

London Cycling Campaign response to Harrow Wealdstone Town Centre Improvements

18 February 2020

<https://consult.harrow.gov.uk/consult.tj/Wealstonetcimprov/consultationHome>

About the London Cycling Campaign

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is a charity with more than 20,000 supporters of whom over 11,000 are fully paid-up members. We speak up on behalf of everyone who cycles or wants to cycle in Greater London; and we speak up for a greener, healthier, happier and better-connected capital.

This response was developed with input from LCC's borough groups.

General comments on this scheme:

- This scheme is opposed. It will not enable more people to cycle in the area, nor will it fulfil the potential identified in TfL's Strategic Cycling Analysis (SCA) nearby for cycling, nor will it make existing cycling significantly safer.
- The scheme may deliver benefits for buses and bus passengers, and improve the public realm in the area, but by failing to adequately tackle motor traffic dominance at this location, the scheme will fail to deliver the best outcomes for anyone.
- We would urge Harrow Council to, as a matter of absolute urgency, and particularly considering the council's declaration of a climate emergency, do the following:
 - Produce a robust climate emergency action plan and new transport strategy alongside, demonstrating how, as a council, it will act to rapidly reduce car use and unleash the potential for cycling (and walking and public transport use) in the borough and for its residents.
 - Update all Highways engineers and officers training to reflect modern approaches to designing for and enabling cycling, to ensure all Highways schemes are designed to fulfil a re-tooled transport strategy with appropriate mode shift targets including reductions in car use.
 - Ensure all councillors, particularly those in the cabinet, are fully briefed and trained to understand cycling, cycling schemes, and the role of motor traffic in a climate emergency.
 - Both councillors and officers should consider visiting schemes elsewhere in London to learn from, such as those in the Enfield and Waltham Forest mini-Hollands particularly.
 - Commit to engaging fully with resident experts and campaigners on such schemes going forward well before public consultation, and importantly, listening to them and taking on board criticisms.

Specific comments on this scheme:

- The scheme continues to provide multiple routes for private motor traffic through Wealdstone town centre. The High Street north-south alignment should be made bus, cycle and pedestrian only (with loading either via side streets or only at certain times). Private motor traffic should be redirected to the A409 entirely. This approach, or one like it would vastly improve public transport here, create a far better shopping environment and enable far more people to walk and cycle through the town centre and to/from it.
- The current scheme materials state one aim of the scheme is to "make improvements to the quality of cycle routes in the High Street area and make accessing the town centre easier and safer for cyclists". The changes proposed for cycling are so disjointed and partial that they provide no overall improvement, and by removing the option for people to cycle southbound along the High Street they actually make the town centre less accessible for cycling.
- Specifically, the short sections of cycle track fail to connect to each other or even safely cross any junctions, including side streets. They will therefore not enable anyone who does not currently cycle here to start, nor will they be well used or confer significant safety benefits to those who do cycle here currently despite deeply hostile road conditions.
- TfL's Strategic Cycling Analysis (SCA) highlights several routes that should be prioritised for much higher cycling levels in the area, including a north-south route from Harrow Weald to Harrow, Harrow to Pinner, Wealdstone to Edgware and Harrow to Kingsbury and Hendon. The SCA also highlights zones where there is the highest potential to grow cycling. To the west of Wealdstone and Harrow is one such area, while to the south east of Wealdstone is also an area of highest current cycle demand. This scheme does not appear to coherently engage with these corridors and zones. It should.
- Reducing through motor traffic in the town centre, particularly in consideration of the zones the SCA highlights, implies strongly that the areas around the town should also be considered to remove the option of through motor traffic displacing onto residential and other non-distributor streets, using "low traffic neighbourhood" principles.
- Walking is also poorly provided for in a scheme that fails to include necessary crossings in some locations, uses staggered crossings, and crossings away from the desire line in other locations.

General points about infrastructure schemes:

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy relies on a growth in cycle trips to keep London moving. This means infrastructure schemes must 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 and enable all ages and abilities to cycle, 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 modes 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.
- All schemes should be designed to enable people of all ages and abilities to cycle, including disabled people.
- Evidence from TfL and from many schemes in London, the UK and worldwide shows the economic benefits, including to businesses, to be found from enabling a wider range of people to cycle more. Further evidence shows how cycling schemes also benefit air quality and reduce climate changing emissions, as well as improving resident health outcomes and reducing inactivity, as mentioned above.
- LCC wants, as a condition of funding, all highway development designed to London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS), with a Cycling Level of Service (CLOS) rating of 70 or above, with all "critical issues" eliminated. Above 2,000 Passenger Car Unit (PCUs) motor vehicle movements per day, or 20mph motor traffic speeds, cycling should be physically separated from motor traffic.