



## Designing mobility for attractive cities

Mobility is at the crossroads of various urban policy: Thriving Streets is connecting mobility with economic prosperity, accessibility, inclusion, participation and health to encourage a change towards more resilient and attractive cities. As an URBACT Action Planning Network, this project aims to improve sustainable local policies through integrated action planning and an organised process of exchange and learning among cities across Europe. It is a network of ten cities working together to improve sustainable mobility in urban areas from an economic and social perspective.



## LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

### LOWER ROAD...A THRIVING HIGH STREET FOR ALL

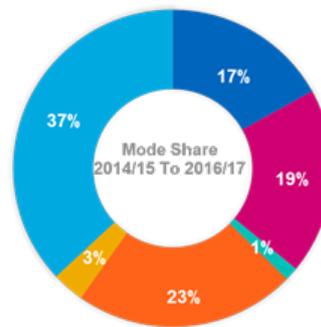
## Borough context

- Southwark is home to 320.000 people and by 2031 its population is expected to increase by 20%.
- Southwark is a diverse borough with just over half (51%) of the population of white ethnicity compared to 84% nationally, 28% black 10% Asian and 8% mixed and over 120 languages.
- 52% of adults and 21% of young have mobility impairment. 45% of 10-11 years old and 50% of adults were considered as being overweight.
- The main areas of development in Southwark will bring about 27.000 new homes and 26.000 new jobs
- 40% of households own a car.

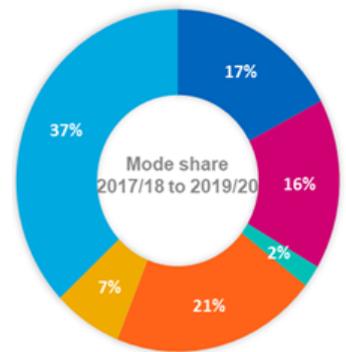
# Challenge

The integrated action plan focuses on Lower Road – a strategic road with lot of traffic. The area – home to 17.000+ inhabitants – will undergo a major redevelopment. It is important that this project addresses the real needs of residents and involves them all through the entire process. Specific challenges in the area:

- Safety and traffic: the area is car-oriented, intimidating for pedestrians, pedestrian crossings are difficult and unsafe, cycling facilities are non-existent, air quality is poor, just like perception of safety.
- Public realm: sidewalks are narrow, walking routes are often indirect, secure bicycle parking facilities are lacking.
- Attractiveness and things to do: the area lacks character, overall non-inclusive environment, playgrounds lack equipment, seating possibilities are rare in public spaces, activities for youth are not present, green spaces are scarce, waste in streets.
- Local economy and regeneration: signs of decline in local economy – lack of destination shops, no night-time economy, closed businesses and vacant premises, no co-working space.



■ Rail/Tube/DLR ■ Bus/Tram  
■ Taxi/Other ■ Car/Motorcycle  
■ Cycle ■ Walk



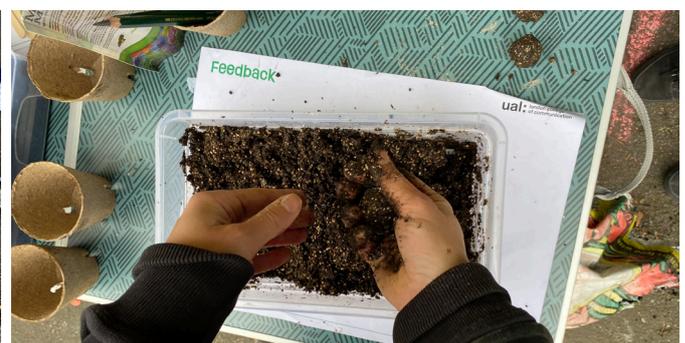
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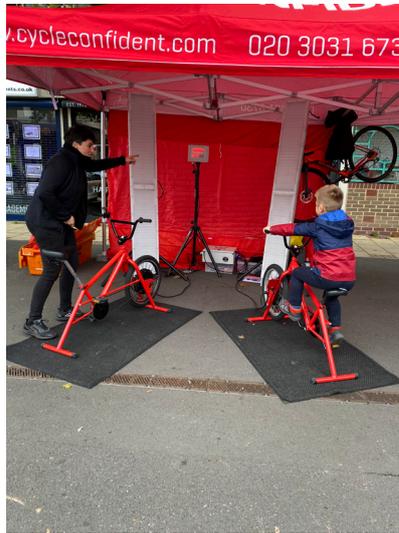
## Ambition

We envisage a street easily accessible to all walks of life, where everyone feels safe from injury and crime at any time of the day, local businesses are easily accessible and thrive, there are activities for everyone from the young to the elderly at any time of the day - and where local history, culture and art are celebrated.

## Small scale actions

On Sunday 17th October we hosted an event on the Lower Road engaging residents and businesses in the project. We had acoustic music, chalk drawing, free bike maintenance, free bike powered coffee from Vello Presso, seed-bomb making with PNK Gardens and bike games from Cycle Confident as well as free cycle training. The engagement with the local community was very positive with over 25 bikes repaired and 45+ conversations. People were happy to see the space more alive and that there was something to do and a reason to stop.





## Action plan

Our objectives:

1. **Reduce car dominance**  
Replacing one-way traffic with two-way system and introducing a segregated cycle way.
2. **Improve active travel experience for all**  
Detail design and implementation a permanent scheme to improve the infrastructure for active travel and safety, construction of temporary cycle lanes, trial of e-scooters, offering free cycle-training opportunities, introducing cycle hire scheme, trial installation and monitoring of accessibility ramps.
3. **Help local businesses to thrive and attract customers to the area**  
Explore the feasibility of thematic markets in the area.
4. **Improve the attractiveness and sense of identity of the area and activities for everyone**  
Promote local heritage and history with better signage, explore feasibility of public art installations and of reopening the adventure playground
5. **Increase connection with the environment**  
Engaging with local community gardens and connect them, implement summer school activities.

## Lesson learnt

- The mission should be to ensure the best service and environment for residents and visitors and persistently strengthening the quality of life for all.
- There is a need for strong political will combined with an experienced team of officers to bring the right change.
- Designing for one specific group with needs is likely to benefit any other group.
- A great place needs at least 10 reasons to be there.
- You are never finished. A good place is evolving.

The **Borough of Southwark** is a partner of the **Thriving Streets network**

**URBACT**  
Driving change for better cities

**European Union**  
European Regional Development Fund

**Thriving STREETS**

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