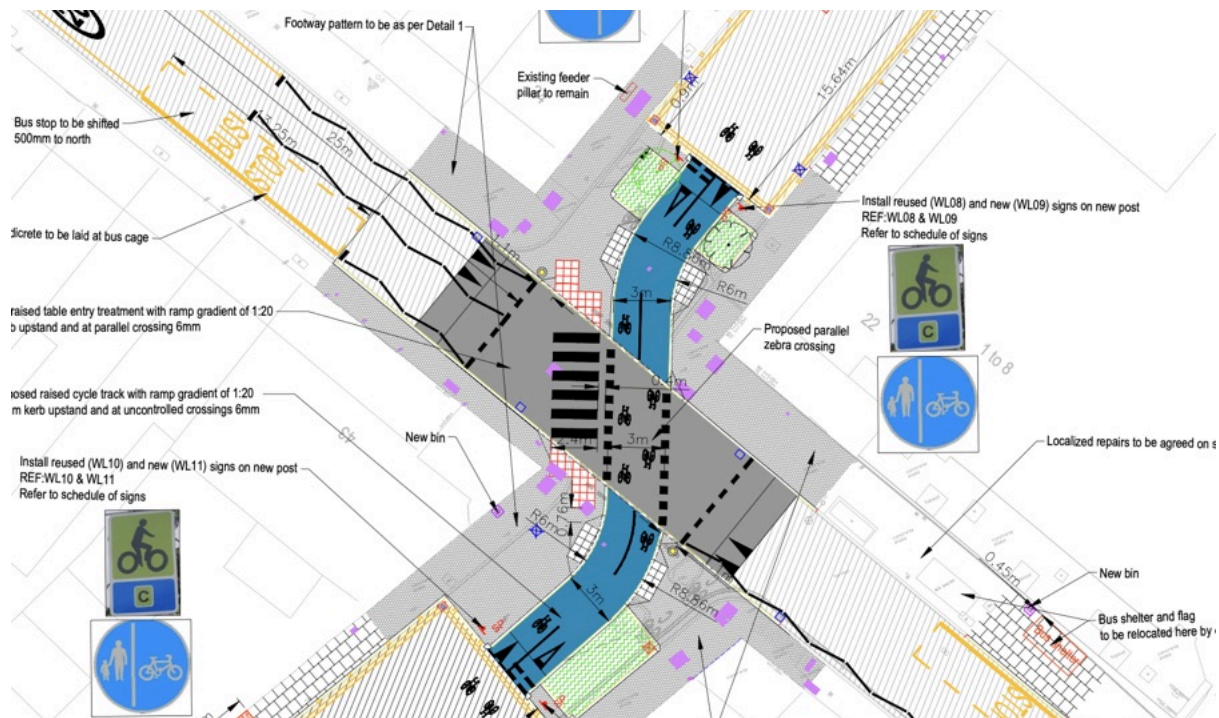


This response to the Water Lane crossing consultation is from **Newham Cyclists**, the local borough group of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC). We are a volunteer group who exist to help all kinds of people access cycling as a cheap, accessible, and convenient form of transport.

We support these proposals.



- **We support the creation of a new, raised, parallel zebra and priority cycle crossing between Manbey Grove and Louise Road, and closing the junctions of these roads with Water Lane to motor traffic.**
 - It will make it significantly easier to use the Cycleway link, which up until now has been difficult thanks to motor traffic speeds and volumes combined with a 'dog leg' movement.
 - It will also make crossing the road easier and more direct for pedestrians, particularly for users of bus route 308.
- **We caution that it's important that design cues make it clear people walking and cycling have priority here, especially with the sharp crossing angle.**
 - Lessons must be learned from similar schemes which have been less successful.
- **This scheme must be part of a wider programme of improvements, both to the Forest Gate/Manor Park C-link, and also to Water Lane itself, which should aim to reduce traffic volumes and speed.**



- Water Lane sees high volumes of through traffic despite not being part of the Strategic Road Network.
- The corridor is a key danger spot for people walking and cycling. Its safety record is very poor, with a fatal crash just weeks ago on the evening of 18th October 2024.
- Longer term we need to see a vision to reduce danger by rationalising traffic flow and reducing speeds on Water Lane.
- **We make no remarks in this response about the proposed removal of overgrown ash trees in the area**, which is mentioned in the consultation literature but we consider a separate issue to the crossing.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- **We suggest further surface treatments to enhance visual priority, highlighting cyclists' presence to drivers and helping those cycling establish and assert their priority. This should go in combination with other measures to highlight the presence of the crossing.**
 - Given the unusual diagonal angle of this crossing (we estimate it at 40°), those cycling will need to look carefully—up to 220° to the right—to check for oncoming traffic. When lined up to cross, traffic approaching from the right will be slightly behind them.
 - We expect most people walking and cycling will therefore choose to slow down, or even stop, to check for oncoming traffic.
 - In this context, we feel it's important that motorists interpret this as a crossing where they do **not** have priority, and must be prepared to stop for people walking and cycling.
 - One possibility is blue coloured asphalt, in line with the Romford Road and other Cycleways in London, to highlight the presence of cyclists to drivers at crossing points. Another colour might be acceptable, but we propose blue because it appears to be the generally accepted colour in London (save in some boroughs such as Waltham Forest, which largely uses red.) Coloured asphalt also generally has a longer lifespan than painted road markings.
 - At a very minimum, the surface should be the same for the cycle track through the point closures and the cycle crossing.
 - Additional measures can help to highlight the priority of people walking and cycling at zebra and parallel crossings, including signage on the carriageway pursuant to TSGRD; and combined lamp posts and Belisha beacons, which illuminate both the crossing and its users.



Cycleway 3 on Cable Street. The continuous coloured asphalt and “elephants’ footprints” on the outside of the cycle area enhance visual priority & optically widen the crossing. Note combined Belisha/lamp posts. (Photo: Tower Hamlets Wheelers)



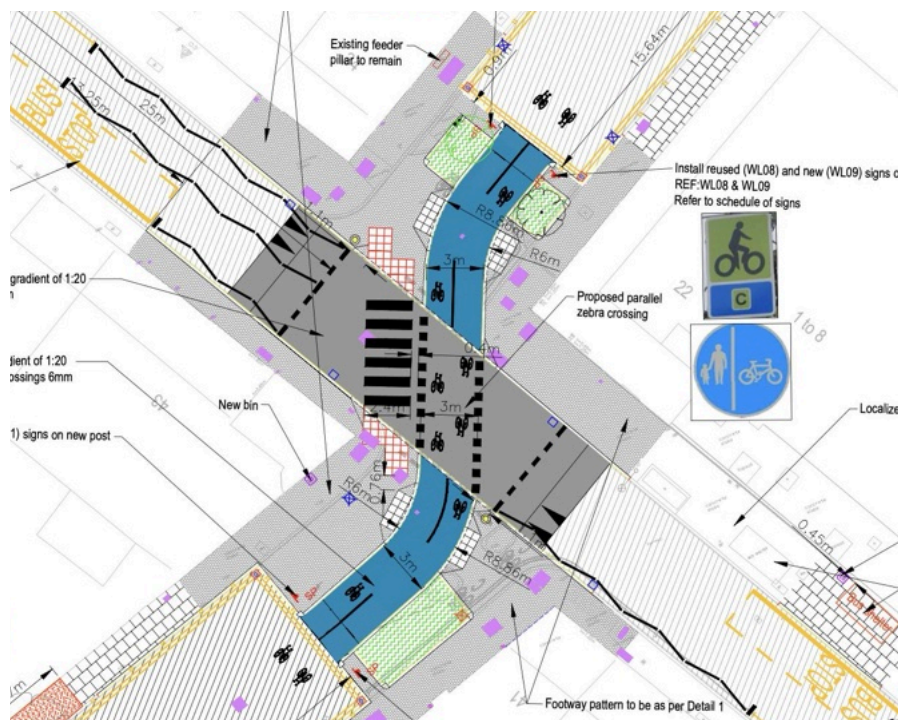
A parallel crossing in Nottingham. The coloured cycle part of the crossing highlights to drivers that this is different from a plain zebra crossing. (Photo credit: Kevin S/@kevjs1982)



Combined Belisha beacon & streetlamp illuminating a zebra crossing at night. (Photo credit: The Ranty Highwayman/@RantyHighwayman)

- **The give-way markings where the cycleway joins the carriageway on Manbey Grove and Louise Road are unnecessary.** They compromise the visual priority and continuity of the cycle route, and contribute to signage clutter and confusion. They are also unusual in that they expect people going straight ahead to give way to traffic on the same corridor, which logically does not make much sense.

While those cycling on the C-link will encounter drivers making a U-turn, volumes and speeds will be low. People will be able to safely negotiate with each other who goes first. This doesn't need a give-way marking any more than encountering someone performing a three-point turn, or indeed a parked car, part way along any other street. We feel double yellow lines will be sufficient to tell drivers they can't park there.



The proposed design, modified by us to remove the give-way markings. The visual priority of the cycle route is clearer. Cyclists encountering a turning car on one of the side roads would negotiate with them for priority similar to encountering a car performing any other manoeuvre anywhere on the street.



As an example: A mode filter on C27 (then branded Q2) in Hackney where a short section of cycle track connects St Peter's Way and De Beauvoir Square. Note there are no give-way markings where the cycle track meets the carriageway on either end—the cycle track has the same priority as the carriageway, albeit controlled by bollards (missing in this photo.)

- **Additional signage or markings which could confuse the priority arrangements must not creep in at later design stages.**

As an example of what **not** to do: in a recent scheme on Cycleway 27, a mini-roundabout on Southgate Road was replaced by a parallel crossing with a new point closure. In principle this is an excellent scheme which gives priority to one of London's most important cycle routes.

At implementation, give-way markings were added suggesting that cyclists had to give way to the carriageway—the exact opposite of the legal meaning of a parallel crossing. These were apparently added in error.

They were replaced by non-standard “edge of carriageway” markings which don't appear in TSRGD. Many users interpret these as give-way markings anyway.

This, combined with “new road layout” signage that told cyclists to look left & right, but made no such request of motorists, led to a situation where those cycling are hesitant to take their legal priority or don't realise they *have* priority, and many drivers barrelling through not realising they must be prepared to give way to people cycling. Anecdotal evidence suggests a significant number of near misses.

We hope that lessons are learned from this scheme. No additional markings or excessive signage should be added to the Water Lane scheme that might confuse the priority arrangements.



*Non-standard “edge of carriageway” markings on the Southgate Road crossing (burnt-off incorrect give-way markings visible underneath.) Note the driver in the right-hand photo failing to give way to the cyclist, who has priority. **Do not copy these markings.** (Photo: Jonathan Rothwell & @Hackneycyclist)*

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- **We would like Newham Council to consider a longer-term vision for traffic volume and speed reduction on Water Lane.**
 - Water Lane is not a formal main road, and is not part of the Strategic Road Network.
 - In spite of this, volumes and speeds on Water Lane are very high.
 - The corridor is a key danger spot for people walking and cycling. Its safety record is very poor.
 - A fatal crash occurred on the evening of Friday 18th October 2024, further north near the junction with Forest Lane. At the time we submit this response, there are still floral tributes at the scene, left by people to remember the person who was killed.
 - We expect that monitoring will need to be in place at the new crossing to ensure drivers comply with the priority arrangements and give way to people walking and cycling when they should.
 - Even after this crossing is built, we think that further work is needed on Water Lane, particularly considering the student volumes at UEL and residential nature of the area.
 - In our objection to UEL's planning application for new student accommodation 23/00790/FUL (dated June 2023) we highlighted that we wanted the applicant to fund improvements to Water Lane to bring it up to LCDS and LTN 1/20 standards.
 - The key issue (and part of the reason the consulted crossing is necessary) is because Water Lane is used by drivers as a shortcut between Leytonstone Road and Romford Road (A118)/Vicarage Lane (B614), avoiding The Grove.
 - We feel meaningful improvements could take the form of:
 - protected cycleways (unlikely due to the available width); or
 - a bus gate at some point on Water Lane, with through traffic diverted to use the strategic road network via The Grove and Romford Road.
 - Any full scheme on Water Lane should connect at the southern end to the excellent Romford Road scheme currently being delivered by Newham Council, and at the northern end to any Waltham Forest/Newham joint scheme on the Leytonstone Road/Leytonstone High Road corridor.

- **We would like Newham Council to develop a programme of junction improvements for the Forest Gate/Manor Park C-link, with the crossing of The Grove between Manbey Grove and Grove Crescent Road considered for improvements.**
 - The mode filters at these junctions have been very successful, but have created some confusion about who should be where (e.g. with redundant traffic islands protecting cycle contraflows that are now unnecessary.)



*Looking west from Manbey Grove towards Grove Crescent Road. Note the redundant island to protect the (now-unnecessary) contraflow.
Photo credit: Nigel King*

- It's difficult for those cycling to cross The Grove to proceed towards the station. Using the toucan crossing involves more pavement cycling than is appropriate, particularly in a busy pedestrian area.



The pedestrian crossing of The Grove, which is a toucan crossing. Cyclists are expected to mount the pavement, ride along to this crossing, cross, and then cycle on the pavement on the other side. We don't think this is in line with best practice standards and could be improved when this area is next reviewed. Photo credit: Nigel King.

- A future scheme should introduce a simpler and more direct crossing of the Grove for people walking and cycling. This could be part of a scheme to build protected tracks on Leytonstone High Road via Maryland (replacing the post-Crossrail layout, which we believe to be sub-optimal and outdated when it was built) or could be an independent scheme. This may be a signalised crossing, or could even be a parallel priority crossing similar to the proposed treatment at Water Lane.
- This would provide an improvement for C-link users to reach the shops in Stratford or the station, and also eliminate the need for footway cycling past the shopfronts on The Grove—particularly if the existing cycle tracks can be extended past Morrisons to connect to the C-link at Manbey Grove.

CONCLUSION

We find these proposals to be of high quality.

We expect that the scheme is delivered with at least the level of quality shown in these proposals, and that it becomes part of a programme of wider improvements to the Water Lane area and to the C-link to Forest Gate and Manor Park.

We ask that the scheme is delivered promptly.

We support these proposals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Compiled by Dr Karen Flanagan and Jonathan Rothwell from Newham Cyclists, with thanks to Kerena Fussell and Nigel King for their contributions.

Thanks to Kev S, @Hackneycyclist and The Ranty Highwayman on Twitter for allowing the use of their images.