Old Kent Road walkabouts and workshop:

Report of Findings

August 2013

Contents

The comments made in this report were made by the participants of the walkabouts and workshops and do not necessarily represent the views of Southwark Council.

1.   INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the comments and findings of the Old Kent Road walkabouts and workshop held in July 2013. Walkabouts provide an opportunity for local people to come and walk particular routes identifying those areas, buildings and spaces which are liked, which are disliked, where opportunities for change lie and the form which future development might take.

Three routes were walked on 16, 20 and 24 July and a workshop was held on 31 July. The three routes were: Albany Road to Bricklayers Arms, Albany Road to St James's Road and Brimmington Park to St James's Road.

The comments made during the walkabouts and workshop will inform future planning guidance for Old Kent Road, including the vision for Old Kent Road in the council's forthcoming local plan, the New Southwark Plan.

The structure of the report is as follows:

- Section 2 of the report describes the planning context
- Section 3 explains the methodology
- Section 4 sets out the next steps
- Sections 5-7 summarise the comments made about each of the three sections of Old Kent Road which were walked.

2.   CONTEXT

The strategic planning framework for Southwark is set out in the Core Strategy (2011). The Core Strategy provides overarching planning policies for the borough and also contains a vision for each area of the borough to guide development over the next 10-15 years. The Core Strategy vision for Old Kent Road states that:

We will set out guidance in an area action plan for the provision of housing, employment and small, local shops to complement the multiple retailers already there. This will include a review of the proposals map designations.

We will work with the local community, local businesses and retail operators, private developers and landowners to improve the area. We want to exploit the expected increased growth in innovative industries in this area, particularly new sectors in green manufacturing, bio-sciences and the knowledge economy, which could provide a range of jobs for Southwark residents. We want to create a more distinctive environment on Old Kent Road at a scale that is comfortable to walk around. We would like new homes to overlook streets and spaces so that there will be much better natural security. The area will benefit from good urban design and high quality architecture to transform it into a place with its own identity rather than a busy road. These must be within a strategy for improved accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and an enhanced public realm. We will work with Transport for London to develop a strategy for improved accessibility.

We will ensure that the Old Kent Road and Elephant and Castle regeneration work together to benefit each other. We are working with Lewisham Council to make sure we have a joined up approach to future development and improvements to Old Kent Road.

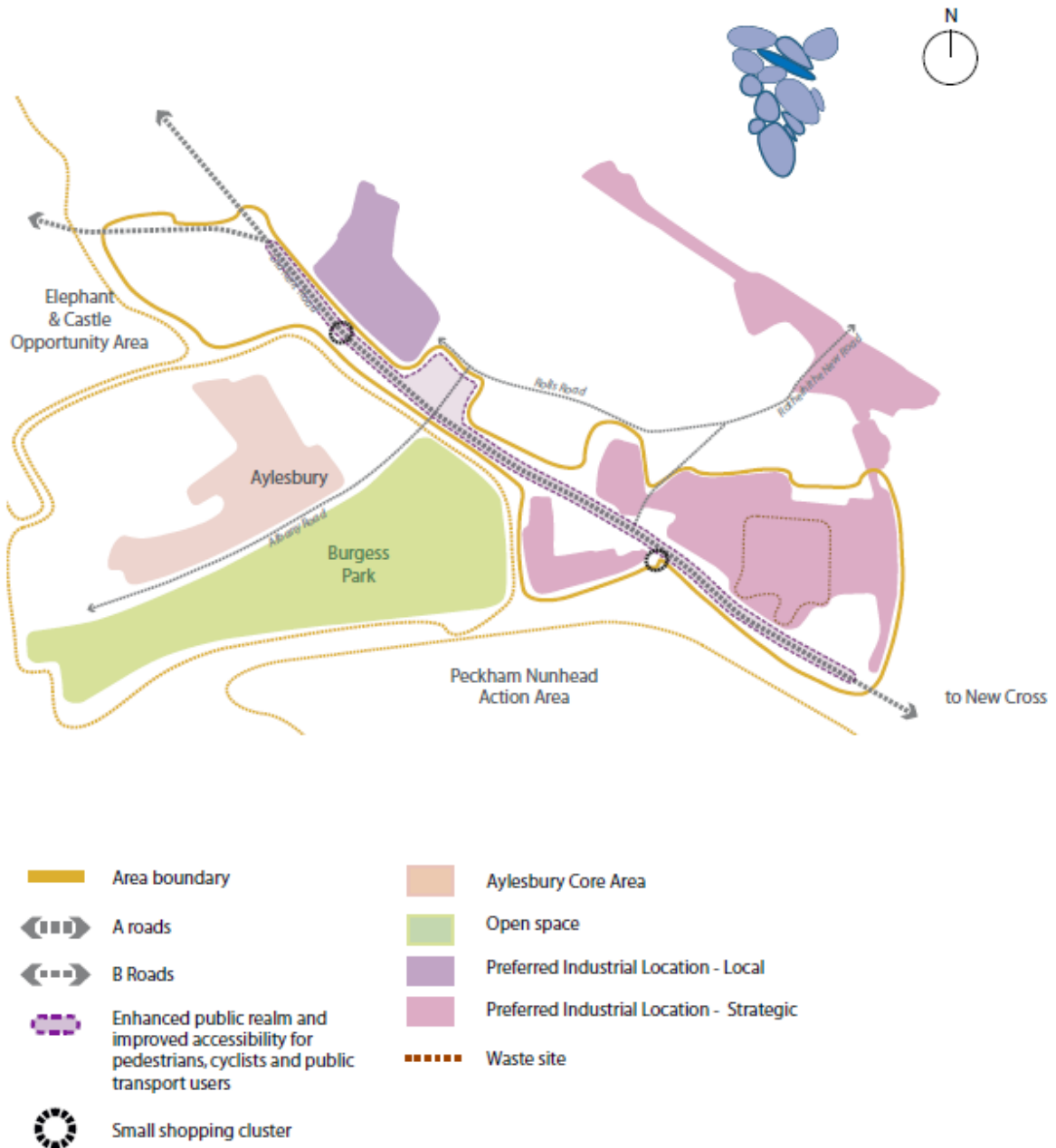The vision is accompanied by a key diagram which illustrates graphically the main principles of the vision.

Figure 1: Core strategy key diagram

We are about to start preparing a new local plan (the New Southwark Plan) to replace the Core Strategy (2011) and saved policies in the Southwark Plan (2007). This will also involve a review of the vision for Old Kent Road. In autumn 2013 we will publish an issues paper for public consultation. This will be followed by an issues and options paper in 2014.

In order to start thinking about the issues and challenges facing Old Kent we arranged a series of walkabouts and a workshop with local residents. Walkabouts provide an opportunity for local residents, community groups and businesses, ward councillors and council officers to meet and walk particular routes, observing the design characteristics of the area, the quality of the landscape and public realm, and identifying those areas, buildings and spaces which are liked, which are disliked, where opportunities for change lie and the form which future development might take.

3.   METHODOLOGY

The walkabouts and workshop were held over a number of days:

Tuesday 16 July 7pm-8.30pm
Saturday 20 July 11am-12.30pm
Wednesday 24 July 7pm-8.30pm
Wednesday 31 July 7pm-8.30pm

The events were advertised widely by a flyer delivered to around 11,000 addresses around the Old Kent Road (see appendix 2), posters in supermarkets and the local library, a mail-out to around 3,000 address in the Planning Policy team's database and through the council's website. Representatives from a variety of local resident and interest groups attended, along with council officers.

Three routes were walked:

1. Albany Road to Bricklayers Arms roundabout (16 July and 24 July)
2. Albany Road to St James's Road (16 July)
3. Brimmington park to St James's Road (20 July)

Appendix 1 shows each route.

The attendees were divided into small groups and each group discussed the character of the area, elements that they liked and where improvements could be made and took notes and photographs along the way.

A workshop was held on 31 July at Walworth Academy in which participants discussed their findings and visually represented these on large maps of the area. The findings and notes from each of the walks and the workshop have been collated in this report.

It should be noted that the comments made in this report were made by the participants of the walkabouts and workshops and do not necessarily represent the views of Southwark Council.

4.   NEXT STEPS

This report will be circulated to all those who attended the walkabouts.

It will be used to inform the local plan issues paper to be published in autumn 2013. A further public workshop will be held in autumn 2013 on the issues paper.

For further information about the walkabouts and workshop please contact the Planning Policy team.

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5.   WALKABOUT NOTES ROUTE 1:
   ALBANY ROAD TO BRICKLAYERS ARMS ROUNDABOUT

Participants: Mia Scaggiante
John Bussey
Sanna Wennberg
Frank Vickery
Richard Lee
Guy Mannes Abbott
Jeremy Leach
Celia Cronin
Carol
Juliet Atako (Workshop)
Sylvia Rothlisberger (Workshop)
Shuhei Nukuyama (Workshop)
Neil Goldwasser
Francis Bernstein
Suhel Ahmed
Rebecca Chagweda
Peter Wright
Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Darren Merrill
Simon Hughes MP (Workshop)
Tim Cutts – Southwark Council
Juliet Seymour – Southwark Council
Kate Johnson – Southwark Council
Alison Squires – Southwark Council

Land uses

How do the types of land uses – shops, homes, offices, workshops etc - contribute to the identity and character of the area?

- The diversity of business, ethnicities and languages in Old Kent Road is a real strength. Also the individuality of shops is a benefit and adds to the character.
- There is a rotation of existing uses that ensure the street is well used throughout the day and into the evening. The existing shops facilitate an active street late into the evening which can make people feel safer.
- The section between East St and Albany Rd functions as a town centre.
- Consideration should be given to creating a town centre at Bricklayers if the flyover (Figure 2) can be removed.
- Positive attractors include Tesco, the library, the Premier hotel and some of the cafes.
- Some like the way some of the cafes spill onto the pavement. There was a suggestion that more similar developments would be beneficial. Edgeware Road was mentioned as an example where this works well.
- Some people thought the retail offer should be managed more effectively. There are lots of takeaways, internet cafes, payday loan shops, betting shops and hairdressers. The last bank along Old Kent Road shut 10 years ago. A number of people stated that they do not shop on Old Kent Road.

- East Street library is in need of refurbishment. East Street itself is well used and liked.
- The amount of traffic on Old Kent Road, the fumes, noise, difficulty in crossing the road make it a poor shopping environment. The image and perception of Old Kent Road is poor.
- Higher densities (residential and retail) should be encouraged. This will allow more life and amenities to be created and to flourish.
- New development should have commercial space at ground floor level, particularly if it is part of a shopping parade. The environment at ground level is quite hostile for residential development.
- There is no need for large retail units.
- More signage is needed to highlight the significant number of positive parts of the area, e.g. there are no signs along the Old Kent Road to highlight East Street Market, also an area of local heritage which contributes to the local identity and character of the area.
- There should be more sports and leisure uses along the road.
- Upper floors of commercial use will not work along the Old Kent Road. People want to have street level access. There is not enough demand for offices in this location.
- There are good links between the faith centres and the mosque that provide important facilities for local residents.
- Perhaps an installation/building of artistic/architectural merit and/or cultural importance might draw people to the area? (Though not local examples, icons/institutions that have enhanced the reputation and appeal of an area are things like the Angel of the North or the Turner Contemporary in Margate).

Pedestrian and cycle movement

How do you experience the area as a pedestrian or cyclist? How can this be improved?

- The street clutter, including rubbish bins, phone boxes, guard rails, signage etc makes it difficult to walk along the street, especially between East Street and Albany Road.
- The environment is unpleasant for pedestrians. Air quality is poor and the environment is very noisy.

Figure 2: Bricklayers Arms flyover

Figure 3: Looking towards Bricklayers Arms

- The sequencing of traffic lights outside the entrance to Burgess Park is frustrating. The pedestrian crossing phase is not long enough to allow pedestrians to cross Old Kent Road. There are no pedestrian countdowns which would be useful. This makes it more difficult to get to Burgess Park. The left hand turn onto Albany Road is especially dangerous as pedestrians do not always realise traffic is coming from that direction. This junction needs improvements for the many cyclists who ride in/out of the park and cross with pedestrians over the junction (eg redesigned with wider crossings, wider crossing paths, and shared pedestrian/cycling space).
- The section between East St and Albany Road is a town centre. It needs to be created as something approaching one. The mixing up of bus stopping space with carriageway makes the road wider than it might otherwise be. The carriageway itself can be narrowed in places and crossing made easier.
- There are no pedestrian crossing points between East Street and the flyover (Figure 3). Crossing the road in this stretch is dangerous and difficult.
- Albany Road is used as a rat run. There should be more safe and convenient crossings on Albany Road. It's an important route for people with the school and the park on either side. Alternative routes exist in the backstreets behind the Old Kent Road that are safer and more attractive to use. These routes should be signed. They are often a preferred alternative to using the Old Kent Road even though they might take longer.
- The crossing opposite Surrey Square is poor (Figure 5).
- There is no crossing on East Street at the junction with Old Kent Road (Figure 4). This makes it very dangerous for pedestrians, especially with the school and library nearby. It's a busy junction and often used as a cut through.

Figure 4: Pedestrian crossing south of East Street across the Old Kent Road

Figure 5: Pedestrian crossing north of Surrey Square across the Old Kent Road

- Lack of proper crossings by the Bricklayers Arm's roundabout leads to pedestrians running out in front of the traffic
- Cycling is very dangerous. The traffic moves very fast.
- Cycle parking is inadequate and poorly designed – often next to bins and obstructing the paths. Consider better provision of cycle parking in the side streets, these could also be shared surface roads.
- More promotion should be made of a "quieter" cycle route that could run parallel to Old Kent Road. Much better and bolder signage for exiting out of /and into/ London for alternative cycle routes is needed.

- The Barclay's Cycle Hire scheme should be extended to Old Kent Road as a priority. There is a very strong cycling community here. It would also encourage people from Bermondsey/London Bridge to come and discover Burgess Park.
- Vehicle speeds in the northern section are very fast. The speed limit should be 20mph.
- In places the carriageway is 8 lanes wide. In the lower part of Old Kent Road has effectively one general lane and one bus lane. Why can't this be extended to the northern part of Old Kent Road?
- The gyratory north of the Tesco should be removed.
- Road signage often takes up space on the pavement, everything designed for car users rather than pedestrians.
- Underground car parking does not work.
- Can land be set aside to create "park and ride" into London? Is all this traffic passing through London, or commuting into London?
- The car park at Lidl is often used by visitors to the area rather the shoppers.
- Eco buses should be added to the Old Kent Road bus routes to practically demonstrate concern for the very high emissions levels here.
- An extension to the Bakerloo line would change perceptions of Old Kent Road.
- Is there potential for a tram, given the width of the road?

Landmarks and views

Are there landmarks which contribute to the character of the area? Do these make it easy to find your way around? Are there any special views which contribute to the character of the area?

- The pubs are key landmarks - Thomas A'Beckett (Figure 6) and Dun Cow (Figure 7).
- Other landmarks are the old fire station, Tesco, Lidl and the Southernwood retail park.

Figure 6: The Thomas A'Beckett

Figure 7: The former Dun Cow pub

- The entrance to East Street should be more of a landmark and there should be signage for the market
- Despite the fact that no one seems to like the Bricklayers flyover it is a landmark. And people know it. However, it is unpleasant and very confusing for pedestrians to navigate and understand. Could it be improved?
- There are lots of views of the Shard, Gherkin and Cheesegrater.
- Taller buildings, especially on street corners should be used as landmarks.

Buildings and heritage

How do the heights, scale, materials and architecture contribute to the character of the street or area?

How does the ground floor relate to the street? Does it make the building feel welcoming? How do shop fronts contribute to the character of the street?

- Good buildings include the Thomas A'Beckett pub, the White House (155 Old Kent Road) (Figure 8), the old fire station, the old cinema, the Premier Hotel and 276-178 Old Kent Road (formerly the Green Man pub) and its tiled scenes of Robin Hood (Figure 9).

Figure 8: The White House   *Figure 9: Tiled scenes in the former Green Man pub*

- The Thomas A'Becket is an important part of the local heritage. Perhaps this could be wider advertised in an effort to promote the history and cultural significance of the area?
- There are many good Georgian buildings (Figure 10). However many are in a poor state of repair and most of the sash windows have been replaced.
- The Peabody buildings (Figure 11) are fine buildings, although could do with cleaning.
- The built form in terms of projecting shop fronts and set back upper floors is typical of the way in which linear London high streets developed and provides a sense of spaciousness.
- There is a variety of different building lines. These could be used as features, but currently look very cluttered.
- Breaks in the built form which are negative aspects of the streetscape include the car wash adjacent to the old fire station, the garages on the corner of Mina Road and Yaldam House on the corner of Massinger Street.
- Many shop fronts are in poor condition. Together with a lot of signage it results in lack of consistency in the street. Could there be an incentive to remove solid shutters and internally illuminated signage? Signage from upper floors should be removed.

- Many of the buildings give an impression of poverty and dereliction. Unless poverty can be addressed, Old Kent Road will continue to feel run down.
- Both the Lidl and Tesco sites are a wasted opportunity with large surface car parks and single storey buildings. Mixed use buildings with housing above and active frontages would be appropriate. A cafe was suggested. New retail developments should have less car parking.
- Augustus Court (1-70 Old Kent Road) was viewed as a poor example of recent development. The shop fronts are poor, the massing is too great and the appearance forboding.

Figure 10: Old Kent Road townscape

Figure 11: Peabody homes

Public Realm and streetscape

Does the public realm feel safe and secure at different times of day and in the evening?

How do things such as seating, lighting, bollards, guard rails and materials contribute to the character of the area?

- The space outside Tesco (Figure 12) is dead. Landscaping is very hard and there are no active frontages to provide life or stimulation. More planters could be used to soften the landscape. Is there potential for market stalls?

Figure 12: Public space outside Tesco

- The pavement in front of the Tesco car park is very busy but very dirty with chewing gum on the ground etc. It is very congested around the bus stop.

- At the bus stop opposite Tesco, there are bins and bicycle locks at the stop. When 3 or 4 buses stop there mothers with pushchairs, wheelchair users can hardly get off. The bin can be moved to Mina Road and so should the cycle stands. There should be no bins at a bus stop because they cause an obstruction.

Figure 13: Waste bins

Figure 14: External roller shutters

- The public realm is dominated by traffic and is noisy and polluted, particularly the stretch from Albany Road up to East Street. North of East Street, pavements tend to be wider, there are fewer shops and the public realm is quieter.
- Street clutter and rubbish bins are very intrusive (Figure 13). Shops should keep bins to the rear of their stores where possible. Management and collection of rubbish should be improved.
- The pavements are very dirty.
- The yellow bin opposite petrol station looks like it could fall on to the road and needs securing.
- The public realm needs to be made more accessible as it is currently very difficult for those with disabilities to use the paths and crossings
- Signage up near the flyover is very intrusive and makes Old Kent Road look like a motorway.
- The flyover is not well used and should be removed. It is a visual and physical barrier which severs communities. A number of people indicated that it should be demolished and the junction re-engineered to create space for more homes etc. It would also liberate some green spaces and enable better links between Bermondsey and Walworth. Some suggested that it could be converted into a park, along the lines of the High Line park in New York.
- Shutters on shops are a negative feature, particularly as many are very dirty (Figure 14).
- Is there an opportunity for public art in the Bricklayers Arms roundabout?
- It would be good if more public spaces could be provided, or glimpses of public spaces between buildings. An example is on the development site adjacent to 152-170 Old Kent Road. This could also help bring people onto Old Kent Road.

In some places, east west movement through blocks behind Old Kent Road is difficult.
- New development and hoardings encroaching onto the pavements are narrowing pathways.
- Any excess carriage capacity and unused parking spaces should be put into alternative use – green infrastructure / public realm eg. Beckway Street.
- Provision of seating areas in public realm space. Jamaica Road – outside cafe/restaurants – is a good example of public realm seating which promotes lingering and resting.
- Street furniture needs upgrading. Bins could be more colourful. Phone boxes are now redundant and should be removed.

Trees, landscaping and green space

How do trees contribute to the character of the area?
How can we reinforce green links?
How easy is to walk to green spaces or between them?
Are there spaces which can be better used?

- The trees tend to be small and there are few of them.
- The landscape is dreary. More colourful plants, hanging baskets and flowers would help make it more attractive. Can greening be provided in the central median strip?
- Street trees need to be better maintained. There should be more information on the council's website about where to report any damage / maintenance.
- Historically there has been lots of green space in the area built on and this should be replaced through more street planting and measures to encourage green infrastructure as part of new development
- Green links should be rethreaded through the area as in the case of Lee Valley and Surrey Canal. Suggestions for green links are: to the Wildlife Garden, along Sedan Way and through Minnows Walk.
- There is an opportunity to provide some benches in the small green spaces on the corner of Mason Street and Old Kent Road and adjacent to Charlotte Court (68b Old Kent Road).
- Open Space next to Charlotte Court (Figure 16) could do with some benches also Mason Street little park.
- Aylesbury Site 7 - The existing link to East Street could be promoted as a play street.
- The open space in front of the bus stops and the flyover at the northern end of the street needs some attention (Figure 15). Surfaces are cracked and uneven, there is evidence of street drinking and the tree canopy is low making it dark and preventing natural surveillance. People do not feel safe waiting for buses here at night.
- Could more be made of the wall opposite the subway entrance between Paragon Mews and Darwin Street e.g. a green wall?

Figure 15: Public space on east side of Old Kent Road in front of flyover

Figure 16: Public space at the end of Townsend Street

6.   WALKABOUT NOTES ROUTE 2:
ALBANY ROAD TO ST JAMES'S ROAD

Participants: Stephanie Lodge (Workshop)
                Jim Lodge (Workshop)
                Ibrahim Adewusi (Workshop)
                Adrian Smith (Workshop)
                Neil Goldwasser
                Liz Bond
                Sally Eva
                John Adkins
                Maisie Adkins
                Barbara Ann Overwater – Southwark Council
                Tom Buttrick – Southwark Council

Land uses

How do the types of land uses – shops, homes, offices, workshops etc - contribute to the identity and character of the area?

- There are a number of vacant shops on the stretch of road between Oakley Place and Trafalgar Avenue. People would like to see more of a diversity of uses along the road. The range of uses is very limited. There are not many restaurants/cafes. Most of the pubs have disappeared which is sad because the road used to be renowned for the number of local pubs. There was some concern with the number of churches.
- There is a lack of leisure facilities along the Old Kent Road and no real reason to draw people to the area, despite excellent traffic links to get people there. Perhaps things like a cinema / bowling alley / theatre / sports facilities / art gallery could be considered?
- There are a lot of vacant flats above shop units which suggests that people do not want to live on the Old Kent Road.
- There are many sites which do not use land efficiently. These include the many surface car parks (eg. the Cantium Retail Park, Asda and Lovegrove Street) and also the single storey big box retail and warehouse uses (Cantium Retail Park, Asda, Six Bridges Industrial Estate and McDonalds).
- Some of the car parks are not well managed which encourages anti-social activity.
- There are a number of obvious development sites, including the land on the corner of St James's Road and Old Kent Road and the former petrol station on the corner of Marlborough Grove.
- There are a series of communities along the road, and these need to be connected and more linked up. There should be more emphasis on community facilities to improve the quality of life for people already living in the area, as well as new residents.
- High density in-fill housing could be an issue. Housing should not be provided at the expense of existing residents.

Pedestrian and cycle movement

How do you experience the area as a pedestrian or cyclist? How can this be improved?

- There are high levels of pollution from vehicular traffic which creates an unpleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The environment is very noisy. Sections of the road where the traffic queues, particularly between the junctions with Glengall Road and Dunton Road, are particularly bad as can be seen on this map: http://www.howpollutedismyroad.org.uk/roads.php
- The footways are dirty and cluttered. Care should be taken that bins and bike racks are not placed next to bus stops which are often congested. Bike racks should not be located in the middle of the footway (eg. at 148 Old Kent Road).
- Routes are busy at all hours which helps make the area feel safer. However, one participant said she would not walk along the road at night time; another considered that the busy road provided some comfort late at night because there was more surveillance.
- Public realm at road junctions is unpleasant for pedestrians. There are no pedestrian signals at several major junctions eg. Trafalgar Avenue. More pedestrian crossings are needed. Often the existing staggered crossings do not follow pedestrian desire lines. Crossings should have countdowns.
- It would be a good idea to establish where people are going when they use the Old Kent Road and look for opportunities to create attractive and well signposted alternatives on side roads.
- Old Kent Road is perceived to be dangerous for cycling. Potential ways of making it safer include:
  - Provision of shared bus lanes and segregation from traffic.
  - Installation of speed cameras.
  - Improvements to alternative routes that take people away from Old Kent Road. LCN route 2 could be a viable alternative for many people travelling east-west, but it is not direct so many people just follow Old Kent Road.
  - Improvements to left turns. These are dangerous for cyclists. There is no cycle lane and motorists can miss seeing a cyclist.
  - Improvements to the cycle superhighway which runs from Mawbey Road, across Old Kent Road, to Glengall Road, through enhancements such as a raised entrance and better road marking.
  - Provision of traffic calming measures along Malborough Grove which is considered to be an accident spot.
  - Improvements to Cobourg Road which is a 'rat run' for motorists and dangerous for cyclists.
- Southbound, just before the Mawbey Road junction, there is bus stop. Just after this junction on the OKR the bus lane starts. The bus lane should begin before this bus stop. Car drivers regularly try and undercut before the current start of the bus lane and are a great threat to cyclists here.
- Introducing bus arrival boards to more local bus stops would encourage a greater use of public transport. For example, the bus stops at Malt Street (WH northbound and EF southbound) are heavily-used and would particularly benefit from this.
- Prioritisation for greener buses should be introduced with a separate lane.

- An extension to the Bakerloo line to the Old Kent Road area would encourage the use of public transport and provide a means for people to visit the area (e.g. Burgess Park) and also provide a much-needed expansion of the London Underground network to South London). The recent completion of the London Overground loop (extending from Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction) is a good model for comparison. This scheme has been very successful in improving the accessibility of South London, with a similar result to the effects of the East London Line revamp, which opened up previously isolated areas. It could encourage professional commuters to the area as well as businesses looking to capitalise.
- There is not enough car parking available to visit the businesses. One example given was the plumbing shop in the frontage between Oakley Place and Trafalgar Avenue. Customers only have 20 minutes car parking allowance to visit the shop.
- The number of churches has an impact upon car parking on the weekends. Cars are parked on the bus lanes on weekends, which creates traffic congestion. B&Q car park is full of people who go to the churches.
- People can park their cars along part of the road, this is good for the shops but provides more issues for the traffic

Landmarks and views

Are there landmarks which contribute to the character of the area? Do these make it easy to find your way around? Are there any special views which contribute to the character of the area?

- Asda, B&Q and McDonalds make the junction of St James's particularly unpleasant and lacking in sense of place (Figures 17 and 18).

Figure 17: B&Q car park

Figure 18: The junction of St James's Road and Old Kent Road

- The sections of the road with wider pavements and trees lining it, eg. between St James's and Albany Road, give the area a much more pleasant 'boulevard' feel, which softens the negative aspects of the busy road (eg. the grey concrete look, traffic noise and pollution).

- The civic building (Figure 19) is a landmark building. More emphasis should be placed on improving the public realm and signage on the building. The mural underneath the civic building is a special feature. Old Kent Road is an historic road and more should be made of it.
- The mature trees are landmarks.

Figure 19: The civic building

Buildings and heritage

How do the heights, scale, materials and architecture contribute to the character of the street or area?

How does the ground floor relate to the street? Does it make the building feel welcoming? How do shop fronts contribute to the character of the street?

- A few participants liked the consistent character/boulevard feel of Old Kent Road.
- Often the streetscape is very fragmented. Some gateway sites need to be developed to enhance the area. For example, the boarded up site on the western corner of St James's and Old Kent Road. The car parks fail to provide a strong frontage and the building line is frequently erratic.

Figure 20: New housing on Coopers Road

Figure 21: The Lord Nelson pub

- The new residential building on corner of Coopers Road and Old Kent Road (Figure 20) seemed to be the maximum height that should be permitted. The heights and character of redeveloped sites should match that of the surrounding buildings.
- The City of London housing is valued for its character and landscaping.
- The Lord Nelson pub (Figure 21) is a heritage asset.
- The shop fronts are tired looking and need a spruce up to make the area more attractive. The frontages on the shops at the St James's Road/Jamaica Road junction have been replaced and modernised and as a result the area looks a lot better e.g. better maintained and more inviting.
- Some of the buildings are lovely but many of these have gaudy signs.

Public Realm and streetscape

Does the public realm feel safe and secure at different times of day and in the evening?

How do things such as seating, lighting, bollards, guard rails and materials contribute to the character of the area?

- There are a lot of waste bins on the pavement. An improved retail refuse management strategy is required to get large retail bins of footways.
- There is a lack of public waste bins along some stretches of the road and there appears to be a consequent high level of littering. Split bins with a section for recyclable waste near public spaces such as Burgess Park would be good. Additionally, bins for stubbing out cigarettes might reduce the number of cigarette butts discarded on the floor. Appropriate enforcement of sightings would also be a deterrent.
- There are a lot of advertising hoardings and signage eg. on the corner of Old Kent Road and St James's Road, around the former petrol station on the corner of Marlborough Road and Old Kent Road. As well as providing inactive frontages, these hoardings allow anti-social behavior to take place behind them.
- The Ossory Road entrance into the industrial area could be more attractive. There is a large area of wasted public realm on the corner of Asda. There is lots of leftover/forgotten space around the large retail sites that could be enhanced with public art, landscaping or temporary uses.
- More CCTV and more signs (eg Neighbourhood Watch signs, 'DNA Marked' signs from the police) to highlight its presence could make the local area in general safer.
- A coherent lighting and landscaping scheme would help to draw together disparate sections of the road. Lighting could be used to define important features, such as Burgess Park. The central reservation areas in the road are inconsistent, with different treatments. They should be more consistent.
- Is there scope for local businesses to contribute financially to maintenance?

Trees, landscaping and green space

How do trees contribute to the character of the area?
How can we reinforce green links?
How easy is to walk to green spaces or between them?
Are there spaces which can be better used?

- The mature trees along the road are a real asset to the area, particularly the ones in the open space between Trafalgar Road and Glengall Road (Figure 22). But this space needs to be upgraded and better signposted. It could be integrated into Burgess Park more effectively. This pavement area is in a poor state with broken pavements, cracked tarmac, weeds, old tree stumps, unpainted or peeling railings and a lack of lighting. There is evidence of street drinking. The park has no centrepiece/feature to draw people in, such as benches facing a pretty flower bed, a water feature etc. The trees could also be pruned to open it up a bit more, making it more visible and allowing more light through. Is there scope for an outdoor gym here?
- The City of London housing estate (Figure 23) is a good example of a nice communal open space. Its garden is well-tended.

Figure 22: Open space on the corner of Glengall Road

Figure 23: Corporation of London housing

- There is scope for better green links to be created, connecting green spaces. Improved signage would also help.
- Burgess Park is a lovely green space but the entrance could be made more visible and more inviting, as you could easily pass it in a car or on a bus without noticing that it's there. Day festivals such as Bermondsey Carnival at Southwark Park draw people to an area, and they might then visit again once they know how to get there, what is there etc. Burgess Park appears to have enough space to host similar events. Music festivals in particular appear to add cultural significance to an area, such as the appeal that the South West Four Weekender brought to Clapham Common in 2003.
- The hanging baskets on the corner of Coopers Road are an asset, and more of those would be nice to brighten up the area.
- The council should also look for opportunities to create pocket green spaces along the road, to provide more relief from the busy road. This could be considered in tandem with new developments coming forward.
- Uplighting could be effective, or lights in the trees such as the very attractive Gabriel's Wharf along the South Bank.
- Can public art be encouraged in open spaces?

7.   WALKABOUT NOTES ROUTE 3:
BRIMMINGTON PARK TO ST JAMES'S ROAD

Participants: Sunny Lambe
                Stephanie Lodge
                Jim Lodge
                Craig Stansfield
                Gaby Giovane
                Neil Goldwasser
                Andy Wilkes
                Mike Pantelides
                Alex Trouton
                Councillor Richard Livingstone
                Tim Cutts – Southwark Council
                Barbara Ann Overwater – Southwark Council
                Nick Wolff – Southwark Council

Land uses

How do the types of land uses – shops, homes, offices, workshops etc - contribute to the identity and character of the area?

- Is there sufficient footfall to support shops? In some areas the industrial areas on the north side of Old Kent Road effectively cut the residential catchment in half.
- If retail is not appropriate at ground floor or if there is not sufficient demand, would other uses be suitable such as health facilities, schools, nursery provision etc? These might also attract people and help make retail uses more viable.
- New retail uses should be smaller scale rather than big box type retail with large car parks.
- Some new businesses are moving into the retail units on Old Kent Road eg. in the Royal London Buildings. Other parades are doing less well. The parade at 721-733 looks rather derelict.
- The ex-Livesey Museum is a beautiful building that looks like it could be well-suited to being an art gallery/school/etc.
- The future of the industrial land to the north of Old Kent Road is key to the regeneration of this part of Old Kent Road. It currently forms a barrier to pedestrian movement and also makes sites on the north side of Old Kent Road difficult to develop. Industrial areas are considered important for local employment. Is there scope to rationalise these areas to focus industrial and warehousing uses on the best sites and use remaining land for other uses?
- The Biscuit factory concept of space for small businesses should be replicated on places along the Old Kent Road.
- There is potential for green technologies and research light industrial uses to be located in the industrial areas off Old Kent Road. Perhaps a university technical facility?
- A good idea would be to introduce a Startup Park on under-used sites, similar to the Box Park in Shoreditch (http://www.boxpark.co.uk), which has provided plenty of budding businesses with a chance to develop, given a strong sense of identity to the area and made it quite appealing/trendy. Enhancing the area's reputation and emphasising the council's willingness to assist would encourage businesses to invest in the area. A more local success story for comparison is

the area of Maltby Street Food Market (http://www.maltby.st/) and Spa Terminus (http://www.spa-terminus.co.uk), which is now a hugely popular alternative to Borough Market.

- There are many churches on this part of Old Kent Road and in the industrial areas alongside.
- There are many sites which do not use land efficiently. These include the many surface car parks (eg Toysrus (Figure 24), Aldi (Figure 25), Furnitureland, CurrysPC World, Hertz, Enterprise (Figure 31), Mercedes Benz garage) and also the single storey big box retail and storeage uses (Toysrus (Figure 24), Aldi, Furnitureland, KFC, Carpet Right, Staples, CurrysPC World, Mothercare, Safestore, HSS Hire, Kwik Fit).

Figure 24: Toysrus

Figure 25: Aldi

Pedestrian and cycle movement

How do you experience the area as a pedestrian or cyclist? How can this be improved?

- The environment is very noisy and polluted. The sign near Toysrus stating "You are now entering an Air Quality monitoring zone" is encouraging. Such schemes seem vital for areas adjacent to such busy arterial roads.
- It is difficult to cross the street. It feels like an urban motor way in places. It feels dangerous to cycle along.
- Some pavements are very wide, and could potentially be segregated into pedestrian/cycle paths. The stretch of road between St James's and Ilderton Road is a considered a barrier to movement. There are no link roads through to the Canada Water area, and this causes congestion at Ilderton Road.
- The large number of churches impacts on the bus lanes on Sundays e.g. by the junction with Ossory Road, where many vehicles park in this lane to visit the churches, and it narrows the dual carriageway down to one lane. Could this be a no-parking zone so that it does not slow the flow of traffic?

Landmarks and views

Are there landmarks which contribute to the character of the area? Do these make it easy to find your way around? Are there any special views which contribute to the character of the area?

- Landmarks include the railway bridge, the Livesey building, Christchurch, the gas holders and the mature trees.

Buildings and heritage

How do the heights, scale, materials and architecture contribute to the character of the street or area?

How does the ground floor relate to the street? Does it make the building feel welcoming? How do shop fronts contribute to the character of the street?

- Too often buildings ignore Old Kent Road. Many of the shops do not provide a front door onto Old Kent Road eg Aldi (Figure 25), Toysrus (Figure 24), Carpet Right (Figure 30) and instead provide access from a car park. Some shops provide blank facades onto Old Kent Road eg Aldi and Toysrus.

Figure 26: Kwikfit

Figure 27: 1-2-1 Redford Court

- The Tustin estate has a black facade onto Old Kent Road at ground level.
- There are many gaps in the streetscape, such as the car parks, car rental yards (Hertz and Enterprise (Figure 31)), Kwik Fit (Figure 26) and the space on the corner of Gervase Street. The streetscape feels very fragmented and in many areas there is lack of consistency.
- New development needs to front onto Old Kent Road. The building which accommodates the tile shop (1-21 Redford Court) (Figure 27) feels about the right scale, provides a viable commercial use at ground level and fronts onto the street.
- Good buildings include the Livesey building, Christchurch and the Royal London Buildings.
- There are elements of good townscape (the Royal London Buildings (Figure 28), Livesey and Christchurch, the frontage between Peckham Park Road and Ethnard Road, 726-720 Old Kent Road, 721-733 Old Kent Road). However, the building on the corner of Peckham Park Road is still vacant at ground level which blights the street corner.

- The mural above the Kentish Drovers pub (Figure 29) is very special although in need of repair. Could the council encourage or even assist owners of architecturally interesting buildings to renovate them?

Figure 28: The Royal London buildings

Figure 29: The Kentish drovers pub

- The shops with the arched roofs under Bowness House are potentially distinctive but currently look rather run down.

Public Realm and streetscape

Does the public realm feel safe and secure at different times of day and in the evening?

How do things such as seating, lighting, bollards, guard rails and materials contribute to the character of the area?

- The public space in front of Bowness House feels rather separated from Old Kent Road. There is a change of levels which makes access difficult.
- The frequent roller shutters create dead frontages in the evening and when shops are closed.
- Removal of guard rails is inconsistent. In some areas the rails have been removed eg. outside the Tustin estate and in other areas they remain eg. at the junction with St James's.
- There are a number of old signs around that appear to be redundant eg. the sign outside the Enterprise rental yard. There is a lot of signage on buildings in parts of the road (Figure 30).
- The pavement is dirty in places. There are too many materials being used eg outside the Tustin estate and the width varies greatly. For example, outside the Hertz rental yard the pavement is inexplicably wide.
- There are few trees which would help provide a sound barrier to protect residential amenities.

- The pavement on the corner of Peckham Park Road and Old Kent Road is dirty and cluttered. The amount of litter seen in the bushes outside Aldi (Figure 25) and the dirty, chewing gum-ridden floor there gives the area a very downtrodden appearance. Rubbish bags on the pavements need to be stored, either behind buildings or in refuse bins.

Figure 30: Corner of Hyndman Street and Old Kent Road

Figure 31: Car rental yard

- The air quality monitoring station should be more visible, to make people aware of 'good' and 'bad' air pollution days.
- Telecommunication cabinets could be more attractive and painted.
- There is a blue tarpaulin stuck in the tree outside Tile Giant (814 Old Kent Road). The GoogleMaps image taken May 2012 shows it has been there at least 15 months.
- Graffiti looks unsightly and tends to attract further antisocial behaviour (e.g. more graffiti) if not removed. This is evident in certain parts of the Old Kent Road, such as on the walls of the railway arches alongside Brimmington Park.

Trees, landscaping and green space

How do trees contribute to the character of the area?
How can we reinforce green links?
How easy is to walk to green spaces or between them?
Are there spaces which can be better used?

- The tree planting in the central reservation (Figure 32) outside Carpet Right softens the landscape. However there was also a concern that it may serve to increase traffic speeds as drivers see a straight stretch of road.
- The green area in front of the Ledbury estate (Figure 33) softens the landscape but does not appear to be very well used. It is also separated from Old Kent Road by a change of levels. The hard standing next to the green space could be used for growing plants.
- A small pocket park/open space could be created between Currys/PC World and adjoining site.
- The large trees should be maintained and pollarded. Some are too bulky and branches droop down to obstruct pedestrians in places along the road.
- Planting of perennial plants and introduction of green walls would add to the greenness of the road.

- The trees should have soakaways, not concrete.
- Brimmington Park lacks a children's playground. The entrance to the park is not obvious and needs to be more inviting.
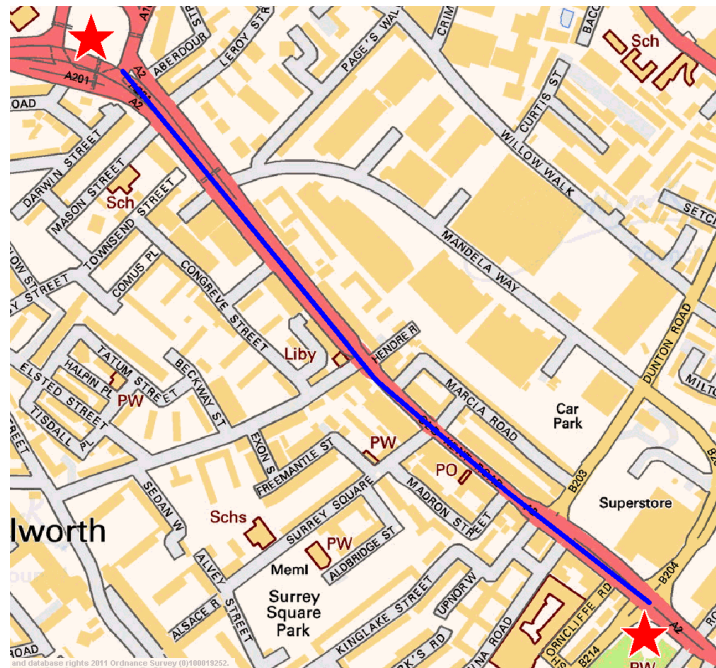

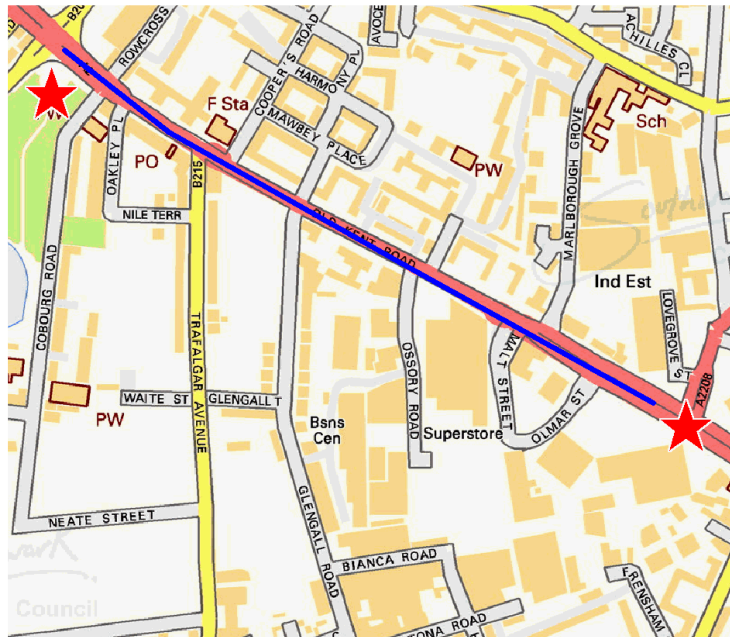*Figure 32: Central planting strip*

Figure 33: The Ledbury estate

APPENDIX 1: THREE ROUTES

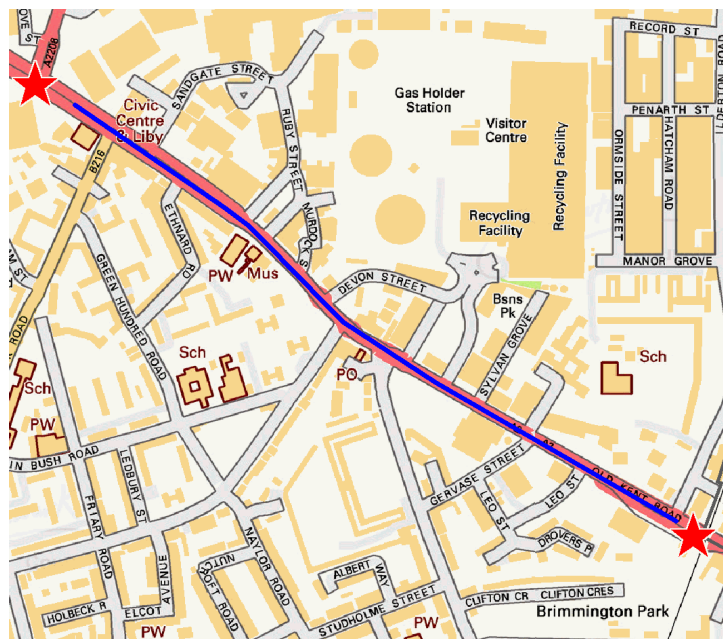Route 1: Albany Road to Bricklayers Arms roundabout (16 July and 24 July)

Route 2: Albany Road to St James's Road (16 July)

Route 3: Brimmington Park to St James's Road (20 July)

APPENDIX 2: FLYER

Old Kent Road walkabouts

To joins us, either on a walkabout or at the workshop, or to send us your views, please get in touch. Remember to include your name, address and phone number and state which event (if any) you would like to attend:

> Email: planningpolicy@southwark.gov.uk

> Address: Planning policy, Chief Executive's Department, FREEPOST SE1919/14, London SE17 2ES

> Tel: 020 7525 5471

Tuesday 16 July 7pm to 8.30pm

Meet at the entrance to Burgess Park (on the corner of Albany Road and Old Kent Road)

Route 1: Albany Road to Bricklayers Arms roundabout
Route 2: Albany Road to Rotherhithe New Road

Saturday 20 July 11am to 12.30pm

Meet at Brimmington Park (Old Kent Road entrance)

Route: 3: Ilderton Road to Rotherhithe New Road

Wednesday 31 July 7pm to 8.30pm

Workshop: Walworth Academy, Shorncliffe Road, London, SE1 5UJ

www.southwark.gov.uk/oldkentroadwalkabouts