**Anything But Footy:**

This is the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park podcast. In this season, we're focusing on the stories and the people that live, work, and play in the park, maximizing the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games. This episode, we hear how the London Legacy Development Corporation is investing 150 million pounds to encourage more people to cycle and walk on and to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

**Speaker 2:**

Cycle track down the centre.

**Will Norman, London's Walking and Cycling Commissioner:**

Yeah.

**Speaker 2:**

It allows us not to change the curves.

**Will Norman:**

Yeah.

**Speaker 2:**

It allows all the parking to stay.

**Will Norman:**

I'd say my favorite part of cycling in the Olympic Park is probably going over the East Cross bridge on the way home. Just that hit of breeze, obviously being able to see the river.

**Ruth Lin Wong Holmes, Head of Landscape and Public Realm, LLDC**

What we've been trying to do is just develop and work with other landowners and developers to make sure we are making it the best place.

**Speaker 5:**

It's not been done as far as we know anywhere in London.

**Will Norman:**

Hi, I'm Will Norman. I'm the mayor of London's Walking and Cycling Commissioner. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, it should be a beacon for physical activity and connected communities. Building in the cycle and walking infrastructure in this area is absolutely essential. This is a new bit of London. This is new communities and new schools. New businesses and new jobs for so many people. This is a unique opportunity to change the way that people move around and travel. Shifting from car use to walking, cycling, and public transport. To achieve that, providing safe infrastructure that people feel that this is the easy, safe, convenient, fun option for people is absolutely essential. And it's brilliant seeing the LLDC and the boroughs working together. An investment of 150 million pounds to improve the facilities put in the infrastructure that we need, it will transform the area. It's great.

**Ruth Lin Wong Holmes:**

Hi, I am Ruth Lin Wong Holmes and I'm head of Landscape and Public Realm at the London Legacy Development Corporation. The park has always had sort of walking and cycling in its heart, the idea of supporting sustainable transport across connecting communities across the park and across the river and walk waterways. So it's always been at the heart of that. And I think what we've been trying to do is just develop and work with other landowners and developers to make sure we are making it the best place for that sort of walking and cycling and wheeling kind of activity. We've been able to work with so many bits of funding with TFL, with our developers, with our planning authority to put piece, pieces of this money together to really make significant change in the area. We have had people from the ground up, people on site giving us information about projects and then really, really big ones like the Westfield Avenue project, which is at the heart of the park and will make a significant difference.

Those large bits of traffic infrastructure are not the things you want to remember, and often you don't remember them in a good way. They're a bit of a barrier. They're a bit of a thing that feels dangerous or uncomfortable and unpleasant. And so I think what we're trying to do is look at those key routes and key locations and can we make them better? Can we make them feel healthier? Can we make them a good transport option? How can we green them up and actually be the place where people might get in contact with nature and biodiversity and green infrastructure? And if we can do that, at the same time, that's like a perfect solution.

**Speaker 5:**

Completely make it consistent and the same and have drops everywhere so that you can actually cross the road. So that's what we're about to do there.

**Monique van den Hurk, Walking and Cycling Project Manager, LLDC**

Hi, I'm Monique van den Hurk, the Walking and Cycling project manager at LLDC. Westfield Avenue is adjacent to the Westfield Shopping Center and is a project that we have, which is a road reduction project. The cycle lane stops and starts every place where you get a little bit of a tricky location, like a driveway, it stops. It is interspersed with a lot of parking. There's on street parking. And it's four lanes of tarmac as well, which does not really create a very beautiful public realm. So the plan is to take the four lanes of roadway and reduce it down to two. The two that are going to be removed will be turned into a landscape zone and cycle, segregated cycling, and it will be continuous and it will prioritize cyclists as well as pedestrians. So on top of putting in the cycle track, we will make a clear zone for pedestrians to walk down that's uninterrupted by parking.

**Ruth Lin Wong Holmes:**

That's the other announcement is that we've had GLA funding for green and resilience fund, which will up the amount of trees that we're able to plant almost Wood Avenue. So we're up to 88 trees and that's an extra sort of quarter because of the funding, what's the funding has allowed us to do.

**Will Norman:**

The shift from four lanes on Westfield Avenue and the dodgy bike lane that runs into trees and stops at junctions, that will be transformational. It'll allow people to get to the station. It'll allow people to get to the shops, their places of work, to schools, and that's going to change things for a lot of people.

**Speaker 5:**

Junction here. And this junction, we would like to turn into basically a mini hole.

**Will Norman:**

In roundabout.

**Monique van den Hurk:**

Chobham Manor does have some cycle lanes already, cycle tracks. But what we are going to do is to just improve and bringing it up to the standard that we expect today, because in the last 10 years, there's been a great change in cycling design and the standards that are expected. And so we are bringing those up to standard, and we shall be getting that on site in the next month or so. We're going to have a continuous footway down Honor Lea Avenue for pedestrians. Now, every time you cross a junction, and there are quite a few of them, the pedestrians have to stop for cars. That's going to be reversed, cars will have to stop for pedestrians. And that is in line with the highway code that came out last year, that the traffic, the triangle of hierarchy, that pedestrians are at the top and cyclists then motor vehicles.

**Will Norman:**

We know that the moments that change behavior in terms of transport are often new homes and new jobs. And what's being delivered in this park is new homes and new jobs. And that's exactly why we need to make sure the infrastructure's there. So it's an easy option for people to think, actually, I might as well use my bike for those shorter journeys. We're seeing that transformation happen now.

**Monique van den Hurk:**

So that is a segment we want to connect out with that existing track that will be there. And yes, there is an interest because, yeah, the road is a bit too wide for the youth now. And if we reduce it, people go slower. Just better for everyone then.

**Jonathan Rothwell, Olympic Park representative and Deputy Coordinator for Newham Cyclists**

So my name's Jonathan Rothwell. My pronouns are he, him, and his, and I'm the Olympic Park representative and deputy coordinator for Newham cyclists. We are part of the London cycling campaign and we campaign for improved conditions for cycling so that it can be unlocked, sustainable, and cheap and inclusive mode of transports for everyone. Obviously, we're very pleased that money is being thrown at improving the infrastructure in the Olympic Park. We will be keeping a close eye on the details because what we have seen in the past is some schemes that have started out with good intention and have been allowed to decay over time, for instance, with poor quality surfacing. And in some cases, for instance, with tree pits being built into cycle tracks. However, what we have seen, and this is down to the hard work of people like Monique and so on, is a significant improvement in the quality of schemes that we're seeing.

So they're now up to national and indeed in some cases international best practice standard. It's very important that you have the right facilities, and I think it's important that we understand that it's not just a hobby for many people. It's not just a hobby. It's not just young men in Lycra racing, ultimately for many people, and I count myself amongst those people, cycling is a serious mode of transport that we use because it is cheap, because it is convenient, because it is accessible, because it costs less than a car, because it runs 24/7, it works at night. So what's really good about the Olympic Park is all the traffic free areas where you don't have to interact with cars. What we hope to see more of is some designing for cycling as a serious means of transports. And hopefully, some of this money will improve the situations on some of the roads, which are maybe not up to standard.

Definitely, we've seen a big change in the attitude of the LLDC. Part of this we think is down to the relentless campaigning of my colleagues over the last decade. But what we have seen as well is a real change over time, not only in the general political environment in the UK, which has become more amenable to cycling, but also from people within the LLDC, including people such as, including the fact that they hired Monique, and the fact that we now actually have a pipeline of walking and cycling projects, which are specifically with those in mind. So I do actually remember the Olympic opening ceremony and when Sir Tim Berners-Lee did that thing and it came up with, "This is for everyone." And that's pretty much how I feel the Olympic legacy should be, and that's what I really hope that we start to see more of.

**Speaker 2:**

Celebration now. This junction, a bit of Temple Mills Lane, Liberty Bridge Road, Penny Brooks, we've got all that done.

**Will Norman:**

The Olympics were in 2012, it is a long time ago now. The park was designed, the master plan for the whole area was designed in a different era. We can see the growth in walking and cycling across London, and it's great that the LLDC and all the teams are adapting the park for actually how people move and want to move around the city right now, and for the future. That greener, cleaner, healthier, successful city that we're trying to build.

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