

## Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign

# Waltham Forest Movers & Shakers

June 2009

Project Report





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*Contra flow cycle lanes on one-way sections of street avoid detours for cyclists. Exemption signs for cyclists on one-way streets would be an even better, simpler solution*

# Introduction

In June 2009, the Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign (WFCC) marshalled a series of bicycle rides with key "Movers & Shakers" in the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF). Councillors, council officers and planning engineers rode in small groups on a route that showcased some of the best and worst elements of street design for Waltham Forest cycling.

There was much frank, clear and friendly discussion between everyone about what could easily be improved, what the current hurdles to cycling are and how the LBWF and WFCC could work together better in the future to improve conditions for cycling.

This report is based on the findings of those rides and of a survey of local cyclists the WFCC carried out during the Tour de Waltham Forest, in the same month.

"Movers & Shakers" is a London-wide initiative being adopted in various forms by London councils and their local Cycle Campaign groups. It has already been run in Wandsworth and is running currently in Redbridge.

The idea of Movers & Shakers in the London Cycle Campaign is to encourage a wider awareness of cycling among key opinion formers and official bodies. This has included religious leaders, council officers and others.

NB: The photos throughout this report are largely taken from the ride route and, with accompanying captions, illustrate examples of good and bad design for cycling. For more detailed information on such design considerations see the "Planning for cycling" section.



*Obstacles (bin and cone) unnecessarily block part of this cycle path, which is also located on a busy pavement where pedestrians routinely walk into the path. Pavement cycle lanes often cause priority conflicts with drivers at crossings.*

# Key recommendations

## 1. Prioritising cycling

Be more aggressive on funding; plan and consult earlier to ensure appropriate “design for cycling” on all schemes

## 2. One way streets

Avoid implementing new one-way systems, add exemption signs or contra flow lanes to existing one-way systems. One way streets are a major barrier to cycling in general and quiet routes specifically

## 3. Maintenance

The borough's roads need to be properly maintained, some are currently dangerous for cycling

## 4. Drivers

A hostile road environment is the biggest barrier to novice cyclists, work with Police and other agencies to improve road safety

## 5. The Olympics

A key opportunity for improved cycle infrastructure is to be had linking to the Olympic Park in the south of the borough



*This new cycle lane on Leyton Green Road is excellent in terms of width. Drivers give cyclists as much space, as cyclists give themselves from the kerb, studies have found. Sadly, use of this lane is often hindered by parked cars.*

# Issues raised on the rides

These issues emerged directly from discussions during the rides.

## 1. Prioritising cycling

**Funding for cycling measures** was highlighted by several on the Movers & Shakers rides as a current issue. Other London boroughs are better at this - Waltham Forest was, for instance, well into the bottom half of London boroughs receiving LCN+ funding last year. This is a particularly urgent issue, given the changes to TfL funding from 2010 and the opportunities available from the Olympic "active spectator" programme.

WFCC recommends: A more aggressive approach from LBWF to seeking out and obtaining funding for cycling infrastructure. Given the new "LIP" funding system there is also now more scope for securing cycling funding beyond just existing LCN+ routes.



*Narrow cycle lanes encourage cyclists to ride too close to the kerb and drivers to pass closely. It would be better to have no cycle lane at all, than this. Better design for cycling should be the priority, not more miles of narrow lanes.*

**Early and wide consultation** with the WFCC was recognised as a priority by all riders. By the time new road layout or development schemes are at the stage of engineers' drawings, it is too late to implement best-practice cycling infrastructure.

WFCC recommends: Earlier consultation on more schemes (currently the WFCC is often not even consulted on cycling-specific schemes), with appropriate follow-up to ensure implementation. This would ensure far better "design for cycling".

**Consultation with major external consultants and contractors is also to be encouraged.** By the time large external schemes go to public consultation or the planning department, it is often too late to make any serious changes to improve cycling conditions.

WFCC recommends: Writing early consultation with WFCC into contracts for suitable contractors and consultants, encouraging existing companies to work more closely with WFCC in consultation on cycling, road and parking infrastructure and design.



*The hatching to the left of the cycle lane on this section of Lea Bridge Road prevents car doors being opened into cyclists – a major cause of cyclist injuries. Yet this treatment remains rare, even on the borough's wider roads.*

## 2. One way streets

**A major block to "permeability"**, one way streets make cycling more dangerous and less attractive: they force cyclists to take circuitous detours and encourage drivers to faster speeds than they would attempt down two-way streets. They also make for less friendly streets for pedestrians.

WFCC recommends: Avoid implementing any further one-way streets - look for alternatives to one-way schemes in preference.

**Many current one-ways could easily see exceptions for cycling.** Many are technically only one-way at the point of the no entry sign. Solutions include engineering-intensive and costly contra-flow lanes or simple cycle exception signs (see Key research on cycling, below).

WFCC recommends: LBWF Highways engineers and WFCC collaborating to create a priority list of the cheapest one-ways to rectify and the most problematic for cycling.

## 3. Quiet routes

**Often end unexpectedly.** Quiet routes in Waltham Forest are very popular with cyclists (67% of local cyclists surveyed choose "quiet" routes in preference), yet are often poorly signed, end at a main road rather than linking to any destination, and feature obstacles (narrow barriers, raised kerbs etc) that dramatically affect the utility of these routes.

WFCC recommends: Officers and the WFCC should collaborate to ensure the most popular and useful quiet routes link through to destinations, are signed appropriately and simple measures to improve them are implemented.



*Another example of a contra flow cycle lane on a one-way street. Exemption signs for cyclists on one-way streets would be an even simpler and less costly solution. Not implementing any more one way systems would be even more preferable.*

## 4. Cycle lanes

**No cycle lane can be better than a bad cycle lane.** Movers & Shakers riders agreed that narrow, interrupted cycle lanes can be worse than no cycle lanes. In fact, recent research shows that cycle lanes can encourage motorists to drive closer to bicycles (see Planning for cycling, below).

WFCC recommends: Only implementing new cycle facilities if they are going to be useful for cycling - with a clear vision and understanding of why the facility is being implemented. Also consider removing some of the worst cycle facilities. (LBWF already has many miles of lanes and quiet routes - it does not need higher mileage numbers, but better quality facilities.)



*This cycle lane, directly outside the Town Hall, Forest Road, turns sharply around a bus stop - a difficult manoeuvre for novice cyclists. Lanes that veer suddenly, particularly onto or off roads, are not good design.*

**Improve priority for cycles.** Improving clarity for cyclists' priority on the road is vital to good cycle facility design (see Planning for cycling, below).

WFCC recommends: Implementing best practice design policies that clarify cycle priority on the road. An extreme measure would be, where on-pavement cycle lanes cross side roads, not dipping to the road level, but rather raising road level in a table to the cycle lane/pavement height. This would give a much clearer indication that the cyclist has priority.

## 5. Road maintenance

**Road maintenance as a serious, even dangerous, issue for cyclists** was recognised by Movers & Shakers riders. According to our survey of cyclists, poor maintenance is the worst thing about cycling in Waltham Forest specifically (37% of respondents).

WFCC recommends: Collaboration between the Transport Liaison Consultative group, Highways engineers, WFCC and other bodies to formulate a solid plan for road maintenance.

## 6. Drivers

**"Bad drivers" and "scary road conditions" are the biggest barriers to cycling** according to 79% of local cyclists in our survey. 10% of injuries on London roads are suffered by cyclists. A road environment where a majority of drivers flout the law is off-putting to even seasoned cyclists and positively hostile for novices. This is one of the key problems stopping more people from cycling.

WFCC recommends: LBWF working with Police to increase enforcement of road rules. Potential actions could include: crackdowns on drivers using mobiles while driving and drivers without MOT/insurance; offering mandatory road safety workshops instead of a fine for those who are caught speeding or running red lights; realigning red light cameras to also catch drivers who block "ASL" Advanced Stop Line cyclist boxes etc.

**Lorries are disproportionately the largest killers of cyclists in London.**

WFCC recommends: Implementing a scheme where every driver working for LBWF (or subcontracted), should have mandatory on-road cycle training by the borough's cycle trainers (many currently don't even watch a brief safety video on driving near cyclists). This scheme should also cover bus drivers, taxi drivers etc. working in Waltham Forest. It could be a massive PR coup for the borough (and would follow several other London boroughs moving towards such a scheme) and would help push for similar standards from local private contractors.

**The Police have run several campaigns against pavement cyclists in the borough.** While pavement cyclists are understandably annoying, you are over 100 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured by a car on the pavement, than by a cyclist on the pavement.

WFCC recommends: LBWF and WFCC working to encourage a more sensible approach by The Police to dangers from pavement cyclists and dangerous drivers. On-road cycle training offered instead of a fine for cyclists caught on the pavement.

## 7. The Olympics

**The London 2012 Olympics "active spectator" programme could be key** to unlocking public realm improvement funding in the "Olympic fringe" areas to ensure schools and housing are linked into the Olympic Park. The "active spectator" idea is to get spectators to the games by walking, cycling and public transport. High-quality cycle and walking paths linking Waltham Forest into the Olympic Park would ensure the residents of Waltham Forest can access the Olympics and the Park in legacy mode. (10% of Olympic staff already walk or cycle to work.)

WFCC recommends: Urgently investigating funding opportunities for cycling infrastructure tied to the Olympic Park, such as the proposed improvements to Marsh Lane Bridge.

## 8. Other agencies

**Local schools, hospitals and other bodies could also do much more to encourage cycling.** There is plenty of scope for LBWF to work with its local PCT, education providers, the biggest local employers etc. to encourage cycling to and from these places by staff and users.

WFCC recommends: Proactively liaising with large local employers and public bodies to create active travel plans aimed specifically at improving cycle parking, ensuring appropriate nearby cycle facilities for staff and site users and encouraging employer investment in supporting cyclists with cycle purchase salary schemes, showers at work, mileage allowances matching motor vehicles etc.



*No cycling through this cut-through between Aubrey Road and Howard Road - yet it forms a natural quiet route for cycling.  
"Permeability" is key to encouraging cycling.*

# Cyclists' opinion survey results

Key findings from cyclists surveyed during the 2009 Tour de Waltham Forest.

**1. "Bad drivers" and "scary road conditions" are the biggest general barrier to cycling** (to 79%). Other barriers included security (poorly-located cycle parking, bicycle theft not a Police priority etc.) and "getting sweaty".

**2. Poor maintenance ("potholes/bumpy roads/glass in cycle lanes") is the worst thing about cycling specifically in Waltham Forest** (37%). After that come "bad drivers" (22%), "poor cycle facilities (cycle parking, cycle lanes)" (13%) and "speed cushions" (as opposed to speed humps) (10%).

**3. Greenways (Epping Forest, the Lea Valley etc.) are the best thing about cycling in Waltham Forest** (63%). The "quiet routes" network were best for 22%.

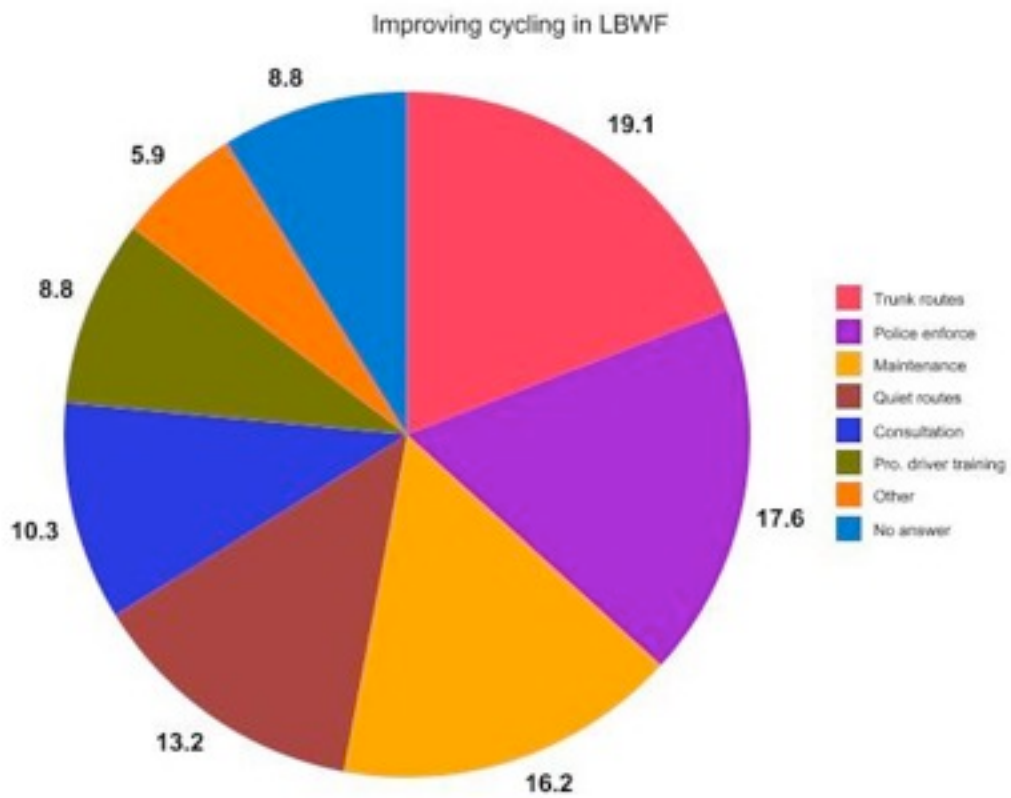
**4. "Improving the main road network of cycle and bus lanes" should be the number one priority to improve cycling** (19%). Followed by "Police enforcing road rules on motorists" (18%) and "maintaining roads and cycle lanes better" (16%). Beyond that (in descending order): "improving quiet routes", "consulting cyclists on changes to road and cycle lane design" and "getting lorry, minicab and other professional drivers to undergo cycle training".

**5. 67% choose "quiet" routes in preference** (35% marked routes, 32% their own). 13% opt for main roads and 10%, the "fastest".

**6. Commuting and riding to shops are the two most common cycle journeys** (for 49% and 35% of riders).

**7. These are the views of average family/commuter cyclists, not sports/fitness cyclists.** 60% commute by bicycle. Most ride less than 10 miles commonly (34% under five miles, 28% under 10). Most either did not ride the TdWF (44%) or rode the easiest Bronze ride (26%). 43% view bicycles primarily as a "fast/sensible way to get around". Only 22% ride mainly for fitness.

*Survey results from 68 respondents.*



*Cycle-positive measures don't necessarily need to include a cycle lane. This raised table on Church Hill forms part of an excellent scheme for cyclists, without any cycle lane. Other measures can control driver behaviour and traffic speed.*

# Key research on cycling

Recent research that shows why it's smart to get people cycling and out of their cars...

**Cyclists, pedestrians and users of public transport shop more regularly and overall spend more than motorists shopping**, according to a study of retail centres in Munster, Germany. Only 25% of motorists leave with two or more bags of goods, meaning the majority of drivers could have arrived by foot, bicycle or public transport.

*Cycling: the way ahead for towns and cities, European Commission, 1999*

**The Department of Transport has authorised a trial of "except cyclist" signs allowing cycling in both directions on one-way streets in Kensington & Chelsea.** This arrangement is "standard in all other European countries", according to Chris Peck, Policy Officer, The Cyclists' Touring Club.

*The Times Newspaper, 17 September, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article6837656.ece>*



*Speed cushions such as these encourage motorists and cyclists to "compete", often aggressively, for the space available. They also fail to slow motorists used to them, and motorcycles. Raised tables or speed humps are preferable.*

**Cycling to work is healthy – reducing mortality overall**, according to a large Danish study carried out in 2000.

*All-cause mortality associated with physical activity during leisure time, work, sports, and cycling to work, Andersen, LB, Schnohr, P, Schroll, M & Hein, HO, Archives of Internal Medicine; Jun 12, 2000; 160, 11; pg. 1621*

**Shoppers "arriving by foot and bicycle visit the most often and spend the most money per month"** according to a study in Toronto, Canada.

*Bike Lanes, On-Street Parking and Business: A Study of Bloor Street in Toronto's Annex Neighbourhood, February 2009, Sztabinski, F., Clean Air Partnership*

**Cycling provides a net benefit to personal health that outweighs its risk of injury by a factor of 20 to 1**, according to a UK-wide study. Approximately 140 people are killed each year while cycling, but around 20,000 other people die prematurely due to a lack of exercise.

*Cycling and the promotion of Health, Hillman, M., Policy Studies, 1993: 14: 49-58, cited in British Medical Association, 1997, Road Transport & Health, British Medical Association, London, UK*



*No entry sign on one short section of Milton Road. Such one-way stretches break up natural quiet routes, divert cyclists unnecessarily and are barriers to cycling adoption. Once in place, such schemes are difficult to adapt for cycling.*

**Measures to calm or restrict traffic and encourage cycling and walking increase levels of retail activity**, according to a European-wide review of studies. Increased retail turnover and profits were measured.

*The Impact of Pedestrianisation on Retail Economic Activity, Lane, B., Transport & Environment Consultancy (Bristol), February 2001, pp5-7*

**Every kilometre cycled generates around 70 pence in improvements to public health.** Even at current low levels of cycling in London, that's over £1 billion annually in London.

*World Health Organisation Health Economic Assessment Tool, [http://www.euro.who.int/transport/policy/20081219\\_1](http://www.euro.who.int/transport/policy/20081219_1), quoted by LCC London Cyclist, August-September 2009*

**Air pollution from road traffic is killing two to three times more people in Europe than road crashes**, according to a study in The Lancet.

*Public-health impact of outdoor and traffic-related air pollution: a European assessment, Künzli, N., Kaiser, R., Medina, S., Studnicka, M., Chanel, O., Filliger, P., Henry, M., Horak, F., Puybonnieux-Textier, V., Quenel, P., Schneider, J., Seethaler, R., Vergnaud, J-C., and Sommer, H. (2000). The Lancet, Vol 356, September 2000, pp 795-801*

**Reducing road speeds from 30 mph to 20 mph in residential areas reduces serious injuries and fatalities by 45% and increases cycling and pedestrian numbers.**

*Transport for London figures quoted by LCC London Cyclist, August-September 2009*

**It is more profitable to provide parking for cycling than motorists**, according to a survey of 1,200 Swiss consumers.

Cyclists produced €7,500 profit for retailers per square metre cycle parking produced, motorists produced €6,625.

*Cycling: the way ahead for towns and cities, European Commission, 1999*



*A reasonably wide lane that clearly has priority over the side road, encouraging drivers to think before turning.*

# What the London Borough of Waltham Forest says about cycling

Key quotes taken from LBWF documents and pledges on cycling.

"Target of a 15% reduction in traffic by the year 2010." *UDP*

"Cycling is a healthy activity which causes no pollution and conserves valuable energy resources. Like pedestrians, the needs of cyclists have in the past tended to take second place behind the needs of motor vehicles. The Council intends to reverse that trend by giving special consideration to the needs of cyclists" *UDP*



*Early consultation between Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign cyclists and LBWF council officers could avoid expensive "fixes" later on in large developments and road schemes and lead to better design for cycling.*

"The Council recognises that traffic growth and congestion are problems on social, economic and environmental levels, and is committed to limiting further growth and encouraging a shift from private car use to increased use of public transport and walking or cycling." *Waltham Forest Climate Change Strategy*

"84% of residents wished the Council to take measures to reduce traffic volumes in the borough. Cycling is the cheapest and most efficient form of transport for short trips and it can only be hoped that the various cycling schemes underway will encourage more people to choose cycling as their favoured transport mode. This would not only reduce motor traffic volumes but would also improve the health of residents." *Waltham Forest Cycle Action Plan*

"Traffic management and related highway engineering offer enormous potential to improve cycling conditions. However, if engineers do not explicitly plan for cyclists, traffic management can make cycling conditions worse, endangering cyclists and discouraging people from cycling." *Waltham Forest Cycle Action Plan*

"Promote sustainable private and public transport." *Waltham Forest Sustainable Community Strategy*

"From 1991 when it first agreed the London Cycle Network to be on most of its main roads, the Council has regarded cycling as a key mode of transport to be integrated into all its road schemes" *Cycling pages, LBWF site*

"On the whole, creating a cycle-friendly infrastructure does not demand either complex or expensive traffic management measures. Instead, some significant changes in thinking, attitudes and priorities are needed in the way that we manage our roads." *Waltham Forest Cycle Action Plan*



*The cycle lane ends here, forcing cyclists out on to Forest Road suddenly. The problem is exacerbated by regularly parked cars and the nearby pedestrian refuge.*

# Planning for cycling

General principles of good and bad practice in cycle facility, road and development design, according to the WFCC.

## In general

**Good:** Early consultation, widespread awareness of cycling issues in all planning sections and all council departments - Highways (even those without cycle lanes/facilities), new developments, parks and open spaces, communities, health etc. - "design for cycling".

**Bad:** Limited consultation, cycle design tacked on as an afterthought.

**Worst:** Fixing problems after implementation.

## Cycle lanes

**Good:** wide<sup>1</sup>, uncluttered (no bollards, potholes, drain covers etc.), uninterrupted (by side roads, bus shelters etc.), flowing (i.e. no sudden interruptions or ends, no weaving onto/off pavements, no sharp corners), on road<sup>2</sup>, available at all times (i.e. not blocked by parked cars), with door "buffer zones"<sup>3</sup>, that go somewhere (i.e. reach key destinations and link to other routes), signed, without steps/kerbs, routed through high footfall areas, routed directly, well-maintained<sup>4</sup>, in locations where cyclists should and do actually ride, put in place for a clear, stated reason.

**Bad:** narrow<sup>1</sup>, cluttered, interrupted<sup>2</sup>, weaving, on pavement<sup>2</sup>, available sporadically, with parked car doors able to stick dangerously into lane<sup>3</sup>, end without destination or link, unsigned, with steps/kerbs, routed through unlit and dangerous areas, routed indirectly (many "quiet" cycle routes send cyclists on a far longer journey, or through unlit alleys, rough estates etc.), poorly maintained<sup>4</sup>.

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Cyclists on average ride in the middle of a cycle lane. Drivers on average give cyclists the same clearance cyclists have given themselves. Narrow lanes see drivers passing closer, reduce room to manoeuvre in emergencies, put cyclists into the path of drains and broken glass more frequently (car wheels clear broken glass to the last 50cm of roads).

A recent study by researchers at Leeds and Bolton universities (due to be published in the journal Accident Analysis and Prevention) found that drivers pass significantly closer to cyclists on roads where there are cycle lanes. The study's author was quoted by The Times (<http://is.gd/36QP7>) as saying that on roads where there are no cycle lanes, drivers "consciously perform an overtaking manoeuvre", but not on roads where there are lanes.

<sup>2</sup> Cyclists assume interrupted cycle lanes, particularly on-pavement lanes crossing side roads, continue as if marked. Drivers only see on-pavement cyclists in peripheral vision and tend to assume their car has right of way. Sideswipe incidents where cycle lanes cross side roads are more common than they should be. One solution would be to give priority to the cycle lane at such junctions and reinforce this by, rather than having the kerb drop, have a road table rise to meet the higher cycle lane.

<sup>3</sup> One of the most common causes of serious injuries for cyclists (after turning lorries) is car doors being opened into their path.

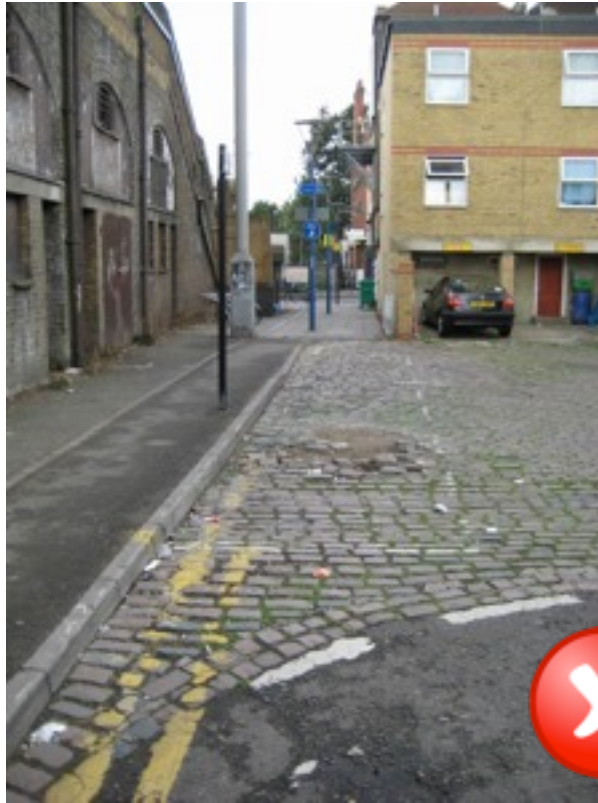
<sup>4</sup> Poorly-maintained roads can easily cause skids and crashes for cyclists - and can be dangerous. At the least, they are far more uncomfortable to ride on a bicycle than in a car - another barrier to taking up cycling. Lack of signage or vandalised signage is a similar barrier.

## Obstructions

**Good:** drains that align with vents perpendicular to direction of travel

**Bad:** drains that align with vents along direction of travel, trapping wheels; obstructions generally to the cycleway

**Worst:** unmarked, dark-coloured obstructions without any high-visibility treatment (i.e. bins, bollards, lampposts, kerbs etc.)



*Courtenay Place to St James Street. A blue "trunk" route on TfL cycling maps, this features cobbles in disrepair and ends with a railing obstruction and kerb step into the road. Is this route a candidate for removal?*

## Cycle parking

**Good:** simple (i.e. "Sheffield" stands that work with all locks and bicycle frame types), unobstructed (not too close to other objects to restrict bicycle placement), prominently placed (frequent footfall, under CCTV etc.), frequent (lot of stands, placed often)

**Bad:** complex (not usable for some frame types, only accessed after complex sign-up procedure, not available 24 hours a day etc.), restricted, poorly sited (dark, unseen corners), infrequent (sparse and occasional spacing in key locations etc.), obstructed (by temporary or permanent obstacles), poorly maintained.

## Road closures

**Good:** not affecting cyclists (i.e. bollards, barriers)

**OK:** One-ways with ideally point closure, or cycle lane contra-flows (see Key research on cycling)

**Worst:** One-ways.

## Speed limiting measures

**Good:** 20mph as default speed for borough roads with smart designs to limit speeds without affecting cyclists

**OK:** raised tables at junctions, full road-width sinusoidal speed humps

**Bad:** speed cushions (drivers swerve to go round them, bullying cyclists and have often learnt how to drive over them without dropping speed), road narrowing spots/pedestrian refuges (cause conflict between cyclists and drivers jockeying to be first through or both attempting to squeeze through at once).



*Complex crossings with narrow and penned-in cycle lanes are a barrier to cycling.*

# Contacts

## **Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign**

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## **Participants in the Movers & Shakers rides, June 2009**

### **Councillors**

Chris Robbins, Council Leader

John Macklin, Deputy Leader

Johar Khan, Transport Liaison Consultative Group

### **Executive**

Robin Tuddenham, Assistant Director (Safe & Strong Communities)

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