

London Cycling Campaign

29 November 2016

Grand Union Canal Quietway (Paddington to West Drayton)

<https://canalrivertrust.citizenspace.com/quietways/better-towpaths-london-paddington-arm/>

This consultation response is on behalf of the London Cycling Campaign, the capital's leading cycling organisation with more than 12,000 members and 40,000 supporters. The LCC welcomes the opportunity to comment on plans. The response was developed with input from our local groups and the co-chairs of LCC's Infrastructure Review Group.

LCC is supportive of the proposal to transform the towpath between Paddington and West Drayton and welcomes in particular better quality surfaces, wider paths, improved access points and new signs.

We do have some comments about accessibility:

- In all locations, DDA-compliant ramps should be considered as the preferred approach to enable access to the towpath for the widest range of people. Wheel ramps should only be used where replacement of steps with a more inclusive design is not an option. While wheel ramps allow some increased ease of access for people cycling, they will not increase access for disabled people who cycle (who may use a larger, wider or heavier kind of cycle, and who may also have poor manual dexterity or strength), cargo cycle users, anyone carrying large panniers or shopping and people cycling with children on seats. Evidence of the level of access improvement achieved with wheel ramps should be examined before widespread implementation on this basis.
- Canal towpaths should be as wide as possible to ensure those cycling can pass each other, or pedestrians, safely and calmly. In particular, vegetation should be appropriately trimmed regularly to ensure usable width isn't encroached on.
- The path should also be surfaced to provide comfortable and safe cycling conditions through the year – with the surface designed to drain well, and remain free of puddles and ruts during the winter etc.
- The towpath when passing under bridges should be designed to provide sufficient headroom and space to manoeuvre for the widest possible range of cycles – including cargo and adapted cycles etc.
- Where an accessible route is unavailable, this should be made clear and an alternative route signposted (with signage put in place at the beginning of the towpath and all entry points). The long term aim must be to make all routes fully accessible.

- Signage should be regular, clear, and include signage of roads intersecting the canal (e.g. on the bridges) for ease of navigation while on the canal.

General points about cycling schemes:

- LCC requires schemes to be designed to accommodate growth in cycling. Providing space for cycling is a more efficient use of road space than providing space for driving private motor vehicles, particularly for journeys of 5km or less. In terms of providing maximum efficiency for space and energy use, walking, cycling, then public transport are key.
- As demonstrated by the success of recent Cycle Superhighways and mini-Holland projects etc., people cycle when they feel safe. For cycling to become mainstream, a network of high-quality, direct routes separate from high volumes and/or speeds of motor vehicle traffic is required to/from all key destinations and residential areas in an area. Schemes should be planned, designed and implemented to maximise potential to increase journeys – with links to nearby amenities, residential centres, transport hubs considered from the outset.
- Spending money on cycling infrastructure has been shown to dramatically boost health outcomes in an area. Spending on cycling schemes outranks all other transport mode for return on investment according to a DfT study. Schemes which promote cycling meet TfL's "Healthy Streets" checklist. A healthy street is one where people choose to cycle.
- LCC wants, as a condition of funding, all "Quietways" highway development designed to London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS), with a Cycling Level of Service (CLoS) rating of 70 or above, with all "Critical Fails" eliminated.