

London Road Improvements Update

September 2014



What's been happening since August?

In August we emailed residents who had expressed an interest in being involved in our London Road improvement scheme to ask where we should focus our £40,000 funding.

We gave three options:

Option 1: A General Clean / Smarten / Tidy Up

Option 2: Preston Circus

Option 3: The Oxford St / Ann Street crossing

Of those who expressed an opinion, the majority felt we should focus on **Option 1; A General Clean / Smarten / Tidy Up**

What Happens Next

Step 1: Identifying what we can do to tidy the area up.

There are various ways London Road could benefit from aesthetic enhancements. Some (such as quality of shop-fronts) are beyond the direct influence of our project. Some (such as consistency of materials and untidy kerb-lines) are beyond the financial scope of the initial budget.

However, there are lots of smaller things we can do that would make a big difference. We've made a start by identifying some of the things we think could be tackled. These are included at the end of this note. We'd also like your ideas. If you think we've missed anything, let us know by emailing emma.friedlander@brighton-hove.gov.uk by **17th October**.

Step 2: Clarify opportunities.

We'll investigate your suggestions, identify exactly what can be done and how much each piece of work would cost. We'll circulate an update in early November.

Step 3: Prioritise

We'll organise a workshop to discuss options with the community, and if necessary agree where our funding should be prioritised. We'll aim to hold the workshop in early November. If you would like to attend the workshop, let us know by emailing emma.friedlander@brighton-hove.gov.uk by **17th October**.

Step 4: Implement improvements

Once we have agreed what we should do, we can implement the improvements – hopefully before Christmas.

Initial Ideas to Clean / Tidy / Smarten London Road.

We would like you to send us your priorities for tidying London Road up, but to start things off we've identified some potential areas where we think we could make an impact. They are:

1: Guardrails

Traditionally, Guardrails were often implemented automatically, regardless of their ability to meaningfully reduce risks of accidents.

Our road safety team have identified 72.5m of Guardrails in the London Road area that would be deemed unnecessary using current safety assessments. Removing these unnecessary Guardrails will cost £5,300.



2: Urban Clearway signs

Urban Clearway signs were added in the 1990s to help manage illegally parked vehicles. Regulations require these signs to be large and repeated regularly - there are around a dozen in London Road.

In some locations, a second 'layer' of loading restriction signs has been added. Next month our parking team will consult on removing the Urban Clearway signs, replacing them with additional loading restriction signs where necessary.

We'll probably still need the same number of signs, but they would be smaller (the image opposite shows both type of sign for comparison). The changes would probably cost around £350.



3: Single Cycle Stands

There are around 15 single cycle stands seemingly randomly placed throughout London Road.

They may have been installed to fulfil a restrictive function (such as preventing vehicles from pulling onto pavements or acting as guardrails) rather than providing the best location to park a bike.



Replacing these cycle stands with properly designed cycle parking facilities could help tidy the area up whilst improving cycle parking. Whilst space for cycle parking in London Road is limited, the areas opposite have potential for new facilities.

Potential cycle parking locations



4: Too many Traffic Signals?

It looks like there may be more traffic lights at Preston Circus than are really required.

Like Guardrails, the old fashioned approach was to put maximum amounts of traffic signals in, rather than try to limit numbers to the minimum required to do the job properly.

Surprisingly, removing unnecessary traffic signals can be very cheap. Our signals team is going to check whether any signals can be removed, and if they can, let us know what the cost would be.

5: Traffic Signage may be inconsistent / sited in unnecessarily obtrusive locations

There is a lot of traffic signage in the London

Road area. A quick review suggests that some signs could possibly be better placed, some could be smaller, and some, including at least two of the four no entry signs at the entrance to Francis Street (below) are unnecessary.

Our parking infrastructure team is already reviewing signs in Francis Street and Marshalls Row. We'll spend more time investigating if and how wider Traffic Signage could be refined.



6: Planters

Planters are well used by the London Road community. Whilst the plants may look attractive, the actual planters are bulky and utilitarian, and some are placed in inaccessible locations.

We suggest working with the people who look after the plants to investigate ways to make the planters more attractive and easier to access and use.



7: Poorly maintained Crimestoppers signs

By making London Road look uncared for, the shabby Crimestoppers signs arguably give the opposite impression to the one they are trying to convey. We recommend removing these altogether, or renewing them and making sure they are properly maintained in future.



8: General upkeep of 'necessary' street furniture such as bins and parking machines.

As with the Crime signs, much of the functional street furniture in London Road is covered in stickers and tags, making the area look scruffy. Although the council's budgets are being cut year on year, making it more difficult to carry out regular maintenance, we'll investigate ways to ensure new street furniture is properly cared for to protect our investment.



9: Poorly installed street furniture.

In general, street furniture should be avoided unless it is either absolutely necessary or serves a positive purpose. Where street furniture is installed, it should be of reasonable quality and installed straight: unlike this bollard and sign post.



10: Public Information signs.

Various public information signs are added to streets across the country.

On a positive level, these can convey useful information to people.

On a negative level, signs sometimes remain in the street beyond their useful lifetime, or are introduced 'to be seen to be dealing with an issue' rather than because they actually have any positive effect.

We'll use London Road as a case study to see

if internal processes can be improved to ensure signs such as those currently found in London Road (below) are only added to the street if they are sure to have a positive impact, are well maintained and removed after the project / campaign is finished.



11: Areas around trees

Over the years, a variety of treatments have been applied to the areas around trees. Some are good, some are not. In a worse case scenario, tree roots can cause unsuitable surfaces to crack or cause trip hazards. We'll identify a consistent way to treat surfaces around the trees in London Road that can be applied elsewhere in the city.

12: Bollards

There are a lot of fairly utilitarian bollards in London Road, especially around Preston Circus. We'll review whether all these are required. Where bollards are required, we can see if their function can be incorporated into other pieces of street furniture. For example, it may be possible to add a reflective surface to a planter.



13: Outside Duke of York's

The space outside the Duke of York's is a mess. Although a cycle link is required in this area to help people safely navigate the one way Preston Circus / Viaduct Road arrangement, the current cycle lane leaves a lot to be desired.

It cuts through the footway, encouraging conflict with pedestrians, doesn't help people trying to cycle north, and planters and cycle stands in the area are placed where space is left over, rather than where they would ideally be.

14: Poor Maintenance of Signs

Some signs in London Road are poorly maintained to the extent that they are effectively useless. An example is the large sign below, which faces a shop. Necessary signs should be properly maintained, unnecessary signs should be removed.



15: Making sure we keep London Road tidy in future.

Investing in tidying London Road has limited value without future management plans being in place to prevent new clutter being added back into the street.

We will try and identify a process to ensure that in future, nothing is added to London Road unless it is absolutely necessary, or serves a useful purpose (like benches).



Redesigning this area should reduce conflict between people on bikes and foot, improve access for cyclists, improve locations (and quality) of cycle parking and planters and generally enhance the environment.