



Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign
458 Hoe St,
London
E17 9AH

8th March 2021

To:
Epping Forest Consultative Committee,
epping.forest@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Dear Epping Forest Consultative Committee,

Redrafted Epping Forest Cycling Strategy

Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign (WFCC) are writing to share our comments on the redrafted Epping Forest Cycling Strategy. These comments follow on from our comments on the previous draft detailed in our letter dated 19th October 2020.

We do not welcome this redraft of the cycling strategy. We were deeply disappointed to discover that this redrafted cycling strategy now excludes those deemed to be cycling for transport from the vision and objectives. This is a direct contradiction of the draft 'Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest'.

In particular:

- Under "Vision" the draft has removed "aid[ing] connected routes for active travel".
- Under "Objectives" the draft has removed the objective "To enable provision for those in the local community choosing active travel to get to and from school, work or local facilities".
- The consultation report states "The City's Corporation's remit (and resources) extend only to Epping Forest land, primarily a recreational space. This includes active travel, but the Forest is a special landscape which must be protected not substituted or **sacrificed** for better local active travel transport solutions." where we note that the word 'sacrifice' is particularly unhelpful in portraying active transport as something intent on destroying the forest. We note that much of forest land is currently devoted to motor vehicles and would be interested to hear of any mentions of 'sacrifice' in relation to that.

We believe that the removal of those elements means the new draft Cycling Strategy is now at odds with the draft '[Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest 2020-2030](#)'. In this document:

- “Our Vision” is about benefiting communities as part of a wider interconnected landscape. Active travel routes would literally provide interconnections between communities in a wider landscape.
- “Our Strategic Priorities” include health and say “We will champion improved sustainable transport provision, networks and infrastructure with our local partner organisations”. However there is no part of the cycling strategy which reflects this as it only addresses cycling where it relates to access to the forest.
- “Implementing The Strategy” says “Improving visitor access to **and across** the Forest, promoting and enhancing sustainable transport”, which must surely include cycling but appears entirely absent from the cycling strategy. Can you identify anything in the cycling strategy which delivers this in a meaningful way? The current provision for transport appears to significantly degrade visitor access by sustainable means in favour of motor vehicles.



Hollow Ponds - Land allocated to motor vehicle parking, no provision for cycles.

The draft cycling strategy does not reflect the vision for the forest generally and specifically does not reflect the transport related strategic priorities nor align with the implementation. In light of this it is unclear what the relevance of the ‘Strategy and Management Plan for Epping Forest’ is.

We do see how this cycling strategy provides a basis on which to work constructively with partners such as Waltham Forest Council to improve and encourage active transport. The consultation report highlights this as an important decades long partnership. Please can you explain what you hope to achieve in relation to cycling by working with Waltham Forest over the next five years?

Regarding parking provision it is clear that the current provision favours motor vehicles ahead of sustainable transport and does not facilitate access to the forest from local communities where many households do not have access to a car. The failure of the strategy to address cycle parking cannot be justified by funding constraints as even low-cost or no-cost improvements are absent from this strategy.

As a minimum we would expect Epping Forest to work with partners and seek sources of funds for cycle parking, survey current usage of the car parks and assess where cycle parking is most needed. We suggest a survey of visitors arriving by car to ascertain what proportion:

- a) Have other leisure/open space facilities nearer to them?
- b) Need to drive to the car parks – ie disabled, no public transport, good reason to?
- c) Are using the car parks for purposes other than visiting the forest?
- d) Are driving zero emission vehicles?

We regard this updated draft to be a step backwards in relation to active travel and that it represents an unsustainable position which is at odds with the stated aims of the City of London. Cycling seems to have been unjustifiably treated as a threat to the forest in a way that other uses are not, despite obvious negative impacts (such as from motor vehicles, dogs, etc.). We do not believe the forest needs to be 'sacrificed' for cycling nor that provision for cycling is a threat to other uses.

Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign knows that local councils, working in partnership with Epping Forest, can make provision for cycling in the local area while improving and protecting the forest for all users. Given the importance of the forest it's not clear how local councils can develop effective cycling strategies without positive partnerships with Epping Forest.

We will be happy to work with Epping Forest constructively on measures to improve cycling in the future if such an opportunity arises.

I would appreciate it if you could write back to update me on the points above and explain how this redrafted strategy reflects the strategy for the forest as a whole.

We hope you find this feedback useful.

Yours sincerely,



Frederick Smith (coordinator)
Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign