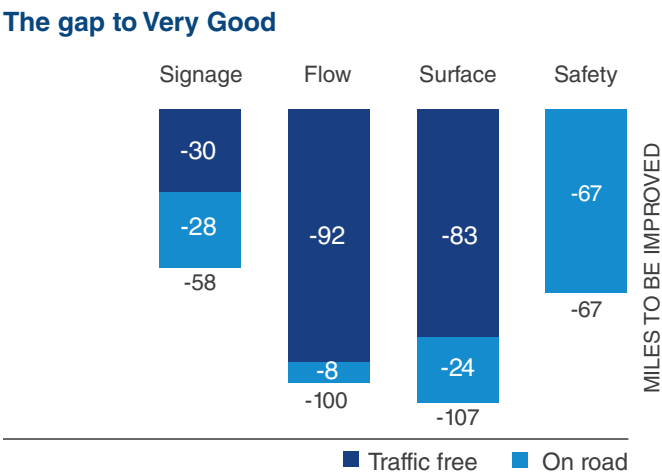
This will give us a Network development plan that sets out our long term plan to deliver the vision for the Network in London.

4. Quantifying the ambition for London

Closing the gap to Very Good

Our ambition is to bring all of the Network in London up to a consistent Very Good standard.

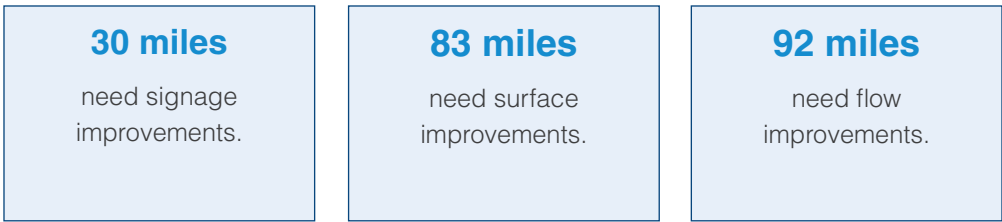
The graph below shows the number of miles, in each category, and for on-road and traffic-free sections that need to be improved for the entire London Network to qualify as Very Good:



On-road improvements required to be classed as Very Good



Traffic-free improvements required to be classed as Very Good



5. UK-wide priorities

Accessibility

Equality of access for all users of the Network is very important and forms a key element of the vision. We want the entire Network to be suitable for everyone and welcome people with all types of cycles including trikes, cargo bikes, hand-bikes, trailer bikes and tandems. It must be inviting and accessible for people on foot and those with pushchairs, wheelchairs, double buggies and mobility scooters.

Restrictive barriers, steep ramps, high curbs and width issues on the network itself are recorded in the physical audit under the service level measure 'Flow'.

- **34 miles** of traffic-free routes in London have barrier issues that impede flow
- **42 miles** of traffic-free routes in London have width issues that impede flow
- **16 miles** of traffic-free routes in London have issues with both barriers and width

As a first step to addressing this it is recommended that an accessibility working group is established to focus on accessibility issues across the UK Network. This will involve experts in the field as well as local volunteers and community groups.

Signage

Signage issues are also common to the whole Network and will be addressed through a national programme. Issues can be split into three main areas:

- Signage issues on the Network itself that need fixing or amending including missing, obstructed or damaged signing or unclear, confusing or misaligned signage
- Signage that promotes the Network including educational information, local maps, distances to attractions, local services and other user information
- Signage that directs users towards the Network – from town centres, train stations, linking routes and other places of interest.

22 miles (13%) of the signage on the Network in London is rated as Poor or Very Poor and require improvements:

- **12 miles** of this is on-road and will need the permission of the relevant highway authority, which will be the borough or TfL
- **10 miles** of this is on traffic-free sections.

37 miles (23%) of the signage on the Network in London is rated as Good and would need improvements to be rated as Very Good.

- **17 miles** of this is on-road and will need the permission of the relevant highway authority, which will be the borough or TfL.
- **20 miles** of this is on traffic-free sections.

6. Activating the Network in London

It is important the results of the National Cycle Network review are backed up by immediate and visible action. In London this is already happening.

London's emerging network

The Mayor of London's programme to build a strategic network of cycling routes means that some projects that will improve the Network are already planned and funded, and some are complete.

There are sections of National Routes 1, 4, 20, 21 and 425 that align with existing and planned routes, which have been prioritised by TfL. These will be an important part of building momentum for the revitalisation of the Network in London.

A significant project that opened in 2018 and plugged a long-standing gap in the Network is the Greenwich 'Missing link'. This £1.5m project on National Route 1 was completed by Greenwich as part of TfL's Quietways programme. When complete, Quietway 14 will use this link on its way between Greenwich to Bexley. The project involved building a cantilever structure alongside the Thames, blasting through a wall to open access to an industrial estate and building an elevated structure on top of the river wall. It has created a new direct traffic-free link on the Thames Path where previously a diversion to the busy Woolwich Road was needed.

We are aware of around 15 projects in the design and development stages on TfL strategic routes that will improve the Network. All projects are delivered by boroughs or TfL. It will be important to influence these so they meet the ambition of quality and user experience set out in the vision for the National Cycle Network. There will also be opportunities to re-align the Network to recently constructed high quality routes.

Major projects and developments

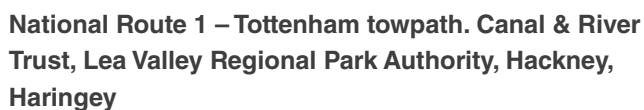
London is a growing city. There are hundreds of development projects across the city, and many large infrastructure projects. We are aware of a number of these on or close to the Network in London, which present opportunities to improve the Network. It will also be important to maintain access and a good quality experience for users of the Network during periods of construction. An important part of delivering the vision for the National Cycle Network in London will be to actively identify and pursue these opportunities.

Identifying new projects

Many more projects – currently unfunded – will be needed to deliver the vision for the National Cycle Network. We will work with boroughs and managing authorities to identify these in our Network development plan. Some could be funded and delivered alongside existing planned projects and developments. Some could be prioritised and funded by boroughs or other funders. Many will need more work to build the support, political will and money to make them happen. We anticipate these will include a wide variety of projects including:

- Neighbourhood-wide projects to reduce through traffic and speeds in residential streets
- Significant new bridges or structures
- Signalised crossings for cyclists and pedestrians and parallel zebra crossings
- Segregated cycling lanes and protected junctions on busy roads
- New and improved paths in green spaces

The following projects give specific examples of some of the types of projects needed in London to deliver the vision of the National Cycle Network



PROBLEM The unbound surface collects water and mud in large puddles and ruts from autumn to spring. Cobbled sections reduce the accessibility of this traffic-free route.

National Route 4 – Ham Gate to Teddington Lock, Richmond-upon-Thames

PROBLEM A number of improvements are needed across this section to meet the vision for the Network including improvements to safety, surface and flow.

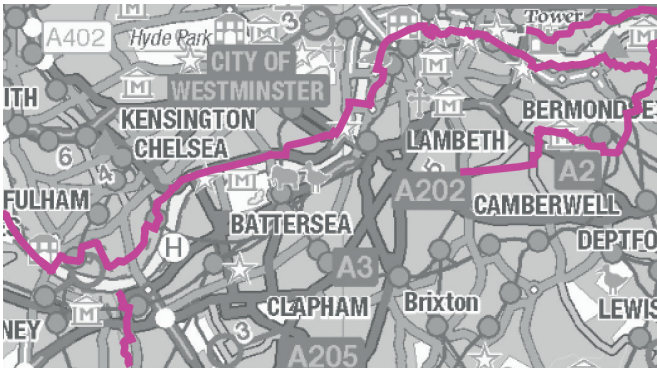
National Route 12 – A1010 crossing, Enfield

PROBLEM Currently this is an informal crossing. To meet the vision for the National Cycle Network we would like to see a safer and more legible crossing.

National Route 20 – Barriers between Morden Hall Park and Carshalton, Sutton, Merton

PROBLEM It can be difficult or impossible to manoeuvre a pushchair, wheelchair, bike, trike or cargo bike through the barriers on this section.

15

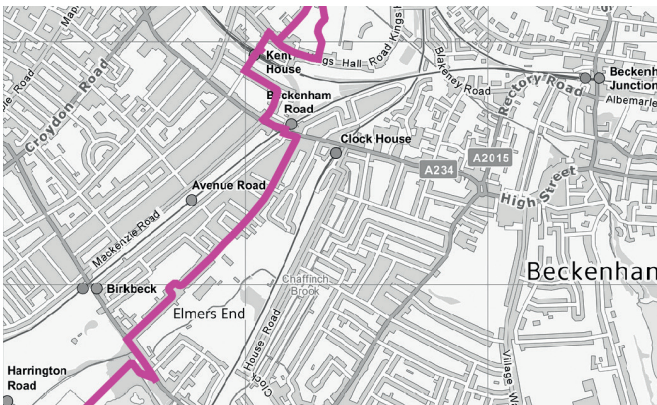


National Routes 4, 13, 20, 425 – Strategic realignment of the Network in Central London

WHY Recently Central London has seen the opening of Cycle Superhighways, which are flagship examples of good cycle infrastructure. These enable stress-free cycling through the centre of London, along the river, past landmarks, separated from traffic. More Superhighway and Quietway routes are planned in this area.

PROBLEM Existing routes contain sections that don't meet our vision – including sections on busy roads and junctions where cyclists aren't protected.

SOLUTION Review whole area to determine how best to link the Network through central London making use of the best of London's infrastructure.

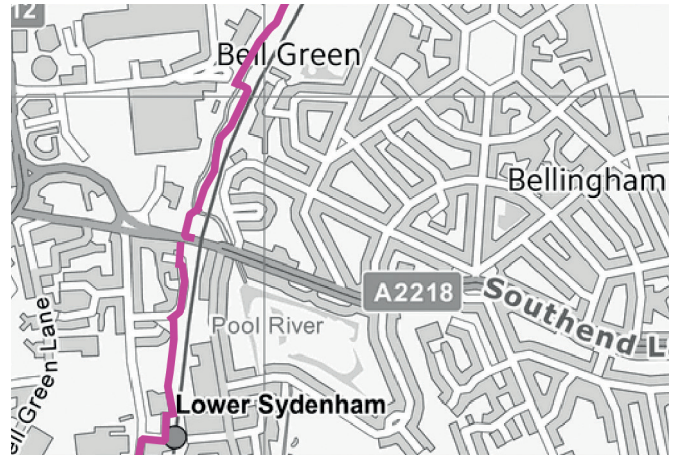


National Route 21 – Elmers End – Kent House corridor, Bromley

WHY Future projects in this corridor could give opportunities to improve and realign the Network.

PROBLEM This section includes busy road crossings, on-road sections with higher than desired traffic volumes, poor surface and barriers.

SOLUTION A review of the wider route corridor will look at opportunities from future borough corridor schemes, future public transport schemes, realignment opportunities and links to a planned Quietway at Kent House. There are a number of locations like this around London where a similar approach will be needed.



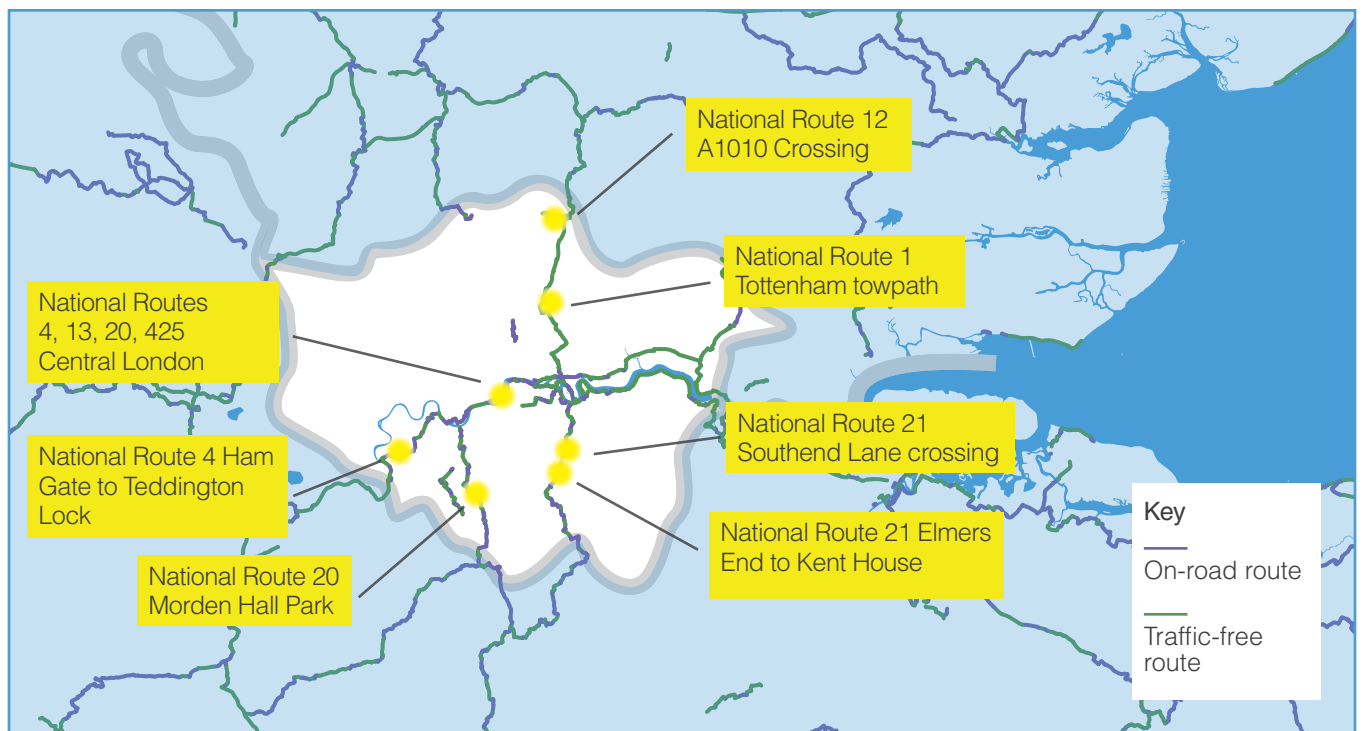
National Route 21 – Southend Lane crossing, Lewisham

WHY Improving safety on the Network in London is our highest priority. An important part of this will be improving crossings of busy roads and junctions on both traffic-free routes and sections on streets so that people walking and cycling feel safer and the route is welcoming and easy to follow.

PROBLEM National Route 21 crosses the busy Southend Lane in lower Sydenham. The current crossing is informal and off the alignment of the route.

SOLUTION A safer and more legible crossing of this busy road is planned as part of a planned Quietway.

Activation project map



7. Conclusion

Our shared vision for the National Cycle Network is to create 'A UK-wide network of traffic-free paths for everyone, connecting cities, towns and countryside and loved by the communities they serve.'

In London this does not mean creating a comprehensive dense network of routes across the whole city – the Mayor's Transport Strategy is already planning and delivering this. Instead the National Cycle Network will complement this by providing an entry point where people can build the confidence to start using London's cycling network. It will show off some of the best places in the city – both local gems and those recognised internationally. It will link to the Network outside London and be recognised throughout the UK

In London improving safety on the Network is our top priority. In a growing city of over 8 million people it is unlikely that our part of the Network will ever be 100% traffic-free. Sections on streets must be either properly segregated from traffic, or on genuinely quiet streets where the volume and speed of traffic is low. Road crossings and junctions must be safe, convenient and legible.

Removing barriers, improving surfaces, designing out conflict between users and improving signage are also needed to improve the Network in London. There will be the need for strategic realignments of some parts of the Network. There may be the need to de-designate some parts of the Network. Likewise there may be opportunities to designate new sections of Network where this is in line with our vision.

The common principle will be to deliver a high quality user experience that invites everyone to enjoy the Network in London. We want the Network to be a place that welcomes everyone to discover the joy of walking and cycling and inspires them to share it on local adventures with others. It should be a place where people can discover they have the option to walk and cycle for their everyday local journeys, rather than being dependent on private vehicles.

Sustrans can't do this on our own. We are custodians of only 163 miles of Network in London. Delivering this vision will require many projects, some tiny, some huge, all essential. We need individuals and organisations to champion them, fund them, use them and love them.

The next job for our team in London will be to apply this vision to the local detail to produce our Network development plan, which will identify where changes and projects are needed to deliver the vision working in partnership with landowners and highway authorities. In London this will mainly be boroughs, managing authorities and TfL, but will also include developers, charitable and private landowners and other local stakeholders where relevant. We will call on the extensive local knowledge of our volunteers and comments from users. Our London advisory panel will help us set the principles to steer decisions.

We hope this report inspires you to help us ensure a bright, exciting future for the Network in London and join with all our valued stakeholders, supporters, volunteers and community friends to turn this vision into reality.

Get in touch

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. If you'd like to know more about our work, we'd love to hear from you.

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