

Pavements, roads and crossings

Overview

Being able to navigate the Borough safely is a core aspect of being part of the Lewisham community. As such, respondents explored a wide array of safety-critical issues and other challenges whilst navigating Lewisham. These challenges include the state of pavements, roads, and crossings when navigating on foot by wheelchair. These challenges require both immediate and long-term action.

Recommendations from the report

Our recommendations touched on these types of action in a number of areas, including:

- The use of Love Clean Streets as a tool to address accessibility issues in the Borough more broadly. This includes addressing: missing, inappropriate, or damaged dropped kerbs; missing, inappropriate, or damaged tactile paving, and access barriers such as overgrown vegetation and pavement blockages.
- The development of a Borough Access 2030 strategy which addresses accessibilities across the Borough in a wider fashion. This would bring together a range of strategic partners, and would support the Council working together with Transport for London and other partners in pavement and road access. The goal of this is to transform Lewisham into a pinnacle of accessibility.



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There are parts of Lewisham I cannot go into on specific days of the week, as I will be unable to use the pavement due to the number of bins obstructing it

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Uneven, broken flagstones, raised ironworks, tree roots, pavement parking, overhanging vegetation, wheelie bins left out all week and other unnecessary street furniture making the pavements cluttered. It is impossible to push a wheelchair on these roads

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Extension: Pavements, Roads and Crossings

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We need better streets for wheelchair users. Pavements are unsafe - too many trees are lifting the pavement up and are unsafe for wheelchair users. You have to go in the road

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Pavements

56% of respondents reported unhappiness with pavements in the Borough, and only 17% reported happiness.

Wheelie bin collection is a major issue for wheelchair users navigating pavements. Avoiding bins obstructing the pavement is challenging, but residents and refuse collection teams should be expected to place all bins against the walls of properties to minimise obstruction of the pavements. Issues with dropped kerbs, pavement quality, and obstructed pavements impact not just on disabled residents, but elderly residents and people pushing prams, suitcases, or trolleys. Improving pavement quality would therefore benefit a wide range of people.

Having a pavement architecture that is suitable for people who are walking and using wheelchairs is crucial to a vision of Lewisham which focuses on public transport rather than private vehicles. This is keeping in mind that many disabled people are unable to use public transport and are reliant on cars. Pavements that are impassable and crossings which prioritise cars actively work against these goals.

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There are not enough dropped kerbs

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Other pavement users

Concerns were raised by respondents about the use of e-scooters on pavements, which can be very dangerous for people with mobility issues who cannot easily move out of the way. Likewise, some respondents were worried about raised bicycle lanes located on a shared pavement with pedestrians.

In places such as Ladywell Park, the cycle/pedestrian areas are not clearly delineated. This puts all pedestrians at risk, but especially blind and visually impaired people, and those with mobility impairments.

There needs to be action on the use of bicycles and e-scooters on pavements, and enforcement where this is violated. Where pavements are divided for cyclists and e-scooter users, and where pedestrians are expected to share space, such expectations need to be clearly signed and delineated. This should be done with tactile paving, to ensure all pavement users (especially blind and visually impaired people) are able to safely navigate the paths.

Extension: Pavements, Roads and Crossings

Pavement architecture, fixed poles, and EV charging stations

There is a need for architecture such as signs, telegraph poles, and electric vehicle charging points to be in place on pavements. However, where pavements are narrow or the architecture has been placed a significant distance 'inside' the kerb, transit for wheelchair users (and buggies) can be impeded. In combination with places where bins have been left out for collection, this poorly-placed architecture can force wheelchair users and people with buggies into the road, as the pavements become impassable.

Roads and crossings

Many of the issues reported by respondents were generalised, referring to a lack of safe crossings, and to lights which are timed too quickly to be safe for residents who must cross roads at a slower pace.

One issue raised by a respondent concerns a specific road: *"...the pedestrian road crossing outside the George & Dragon (SE10 8DE) is so unsafe. There is low visibility for drivers and pedestrians, and it is an accident waiting to happen."* Both the traffic lights and this crossing should be addressed from the perspective of avoiding serious accidents.



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Many traffic lights in Lewisham no longer have the moving cones under the lights which informs VIPs (visually impaired people) that it is safe to cross the road

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On big estates like Pepys there is not enough parking, so cars are parked on pavements and on corners despite having double yellow lines

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[[Traffic lights in Central Lewisham were designed] where they are convenient for cars so pedestrians have to walk up the road to the crossing, then back down on the other side. Massive walk if you're mobility impaired.

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