

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2013

URGENT QUESTION

1. URGENT QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR ANOOD AL-SAMERAI

What is the council doing to improve cycle safety across the borough in light of the recent tragic deaths of six cyclists in London, including Richard Muzira in Camberwell on 18 November?

RESPONSE

The death of Richard Muzira in Camberwell is a terrible tragedy and my thoughts are with his family and friends.

Any death on our roads is a death too many, but with six deaths in two weeks across London, I believe that London-wide we need to look to more radical solutions to make our roads safer. That is why I have proposed a safe cycling hour, where HGVs are banned from London's roads in the morning and evening for an hour and when cyclists know that at those times they will not have to navigate the city's streets with large HGVs.

I have spoken to the Mayor's cycling adviser following Mr Muzira's death and he has committed to look at this suggestion along with other ideas about how we improve cycle safety.

I want Southwark to be the safest borough in London for cyclists and get more people on their bikes. We are already doing this, and are making changes to make cycling safer. Significant improvements are being made in the cycling infrastructure in the Borough, with over £2.2 million spent since 2010. We are the first borough to implement Trixi mirrors to improve safety for cyclists at junctions. Eight junctions have been completed and another five are expected this financial year. I have also asked officers to prioritise the junction where Mr Muzira was killed. In addition we have introduced and are introducing eleven cycle contra flows, one cut through, five cycle superhighway complementary measures and three green links. All of this is being implemented during 2012/13 and 2013/14, this includes Greendale phase 1 and 2.

Cyclists do not stop at the borough's boundaries, which is why we are closely with Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor's officer on improvements to the strategic network. This includes:

- London grid – seven routes are identified by TfL and currently are being looked at by Southwark
- Quietways – some seven quiet cycle routes have been identified, with plans to make a decision on their suitability and priority early next year
- Working with TfL to deliver new and improved Cycle Superhighways
- Awaiting Mayor's design guidance for cycling infrastructure.

As well as physical changes, we are working to improve training and speed reduction which is key for cyclist safety. This includes:

- Making Southwark a 20 mph borough
- Offering free cyclist training to anyone that lives, works or is educated in the borough (training around 959 children and 731 adults per year). With a target to increase this by 10% by March 2014.
- Signing up to the LCC Safer Lorries Campaign
- Running Safer Urban Driver courses for drivers of HGVs
- Having a programme of HGV/Cyclist awareness days – Exchanging Places
- Having all roads Bikeability assessed – accessible via the council's website
- Being successful with £285,000 bid as part of the Cycling Schools Partnership for junction improvements, Bike it Plus Officer and seed funding in Dulwich area
- Running a programme of Dr Bikes
- Running a 'Park to Park' mass cycle ride for children
- Running a cycle loan scheme for teachers
- Running cycling clubs in schools
- Currently running cycling campaign promoting cycling and cycle safety
- Promoting cycling and cycle safety through the school travel plan process
- Running education/enforcement days with the police
- Looking at the possibility of running HGV events in secondary schools
- Looking at running bike building/maintenance classes for children and adults where participants get to keep their bikes.

As a borough we are taking cycle safety seriously. All of these changes are about improving cycling and safety in the borough. However, I want, London-wide, for us to look at what more can be done and welcome that my idea for a cycle safe hour has sparked a real debate about more radical solutions.