

CONSULTATION REPORT

BP0005 – Southend Lane Bus Priority Scheme

December 2024

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Executive Summary

As part of Transport for London's (TfL) bus priority initiative, The London Borough of Lewisham (LBL) Council plans to introduce a new westbound bus lane along Southend Lane, from Worsley Bridge to Farmstead Road. This bus lane will operate Monday to Friday, from 7am to 7pm. The construction will involve converting the central traffic island into a road and modifying the layout and operational timing of the signal crossings.

A public consultation was conducted from 30 September to 8 November 2024 to inform residents, bus users, the public, and other stakeholders about the proposed scheme and gather their feedback.

The consultation received a 4% response rate, with an additional nine responses from key stakeholders. The majority of respondents were not regular bus passengers; 51% reported using the bus less than once a week or never. This indicates limited community engagement with the scheme, and the feedback was predominantly from car drivers.

The feedback received was categorized into main themes addressing common issues or queries. The primary concerns raised were due to:

- Lack of clarity regarding the scheme's details.
- Unawareness or lack of interest in the scheme's benefits for bus passengers and sustainable transport improvements.
- Increased congestion.
- Lack of bus journeys.
- Pedestrian safety.
- Lack of cycle infrastructure.

Lewisham Council have addressed this feedback by responding to consultation comments and addressing the main themes, providing clear and transparent information about the scheme, emphasizing the benefits of the bus lane and correcting any misconceptions. Slight adjustments to the proposal were also incorporated based on the feedback, such as adding a new zebra crossing near Hedge Walk steps, adjusting the operational timing of the bus lane, and redesigning the King Alfred Avenue crossing to accommodate cyclists.

1. Introduction

Lewisham Council is planning to introduce a new bus priority route along Southend Lane as part of Transport for London's (TfL) initiative to enhance the speed, reliability, and efficiency of the bus network.

This report sets out the details of the public consultation held between 30 September 2024 and 8 November 2024, with an analysis of the results. We will also detail, Lewisham Council's response to the issues raised and the replies to any comments / objections received as part of the consultation.

The initial proposal includes:

- **New bus lane:** A new 665-meter westbound bus lane from Worsley Bridge to Farmstead Road.
- **Road modifications:** Conversion of the central traffic island into carriageway construction so to create space for the new bus lane.
- **Junction:** Modification to the existing pedestrian crossing at the King Alfred Avenue junction with Southend Lane, then additional layout changes to the pedestrian crossing near to the junction of Elfrida Crescent. The amendments will include adjustments to the central islands, along with changes to the signal timings.

The consultation drawings for the proposed bus lane design have been provided in Appendix A.

2. About the consultation

2.1 Purpose

The main objectives of the consultation were to:

- Provide stakeholders and the public with clear and accessible information to raise awareness of the proposed bus priority scheme and enable them to respond.
- Provide the background information which has lead to the proposals and design being put out for public consultation. In this instance the delays to the buses along the route.
- Allow respondents to suggest improvements for the scheme or object with them providing key issues within the local area. It also provided the opportunity for them to raise other issues within the borough.

2.2 Details of the consultation

As part of the Council's commitment to creating an inclusive and well-informed public scheme, an extensive public consultation was conducted aiming to gather diverse feedback and ensure the design meets the community needs.

During the public consultation the following consultees have been asked for their feedback:

- Local residents
- Local businesses
- Lewisham Council members:
 - Cabinet member for Environment and Climate
 - Local ward Councillors
- Key stakeholders:
 - London Ambulance Service
 - London Fire Brigade
 - Metropolitan Police Service
 - Road Haulage Association
 - British Motorcyclists Federation
 - Communications providers
 - Bus operators
 - Lewisham Cyclists
 - United Cabbies Group (Taxis)
- TfL
 - TfL sponsor
 - TfL network performance

A letter drop was distributed to the residents living in the affected area inviting them to complete an online consultation questionnaire on our web page at the following address: [Lewisham Council - Have your say on current schemes](#). The page contained a link to our online survey, frequently asked questions and supporting documents and information to assist respondents. This was actively promoted on Council's social media platforms to maximise the engagement with community and get wider feedback. The consultation ran for six weeks from 30th September 2024 to 8th November 2024.

2.3 Survey content

The survey contained the following key questions:

- Firstly, respondents were asked how often they catch the bus to understand any potential bias in the responses.
- Following this, to get an understanding of the public's perception of the scheme, respondents were asked if they think the proposed scheme would:
 - Improve bus journey times.
 - Provide a more reliable bus network in the area.
 - Attract more people to catch the bus over driving.
 - Reduce traffic along Southend Lane.

Following this, there was a section that allowed respondents to provide any feedback or comments on the proposed scheme and raise any other issues they would like to identify within the Southend Lane area.

3. Analysis of consultation responses

3.1 Context

We received a 4% response rate from our public consultation with 3042 letters to properties and receiving 120 responses. Additionally, we received responses from 6 key stakeholder groups, where the majority were in support of the scheme.

Key stakeholders who responded are shown in Table 1 below.

Stakeholder	Response	LBL response	Support Y/N
National Health Service (NHS) Local Ambulance Service (1 response)	No objections, happy that bus lane can be used for emergency vehicles.	N/A	Yes
Transport for London (TfL) (2 responses)	In support of the proposal and assisting with consultation.	N/A	Yes
British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF) (1 response)	In support of the scheme since the bus lane will be allowing motorcyclists.	N/A	Yes
Police (1 response)	No objections.	N/A	Yes
Lewisham Cllrs (3 responses)	In support of the scheme given that an appropriate crossing near farmstead road is provided, bus lane operation is not 24/7 and future proofing for cycleways are considered.	A new zebra crossing will be added near farmstead lane, bus lane will operate 7am to 7pm and proposal allows for future space for cycleway if required.	Yes
Lewisham Cyclists (1 group response)	Objection, due to lack of segregated cycle lanes.	Proposal allows for future space to accommodate segregated cycleway if required.	No

Overall, the responses were low, with the majority of respondents not being bus passengers with 51% using the bus less than once a week or never. Then a further 10% used the bus once a week and 39% used the bus several times a week.

This indicated that there was limited community engagement on the scheme, and out of those who did participate, the majority were car drivers.

3.2 Results

A breakdown of the survey responses received are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Number of responses to each survey question

Survey Question	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	Unsure
Will the scheme improve bus journey times?	35	10	64	7
Will the scheme provide a more reliable bus network in the area?	32	9	72	3
Will the scheme attract more people to catch the bus over driving?	27	6	81	2
Will the scheme reduce traffic along Southend Lane?	19	10	86	1

Despite all the efforts and materials issued, a low number of bus passengers, or regular users of the service responded.

It is important to note that most respondents were car drivers which may have influenced the feedback and introduced potential bias. Moving forward, Lewisham Council will increase outreach efforts to engage with a wider range of demographics, aiming for a more balanced and representative spread of feedback.

In terms of traffic reduction along Southend Lane, 74% of respondents disagreed, with most comments suggesting that the bus lane would cause more traffic. This response indicates that there might be some misunderstanding about the schemes impact, as there will be no change in the number of running lanes and therefore no predicted increase in congestion. Over time, traffic reduction is anticipated as bus journeys become more appealing and people adjust their travel behaviours.

3.3 Main themes

From the consultation, it was understood that most of the common issues raised were due to:

- Lack of clarity regarding the scheme's details.
- The benefits to bus passengers and the improvements for the sustainable transport along the link as the majority responding were car drivers.
- Increased congestion.
- Lack of bus journeys.
- Pedestrian safety.
- Lack of cycle infrastructure.

Lewisham Council aims to address this feedback by:

- Responding to the consultation themes (Table 2 below), providing clear, transparent, and factual information about the scheme, emphasising the benefits of the bus lane, and addressing any misconceptions.

- Making slight adjustments to the proposal to accommodate the feedback as much as practical. These adjustments are detailed in Section 5. Next Steps. below.

The comments gathered regarding other issues identified in the borough have now been brought to our attention. These will be reviewed, prioritised, and implemented based on available funding.

Table 2: Main themes of the consultation and how the Council will address them.

Main theme	No. of comments	% of total comments	Council's response
Congestion - there is concern that the new bus lane will increase traffic on Southend Lane and create a bottleneck at Worsley Bridge.	36	31%	<p>The scheme's impact on traffic will be neutral, as the middle lane will be converted to a regular traffic lane, maintaining the current number of running lanes. The bus lane terminates before Worsley Bridge, so no additional traffic is anticipated there, however, this will be monitored after implementation.</p> <p>Additionally, ongoing work is being conducted to assess the performance of the Worsley Bridge junction. This will be a separate project, connected to the Bell Green gyratory.</p> <p>We will amend the proposed bus lane operational timing to 7am to 7pm daily rather than 24/7.</p>
Effectiveness of scheme – there is concern that the scheme may not be effective, as only one bus (181) operates along Southend Lane, and it experiences capacity issues during peak hours.	34	29%	<p>A TfL study has informed that Southend Lane, particularly in the westbound direction, experiences significant performance issues, including reliability and speed problems for the entire proposed extent. Implementing a bus lane is the most effective way to prioritise bus services over general traffic, improving bus journey times, and allowing passengers to reach their destinations quicker.</p> <p>The new bus lane will also be accessible to cyclists, motorbikes, taxis, and patient transport vehicles, improving their journey times and enhancing safety for vulnerable road users by separating them from the busiest traffic lanes.</p> <p>In addition to immediate benefits to current bus services, there are long term plans for the Bell Green gyratory at the western end of Southend Lane. While initial benefits may be limited to the single</p>

			service along this corridor, the bus lane has potential to integrate into broader plans for the area.
Pedestrian safety - removal of a traffic island will be dangerous for pedestrians who currently use it to cross the road. Crossing facilities at near the railway bridge (Waterlink Way) are very poor. Lots of school children using the road. The relocation of the crossing near Farmstead Road is not suitable due to the desire line of pedestrians using the hedge walk stairs.	27	23%	<p>The same amount of formal crossing points will be retained with the aim being to guide all pedestrians to these locations. Pedestrian behaviour to wait on central island currently increases risk of increased personal injury type accidents therefore authority is trying to guide more to upgraded controlled crossings that have been modified as part of this scheme.</p> <p>We are currently awaiting TfL to attend site for their signal team to implement a new toucan crossing opposite the access to Waterlink Way. We anticipate this should be done prior to any works on the bus priority scheme.</p> <p>We are proposing a new zebra crossing facility and upgrading the hedge walk stairs to ramp access to facilitate the pedestrian flow and accessibility in this new location.</p>
Parking – there is concern that the new scheme will make it more difficult for residents to park outside their houses and there will be increased parking enforcements.	13	11%	<p>The aim of the scheme is to have minimal reduction of parking spaces and move the parking from the footway to the road. The scheme will have a net positive impact on parking spaces with some of these to be used for EV charging bays and cycle hangars. There will be no additional permits issued for residents to park on the road. All parking for business deliveries will remain unaffected.</p> <p>The area will be subject to sustainable streets consultation in the near future which will carry out a more in-depth review of parking.</p>
Better cycling infrastructure – the road width should be utilised to implement segregated cycling lanes and the toucan	12 (including the Lewisham	10%	<p>While the scheme does not include dedicated cycle lanes, the new bus lane will be open to cyclists, keeping them away from the busiest traffic and enhancing both their journey times and safety.</p>

crossing at King Alfred Avenue should be redesigned to accommodate cyclists.	Cyclists group)			This lane is not highlighted in the top 10 routes in the active travel strategy priority list. however, following implementation of the scheme, if a separated cycleway is needed, the proposal has been designed to allow space for this in the future. Currently, it has not been included to preserve the parking spaces along the lane. The redesigned King Alfred Avenue crossing will accommodate cyclists as requested.
Access to amenities - there is concern that the new bus lane will hinder vehicle access to the shops along Southend Lane, such as Sainsbury's and Lidl.	8	7%		<p>The scheme will not impact access to the shops along Southend Lane for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the shops will remain unrestricted. • The proposed parking changes involve moving parking from the footway to designated bays on the carriageway, with no additional parking restrictions along the street. • No increase in congestion is anticipated, as the number of running lanes will remain the same.
Funding – there is concern that the scheme is using taxpayers' money.	7	6%		<p>This project will be funded by TfL specifically for bus priority schemes. The allocated funds are restricted to this purpose and cannot be used elsewhere. If Lewisham Council does not allocate the funding for this project, it is likely to be reallocated to another local authority for the same purpose, potentially affecting future funding allocations for Lewisham.</p> <p>This TfL funded project aims to improve bus reliability and is a part of a broader strategy to implement 25 km of new bus lanes by 2025.</p>
Vehicle safety – there is concern that the likelihood of accidents will increase due to the narrower roads and vehicles entering from side roads across a bus lane.	4	3%		<p>Vehicle tracking has been conducted to ensure that movements at each junction within the scheme and along the corridor do not conflict with waiting pedestrians or other road users.</p> <p>Although lane widths have been reduced, they still comply with current design standards, allowing all types of vehicles to safely travel along Southend Lane. An additional benefit is the expected</p>

reduction in vehicle speeds, which tends to occur when vehicles travel closer together.

4. Consultation outcome

The aim of the proposed scheme is to enhance public transport accessibility for non-car drivers in an area that would benefit from improved connectivity. While the scheme does not specifically benefit car drivers, it is designed to minimise any negative impact on them. Based on the consultation feedback and the provided information, the decision has been made to proceed with the proposed bus priority lane and implement the suggested adjustments.

Additionally, the road along Southend Lane will be resurfaced and the condition improved. There are also future plans to further enhance the transport infrastructure in this area to integrate with this scheme.

5. Next Steps.

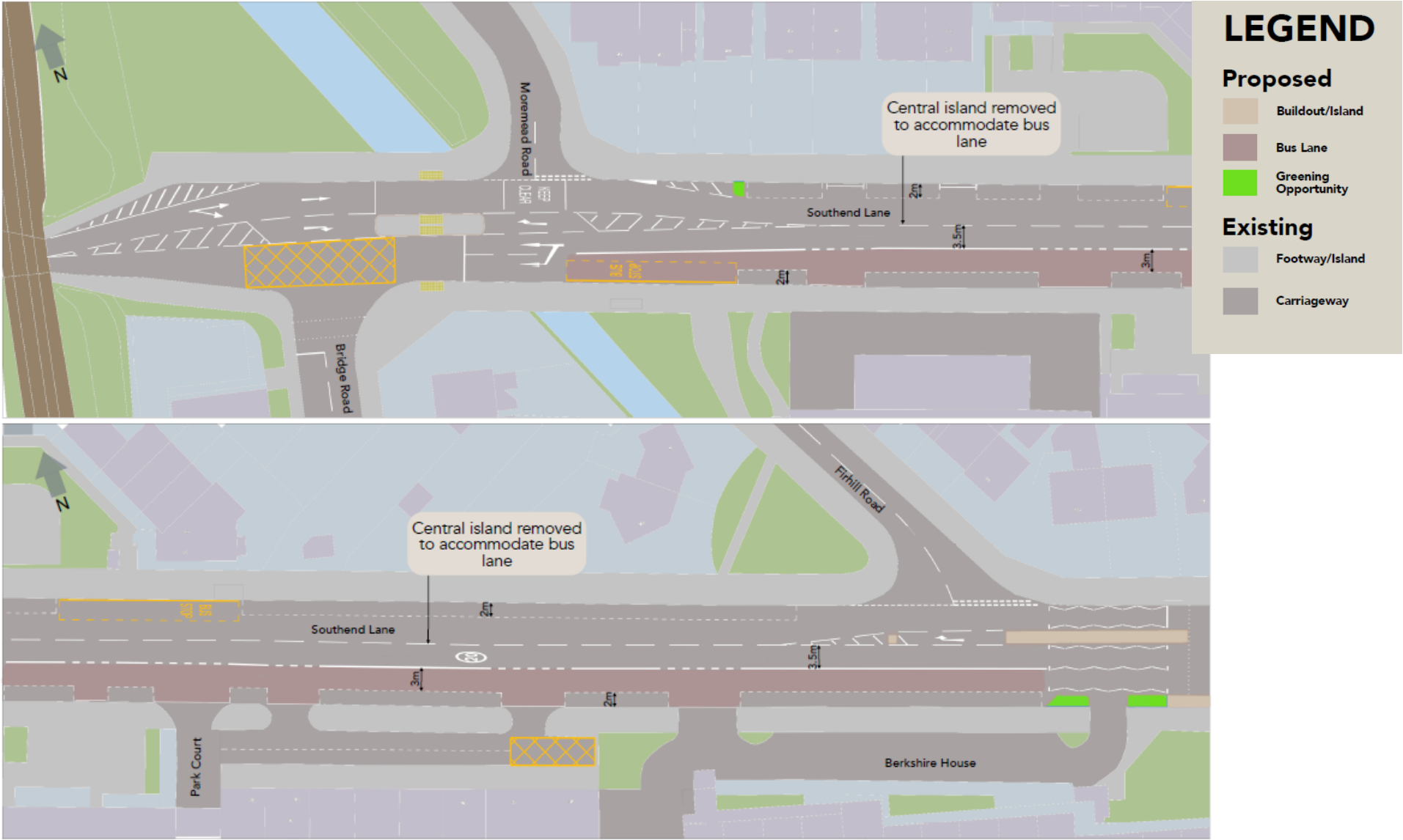
Following the consultation and understanding the reasons behind the most common issues raised, Lewisham Council aims to improve the clarity of the scheme for the public and make slight adjustments to the proposal to accommodate the feedback as much as practical.

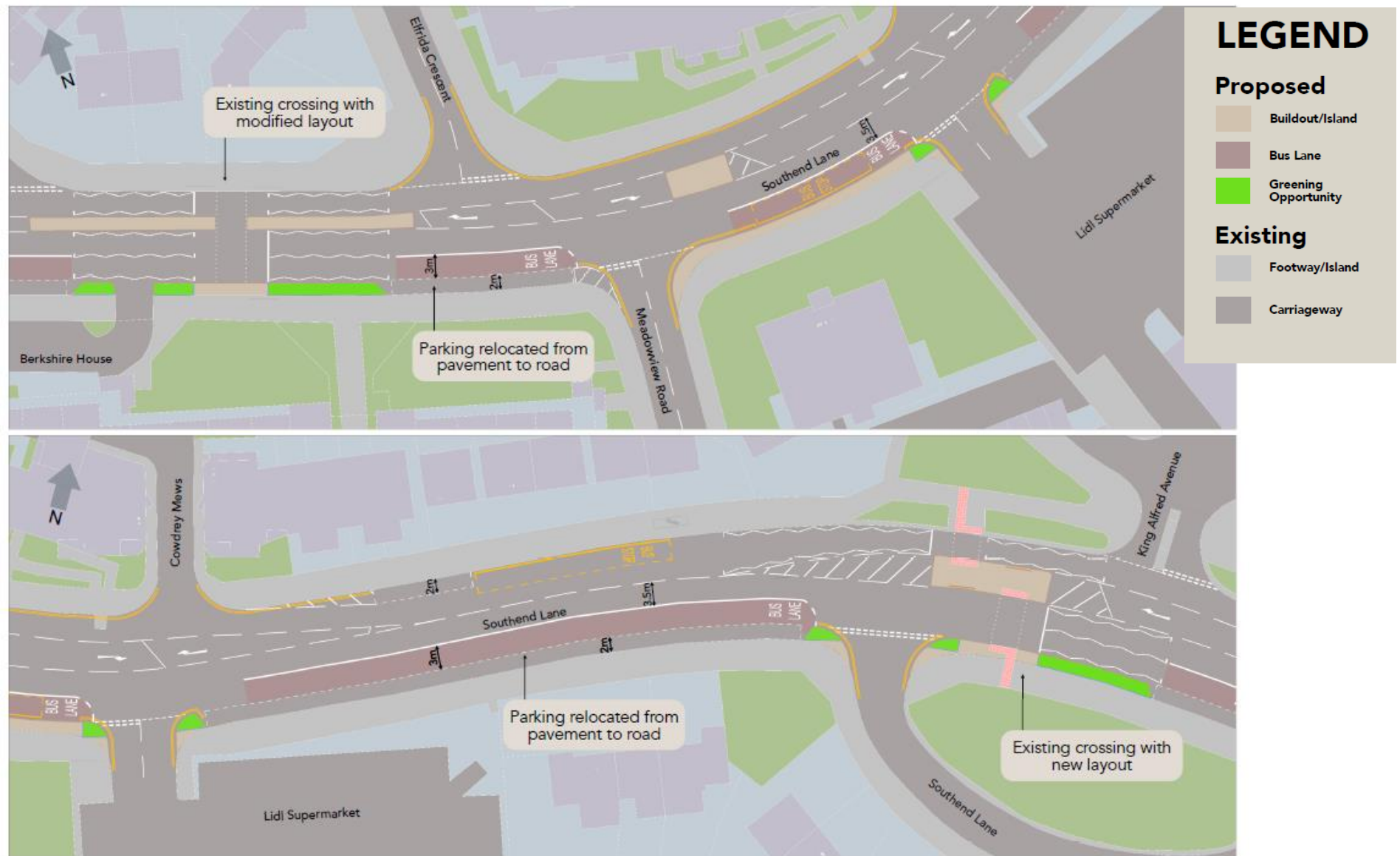
To improve the clarity of the scheme and address any misconceptions, responses to the main themes raised has been provided in Section 3.3 of this Consultation Report. This information will also be made publicly available on Lewisham Council's website.

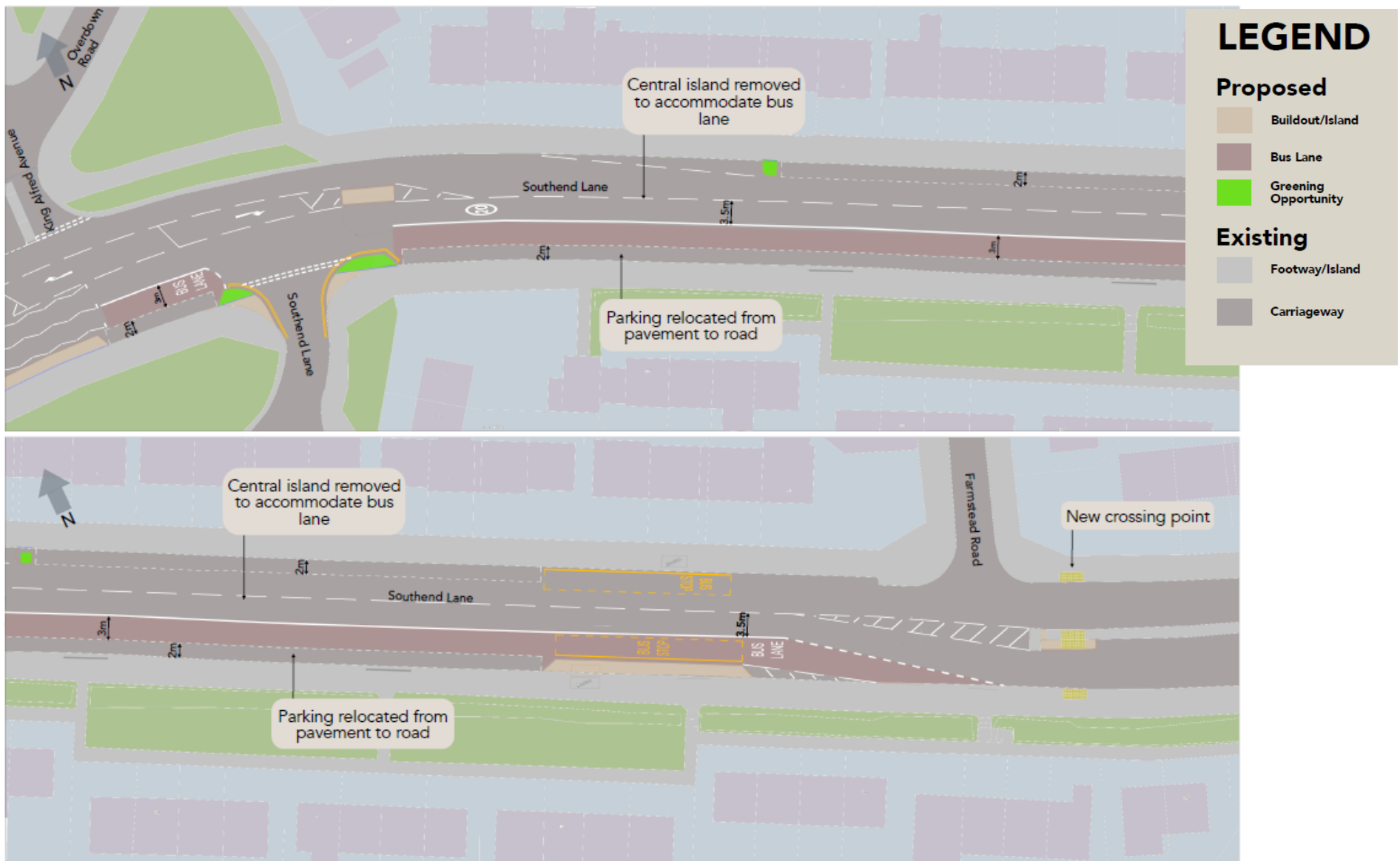
The two key proposal adjustments have been provided below:

- Construction of an additional zebra crossing to the east of Farmstead Road to accommodate pedestrian flow and construction of a ramp to replace steps at Hedge Walk for improved accessibility.
- Limiting the operation of the bus lane to daytime hours (not 24/7) to meet the required need.
- The redesigned King Alfred Avenue crossing will accommodate cyclists as requested.

Appendix A: Southend Lane Bus Priority Scheme Consultation drawings







Appendix B: Summary of Stakeholder replies

Table 3: Summary of Key Stakeholder Responses to the Consultation

Organisation	Key message of query	Comment
National Health Service (NHS) Local Ambulance Service	In support.	In support of the proposals given that exemptions to the bus lane apply to any vehicle being used for police, fire, and ambulance purpose.
Transport for London (TfL)	In support.	In support of the proposals and assisting with consultation.
British Motorcyclists Federation (BMF)	In support.	In support of the scheme since the bus lane will be allowing motorcyclists.
Police	In support.	No objections.
Lewisham Councillors	In support of the scheme given that an appropriate crossing near farmstead road is provided and bus lane operation is not 24/7.	<p>In support of the scheme and promoting sustainable transport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The crossing near Farmstead Road is frequently used by bus passengers who then walk through to Hedge Walk steps. This route is particularly important for parents with children heading to school. If the scheme alters the Farmstead Road crossing, it could pose a danger as children might no longer cross at the designated point. • It would be beneficial to add another crossing outside the bus stop where passengers cross the road to Lidl. While there is a nearby crossing, it is not on the direct path (desire line). • The bottleneck at Worsley Bridge is not currently an issue due to the 15-minute bus interval but could become problematic with increased bus frequency. • Signal timing along this road needs to be evaluated. • Concerns were raised about the 24-hour bus lane operation. Night buses do not require a dedicated bus lane, so it should be implemented based on need and limited to daytime hours. • Although there were initial concerns about the lack of segregated cycle lanes, these were alleviated when it was clarified that the proposal allows for future space to accommodate them.

Lewisham Cyclists	Objection, due to lack of segregated cycle lanes.	<p>Lewisham Cyclists strongly oppose the current proposals, as they fail to provide fully protected cycling space. The Southend Lane/Whitefoot Lane corridor is a key cycling route identified in the Lewisham Active Travel Strategy, and the lack of safe east-west cycle routes due to railway dislocation makes enhancing existing routes crucial. The high traffic levels along this route necessitate fully segregated cycle lanes under London Cycling Design Standards.</p> <p>The proposed scheme prioritises bus lanes, which could hinder future implementation of segregated cycling lanes, particularly impacting eastbound cyclists on Southend Lane's uphill stretch from Worsley Bridge junction. The scheme lacks clarity on bus lane operational times, potentially leading to increased traffic and the need for camera-based enforcement.</p> <p>Only one bus route (181) currently uses the proposed bus lane, raising questions about the justification for substantial works without supporting delay statistics. The introduction of 'Superloop' express bus routes requires careful design consideration for cycling and pedestrian safety, including priority crossings and improved facilities at key points like King Alfred Avenue.</p> <p>Ample road width exists to implement segregated cycling lanes alongside localised bus priority measures. A holistic approach to redesigning the carriageway is essential, and Lewisham Cyclists are willing to participate in design meetings to develop a more optimal solution.</p>
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