

Epping Forest Transport Action Group Priority Cycle Routes

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Route Colour Key:

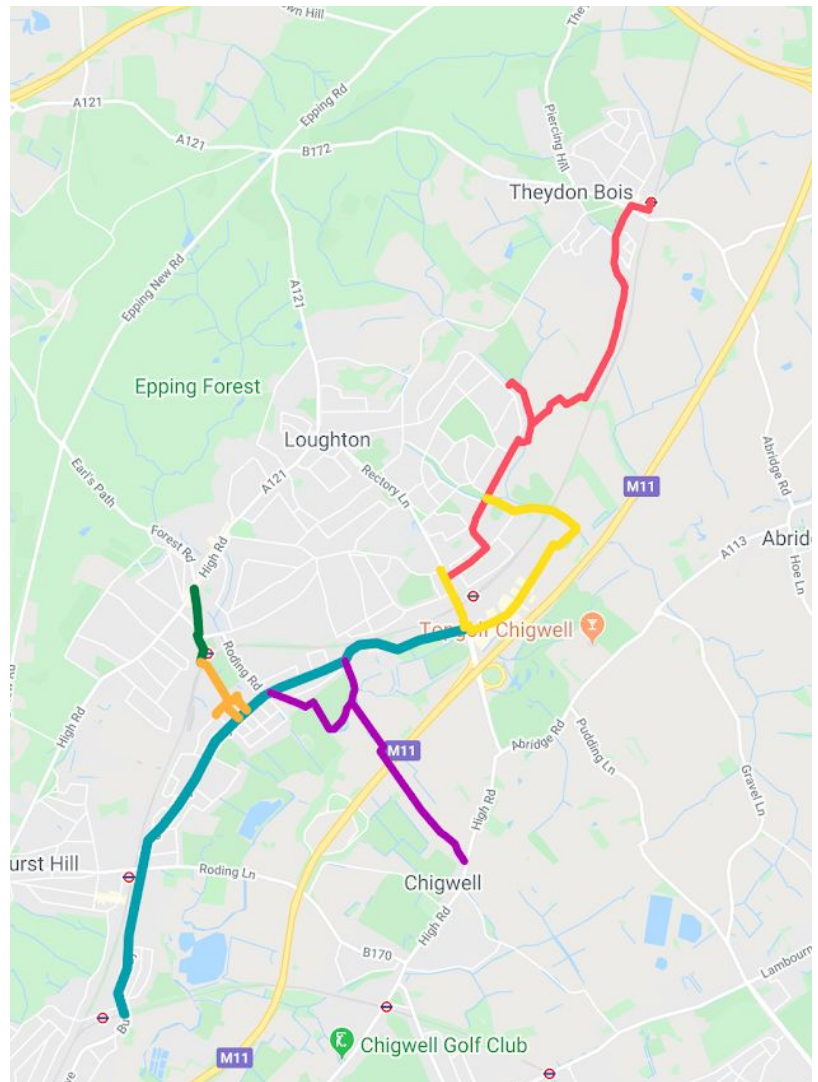
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| Route 40 | |
| Route 41 | |
| Route 32 | |
| Route 39 | |
| Route 34 | |
| Route 21 | |
| Route 21a | |

EFTAG looked at the Epping Forest Cycling Action Plan published by Essex County Council and evaluated the numerous routes it proposed. We set ourselves four criteria for choosing the routes to prioritise. These were routes with:

- 1) Close proximity to schools.
- 2) Close proximity to transport hubs.
- 3) Close proximity to shops and facilities
- 4) Offered links between all of the above.

From this we selected 6 routes which offer excellent interconnection and utility as a network, transforming the cycleability of Loughton, Debden, Theydon Bois, Buckhurst Hill, and Chigwell, and encouraging cycling as a mode of transport between these settlements - not merely within them.

Each of our six routes offers significant impact on its own, improving walkability and cyclability of its route, and improving wheelchair accessibility too. As a network, however, all six create a far more substantial move towards a future where the people of Epping Forest are far less reliant on the car than they are today.



The routes described here should not be viewed as an exhaustive list: there are routes unserved, places unreached and people left behind, but they are, in our view as experienced local cyclists and as residents, the best place to begin.

Route 40

Route 40 links Theydon Bois Underground Station to Debden on to the Broadway shopping centre and Route 41.

It is proposed that it should follow Station Approach to the Junction with Coppice Row/Abridge Road, go straight ahead to Poplar Row (via some sort of controlled crossing, possibly replacing the existing Zebra Crossing) and on to Theydon Park Road and follow it to the southern end, continuing along the Private Road section (which may need adopting) and on to its southern end. This road will need a new sealed surface to facilitate this. This section is envisaged as a signposted quietway.

Next, the route will continue through where there is currently a farm gate at the end of Theydon Park Road and cross the field towards Debden, following the hedgerow (either to the left or to the right) to minimise disruption and loss of farmland. When it reaches the back of the Willingale Road houses, it will turn left and continue to the back of the houses on Langley Meadow where there is a gap between houses with a metal fence, which can be removed to allow the path through. We envisage this section would take the form of a segregated or shared use cycling/walking path.

There is potential for a fork behind Willingale Road with the option to turn right instead of left and continuing north to meet Willingale Road Playing Field; this addition would improve accessibility for pupils at Davenant Foundation School.

Next the route would travel the short distance down Langley Meadow (as a signposted quietway) before meeting Willingale Road and turning left towards Debden Park High School and The Broadway. It would continue along Willingale Road (ideally as a 2-way fully segregated path on the allotment side of the road), reaching The Broadway and turning right. If this section of route cannot be constructed with full separation from motor traffic, then a 20mph speed limit (currently 30mph) on Willingale Road is essential.

If the optional spur towards Davenant Foundation School is not constructed behind the houses on Willingale Road, then the route along Willingale Road should extend north of Langley Meadow to provide an alternative serving of Davenant Foundation School.

On The Broadway, the route could either take the form of a signposted quietway with 20mph speed limit (currently 30mph) or be fully segregated. The fully segregated option will be more expensive, but will achieve a much higher impact. A contraflow cycle lane could be added down Torrington Drive to permit easier cycle access to Debden Station from The Broadway. At the

end of the Broadway, Route 40 ends by crossing Chigwell Lane (Toucan crossing, likely converted from an existing pelican/puffin crossing) to meet Route 41.

Route 41

Route 41 is a short route which links up the current cycle infrastructure on Rectory Lane to improve its usability, while also connecting routes 40 and 32. We have extended it to better serve the Langston Road industrial area and Epping Forest Retail Park by upgrading an existing path which is currently unsuitable for cycles, pushchairs and wheelchairs due to its narrowness, muddiness and slanted surface where the path has eroded. This route improves accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists of the Epping Forest Retail Park, rectifying an unacceptable shortcoming in the planning of this very recent development. Work is needed to improve the existing Rectory Lane infrastructure as part of this route.

Route 41 begins at the dead end of the service road (Rectory Lane) adjacent to Epping Forest College, which is where the current cycle route on Rectory Lane ends (EFTAG is happy to produce proposals for how the existing infrastructure can be brought up to an acceptable standard). Route 41 proceeds southeast to Borders Lane where the light-controlled pedestrian crossing at the junction with Chigwell Lane can be converted to a Toucan Crossing. The route then continues south, along the west side of Chigwell Lane as a fully segregated off-road path, where it meets Route 40 at the aforementioned toucan crossing at the end of The Broadway, linked by a small shared use section of pavement. From the Route 40 intersection, it continues to Colson Road, where it crosses 1-1.5 car lengths back from the junction with Chigwell Lane so as to permit the Cycle path to have a completely separate junction to avoid ambiguity. The grass verge is plenty wide enough to permit this.

The pavement along the west side of Chigwell Lane, at the southern side of the junction with Colson Road, ends with no continuation onto Colson Road and no dropped kerb. This is a huge accessibility issue and can be remedied for disabled pedestrians and those with pushchairs as part of the construction of Route 41.

The path continues to the south of Colson Road, behind the bus stop and down to the railway bridge where the existing Puffin Crossing may be converted to a Toucan Crossing to permit cycle access to Debden Station from the west. Under the railway bridge and to the south of it, there is already a shared use path which can be segregated and have its signposting improved. This path extends to the junction with Oakwood Hill where Route 41 meets Route 32.

Route 41 then turns left, crossing Chigwell Lane using a Toucan crossing on the North side of the large junction with Langston Road and Oakwood Hill where there are currently no light controlled Pedestrian Crossings, despite the presence of textured paving and dropped kerbs.

The route follows the North side of Langston Road in the form of a widened pavement modified to shared use (likely entailing the removal of the third lane leaving Langston Road, allowing the remaining two to be widened to a standard width). The route continues to the Puffin Crossing which will be converted to a Toucan Crossing to allow the route to serve the Epping Forest

Retail Park. The route then continues as a shared use or segregated path along the south side of Langston Road, reaching the Public Right of Way (Footpath 24) which begins at the “Private Road” signs on the entrance to the De La Rue site.

At the entrance to the De La Rue site there are barriers (raised at time of inspection) which must not be permitted to obstruct the route, and small rubber speed bumps which are unsuitable for cycle traffic. If these can be removed or redesigned, then Route 41 can be a Quiet route here, however if they cannot then it must remain an on-pavement route, with a widened pavement and appropriate signage (either shared or segregated).

Next, Route 40 turns to the right, crossing a driveway and continuing onto what is currently an unsurfaced path. This path needs widening and sealing to make it suitable for cycle traffic in all weather conditions.

While Footpath 24 continues over the river, Route 41 does not, taking a left turn immediately after the end of the De La Rue site and following the river North-West towards the Central Line. The path here will need widening - which shouldn't be a problem for the majority of its length, but may be more difficult in one location where the path pinches between the river on the left and the De La Rue perimeter fence on the right. Regular cutting back of the foliage will be needed, as it is currently for the existing path. Route 40 passes under the Central Line's existing brick viaduct and out onto the grass behind the houses at the bottom of Kingsley Road.

Continuing across the grass, still on a new metalled path, the route passes beneath a pair of arches, formed by the meeting branches of mature trees and the the green at its eastern corner,, at the North end of The Broadway. This entrance may need posts adding to prevent motor vehicle access as the grass had tyre tracks in it at the time of inspection.

Route 41 then turns immediately right into Rockwood Avenue in the form of a signposted quietway with 20mph speed limit and improved road surface, continuing to meet Route 40 on Willingale Road

Route 32

Route 32 forms the backbone of EFTAG's proposed network of six routes. It links Debden, Loughton, and Buckhurst Hill and offers potential to be extended in the future to connect with the 'Roding Valley Way' path in the London Borough of Redbridge. Route 32 joins up routes 41, 39, and 34 and allows for much improved cycle access to the Roding Valley Recreation Ground.

Route 32 is also important as it follows a road which is in a poor state of repair, where speeding is an issue, leading to heavy engagement with Community Speed Watch, and where Epping Forest experienced its cyclist fatality in a RTI in recent years - a hit-and-run in 2016. Money needs to be spent along this route anyway, and Route 32 offers an excellent proposal to significantly improve this area while repairing crumbling infrastructure and correcting the design mistakes of the past.

Beginning at the eastern end of Oakwood Hill, with the intersection with Route 41, Route 32 should run along the north side of Oakwood Hill as a segregated 2-way path, crossing modified junctions at the Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate and Lower Alderton Hall Lane. It can link up with the eastern spur of Route 39 via a new parallel crossing where there is currently a keep-left island at the entrance to the Recreation Ground.

Route 32 continues west, running across the front of the crescent of houses between Leycroft Close at Barncroft Close (on the road side of the green). This could entail the replacement of the railing across the front of the crescent which is in a poor state of repair, and the reinstatement of the bollard on the corner of Barncroft Close, the loss of which a few years ago has led to parking on the green, much to the consternation of the residents.

The route will continue along Oakwood Hill, integrating with the existing cycle lane permitting left turns out of Alderton Way, modifying it to permit cycles to turn right into Alderton Way too, and along to the junction with Roding Road whereupon Oakwood Hill becomes Valley Hill. At this junction, the crossings on Oakwood Hill and the northern spur of Roding Road would be converted to Toucan Crossings to facilitate a) the continuation of Route 32 onto Valley Hill and b) the connection with the western spur of Route 39 emerging from Southview Road.

Continuing along the northern side of Valley Hill, Route 32 will reach Kenilworth Gardens and then Highland Avenue. Both of these will form part of Route 34 to provide more direct access to Loughton Station. After Highland Avenue, the path would split, with the westbound path crossing Valley Hill via a new Parallel Crossing and continuing on the south side of the road, with the eastbound path remaining on the north side of the road. These fully segregated paths on either side of the road would occupy the space currently used for keep-left islands and hatched sections which encourage excessive speed. Where needed, some additional width may be found in the wide pavements which adorn the south side of the road. The paths could be at road height, protected by a kerb, or at pavement height, but care must be taken to ensure drivers entering and leaving driveways look out for and give way to cyclists using Route 32. This risk is manageable and has not proven to be a problem elsewhere within similar schemes.

Route 32 should continue as a fully segregated “superhighway” style path along Valley Hill to serve the Loughton Way shops, eventually meeting Palmerston Road: a difficult junction that needs improvement for pedestrians as well as for cyclists. This leaves open scope for a future extension down Albert Road and Buckhurst Way to the London Borough of Redbridge, integrating with “The Roding Valley Way” route to Woodford Bridge and Gants Hill, and serving Roding Valley Underground Station.

Route 39

Route 39 joins Chigwell High Street to Route 32 in Loughton, offering a cycle commuting option to Loughton/Debden-resident Chigwell School pupils and improving all-weather and wheelchair access from Chigwell Village and the Chigwell Riding Trust facility to the Roding Valley

Meadows Nature Reserve (SSSI) and the Roding Valley Recreation Ground. It offers an opportunity to replace the Charlie Moules bridge which has accessibility and is in a poor state of repair, with one which is open for all, while providing an opportunity to address the crumbling river bank on the north side of the River Roding at this point. Route 39 also serves the new Chigwell Grange housing estate, and the public sport facilities in Chigwell School, and offers an opportunity to repair a significant active travel deficit which exists within that development.

Beginning at the top of Grange Farm Lane, at the junction with Chigwell High Road (possible segregated extension south to the Junior School entrance to Chigwell School) Route 39 extends northwest along Grange Farm Lane in the form of a signposted quietway with 20mph speed limit. This quietway will require a higher standard of road surface maintenance on Grange Farm Lane. Passing the Chigwell Grange housing estate and the Chigwell Riding Trust, the route reaches the Grange Farm Lane bridge where it crosses the M11.

Crossing the bridge, Route 39 continues along the existing green lane into the Roding Valley Meadows nature reserve. This path will require a fully sealed surface and could be shared use, or segregated; its surfacing will make the meadows more accessible during and after wet weather, as well as improving wheelchair access to the nature reserve. At the end of the green lane, the path at present opens out to a well trodden path across a meadow, past a cattle grazing ground. The metalled path should continue along this route, minimising disruption to the nature reserve, while recognising that there is significant precedent for hard surface walkways in the reserve due to surviving infrastructure from the former RAF Chigwell balloon base.

On the northwest side of the meadow, the path reaches the Charlie Moules bridge which needs to be replaced. The existing bridge is extremely narrow with steep steps on both sides and aggressive anti-cycle barriers. It is inaccessible to wheelchair users and cannot be adapted to even practicably allow a bike to be pushed across. The new bridge is a significant opportunity to create a substantially improved gateway to the Roding Valley Meadows nature reserve.

Once on the Loughton side of the River Roding, Route 39 splits, with one spur heading north and another heading west, both eventually meeting Oakwood Hill.

The north pointing (eastern spur) follows the existing tarmac path around the recreation ground in the form of a permissive path before leaving the recreation ground through a redesigned gate opposite the bottom of Lower Alderton Hall Lane and crossing Oakwood Hill on a new Parallel Crossing to meet Route 32 on the north side of Oakwood Hill. This spur is ideal for cycling between Chigwell and Debden/Theydon Bois.

The path around the recreation ground here would be improved by a new surface and widening to allow a bike to pass a pushchair on the path; some of this could be achieved as part of works to secure the eroding river bank which has been a recurring problem in recent years, posing a threat to the integrity of this path and the safety of those who use it. The gate at the entrance to the Recreation Ground by Lower Alderton Hall Lane is narrow and difficult to use by bike, as well as having posts which have rusted through at ground level. A wider and more welcoming

gate could replace it and any anti-social use of motorcycles dealt with using CCTV and ANPR, instead of the use of roadblocks which inhibit legitimate use of the Roding Valley Recreation Ground.

The western spur of Route 39 follows the same riverside path as the eastern spur, but in the other direction, continuing as far as the hedgerow behind the Loughton South Cricket Club Pavillion. At the hedgerow, the path would turn right to follow the hedge north on a new path to be constructed towards the tennis courts, before leaving the recreation ground at the end of Southview Road through a redesigned cycle friendly entrance which again could make use of technology to enforce against motorcycle use without unfairly preventing legitimate use of the Recreation Ground.

Route 39 would continue along Southview Road as a signposted quietway (with a new 20mph speed limit) towards the junction with Oakwood Hill, crossing the pavement outside Oakwood Wines to meet the new Toucan Crossing on Oakwood Hill and joining Route 32 outside the former Goodey's Newsagent.

Route 34

Route 34 links the arterial route 32 to Loughton Underground Station and Route 21a to Loughton High Road.

The southern end of Route 34 consists of the 3 spurs which currently exist on the Great Eastern Path, which join Kenilworth Gardens, Highland Avenue and Cheltenham Gardens and link them to the Great Eastern Path. Route 34 would entail removing the cycling prohibition which currently exists on these paths and removing anti-cycling devices (technology can be used against antisocial motorcycle use without restricting lawful accessibility, as discussed in the context of Route 39). The pavement in the corner of Cheltenham Gardens would need a dropped kerb to facilitate entry and exit from the path without riding on the pavement adjacent to the road.

From the three spurs, Route 34 follows the Great Eastern Path, slightly widened onto its grass verge and ideally in the form of a segregated path, northwest, crossing Roding Gardens and continuing behind the Roding Valley High School playing fields to the underpass beneath the Central Line, southwest of Loughton Underground Station.

The underpass has a substantial number of steps on its northern side and a small number of steps on its southern side, so, consequently, the unfortunate use of a "Cyclists Dismount" sign would probably, in the short term at least, be inevitable here. However, with proposals in the Epping Forest Local Plan and from Transport For London to redevelop Loughton Station car park, the conversion of this underpass into one which is step free and hence accessible to both cycles and wheelchair users is feasible and should be made a condition of any planning consent. The undesirable "Cyclists Dismount" signs here (the only ones which need appear on these six routes) could then be removed.

Following the underpass, the route would meet the southern end of Route 21a, before turning right along the path around the London Underground Staff car park and onto the station forecourt where the station's best utilised sheffield stands (cycle parking) are situated, and the route ends.

There are 4 stands on the station forecourt, designed to accommodate 8 bicycles; when surveyed 10/7/19 the 4 stands, shelter support frame and railings behind were accommodating 14 bicycles, while the substantially larger (but less overlooked) set of stands adjacent to the station car park, with 11 hoops capable of accommodating 22 bicycles, accommodated 2 bicycles and a scooter, with a further two bicycles chained to signposts on the forecourt itself.

Route 21

Route 21 is a cycle route linking Loughton Underground Station to Loughton High Road. While EFTAG firmly believes that there should be a cycle route which achieves this, we completely disagree with the choice of route in the Cycling Action Plan for Route 21. This disagreement comes from 1) the large number of complex junctions to be navigated. 2) the circuitous route taken. 3) the poor integration with other cycle routes. EFTAG instead proposes an alternative approach, namely route 21a.

Route 21a

Route 21a links Loughton Station to Loughton High Road, and also integrates with Route 34 to permit protected cycling from Route 32 to Loughton High Road, completing a network which connects the main shopping centres of Epping Forest, as well as joining Loughton to the network connecting the centres all of the major Epping Forest settlements within the M25.

The route begins at the north side of the underpass to the southwest of Loughton Underground Station. It follows the path adjacent to the main station car park towards the pick up/drop off area, and crosses it, crossing the entrance to the car parks on a parallel crossing, replacing the existing Zebra Crossing. From here, the route continues as a 2-way segregated path along the footpath to the east of Sainsbury's car park, past the roundabout and along Old Station Road as far as the first Puffin Crossing. The Puffin Crossing can be extended to the junction with Station Road and converted to be a Toucan Crossing, permitting cycles to cross, turning right into Station Road while cars remain prohibited from doing so. A 2-way superhighway style path would extend down Station Road, narrowing the road and addressing some of the speed and overtaking concerns which are anecdotally reported. At the junction with Loughton High Road the route ends.

Significant additional cycle parking (Sheffield stands) on Loughton High Road should be provided as part of this scheme.

