Open Agenda

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 5 October 2026
6.30 pm
Ground Floor Meeting Room G01A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Supplemental Agenda No.1

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5.	**Lower Road Project** To receive a report from officers providing an overview of the Lower Road Project and how the plans for Lower Road have been developed, including decisions around consultation and considerations around safety.	1 - 13

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Date: 28 September 2026

Agenda Item 5

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Meeting Name:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	**5 October 2026**
Report title:	**Lower Road Gyratory and Cycleway 4 Scheme Update**
Ward(s) or groups affected:	Rotherhithe
Classification:	**Open**
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/A
From:	Strategic Director of Environment, Sustainability and Leisure

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note:

1. The rationale for the introduction of the Lower Road C4 cycling scheme, and the work undertaken to implement the scheme;
2. The impact that the scheme has had on increasing cycling, and improving road safety along Lower Road;
3. Notes the decision taken on 3 September 2026 to make the Lower Road C4 scheme permanent, and the rationale for it set out in this report; and
4. The progress made in developing further improvements as part of Phase 2 of the Lower Road Gyratory scheme.

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME AND STRATEGIC CASE FOR CHANGE

Lower Road is one of the principal transport corridors serving the Rotherhithe peninsula, providing connections between the Rotherhithe Tunnel, Surrey Quays, Greenland Dock, Deptford, Lewisham and Greenwich. The corridor performs several important functions, carrying significant volumes of general traffic and buses, while also serving local residents, businesses, schools and visitors.

The Lower Road gyratory was designed primarily to maximise vehicle capacity, and as a result provided a relatively poor environment for walking and cycling, with indirect routes, complex junction arrangements and limited provision for less confident cyclists. As a consequence, for many years, concerns had been raised about road safety, the quality and continuity of cycling infrastructure, and the

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severance effects created by the historic highway layout.

In response to these challenges, the council developed proposals to transform Lower Road as part of a wider programme to improve sustainable transport, encourage a shift towards active travel, improve road safety and support the council's longer-term transport and climate objectives.

Specifically, the cycling scheme sought to support the delivery of Cycle Superhighway 4 (CS4, now C4), which was originally conceived as a 5.3km route along the A200 corridor between Greenwich and Tower Bridge. It had high existing numbers of cyclists (over 1,000 cycles in the AM peak along the busiest sections; more than general traffic) and demand analysis showed it had the potential to unlock 89,000 new cycling trips.

It was also intended to reduce collision casualties – Rotherhithe Roundabout had been ranked as the third most dangerous junction in Britain for cyclists and half of all collisions along the rest of the route (to the end of 2016) involved vulnerable road users - 93 cyclists and 49 pedestrians.

In 2019, the council consulted on proposals to remove the Lower Road gyratory and introduce a redesigned two-way road layout incorporating improved facilities for walking, cycling and public transport.

The scheme was originally made up of two distinct parts: (a) a cycleway and (b) bus improvements. Overall, the combined proposals were supported by 60% of respondents. While the full gyratory removal scheme did not immediately progress at the time due to a lack of funding, the consultation demonstrated support for the overall direction of travel, and established the strategic case for improving conditions for active travel along the corridor.

The cycleway element of the scheme was ultimately developed as Lower Road Cycleway 4. In 2020, Southwark Council approved the delivery of Cycleway 4 on Lower Road, between Rotherhithe Roundabout and the junction of Bestwood Street and Evelyn Street. In 2022, the council secured funding from TfL to deliver the scheme. Construction took 16 months and the route opened in March 2024. The scheme was introduced to support safer and more accessible walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport use during and after the pandemic.

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A map showing the Cycleway 4 route from Tower Bridge to Greenwich (Image: TfL)

This completed the final section of Cycleway 4 (C4), a fully segregated strategic east-west cycling route linking London Bridge and Greenwich through the boroughs of Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich, providing a safer and more direct route for people travelling by cycle across south-east London.

The scheme aimed to deliver three primary objectives:

1. Complete the final Southwark section of Cycleway 4, creating a continuous strategic cycling route between London Bridge and Greenwich.

2. Support a long-term shift towards more sustainable and space-efficient forms of travel, consistent with the council's transport, health and climate ambitions.

3. Improve safety and accessibility for people walking and cycling along Lower Road.

Traffic modelling undertaken during scheme development demonstrated that the proposals would deliver substantial benefits in terms of cycling connectivity, accessibility and route continuity, helping to complete a key section of the strategic Cycleway 4 corridor. While the modelling identified potential impacts on bus journey times and general traffic movement, these impacts were assessed as manageable and were partially offset by wider network benefits and improvements elsewhere along the corridor. TfL reviewed the modelling evidence in full, and agreed that the

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overall benefits outweighed the identified disbenefits and, on that basis, approved funding for the scheme in 2022.

SCHEME DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The scheme was implemented using Experimental Traffic Management Orders introduced in October 2022 and March 2023, allowing construction to proceed while enabling monitoring and public feedback during operation.

Cycleway 4 opened on Lower Road in March 2024. The scheme introduced a largely segregated two-way cycle facility between Rotherhithe Roundabout and Evelyn Street and included associated changes to junction layouts and bus stop arrangements to accommodate cyclists, pedestrians, buses and general traffic.

The measures also included a new signal-controlled pedestrian crossing close to the southern entrance to Southwark Park and pedestrian improvements at the Surrey Quays Road and Hawkstone Road junctions.

Following the expiry of the ETMOs the Council implemented Temporary Traffic Management Orders (TTMOs) to ensure continued enforceability and safety for all road users. The TTMOs were due to expire in May and June 2026. To avoid a lapse in the measures and maintain enforceability the Council sought and obtained approval from the Secretary of State in November 2025 to extend the Orders for a further six months. Ministerial approval was confirmed by the Department of Transport (DfT) on 8 May 2026 and the Council has subsequently extended the TTMOs until 28 November 2026, to maintain road safety along Lower Road pending a decision on permanent measures.

Key milestones and next steps

Date	Milestone
2019	Consultation on the original two-way scheme (60% support)
2020	Approval of CS4 between Rotherhithe roundabout and Evelyn Street
2022	Securing of TfL funding for the final section
Oct 2022 - Mar 2023	Experimental Traffic Management Orders
Mar 2024	Scheme opening
Nov-Dec 2025	Informal engagement
Nov 2025 – Feb 2026	Parking relocation scheme approved
Jan 2026	RSA4 Completed
Mar - Apr 2026	Statutory consultation
May 2026	Approval to extend TTMO to 28 Nov 26
Sep 2026	Approval to implement the permanent Traffic Management Orders for Lower Road C4

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Ongoing	To develop and implement a permanent redesign of Lower Road as part of phase 2

SCHEME MONITORING, SAFETY REVIEWS AND SCHEME PERFORMANCE

Following implementation, the council undertook extensive monitoring of the scheme, including traffic, cycling and bus performance data, independent Road Safety Audits, collision analysis, community feedback and equality impact assessment.

Impact on cycling levels

Since the introduction of the two-way cycle track, demand has grown strongly, with average monthly cycle trips increasing 81% from 1,747 to 3,163 between 2018 and 2025. Spring average cycle counts were up 32% northbound and 21% southbound between 2024 and 2025. This demonstrates that the route now serves a significant number of users and forms an important part of the local cycling network.

The temporary two-way cycle track has proven effective, supporting a vital connection between London Bridge and Greenwich and achieving a 57% increase in cycle trips between Spring 2023 and Spring 2025, enabling a strong shift towards sustainable travel.

Impact on road safety

An independent Stage 3 Road Safety Audit completed following opening identified a number of opportunities for improvements. Within six months, the council delivered a range of measures including enhanced signage and road markings, blue surfacing at conflict points, additional tactile paving, signal upgrades and changes to segregation layouts to improve emergency service access.

A subsequent Stage 4 Road Safety Audit and collision review have also been completed, with recommendations accepted and incorporated into ongoing scheme development.

A Collision Review recorded 21 collisions in 2024 (23 casualties, of which 6 were serious injuries). The review of the 16-month post-implementation period from April 2024 to July 2025 identified 15 collisions, including one serious injury (6%), indicating a reduction in collision severity compared with the pre-scheme period.

Following an initial increase in collisions in April 2024, collision levels stabilised at an average of two per month, suggesting that road users have adapted to the revised road layout.

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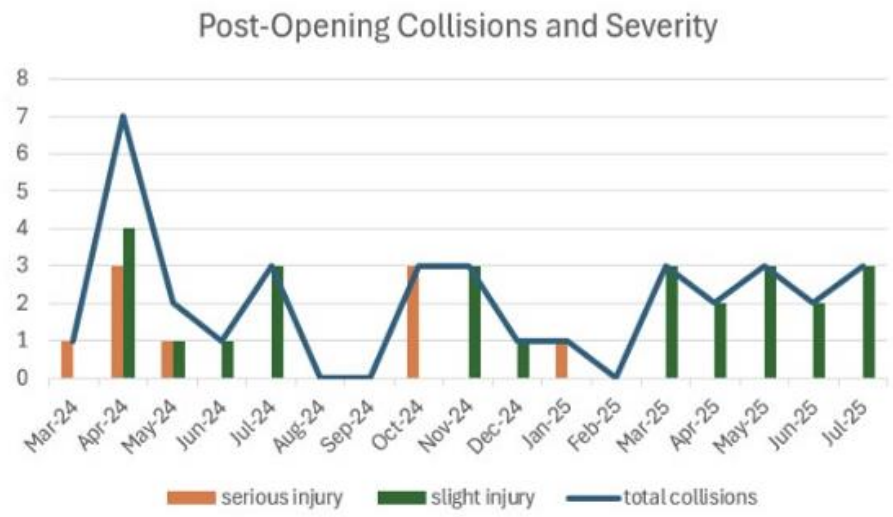


Figure 1 - Post-opening collisions and Severity between March 2024 and July 2025
note: 2025 collision data is provisional

Cyclist collisions showed that while rider numbers increased 81% between 2018 and 2025, collisions involving cyclists over the same period rose only by 0.16%, with around 2 collisions a month being reported.

Achieving this growth in cycling volumes without seeing a commensurate increase in collisions is significant, and highlights how effectively the scheme has improved road safety for riders.

To put this in context, if collisions had increased at the same rate as rider numbers, in 2025 Lower Road would have seen around 19 more cyclists involved in collisions per year based on pre-scheme averages.

Impact on bus journey times and general traffic

Traffic volumes on Lower Road Traffic volumes on Lower Road peaked at 21,152 vehicles/day in 2022 before stabilising between 17,583 and 17,749 vehicles/day from 2023 to 2025. This means that traffic volumes are now 8% lower when compared with pre-scheme levels, and 16% lower than in 2022. It is of particular note that the number of heavy and light goods vehicles has fallen by 61%.

However, despite these reductions in the number of vehicles using this route, officers acknowledge that congestion along Lower Road remains a challenge.

Although Table 1 below shows a reduction in traffic volumes on Lower Road, this should be viewed in the context of the reduced capacity. Despite lower numbers, at times the road can become significantly congested. The Council acknowledges localised traffic impacts and remains committed to improving bus performance and delivering wider strategic benefits along the Lower Road corridor.

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Table 2 - Trends of Traffic volume over the years

Year	Count by type							Total motor vehicles
	Car & taxi	LGV	HGV	Cycles	Pedestrian	Motorcycle	Buses	
2018*	13,427	3,675	316	1,747	-	766	850	19,034
2022*	16,274	2,387	602	2,424	-	1,098	791	21,152
2023**	14,129	1,492	181	2,461	1,653	1,165	912	17,879
2024***	13,712	1,641	181	3,079	1,293	1,313	890	17,737
2025****	13,828	1,365	124	3,163	1,178	1,173	739	17,446

* Dft manual count data[2]
** Vivacity data, Mar-Dec 2023
*** Vivacity data, Jan-Dec 2024
**** Vivacity data, Jan-Dec 2025

In respect of buses, speeds are monitored across the eight routes serving the corridor. Between 2018/19 and 2025/26, five of the eight routes showed reduced speeds, most notably Route 1 (-11%), Route P12 (-8%), Route C10 (-4%) and Route 225 (-4%), with Route 199 down 1%.

It is important to recognise that C4 is not the sole cause of the concerns raised. Issues such as congestion, junction performance, visibility, right-turn restrictions and bus reliability are influenced by a range of factors currently affecting the wider area. These include the Canada Water development and associated construction activity, utility works on the surrounding road network, the periodic closure of the Rotherhithe Tunnel, and the introduction of user charges at the Blackwall and Silvertown tunnels. Collectively, these factors place significant additional pressure on the local highway network, affecting traffic conditions and bus service reliability independently of the C4 scheme.

Equality Impact and Needs Assessment
An Equality Impact and Needs Assessment (EINA) was undertaken in line with the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. It identified that proposed kerb-segregated cycle infrastructure could restrict vehicle access for some residents, particularly disabled residents, and this segregation was accordingly withdrawn from the design to maintain access.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

A core principle of the programme was meaningful engagement with residents, businesses and stakeholders. Consultation formed an integral part of the programme's development, with feedback actively shaping the design and implementation of schemes. This iterative approach enabled officers to identify concerns, understand local circumstances, and make informed adjustments throughout the programme, resulting in more robust, effective and locally responsive outcomes. The programme's evolution was therefore underpinned by ongoing engagement, which played a central role in improving schemes and ensuring that decisions were informed by those most affected by them.

The original 2019 consultation received approximately 60% support for the wider Lower Road proposals and established the basis for progressing the cycling

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infrastructure component.

Following implementation, public feedback gathered through the Experimental Traffic Order process informed a number of immediate operational and safety improvements. Feedback in the first six months after opening in 2024 led to early fixes including:

- improved signage,
- blue surfacing,
- tactile paving,
- signal upgrades, and
- adjusted wand spacing for emergency access.

Officers also maintained regular engagement with ward councillors through local forums and meetings, with discussions focusing on bus delays, driveway access, pedestrian crossings, bus stop accessibility and traffic signal operation. These have been taken forward where possible, with other elements being rolled into the Phase 2 programme outlined below.

Between November and December 2025, the council undertook a non-statutory engagement exercise on making the scheme permanent and introducing further safety improvements. A total of 1,356 responses were received, **with approximately** 77% expressing overall support for the proposals, although responses within Rotherhithe itself were more evenly divided.

The engagement directly influenced the final design. In response to feedback received, the council proposed:

1. Reinstating right turns at Culling Road and Ann Moss Way,
2. increasing separation between cyclists and general traffic at key junctions,
3. Introducing raised junction tables,
4. Adding a yellow box junction at Redriff Road,
5. Realigning the cycle track at Orange Place
6. Adding belisha beacons at floating bus stop crossings, and the Seven Islands Leisure Centre (due to access concerns for disabled residents).

The council also amended proposals in response to concerns identified through the Equality Impact and Needs Assessment, including the removal of certain kerb segregation measures where these could adversely affect access for disabled residents.

Statutory consultation on the permanent Traffic Management Orders was subsequently carried out between 12 March and 2 April 2026. Of the 223 valid representations received, approximately 71% were fully or partially supportive.

DECISION TO MAKE THE SCHEME PERMANENT

Officers assessed the outcomes of scheme monitoring, Road Safety Audits, collision data, equality considerations and consultation responses against the scheme's original objectives.

The evidence demonstrated that the scheme had successfully achieved its primary objective of substantially increasing cycling levels and completing a strategic

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section of the London cycling network. The safety issues identified following implementation were considered capable of being addressed through targeted design modifications, while consultation findings indicated overall support for retaining the scheme and delivering further improvements to improve its operation and address stakeholders' concerns.

Taking these considerations into account, a decision was made by the Leader of the Council to make the Lower Road Cycleway 4 scheme permanent on 3 September 2026, together with a package of associated safety and operational improvements.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND PHASE 2

While the permanent scheme delivers significant active travel benefits, monitoring demonstrates that further intervention is required to address congestion and bus journey time impacts.

The council has already implemented measures intended to improve traffic flow, or will shortly be doing so following the decision to make the scheme permanent. These changes include:

- A parking relocation scheme, which moving parking bays off Lower Road (between Redriff Road and Plough Way) to Cope Street and Rotherhithe Old Road, to improve traffic flow, which was completed in February 2026.

- A yellow box junction is proposed to be reinstated at the Redriff Road/Lower Road junction to keep the junction clear and improve safety and traffic movement.

- Design changes have been developed at the Culling Road, Ann Moss Way and Chilton Grove junctions, including reinstating right turns at Culling Road and Ann Moss Way.

However, analysis indicates that fully resolving bus reliability and network performance issues is likely to require delivery of the wider Lower Road gyratory redesign originally envisaged in the 2019 scheme.

Officers are therefore progressing the development of Phase 2 of the Lower Road programme, with a particular focus on improving bus journey times, reducing congestion and enhancing overall network performance. Public consultation will be undertaken on the Phase 2 proposals as they are developed.

Officers are currently developing the designs, with two principal options under consideration.

While the permanent scheme is delivering significant benefits in terms of active travel, road safety and public realm improvements, officers acknowledge ongoing challenges in relation to traffic congestion and bus journey time reliability. Addressing these issues is critical to ensuring that the full range of programme objectives are realised and that the transport network functions effectively for all

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users.

Since implementation, the council has introduced measures to improve traffic flow, including the relocation of parking bays and the reinstatement of a yellow box junction at Redriff Road. Consistent with the wider programme approach, these measures have been informed by operational monitoring, stakeholder feedback and ongoing engagement with local communities and transport operators.

While these interventions have delivered improvements, analysis indicates that fully addressing bus reliability and wider network performance issues is likely to require implementation of the broader Lower Road gyratory redesign that formed a key component of the original 2019 proposals.

Officers are therefore progressing the development of Phase 2 of the Lower Road programme, with a particular focus on improving bus journey times, reducing congestion and enhancing overall network performance, while maintaining the active travel benefits delivered through the permanent scheme. As with previous phases of the programme, engagement and consultation will be central to the development of proposals, enabling residents, businesses, stakeholders and transport users to inform and help refine scheme designs before any decisions are taken.

Officers are currently developing the designs, with two principal options under consideration:

Option 1 would retain the existing gyratory arrangement and seek to improve its performance through detailed analysis and modelling. This would focus on identifying junction efficiencies at Plough Way, Redriff Road and Hawkstone Road. As there are no bus lanes in this area, any improvement in capacity would benefit bus movements and general traffic alike.

Option 2 would remove the gyratory, with Bestwood Street and Rotherhithe Old Road becoming two-way operation for general traffic. Lower Road between Redriff Road and Hawkstone Road would become bus-only, with the aim of improving bus journey times along this section.

Wider improvements

Cyclists currently switch sides of the road at the Redriff Road junction, requiring dedicated signal stage within an already congested gyratory. This introduces delays for both general traffic and buses. Options are being explored to relocate the crossing movement to the Surrey Quays Road junction, where there is greater spare capacity. If proven beneficial, this change could be incorporated into either

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option.

The intervening links are also being reviewed to identify pinch points that may be constraining capacity, including the potential rationalisation of parking and loading arrangements.

Funding

At present, no funding has been identified to deliver the Phase 2 of this programme. Progression beyond the current stage will therefore be dependent on securing an appropriate funding source, and no commitment to delivery can be made until this is in place.

Lane Rental Scheme

Alongside targeted investment in highway infrastructure and network management, the Council has also been exploring additional tools to reduce the disruption caused by roadworks and street works, which are a significant contributor to congestion on the local road network.

Lane Rental was introduced by the Department for Transport to tackle the disproportionate impact that roadworks can have on congestion, journey reliability and bus performance on the busiest parts of the highway network. The principle behind the scheme is simple: where works take place on the most traffic-sensitive roads during the most disruptive periods, a daily charge applies.

This creates a strong incentive for utility companies and highway authorities to complete works more quickly, collaborate with other promoters, adopt innovative construction methods, and move activities to off-peak, overnight or weekend periods wherever possible. By encouraging works to be planned and delivered in a way that minimises disruption, lane rental seeks to reduce the congestion costs imposed on road users and support the more efficient operation of the highway network.

To help address congestion in Southwark, the Council successfully applied this year to the Secretary of State for Transport for approval to introduce a Lane Rental Scheme and are aiming to introduce it by spring 2027.

The scheme builds on the model that Transport for London has operated on its strategic road network since 2012, where charges are applied to works taking place on the busiest and most traffic-sensitive roads at the most disruptive times.

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Evidence from TfL's scheme demonstrates that lane rental has been effective in changing industry behaviour and reducing the impact of roadworks. Since its introduction, there has been a 27% increase in utility works being undertaken overnight on lane rental routes, helping to remove disruption from peak periods. TfL also reports that journey times at peak hours where works were being carried out were 5-8% quicker than before, that the duration of works reduced through earlier coordination and more efficient programming of works, while 98% of TfL works and 83% of utility works have avoided lane rental charges by adopting less disruptive working practices.

Recognising the strategic importance of Lower Road and the congestion challenges experienced on this corridor, Southwark has designated Lower Road within the highest charging band of its Lane Rental Scheme. As a result, works promoters carrying out planned works on this route during chargeable periods will face charges of £2,500 per day. This rate mirrors that applied by TfL on the most traffic-sensitive parts of its network and reflects the significant disruption that road occupation can cause on Lower Road.

The Council expects this approach to encourage promoters to minimise the duration of works, maximise collaborative working opportunities and, wherever practicable, undertake activities outside the busiest periods. Emergency works required to maintain public safety and essential services will, as under the national framework, continue to be accommodated where necessary.

The Council expects the scheme to deliver long-term benefits across the borough by reducing the time roads are occupied, improving coordination between works promoters, encouraging innovation in construction methods and reducing congestion on key routes. Any surplus generated through the scheme will be ringfenced and reinvested in measures that further reduce the impact of roadworks and improve the operation of Southwark's highway network.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Title of document(s) (Insert hyperlink here)	Title of department/unit Address	Name Phone number
Title of document(s) (Insert hyperlink here)	Title of department/unit Address	Name Phone number

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Insert title of document
Appendix 2	Insert title of document
Appendix 3	Insert title of document

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Appendix 4	Insert title of document

AUDIT TRAIL

This section must be included in all reports.

Lead Officer	Polyvios Polyviou, Head of Highways and Sustainable Transport	
Report Author	Nazihah Begum, Project Manager	
Version	Draft	
Dated	21/09/2026	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	**Comments Sought**	**Comments Included**
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance		
Strategic Director, Finance	Yes	
List other officers here		
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes/No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		28 September 2026