Transport for All
Access, Rights, Advice

London Borough of Southwark

Dulwich Junction Site Visit Report

June 2022

Contents

1. Introduction and summary

This report collates feedback collected in June 2022 by Transport for All during a pan-impairment site visit to the Dulwich Village/Turney Road and Calton Avenue/Court Lane/Dulwich Village junctions. The visit involved walking and wheeling around the junctions, identifying both barriers and enablers for disabled people within the street space.

Within this report, we have focused on three key areas:

1. Physical infrastructure e.g., crossings and pavements
2. Sensory environment e.g., colour and contrast
3. Communication e.g., signage and information provision

The visit was conducted by a group from Transport for All, including people with mobility impairments, visually impaired people, people with long term health conditions, people with energy impairments, neurodiverse people and people living with mental health conditions. Some people had more than one impairment. The participants used mobility aids including manual wheelchairs and assistance dogs.

Both barriers and enablers to access for disabled people were observed across the site. Detailed feedback is set out in this report, however in sum, we found that the streetspace at the Dulwich Village/Turney Road and Calton Avenue/Court Lane/Dulwich Village junctions requires changes across the three areas of physical infrastructure, sensory environment, and communication in order to remove barriers to access for disabled people across the impairment groups.

It should be noted that this report does not constitute a full audit of the junctions. We have sought to provide examples of the range of barriers within the area rather than to catalogue all instances of all of the barriers.

Immediate actions could include:

- Reviewing and amending signage to ensure clear information for all road users
- Addressing the safety of the Calton Avenue cycle lane controlled crossing
- Reviewing the enforcement of pavement dining licences on Calton Avenue.

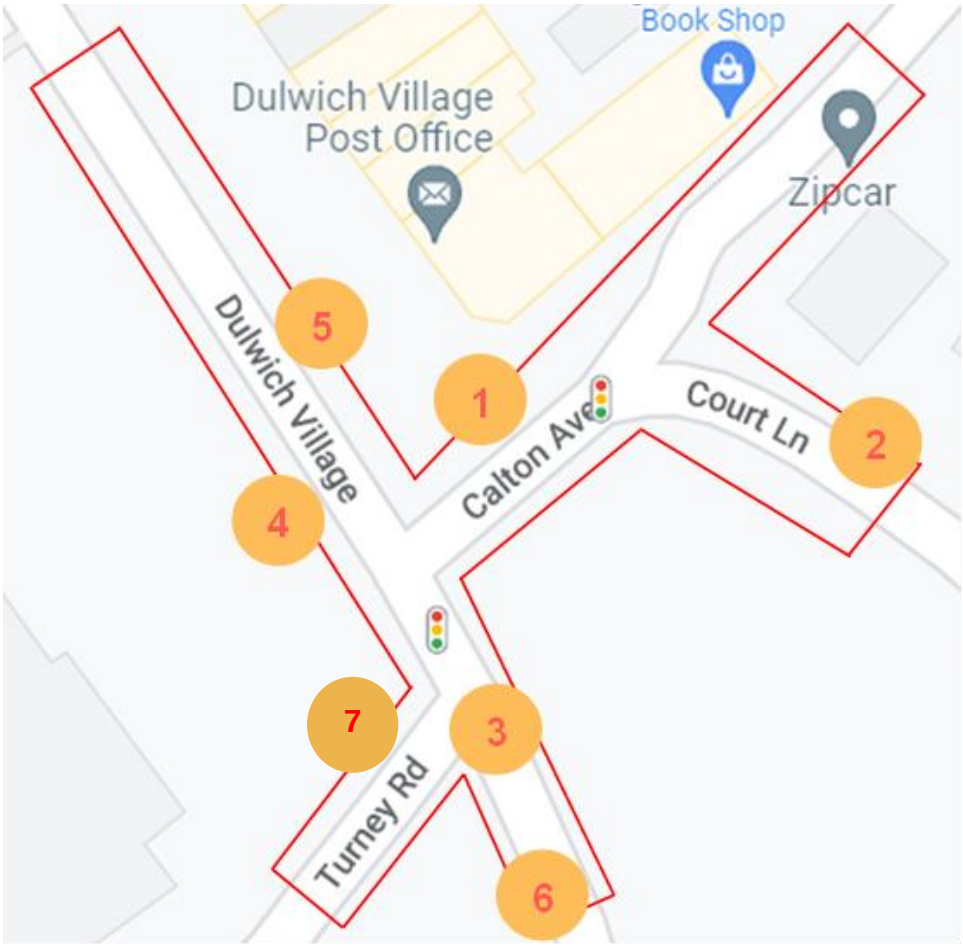
Longer term actions could include:

- Reviewing and changing the physical infrastructure, sensory and communication elements of the junctions and the surrounding areas, expanding on and addressing the points raised in this report
- Co-producing designs for the junction with local disabled people from across the impairment groups
- Using existing tools to review infrastructure designs, such as the City of London Streets Accessibility Tool

- Reviewing future plans and proposals from a pan impairment perspective to remove any unintended consequences that create access barriers.

2. Areas Covered

The areas covered during the site visit are marked below in red. The numbers marked on the map refer to specific issues identified in section three.



3. Specific Feedback

The numbers below relate to the numbers marked on the map showing roads covered during the site visit.

1. Calton Avenue

Physical Infrastructure

Road users
At the Calton Avenue/Court Lane/Dulwich Village junction, the road has been closed to cars. The Northbound lane has been pedestrianised while the Southbound lane is open to cycles. The controlled crossings for pedestrians across both lanes have been removed, and the tactile paving at many of these crossing points has also been removed. This means for visually impaired people there is no notification that they may be entering a space which contains cycle lanes. This set up appears to contradict LTN 1/20 guidance regarding separation of cycling and pedestrian routes and spaces.

There is a delineated cycle lane which is marked by wands on the South side of Calton Avenue by the Dulwich Village junction, and this cycle lane appears to have a controlled traffic flow still in place for cycles only. However, the lights are only visible to cyclists approaching the junction, rather than to pedestrians crossing across the lane (as the vehicle traffic lights and the 'green man' signals have all been covered by tarpaulin). This is a significant safety concern.

Pavement infrastructure
While the road outside the shops has been closed to cars, there are only two dropped kerbs to mount the pavement of Calton Avenue by the shops if approaching from the road. One is outside 49 Dulwich Avenue, and one is outside 1a Calton Avenue. The Eastern most dropped kerb, outside 1a Calton Avenue, directs people straight into a line of pavement tables and chairs. Raising the level of the pedestrianised road to the height of the adjoining pavement throughout would make the seating areas more accessible to many disabled people.

New seating and rest spaces
The new seats in front of 1 and 1a Calton Avenue were welcomed by participants as a good space to stop and rest. It was noted that none of the non-commercial seating has any shade cover. The new public seats are a mix of benches with backrests and without backrests. Backrests are helpful for some disabled people to provide support when seated. The backrests on the benches are quite far back and do not stretch the entire width of the bench, meaning sitting at one end could be precarious. There is space around the cluster of benches for a wheelchair user to sit near friends, however there is no dropped kerb alongside the seating areas – so a wheelchair user would have to navigate into the road and wheel back around behind the seating, rather than joining the seating area from the adjoining pavement.

The additional seat to the West of the cluster of benches does not have a backrest and is placed at quite a significant angle where one end of the seat is much higher than the other end. This means this seat is less suitable for people with reduced mobility or those with impaired balance.

Pavement clutter
Some of the shops on the North side of Calton Avenue have tables and chairs set out on the pavement. There is also other street clutter, such as A-boards, on the pavement. At the time of the visit there was a narrow gap between rows of chairs and tables which felt tight to pass through for some of the participants.

Waste facilities
It was noted that there were a good number of bins at different points around the junction, and no litter was observed on the pavement or roads.

Sensory Environment

Pavement clutter
There are low level decorative planters alongside the traffic island in Calton Avenue. These are of a neutral colour, lack contrast and have sharp corners.

Modal filters
The modal filter planters at all approaches to the junction had sharp corners and lacked contrast to draw attention to their edges. Some of the planters held vegetation that had overgrown the footprint of the planter, and so reduced the amount of space to navigate around the filter. Some of the planters had been graffitied, potentially creating a less pleasant street environment.

New seating and rest spaces
The new seats in front of 1 and 1a Calton Avenue are of a neutral colour and the seats, and the armrests, lack contrast so do not stand out for visually impaired people. They also have numerous sharp edges which could be walked into by visually impaired people.

Communication

Road users
At the Calton Avenue/Court Lane/Dulwich Village junction, pedestrians and cyclists appear to be using the junction as a ‘shared space’ without clearly marked areas for different road users to avoid coming into conflict. We did not observe signage that explained that the Northbound lane was pedestrianised and the Southbound lane was open to cyclists travelling in both directions.

Signage
It was felt that the tarpaulins covering the traffic light infrastructure may be confusing for some disabled people. More signage to show that the area had been closed to cars, rather than that the lights were simply broken may be helpful. The signage was much clearer for vehicle approaches, such as the signs on the modal filters facing the road

that would be seen by car drivers, compared to any signage for pedestrians approaching from the pavements along Dulwich Village.

2. Court Lane

Sensory Environment/Communication

There was one modal filter on Court Lane at the approach to Calton Avenue, and this was placed across the left-hand lane of the road. There were more of the white and red blocks at this junction. Both had sharp corners and there was limited signage for pedestrians to explain their function.

3. Crossing on Dulwich Village at the junction with Turney Road

Physical Infrastructure

This crossing has a traffic island mid-way across, which is wide but not deep. Some people (e.g., wheelchair users, people with energy impairments, or older people) may need to stop halfway but may feel unsafe doing so due to a lack of space. For example, wheelchair users may worry about their back wheels sticking out in the path of oncoming traffic. There are also no tactile markings to delineate the island.

Sensory Environment

There is ‘L’ shaped tactile paving on both sides of the crossing, however this is of a similar colour to the surrounding pavement. Someone with low vision may not be able to differentiate between two shades of grey as they are similar in tone, and best practice recommends the use of red tactile paving at controlled crossings.

4. Crossing on Dulwich Village outside Dulwich Hamlet Junior School

Physical Infrastructure

This crossing has a traffic island mid-way across which is wide, but not deep. Some people (e.g., wheelchair users, people with energy impairments, or older people) may need to stop halfway but may feel unsafe doing so due to a lack of space. For example, wheelchair users may worry about their back wheels sticking out in the path of oncoming traffic. There are also no tactile markings to delineate the island.

Sensory Environment

There is ‘L’ shaped tactile paving on both sides of the crossing, however this is of a similar colour to the surrounding pavement. Someone with low vision may not be able to differentiate between two shades of grey as they are similar in tone, and best practice recommends the use of red tactile paving at controlled crossings.

5. Outside Dulwich Village Shops

Physical Infrastructure and Sensory Environment

Accessible parking
One car parking bay on this stretch of road was labelled as ‘disabled’. However, the bay appeared to be the same width as the other parking bays, without any crosshatching at either side to provide extra space. Additionally, there is no dropped kerb to move from the parking space onto the pavement.

Photo 01 shows a parking bay that has the word ‘Disabled’ written by it, but no associated infrastructure to support disabled drivers or passengers.

Pavement surfacing
There are trees growing under the pavement and lifting it up, creating a slope. This is difficult for wheelchair users and visually impaired people to navigate.

Photo 02 shows tarmac around a tree root that is uneven and creates a slope. The photo is taken outside 37-39 Dulwich Village.

Pavement clutter
There are white bollards in front of the parking bays, with clutter, rubbish and recycling leaning against them. This street clutter has reduced the usable pavement width and creates a barrier for visually impaired people and wheelchair users to navigate.

Photo 03 shows boxes that have been piled up across the pavement.

There are white and red blocks at the corner of the junction with Calton Avenue which appear to be anti-car measures, but their purpose is not clear. They have sharp edges and are placed across the pavement where visually impaired people may walk into them. There is sufficient space between them for wheelchair users to manoeuvre through.

Photo 04 shows the white and red blocks. Image taken from Google Maps.

Seating and rest spaces
The seating outside the Post Office was welcomed as providing a helpful meeting point and rest space. However, the seating lacks arm rests which some people would find helpful to support sitting and standing.

Further, it does not have contrast to differentiate it from the similar colour of the paving, creating a barrier for visually impaired people.

Photo 05 shows the circular bench outside Dulwich Village Post Office. Image taken from Google Maps.

Cycle storage
The Sheffield cycle stands outside Dulwich Village Post Office have contrast added. Some of the stands are placed on a pavement buildout and are therefore not taking up space from people walking or wheeling along the main pavement. However, the stands outside 49 Dulwich Village are in the way of pedestrians who have to walk or wheel around them.

While outside the scope of this report, it was noted that there is no level access into some shops on this stretch of road, and bells to attract attention at some shops are too high up for some wheelchair users to be able to reach.

6. Bus stop on the East side of Dulwich Village, south of Turney Road junction (Stop VJ)

Physical Infrastructure and Sensory Environment

The bus stop consists of a post and flag at the kerbside, and a bus passenger shelter located some distance away at the back of the pavement. The distance between the two may pose a barrier for people with mobility impairments who may be seated at the shelter and may take longer to walk to the bus post when a bus arrives. The boarding/alighting area is quite narrow. If a bus ramp isn't deployed in the appropriate place, wheelchair users may have to wheel into grass to do a sharp turn to be able to get onto/off the bus.

One side of the bus boarding/alighting area is cordoned off through the placement of white bollards with spiked chains running between them at knee height. The purpose of these is unclear, and the chains could be a trip hazard for visually impaired people such as white cane users who will not pick up on the hazard at pavement level.

Photo 06 shows the bus stop boarding and alighting area, with the chains and bollards next to it. Image taken from Google Maps.

Communication

There is no information displayed at the shelter, either via posters on the shelter's board, or via a digital display. At the bus stop flag there is service information displayed via a poster, but there is vegetation on the ground around the base of the post which would make it hard for people with low vision to get close enough to read it.

7. Crossing on Turney Road outside Dulwich Hamlet Junior School

Sensory Environment

There is 'L' shaped tactile paving at two junctions of the crossing, however this is of a similar colour to the surrounding pavement. Best practice recommends use of red tactile paving at controlled crossings.

On the North side of the road there is a pedestrian island before the path crosses a cycle lane, which again is wide but not deep, creating a tight corner for people to navigate.

Photo 07 shows the traffic island mid-way across the crossing on Turney Road. Image taken from Google Maps.