



# Tower Hamlets – A Cycling Borough





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# 1. Foreword

A quiet cycling revolution has been growing in London in recent years. The number of people choosing to cycle is rapidly increasing and this growth has been further encouraged by the Santander Cycle Hire Scheme, the construction of the Cycle Superhighways and radical new design standards that place much greater emphasis on cyclists' needs. The London Mayor has put cycling at the heart of TfL's transport agenda and, if supported by the boroughs with adequate investment, the vision of London as a cycling city to rival Amsterdam or Copenhagen is achievable.

In the recent past Tower Hamlets has been at the forefront in promoting cycling as a mainstream transport mode. The busy off-road Cable Street cycle route was the prototype of the successful Cycle Superhighways that followed and the school cycle training and participation programmes pioneered by the borough have become the template for TfL across London.

However, the Council recognises that there is a great deal more to be done. Many of the borough's roads need to be improved to make cycling safer and more convenient and an improved and expanded cycle network is needed. The barriers that stop people from cycling need to be broken down.

Based on GLA statistics and projections Tower Hamlets was the fastest growing area in the country over the 10 year period to 2012, with the population increasing by 27% to a total of 263,000 residents in 2012. Over the next 10 years the population is expected to increase by an additional 20%, to reach more than 320,000 residents by 2023. Sustainable growth needs a sustainable transport system and Tower Hamlets' vision is for cycling to play a central role in the borough's growth in order to relieve congestion on the roads, buses and train systems.

This strategy recognises that increased cycling has an important role in improving the health and quality of life the borough's residents, bringing about economic benefits and making places more attractive, 'liveable' and safe.

## 2. Our Vision

The Tower Hamlets Community Plan 2015 sets out the borough's overall ambitions and defines the priorities for change. The plan's priorities and objectives are arranged around four themes:

- A Great Place to Live
- A Fair and Prosperous Community
- A Safe and Supportive Community
- A Healthy Community

The emerging action plan aims to deliver a cross-partnership campaign to “get Tower Hamlets more active”, which includes a focus on:

- Encouraging walking and cycling
- Enhanced use of parks, sport and leisure facilities
- Improving road safety
- Supporting people with disabilities to be more active

### 2.1 ‘Tower Hamlets – A Cycling Borough’

We want Tower Hamlets to be one of the easiest and safest places to cycle in London and to make cycling the natural choice of transport for most people.

A Cycling Borough means:

- a healthier population;
- a less congested road network; and
- a more prosperous place.

2.2 There is great potential for a significant increase in cycling in Tower Hamlets. The borough is perhaps uniquely poised for growth in cycling because:

- Cycle use is already rapidly expanding despite the clear need for improvement in facilities and infrastructure;
- Tower Hamlets (along with Newham) is the flattest borough in London;
- Almost half the population is aged between 20 and 39, the most popular ages for regular cycling, and large population growth is expected in the next ten years;
- Tower Hamlets has an unprecedented network of off-road canal and riverside paths, which can be used by leisure and commuter cyclists alike.



### 2.3 But there are challenges to overcome:

- High quality provision for cycling will mean allocating more road space to cyclists, sometimes at expense of motorised modes, and the dominance of on-street car parking will need to be reduced;
- Safety is the number one reason why many people do not cycle so major improvements to the cycling environment are required; and
- Practical and social barriers to cycling need to be addressed.

### 2.4 Guiding Principles

In order to deliver the vision we have established 3 key principles that will guide all future cycling projects and initiatives:

- **A Better Cycle Network**  
Both the quality and quantity of cycling infrastructure and facilities needs significant improvement and this strategy sets out how we will achieve it.
- **Safer Cycling**  
Safety is the primary concern of existing and potential cyclists and how we address this critical issue is key to the success of this strategy.
- **Cycling for All**  
This principle can be divided into two parts. Firstly, the health benefits of regular cycling mean we want to encourage cycling for all, from 8 to 80 years old, and remove the barriers that stop people cycling. Secondly, we want to ensure that a better environment for cycling means improving conditions for local business and better public spaces.

### 2.5 We have set out 32 pledges, highlighted green, in this strategy setting out how we will deliver the vision. They will have their own targets and delivery schedules but in order to measure overall progress we have set ourselves 4 over-arching targets, further details of which are given in Section 9. By 2025 we will at least:

1. Double the volume of cyclists in the borough
2. Increase the proportion of residents cycling to work to 15%
3. Reduce the risk of cyclist accidents by half
4. Double the number of children cycling to school

## 3. Health Benefits of Cycling

Increased cycling will bring about substantial improvements to the health and quality of life of the borough's residents and we will encourage and promote cycling as a means to reducing child obesity and mortality rates throughout the population.

### 3.1 The Health Benefits:

Cycling has several well documented benefits in relation to health and wellbeing:

- Cycling is excellent exercise. It helps people meet the recommended physical activity guidelines, improves their physical and mental health and their well-being, while reducing the risk of premature death and ill-health.
- Cycling fits into daily routines better than many other forms of exercise, because it doubles up as transport to work, school or the shops. It's easier than finding extra time to visit the gym and far less costly.
- Research published in the medical journal The Lancet concluded that, potentially, increased walking and cycling in urban England and Wales could save the NHS roughly £17bn (2010 prices) within 20 years because of its impact on diseases associated with physical inactivity.
- Research for TfL has shown that the health benefits of active travel far outweigh the risks from hazards such as air quality and road traffic collisions. In the scenario provided in the report the benefit outweighed the harms by 62:1.
- Cycling from a young age can help to address childhood obesity. Boys aged 10-16 who cycle regularly to school are 30% more likely to meet recommended fitness levels, while girls who cycle are 7 times more likely to do so.
- Cycling, which of course has zero emissions, improves air quality for everyone if those cycled trips would otherwise have been made by motorised means. And improved air quality will lead to a reduction in premature deaths across London.

### 3.2 Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

Promoting active travel is a key component of Tower Hamlet's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. We know that there are higher levels of lifestyle risk factors in Tower Hamlets compared to elsewhere. In the Tower Hamlets population:

- 13% of children aged 4-5 are obese (7th highest in the country) and 1 in 4 children aged 10-11 are obese, amongst the highest in the country;
- 68% do not meet recommended levels of physical activity (compared to 66% nationally) with significantly lower levels in more deprived parts of the borough.

## Tower Hamlets – A Cycling Borough

Consultation on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy asked residents what would keep them healthy. Healthy food, exercise and environment were the top 3 responses. However, there was a sense that more needs to be done to encourage people to “Get Active.”

Improving the cycle network and cycling safety are key elements in this strategy to encourage more cycling. Section 7, Cycling for All, sets out several pro-active initiatives including school training and participation programmes to embed a cycling culture from early age, guided leisure rides to encourage new and inexperienced cyclists, and working with local cycling groups and clubs to promote cycling.

**We will ensure that initiatives to promote and encourage more cycling are developed and implemented as part of Tower Hamlets’ Health and Wellbeing Action Plans.**

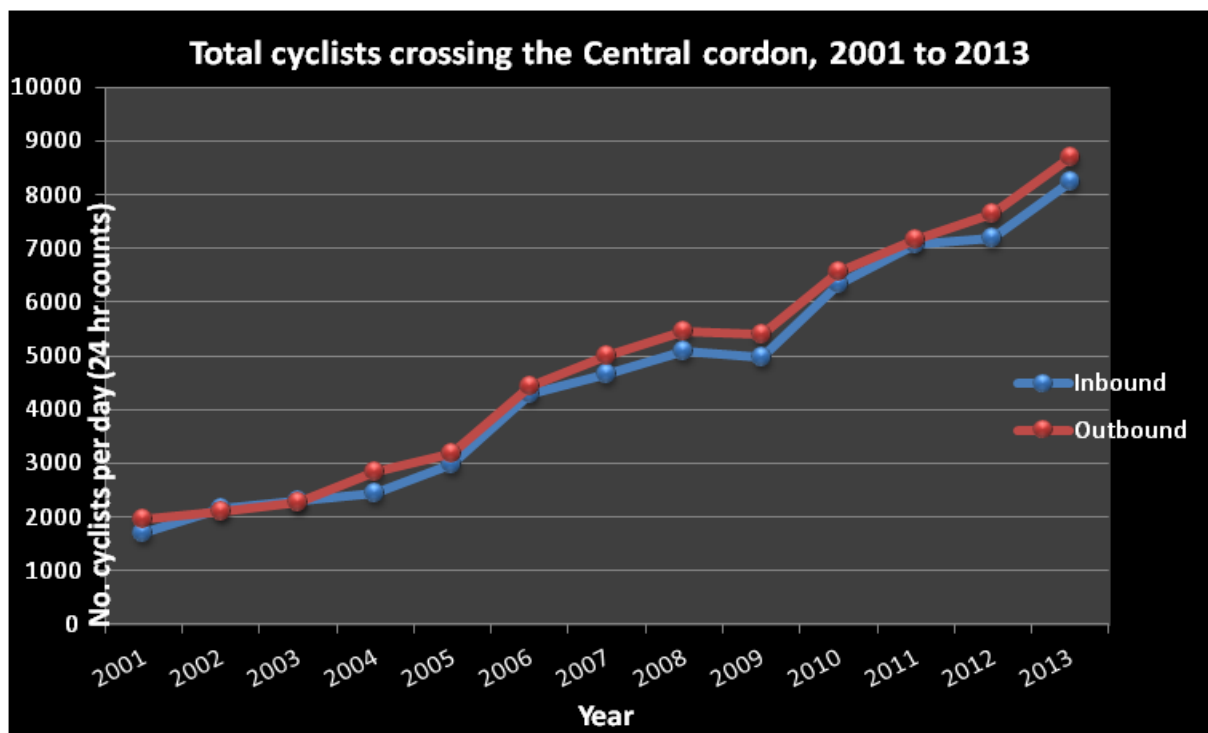


## 4. Growth in Cycling

It is clear that there is great potential for a significant increase in cycling in Tower Hamlets. With the implementation of this cycling strategy we plan to increase the rate of cycling growth and treble cycling in the borough by 2025.

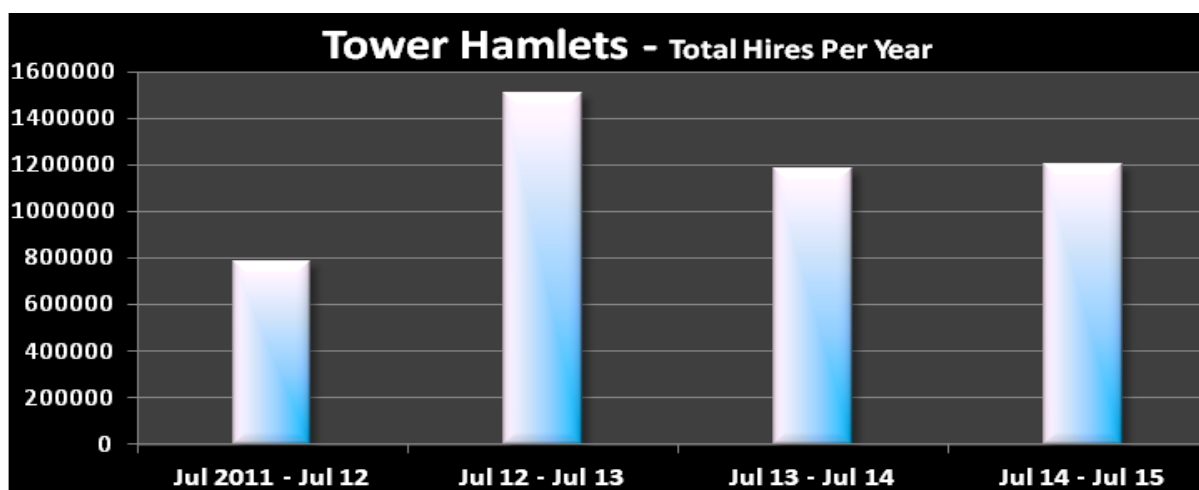
### 4.1 Recent Cycling Growth

Traffic survey and Census data has shown that the amount of cycling in Tower Hamlets has quadrupled between 2001 and 2013, growth which exceeds the inner London average. Figure 1 shows the increase in cyclists crossing the Central London cordon, which passes through the west of the borough.



**Figure 1 – Cyclist Volumes Crossing Central London Cordon**

The Santander Cycle Hire Scheme is well used in the borough with 1.2 million hires in the last 12 months as illustrated in figure 3, which equates to over 3000 hires per day. After the spike in Olympics year the level of use has remained constant.



**Figure 2 – London Cycle Hire Scheme Usage in Tower Hamlets**

### 4.2 Capacity for Future Cycling Growth

The recent trend for increased cycling across London, and especially in Tower Hamlets, allied to population growth mean that cycling volumes in Tower Hamlets look set to increase significantly over the next ten years. However, Tower Hamlets also has a very high level of public transport accessibility especially in underground and rail.

Tower Hamlets was the fastest growing area in the country over the 10 year period to 2012, with the population increasing by 27% to a total of 263,000 residents in 2012. Over the next 10 years the population is expected to increase by an additional 20%, to reach more than 320,000 residents by 2023. There is huge potential for increase cycling in Tower Hamlets if the infrastructure is right and a culture of cycling is developed:

- Nearly two thirds of potentially cyclable trips are currently made by car with the remainder largely made by bus;
- Of the 4.3 million potentially cyclable trips made every day, 3.5 million would take less than 20 minutes for most people to cycle.

Tower Hamlets and Newham are the flattest boroughs in London, which makes for easy cycling. The demographics of the borough are also encouraging for increased cycling. The borough is the 2nd most densely populated in London at 13,296 residents per Km<sup>2</sup> and almost half of all residents in the borough (49%) are aged between 20 and 39.

Car ownership in the borough is also lower than the inner London average. According to the 2010 London Travel Demand Survey 61% of households do not own a car. The lack of space on the road network and the population growth means an increase in cycling (and other non-car modes) is essential to reduce congestion and help people get around the borough more easily.

## 5. A Better Cycle Network

A key outcome of this strategy will be to transform the network of cycle routes in the borough. We want to develop a dense network of cycle routes on both busy and quiet roads. We will provide infrastructure and facilities to the latest high quality design standards and catering to all types of cyclist.

### 5.1 Existing Network

Tower Hamlet's transport links, both road and rail, are dominated by east/west movement. This is because central London is located on the western edge of the borough and also because the Thames forms an effective barrier to north/south movement. It is not surprising then that cycle movement is also predominantly east/west and the borough has two cycle superhighways along this axis in close proximity - CS2 (along the A11) and CS3 (Cable Street). These two routes cater for 60% of all cyclists entering or leaving central London to/from Tower Hamlets.

In the rest of the borough where cycle lanes have been provided they are now below the new design standards and some routes are discouraging and confusing for new and inexperienced cyclists. For this strategy the existing cycle network is defined in Figure 3.

### 5.2 Our Proposed Network

We have developed and mapped proposals to upgrade the existing network and introduce new cycle routes that are safe, convenient and comfortable to use.

#### 5.2.1 Cycle Super Highway Upgrades

The CS2 (A11) and CS3 (Cable Street) will remain the key east/west routes to and from central London. They already cater for 10,000 cycling trips a day, which represents 60% of cyclists entering/leaving central London.

Tower Hamlets' CS3, which was the template for cycle superhighways, has been a victim of its own success and Cable Street suffers from crowding at peak times. Plans are being developed to increase the capacity of this route and integrate better with surrounding places. Potential options include the possibility of converting Cable Street into a 'Cycle Street', a concept that would involve removing most motor traffic except for access.

The CS2 upgrade by TfL should be complete by April 2016 and should significantly improve safety for cyclists on that route.

**We will implement plans, in consultation with cyclists and local residents, to improve CS3 so as to increase its capacity and safety at peak times and explore the idea of a Cycle Street.**

**We will monitor and review the impact of the CS2 upgrade, especially with regard to safety, and apply the lessons learned to future cycle schemes.**

### 5.2.2 Upgrade of Existing Routes

A key part of this strategy is to review the old London Cycle Network and other signed cycle routes and upgrade them to the latest LCDS. The alignment of the old routes is generally suitable, particularly as they cater for most of the north/south desire lines.

However, many of the routes have little or no provision for cyclists and the cycle lanes, where present, do not meet the latest guidance for quality. The strategy therefore proposes a systematic upgrade of these routes, using the new Cycle Level of Service (CLoS) assessment process. Depending on the route the upgrades could consist of segregated cycle tracks/lanes, 'traditional' painted cycle lanes or the Quietway approach (see below).

The programme of upgrade works will be prioritised with local cycling groups and TfL and can also be linked with other planning and highway development plans. Initial priorities will include segregated or partially segregated cycle tracks in Burdett Road and Manchester Road.

**We will upgrade the existing signed cycle network on borough roads to meet guidance set out in the new LCDS, including segregated cycle tracks where appropriate, and achieving a better level of service.**

### 5.2.3 Quietways

Quietways is the name given by TfL to a new network of routes on quiet roads for those cyclists for whom comfort and a quieter environment is important. That said, Quietways will be as direct as possible, allowing permeability for cyclists through roads closed to motor traffic. Quietways will have their own signage developed by TfL and will appear on London-wide cycle maps. In general, dedicated lanes will not be required on these routes due to low levels of motor traffic.

Currently there is one proposed Quietway in Tower Hamlets, illustrated on figure 4, which runs through Hackney Wick to Liverpool Street. Design options for Phase 1 (Hackney Wick to Stepney Green) are currently being developed whilst Phase 2 will be implemented after the Whitechapel Crossrail development is completed.

There is a desire to provide an on-road Quietway that follows the Regent's canal in order to reduce crowding on this corridor at peak times and provide an alternative route at night.

**We will work with TfL to implement the borough's first Quietway which will cross the borough from Hackney Wick to Liverpool Street.**

**We will work with the London Borough of Hackney and TfL to develop and implement a Quietway along the Regent's Canal alignment.**

#### **5.2.4 New Cycle Routes**

By strategically adding further links to the cycle network a denser grid can be developed, ensuring easy access to network for all residents. The proposed new routes are shown on figure 4 and the type of cycle facilities required will depend on the nature of each section.

The neighbouring boroughs of Newham, Hackney and the City of London are also planning new routes that will impact or connect with Tower Hamlets. Hackney plans a route along Hackney Road where cycle flows are as high as CS2 and CS3. A key section of Hackney Road falls within Tower Hamlets.

By 2025 we envisage a dense network of high quality cycle routes as illustrated in figure 5.

**We will develop and implement a denser network of cycle routes so that all areas in the borough have easy access to the network.**

#### **5.2.5 The 'Leisure Loop'**

The legacy of London's industrial past includes the canal network comprising, in Tower Hamlets, the Regent's Canal, the Hertford Union Canal, the Lee Navigation and the Limehouse Cut. From this central loop there are spurs where cyclists can continue off-road to the Olympic Park and Lea Valley in the north-east, Islington and Camden in the north-west and all the way to Tower Bridge in the south-west.

Whilst the paths that make up the 'Leisure Loop' already exist there is significant room for improvement. But working in conjunction with the Canal and River Trust, which manages these routes, the 'Leisure Loop' could be a powerful resource for encouraging new cyclists.





**Existing Network**

- Cycle Superhighway
- On-road cycle network (to be upgraded)
- Canal and riverside path
- Park and green spaces route
- Green spaces and parks







WALTHAM FOREST

HACKNEY

OLYMPIC PARK

**Proposed Routes**

- Quietway Phase 1
- Quietway Phase 2
- Potential Additional Routes
- Planned Routes by Neighbouring Boroughs
- Parallel Canal Route Quietway

NEWHAM

CITY OF LONDON



SOUTHWARK

GREENWICH

LEWISHAM





**Future Network**

- Cycle Superhighway
- Upgraded on-road cycle network
- Canal and riverside path
- Park and green spaces route
- Quietway Phase 1
- Quietway Phase 2
- Potential Additional Routes
- Planned Routes by Neighbouring Boroughs
- Parallel Canal Route Quietway
- Green spaces and parks



We will:

- Develop new legible mapping, signing and a promotion strategy to encourage use by new cyclists;
- Widen tow paths at pinch points and upgrade sections where cycling is difficult;
- Improve access to the loop and increase the number of access points where possible;
- Work with the LLDC and Newham to continue the Lee Navigation spur further south to the Royal Victoria Dock as part of the Leeway as and when the former industrial sites along this section are re-developed.

### 5.2.6 Filtered Permeability

‘Filtered Permeability’ is the term that has been coined to describe situations where cyclists can travel through an area (permeable) but motor vehicles cannot (filtered). Typical examples are allowing cyclists to use one-way streets in both directions and allowing cyclists through cul-de-sacs.

A pilot study has already been carried out in an extensive City fringe area bounded by Hackney Road, Vallance Road, Cable Street and the western borough boundary. The study has recommended that 38 one-way streets can be opened up to two-way cycling with relatively low cost changes to signs and road markings.

This strategy aims to assess all zones in the borough (each zone being that area bounded by the cycle network) and undertake a methodical review of filtered permeability issues. Zones will be prioritised according to need and the improvements implemented to an annual programme.

**We will review every ward/zone in the borough for cycling permeability issues and implement quick and simple measures, such as allowing safe cycling in both directions in many one-way streets and opening up no-through roads to cyclists.**

### 5.2.7 Stepney School Cycle Partnership

A pilot scheme in Stepney centred on a cluster of schools is being assessed to make the neighbourhood safer and more convenient for walking and cycling. In addition to making the area more permeable for cyclists some roads could be closed to motor traffic to prevent rat-running, whilst ensuring access to property is retained. The proposals are closely linked with existing school cycle training programmes. Subject to the success of the pilot scheme others will be considered throughout the borough.

**We will implement the first School Cycle Partnership in Stepney and consider similar schemes across the borough.**

### **5.2.8 River Crossings**

Tower Hamlets is bounded on two sides by rivers, the Thames and the Lea, natural barriers which restrict movement between the borough and its neighbours Greenwich and Newham.

New cycle and pedestrian bridges across the River Lea are part of Tower Hamlets' and Newham's master planning. The section of the River Lea between the A13 and the A11 is expected to undergo significant change in the coming decade as old brownfield sites are re-developed and we use these opportunities to provide further river crossings where appropriate and continue the River Lea path southwards as part of the Leeway, working with the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC).

The Thames is a much greater barrier and there are no bridges east of Tower Bridge whilst the two main road tunnels are not suitable for cyclists for safety and air quality reasons. A number of crossing options exist, some of which could be enhanced for cyclists:

- **Greenwich Foot Tunnel**

The tunnel is well used by pedestrians and cyclists alike but there are certain times of day when cycling may be practical due to low pedestrian usage. LB Greenwich manages the tunnel and is planning to trial a real time IT system to allow cycling when pedestrian numbers are very low.

- **Docklands Light Railway and Emirates Skyline**

The DLR branches to Woolwich and Lewisham can both be used to cross the Thames. Following a successful trial in 2013 passengers can now take bikes on all DLR trains off-peak. Bicycles can also be taken on the Emirates Skyline cable car between Greenwich and Newham.

- **New Thames Bridge**

Finally, Sustrans has an ambitious plan to build a pedestrian and cycle bridge across the Thames between Canary Wharf and Rotherhithe, a project which clearly has transformative potential. This major project is currently unfunded and a feasibility report is due in late 2015.

**We will work with Greenwich to trial their planned intelligent cycle system in the Greenwich Foot Tunnel to allow cycling when pedestrian volumes are low. We will work with Newham and developers to provide additional crossings for pedestrians and cyclists across the River Lea.**

**We support the Sustrans idea of a new Thames Crossing in principle but will review the feasibility report when published and assess the funding**

### 5.2.9 Quality of Cycling Infrastructure

High quality provision for cycling in Tower Hamlets, as across many London boroughs, is lacking in many neighbourhoods. Where cycle facilities have been provided in the past there is significant room for improvement.

The new London Cycle Design Standards (LCDS) set the bar considerably higher for the design of cycle facilities, including a far greater degree of physical separation on busy roads, both on links and at junctions.

The LCDS include a 'Cyclist Level of Service' (CLoS) scoring tool for designers to ensure that cycle schemes achieve the highest standard in terms of safety, comfort and convenience for all types of cyclists.

All future cycle network routes and upgrades of existing routes will be implemented and maintained in accordance with the new cycle standards. Our aspiration is for all cycle routes, both those proposed and existing ones to be upgraded, to achieve a good or better Cycle Level of Service (CLoS) score.

We will maintain staff training in the latest cycle design standards and expectations for all appropriate technical staff, especially those charged with planning, designing and maintaining the borough's roads.

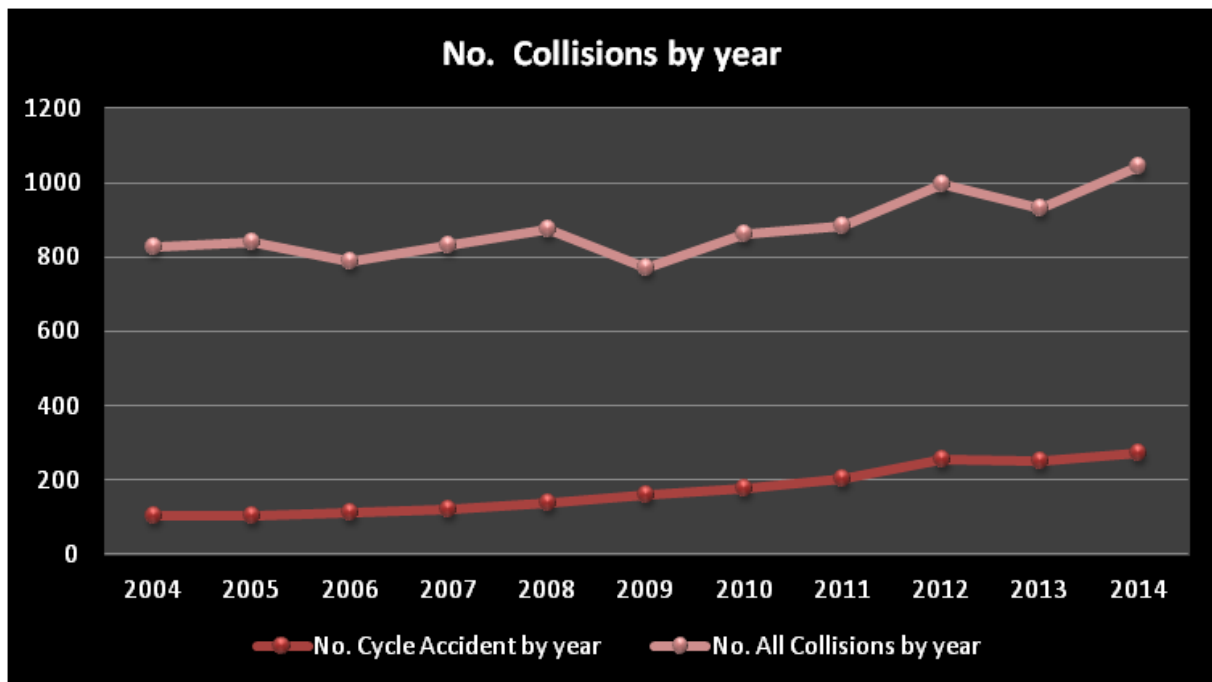


## 6. Safer Cycling

A key outcome of this strategy will be to significantly improve safety for cyclists. A high level of road accidents is a major concern in itself but given that perception of poor road safety is one of the key barriers to uptake of cycling, it is a problem that needs to be rigorously addressed. The aim of this cycling strategy must be to get this risk of accidents falling year by year.

### 6.1 Trends in Cycling Accidents

The last ten years of personal injury collision data has been assessed to understand the trends in cycling accidents. Figure 6 illustrates the trend of increasing cyclist accidents



**Figure 6 – Total Road Traffic Accidents and Cycle Accidents in Tower Hamlets**

It is not surprising that the frequency of cyclist accidents has increased over the last ten years due to the significant increase in the number of cyclists on the roads. But an index of risk can be created to show the change in cyclist accidents in relation to the volume of cyclists each year. Figure 7 illustrates the index over time.



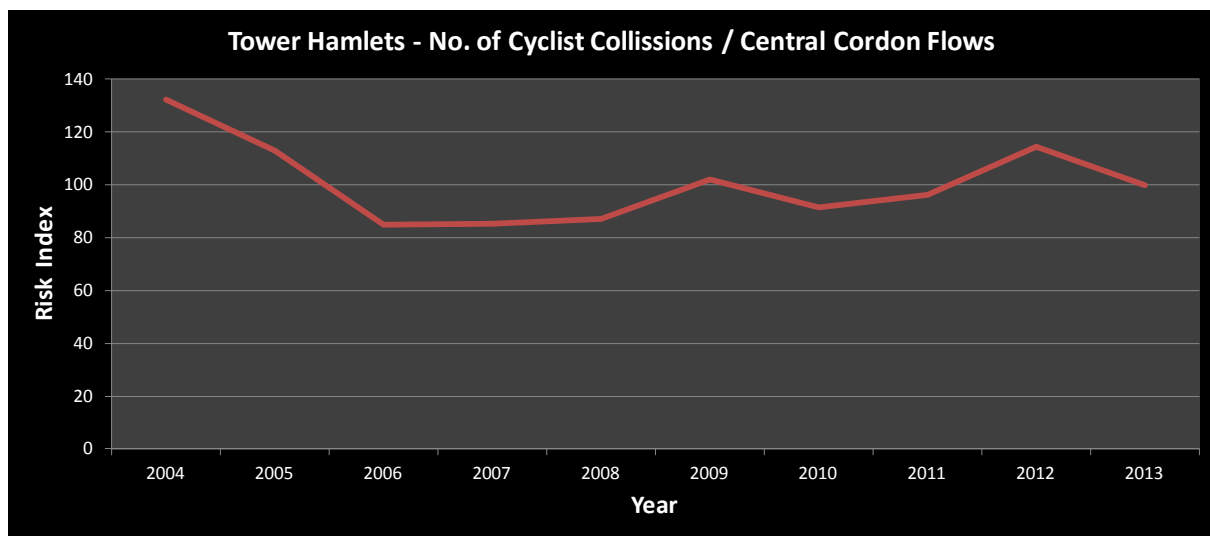


Figure 7 – Cyclist Risk Index (2013 based at 100)

However there is one positive trend from the accident analysis and that is that the frequency of killed and serious injury accidents has remained fairly constant over the last 10 years and this represents a substantial decrease in risk relative to the growth in cycle volumes.

The TfL road network (TLRN) makes up less than 5% of the roads in London. These ‘red routes’ are maintained, improved and managed exclusively by TfL. In Tower Hamlets the TLRN constitutes some the busiest routes for motor traffic and cyclists. Over half of all cyclist accidents in the borough occur on these roads as shown in figure 8. In the last 3 years 392 cyclist accidents (including 43 serious and 2 fatalities) occurred on borough roads. In the same period there were 387 (including 51 serious and 6 fatalities) on the TLRN.

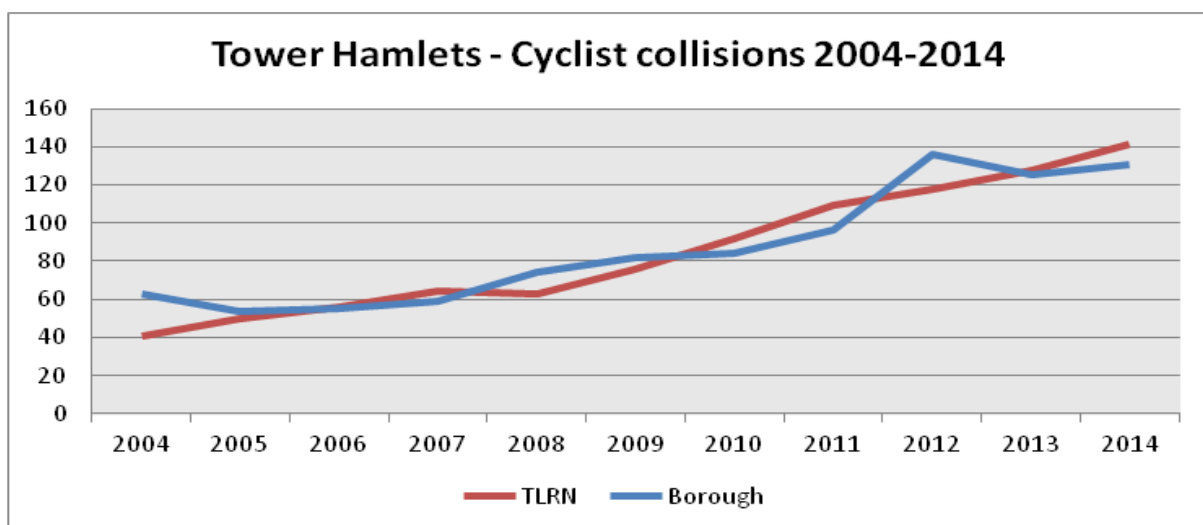


Figure 8 – Cyclist Accidents on TfL and Borough controlled roads.

## 6.2 Improving Road Safety

Our proposals for improving road safety include major investment in the quality of safe cycling infrastructure, the provision of training, traffic enforcement and support for high safety standards for lorries and their drivers.

### 6.2.1 Safer Scheme Design

The new London Cycle Design Standards (LCDS) set the bar considerably higher for the design of cycle facilities, including a far greater degree of physical separation on busy roads. All future cycle network routes and junctions and upgrades of existing routes should be implemented in accordance with the new standards, and the strongest emphasis is on safety.

The impact of high quality infrastructure should not be underestimated; TfL estimate that the CS2 upgrade on the A11 will prevent 40 – 50 accidents per year, a reduction of almost one third. We will closely monitor the accident rates on the CS2 route to establish the actual level of reductions and learn the lessons for future schemes.

By introducing far greater ‘filtered permeability’ and ‘Quietways’ (as described in Section 5) we will enable many more cyclists to use quieter roads and make shorter journeys, reducing their exposure to traffic risk. We have already identified 38 one-way streets in the west of the borough where cycling could be permitted in two directions.

**We will use the latest cycle design guidance on new schemes (and upgrades) to implement far higher standards of safety and comfort for cyclists. We will physically separate cyclists from motor traffic where appropriate.**

**We will expand the unsigned cycling network by opening up one-way streets and no through roads to cyclists. We will work with local cyclist groups to identify and prioritise these measures.**

**We will ensure that all technical staff that undertake design, implementation and maintenance on the public highway undertake training in cycling design.**

### 6.2.2 Lower Speeds

Whilst not a specific part of this Cycling Strategy, Tower Hamlets introduced a borough wide 20 mph speed limit and ‘20’s Plenty’ campaign in April 2015. Whilst it is too early to assess the impact on road accidents, any speed reduction can only help to reduce danger to cyclists. As a general rule, for every 1 mph reduction in speed accident frequency reduces by about 5%

### 6.2.3 Traffic Enforcement

The police launched the 7 week Operation Safeway at the end of November 2013 across London following a spate of cyclist fatalities. The operation involved intensive enforcement at 170 high profile junctions across London, including several in Tower Hamlets. Motorists made up over two thirds of those that received fixed penalty notices (PCNs) but 4,200 cyclists were also given PCNS, of which the largest volume (1,600) was for not using lights.

This strategy recognises that regular and consistent enforcement activity for motorists and cyclists alike is required to improve safety for all.

**We will continue to work with police to target areas for traffic enforcement for all road users and support large scale ‘crackdown’ operations when they are planned.**

### 6.2.4 Cycle Training including Schools

Tower Hamlets, along with its delivery partners gave training to 46 schools in 2013/14 mainly to year 5 children. Over 50% of those trained achieved the national standard Bikeability Level 2, which is equates to confident cycling on quiet residential roads. Further details of the Schools Training programme is given in Section 7. The Council also provides free adult training.

**We will continue and expand our cycle training schemes in schools and we will offer training to every school to all year 5 pupils (or other appropriate ages) every year from 2016.**

**We will continue to offer free cycle training to adult residents of the borough.**

### 6.2.5 ‘Safer Lorries, Safer Cycling’ Campaign

The two main lorry contracts operated by the Council are for highways maintenance and refuse collection. Both these contracts are accredited to FORS, the nationally recognised Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme, which ensures drivers are fully trained in cycling needs.

**In the future we will require that all construction and lorry fleet contracts operated by or on behalf of the Council are accredited to FORS and that contactors will be obliged to work towards the gold standard.**

## 7. Cycling for All

This third key principle of the strategy guides a number of initiatives to make cycling easier and more practical for people from all age groups and backgrounds. It also underpins the proposition that 'A Cycling Borough' will have wider benefits for residents and businesses beyond cycling itself.

The previous sections of this strategy have set out how we will significantly improve the coverage, quality and safety of the cycle network over the next decade. Evidence suggests the increase in cycling in London in recent years has largely come from existing cyclists cycling more often rather than an increase in new cyclists. If significant growth in cycling is to be achieved then the new cyclists need to be encouraged.

Research consistently shows that safety is the number one reason given by people who do not cycle. However, there are also social, cultural and practical barriers that prevent uptake of cycling which this strategy will address. To address some of the barriers and provide incentives to attract newcomers to cycling this strategy sets out the following short and long term initiatives:

### 7.1 Schools - 'Bike It' and 'Bikeability'

The schools training programme 'Bikeability', has undergone a complete overhaul in the past 3 years. A new approach has been developed that has led to a doubling of cycling to school. The new approach involves:

- **Cycle Training**

Training is offered to all pupils in a given year group irrespective of ability. Training was carried out at 45 schools in 2014/15

- **Pool Bikes**

A pool of bikes is provided free of charge so that those children without access to bikes can enjoy full participation.

- **Including Parents**

Whilst many children are interested in the idea of cycling to school we found that in many cases the parents were more reluctant. By including adult members of the family in the training programme we have found that families are more likely to engage in the process and allow/encourage cycling to school.

'Bike It' is a separate cycling programme that aims to develop a culture of cycling among children. It is run by Sustrans and funded by both Tower Hamlets and TfL.

It provides bike maintenance sessions, guided leisure rides, cyclist breakfasts and other activities to help embed a culture of cycling. Bike It is an intensive approach working with an individual school through a whole year. The Bike It programme covers 6 schools per year, a mixture of primary and secondary.

**We will continue and expand our improved school cycle training programme, which includes adult members of the family and free pool bikes, to offer it to every school in the borough every year.**

**We will continue working with Sustrans and part funding the Bike It programme every year to embed a culture of cycling in the borough's school children.**

### 7.2 Sport and Leisure

Cycling for sport and leisure brings significant health benefits to its participants as set out at the beginning of this strategy. Tower Hamlets is lucky to have active cycling clubs that encourage and promote this type of cycling and there are a number of facilities to use

- **Guided Rides**

We provide a number of events each year, often working with Tower Hamlets Cycling Club, to offer guided rides around the borough and basic cycling competence sessions. We also promote Santander Cycle Rides for new cyclists in Victoria Park, Sky Rides, and will work with British Cycling's 'Breeze Champions' to promote cycling for women.

- **BMX**

A hub of activity has already developed around the Mile End BMX track from the local cycling club supported by the Urban Adventure Base, which is run by the Council's Youth Service. Following the successful 2012 Olympics BMX as a sport has rapidly developed and a new BMX track will shortly be opened at Langdon Park

- **Olympic Velodrome**

Off-road cycle tracks provide easy access from the borough to the Olympic Park and velodrome.

- **All Ability Cycling**

This club is funded by the Council and operates from Victoria Park. It is free to attend and open to all, regardless of age or ability. There are a range of bicycles available for participants, including hand cycles, wheelchair bicycles, tandems, scooters, two wheelers and training is provided by qualified instructors.

Evidence shows that encouraging casual cycling without commitment can be a powerful tool in breaking down barriers to cycling. As safety concerns are the greatest barrier to cycling, participation in fun and informal leisure cycling events can prepare cyclists for more serious utility cycling by raising their confidence and allowing them to overcome some of their concerns about traffic

### The Leisure Loop

The 16 miles of off-road network in the borough is something to be championed as a unique resource for a densely populated inner London location. The legacy of London’s industrial past includes the canal network comprising, in Tower Hamlets, the Regent’s Canal, the Hertford Union Canal, the Lee Navigation and the Limehouse Cut. From this central loop there are spurs where cyclists can continue off-road to the Olympic Park and Lea Valley in the north-east, Islington and Camden in the north-west and all the way to Tower Bridge in the south-west. The ‘Leisure Loop’ is illustrated in figure 9.



Figure 9 – ‘Leisure Loop’



Whilst the paths that make up the 'Leisure Loop' already exist there is significant room for improvement. But working in conjunction with the Canal and River Trust, which manages these routes, the 'Leisure Loop' could be a powerful resource for encouraging new cyclists whilst also serving important commuter routes.

**We will continue to work with local cycle groups and British Cycling (the national governing body) to promote cycling for sport and leisure, including Sky Rides, Santander Cycle Rides, all ability cycling club and women-only rides.**

**We will work with partners and developed to develop leisure based Cycle Hubs at the BMX track in Mile End Park and the proposed BMX track at Langdon Park.**

### 7.3 Local Cycling Groups

The positive role of cycling group volunteers and organisers in the community should be recognised. Involvement of local cycling clubs is a key part of this strategy in increasing levels of cycling. Evidence shows that peer-to-peer engagement is the most effective method of ensuring sustained involvement. Two key groups are:

- **Tower Hamlets Wheelers** – this is the local branch of the London Cycling Campaign and has become a key stakeholder for the Council. Wheelers' members help report cycling issues through their website and the group is an important conduit for wider consultation with cyclists.
- **Tower Hamlets Cycling Club** – the club is affiliated to the British Cycling and often helps the Council with guided rides and other sport and leisure based events throughout the year.

**We recognise the important role played by local cycle groups and will continue to work with them to identify problems and further promote cycling.**

### 7.4 Cycle Parking

Cycle parking is a practical issue that can deter or inconvenience the cyclist, and represents a significant barrier to new cycling unless addressed. This strategy has a number of proposals to improve the quantity and quality of provision:

- **Pavement Bike Stands**

A recent street audit showed that there are approximately 1000 individual cycle stands on the public highway in the borough. Whilst this is a good starting point we receive regular requests from the public for more and better parking, requests which we encourage through the Council website and the Find It Fix It Love It app.

As suitable pavement locations become more difficult to find we will assess demand by putting in temporary cycle parking in the road by using 'Car Bike Port' that has been successfully used in Hackney. The port is placed on the road, often at the expense of a car parking space, and its use monitored. If usage reaches a certain threshold then the bike parking can be made permanent feature. Bearing in mind that one car parking space can accommodate 10 -12 bikes this is an effective use of road space.



#### **'Bike Car Port' by CycleHoop**

- **Secure Bike Parking**

Whilst new housing developments are required to provide secure off-street cycle parking many of the borough's residential areas are characterised by traditional terraced housing where there is lack of off-street provision for many residents, especially those who have no access to outdoor space and live above the ground floor.



#### **'Secure Cycle Hangar' by CycleHoop**

To address this issue we intend to carry out trials of lockable on-street cycle hangars, and lockers. If successful and economically efficient then there is the potential to roll out secure parking in residential locations.

- **New Developments**

Minimum standards for the quantity of cycle parking in new developments are taken from the London Plan 2015, which increases the requirement from the previous regulations. We will enforce the new requirements for all developments in the borough.

However, quantity of cycle parking alone is not enough as there is anecdotal evidence from developers that some large cycle stores are not used as people feel they are not safe. There is little formal guidance on the best type and quality of cycle storage to provide in new developments although research suggests that private/ individual storage facilities in close proximity to residences are favoured.

We are working with Crossrail to ensure that a Cycle Hub from part of the new Whitechapel Station. The hub will provide secure cycle parking and may be combined with other facilities for cyclists such as an on-site repair workshop.

**We will significantly increase the level of on-street cycle parking in the next three years, including secure, lockable units.**

**A single car parking space can accommodate 10 – 12 bikes. Where there is strong demand for cycle parking and a lack of pavement space we will remove car parking space and replace it with cycle parking, subject to localised consultation. We will work with developers to assess innovative and user-friendly cycle parking layouts in new developments to establish principle of good practice. We will ensure a Cycle Hub is included in the new Whitechapel Station as part of the Crossrail work.**

### 7.5 Security

The Council will continue to work with the Metropolitan Police Cycle Task Force and the borough's Safer Transport Team to help reduce cycle theft. Ongoing initiatives include bike marking and registration at BikeRegister. In addition to increasing the numbers of secure cycle parking spaces we will run awareness campaigns for cyclists in the correct method of securing their bikes to help reduce the possibility of theft.

### 7.6 Boosting the Local Economy

A critical part of this cycling strategy is to ensure that increased cycling results in benefits for businesses and the local economy. It is understandable that some businesses could be worried about their customers if more road and parking space is given to cyclists at the expense of cars.

But the benefits and contributions to trading that increased cycling levels bring to businesses should not be under-estimated. National and international research repeatedly demonstrates that increased levels of cycling and cycle parking will boost takings at local shops and businesses, reduce staff sickness and improve productivity.

**We will promote the business benefits that cycling schemes can bring and Work with businesses during scheme design to maximise the economic benefits.**

## **7.7 Place Making**

Well designed cycle schemes are generally beneficial for pedestrians and the public realm in general. Quieter streets with more cyclists and pedestrians are safer and give a greater sense of security and community.

Road space in the borough is at a premium and we recognise that many cycle routes are only busy for short periods of the day and that there are often other priorities for the space at other times. Careful design and consultation with local residents and businesses is essential to achieve the maximum benefit of cycle schemes for all road users.

**We will involve urban designers, local residents and businesses, in addition to cycle groups, when new cycle schemes are being considered in to order to achieve balanced benefits for all.**

## 8. Funding

We recognise that the commitments and aspirations set out in this strategy will require significant funding.

The majority of transport funding for the London boroughs is allocated by TfL and whilst the current London Mayor has put cycling at the heart of transport policy there is no guarantee that future mayors will do the same.

The Council may also use developer contributions (in the form of agreements based on Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act) to fund cycling schemes and will continue to do so at a localised level. The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from April 2015 will in future give the Council greater flexibility and control over its developer funded budgets. With major development expected around Canary Wharf and the City fringe areas in particular the CIL is expected to raise tens of millions of pounds in the coming years. Across the borough there will be significant competing demands for this crucial funding and this strategy will form an important justification to support funding requests for cycling projects.

TfL invest directly in the TLRN and investment in the last two years has been significantly higher than in previous years due to work on the CS2 upgrade of which about two thirds is located in Tower Hamlets. The Council will continue to work with and lobby TfL to deliver further cycling improvements on their network.

Consequently, whilst funding for 2015/16 is set out below, there is considerable uncertainty over funding in future years from all sources. Nonetheless, it is clear that major investment in cycling will be required and a Delivery Plan, which will follow on from publication of this strategy, will set out more precisely the scale of requirements along with a prioritised aspirational delivery programme.

| Year    | Funding Status | LIP and Government Allocations (£000s) | Developer Allocations (S106 and CIL) | TLRN (direct funding by TfL) | Estimated Total £000s |
|---------|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2015/16 | Actual         | 1300                                   | 700                                  | 11000                        | 13000                 |

## 9. Targets and Pledges

To deliver our vision of 'A Cycling Borough' we have set 4 challenging targets to increase levels of cycling by 2025. Two of the targets are designed to measure the success of the strategy specifically in terms of borough residents and children. The other two capture broader statistics that cover all people cycling in the borough, including people who work in the borough and those simply visiting or passing through.

This strategy also sets out the 33 pledges explaining how we intend to achieve these 4 targets. Please note that further specific targets may later be developed for some of individual pledges.

### 9.1 Key Targets by 2025

- **General Cycling Volume Target**

We will use the Central London Cordon count, carried out annually by TfL and as shown in figure 1, to measure how many people make the journey into and out of Tower Hamlets each day by cycle. If the recent growth trend continued we would expect to see a 78% increase between 2013 and 2025. The Mayor of London has set out to double cycling (that is a 100% increase) in London by 2025 and this represents our minimum target. Our aspiration is to treble cycling, that is a 200% increase.

- **Borough Residents Cycling to Work**

Census data shows that only 4% of the borough residents regularly cycled to work in 2001 and this had increased to 7% in 2011. In line with our first target to double overall cycling levels our target is to increase the proportion cycling to work to 15% by 2025. Bearing in mind the expected population growth this percentage represents significantly more than a doubling of actual cyclists in this group. Our aspiration is for 25% of residents to cycle to work.

- **Cycling Accident Risk**

We have set out in this strategy a method to relate cycle accidents to the volume of cyclists on the roads. Measured in this way the level of risk in Tower Hamlets has remained more or less unchanged in the last 10 years, as is also the case in neighbouring boroughs. However, we expect the move towards a cycling culture, in part driven by improved quality of cycling infrastructure, to facilitate a step change in the level of risk. Our target is to reduce the level of accident risk by half (that is a 50% reduction) by 2025 and our aspiration is for a 60% reduction.



### ● **Cycling to School**

The Department for Transport estimates that only 2% of children cycle to school nationally. However, the cycling charity Sustrans reported this year that their Bike It programme in 126 schools across London, several of which were in Tower Hamlets, resulted in an increase in regular cycling from 6% to 12.5%. Therefore we have taken 6% as the baseline proportion for Tower Hamlets. Our target is to achieve 12% of all children cycling to school and our aspiration is for 20%.

| Targets                                 | National (existing) | London (existing) | Tower Hamlets (existing) | Tower Hamlets (Target 2025) | Tower Hamlets (Aspiration 2025) |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cycling Growth                          | n/a                 | 50% <sup>1</sup>  | 60% <sup>1</sup>         | <b>100%<sup>2</sup></b>     | <b>200%<sup>2</sup></b>         |
| Residents Cycling to Work <sup>3</sup>  | 3%                  | 4%                | 7%                       | <b>15%</b>                  | <b>25%</b>                      |
| Index of Accident Risk <sup>4</sup>     | n/a                 | n/a               | 100                      | <b>50</b>                   | <b>40</b>                       |
| Children Cycling to School <sup>4</sup> | 2%                  | 6%                | 6%                       | <b>12%</b>                  | <b>20%</b>                      |

1. Cycling Growth 2008 – 2013 based on TfL's Central Cordon Flows
2. Based on 2013 Central London Cordon
3. Based on Census data 2011
4. This is the accident frequency in proportion to cycling volumes as measured by the Census, further details of which are set out in the Safer Cycling section of this strategy and the accompanying technical report.
5. London baseline value from Sustrans 2015 survey. National value from DfT National Travel Survey 2014.

## 9.2 Pledges

The 32 pledges set out in this strategy are summarised below. An Action Plan, which will follow publication and approval of this Strategy, will set out detailed programmes showing how each will be delivered. Over the next two years, subject to public consultation, the Action Plan will give the following priorities for funding:

- Cable Street Upgrade
- Manchester Road Segregated Cycle Track/Lanes
- Burdett Road Segregated Cycle Track/Lanes
- Filtered Permeability Measures
- Proposed Quietway Route
- Parking - Cycle Hangars and Bike Ports on streets
- Stepney School Partnership Pilot Scheme
- School Training – Bikeability and Bike It

| Guiding Principle      | Subject                   | Pledge   | Ref |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--|-----|
| A better cycle network | Cycle Super Highways      | We will implement plans, in consultation with cyclists and local residents, to improve CS3 so as to increase its capacity and safety at peak times and explore the idea of a Cycle Street  | 1   |
|                        |                           | We will monitor and review the impact of the CS2 upgrade, especially with regard to safety, and apply the lessons learned to future cycle schemes.   | 2   |
|                        | Existing Route Upgrades   | We will upgrade the existing signed cycle network on borough roads to meet guidance set out in the new LCDS, achieving a good or better level of service.  | 3   |
|                        | Quietways                 | We will implement the borough's first Quietway which will cross the borough from Hackney Wick to Liverpool Street.   | 4   |
|                        |                           | We will work with the London Borough of Hackney and TfL to develop and implement a Quietway along the Regent's Canal alignment.  | 5   |
|                        | New Cycle Routes          | We will develop and implement a denser network of cycle routes so that all areas in the borough have easy access to the network.   | 6   |
|                        | Leisure Loop              | <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Develop new legible mapping, signing and a promotion strategy to encourage use by new cyclists;</li> <li>□ Widen tow paths at pinch points and upgrade sections where cycling is difficult;</li> <li>□ Improve access to the loop and increase the number of access points where possible;</li> <li>□ Continue the Lee Navigation spur further south to the Royal Victoria Dock as and when the former industrial sites along this section are re-developed.</li> </ul> | 7   |
|                        | Filtered Permeability     | We will review every ward/zone in the borough for cycling permeability issues and implement quick and simple measures, such as allowing safe cycling in both directions in many one-way streets and opening up no-through roads to cyclists.   | 8   |
|                        | Safer School Partnerships | We will implement the first School Cycle Partnership in Stepney and consider similar schemes across the borough  | 9   |
|                        | River Crossings           | We will work with Greenwich to trial their planned intelligent cycle system in the Greenwich Foot Tunnel to allow cycling when pedestrian volumes are low.   | 10  |
|                        |                           | We will work with Newham and developers to provide additional crossings for pedestrians and cyclists across the River Lea  | 11  |
|                        |                           | We support the Sustrans idea of a new Thames Crossing in principle but will review the feasibility report when published and assess the funding  | 12  |

## Tower Hamlets – A Cycling Borough

| Guiding Principle   | Subject                           | Pledge  | Ref |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
| A better cycle network  | Quality of Cycling Infrastructure | All future cycle network routes and upgrades of existing routes will be implemented and maintained in accordance with the new cycle standards. Our aspiration is for all cycle routes, both those proposed and existing ones to be upgraded, to achieve a good Cycle Level of Service (CLOs) score. | 13  |
| Safer Cycling   | Safer Cycling Designs             | We will use the latest cycle design guidance on new schemes (and upgrades of old ones) to implement far higher standards of safety and comfort for cyclists. We will physically separate cyclists from motor traffic where appropriate.   | 14  |
|   |                                   | We will expand the unsigned cycling network by opening up one-way streets and no through roads to cyclists. We will work with local cyclist groups to identify and prioritise these measures.   | 15  |
|   |                                   | We will ensure that all technical staff that undertake design, implementation and maintenance on the public highway undertake training in cycling design.   | 16  |
|   | Traffic Enforcement               | We will continue to work with police to target areas for traffic enforcement for all road users and support large scale 'crackdown' operations when they are planned.   | 17  |
|   | Cycle Training                    | We will continue and expand our cycle training schemes in schools and we will offer training to every school to all year 5 pupils (or other appropriate ages) every year from 2016.   | 18  |
|   |                                   | We will continue to offer free cycle training to adult residents of the borough.  | 19  |
|   | Safer Lorries                     | We will require that all construction and lorry fleet contracts operated by or on behalf of the Council are accredited to FORS and that contractors will be obliged to work towards the gold standard.  | 21  |
| Cycling For All   | Bike It                           | We will continue working with Sustrans and part fund the Bike It programme every year to embed a culture of cycling in the borough's school children.   | 22  |
|   | Sport and Leisure                 | We will continue to work with local cycle groups and British Cycling (the national governing body) to promote cycling for sport and leisure, including Sky Rides, Santander Cycle Rides, all ability cycling club, and women-only rides.  | 23  |
|   |                                   | We will work with partners and develop to develop leisure based Cycle Hubs at the BMX track in Mile End Park and the proposed BMX track at Langdon Park.  | 24  |
|   | Cycling Clubs                     | We recognise the important role played by local cycle groups and will continue to work with them to identify problems and further promote cycling.  | 25  |
|   | Cycle Parking                     | We will significantly increase the level of on-street cycle parking in the next three years, including secure, lockable units.  | 25  |
| A single car parking space can accommodate 10 – 12 bikes. Where there is strong demand for cycle parking and a lack of pavement space we will remove car parking space and replace it with cycle parking. |                                   | 26  |     |

| Guiding Principle | Subject                    | Pledge  | Ref |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---|-----|
| Cycling For All   | Cycle Parking              | We will work with developers to assess innovative and user-friendly cycle parking layouts in new developments to establish principle of good practice.                                      | 27  |
|                   |                            | We will ensure a Cycle Hub is included in the new Whitechapel Station as part of the Crossrail work.  | 28  |
|                   | Cycle Security             | To follow   | 29  |
|                   | Boosting the Local Economy | We will promote the business benefits that cycling schemes can bring and Work with businesses during scheme design to maximise the economic benefits.                                       | 30  |
|                   | Place Making               | We will involve urban designers, local residents and businesses, in addition to cycle groups, when new cycle schemes are being considered in to order to achieve balanced benefits for all. | 31  |
|                   | Health                     | We will ensure that initiatives to promote and encourage more cycling are developed and implemented as part of Tower Hamlets' Health and Wellbeing Action Plans.                            | 32  |

