

The London Cycling Campaign is the capital's leading cycling organisation with more than 12,000 members and 40,000 supporters. We welcome the opportunity to comment on these plans and our response was developed with input from our local Westminster group and from the co-chairs of our Infrastructure Review Group.

We welcome the theory of Quietways targeting less confident cyclists who want to use low-traffic routes, while also providing for existing cyclists who want to travel at a more gentle pace. We also welcome the Mayor's vision for Quietways that are direct, designed as whole routes, segregated from motor traffic where they briefly join busy roads and make use of "filtered permeability" that restricts through motor traffic etc.

Sadly, our assessment based on the first routes to reach public consultation is that Quietways thus far fail to fulfil these ambitions to the degree needed to genuinely boost cycling numbers. This is the case with this section of Quietway.

In short, this section of Exhibition Road may look very pleasant, but it's not very pleasant to use for either cyclists or pedestrians – unlike the southern end of Exhibition Road. The "shared space" design here fails for obvious reasons – there are far too many motor vehicles using this stretch. They also travel too fast. But that speed comes largely from their strength in numbers, as thus the ability to marginalise pedestrians and cyclists. This stretch of street is host to a cluster of London's most iconic institutions – whose users and staff arrive in the vast majority on foot, or by cycling. Yet this street, that should be dominated by pedestrians, is dominated by cars. Cars at a volume to ensure that calling this stretch of Exhibition Road a "Quietway" without further treatment devalues both the concept of Quietways and demonstrates Westminster council's lack of understanding of what is needed for people to shift from driving to cycling.

For this to be an appropriate Quietway, and, frankly, to improve the street for the nearby institutions' staff and users, a modal filter should be installed to remove through motor vehicle traffic. As an interim measure, until the filter is in place, Westminster Council could and should do far more to calm this street and ensure maximum safety for pedestrians. One suggestion would be to work with Kensington & Chelsea to further reduce parking by placing it in a more traditional end-to-end arrangement – this would help avoid motorists reversing out of a space into a cyclist – and to increase gaps between parking to enable easier crossings. Even better would be to move parking further from the footway area. Another would be to stagger parking and the "carriageway" area to more appropriately slow traffic and make it clearer to drivers that they are "guests" on the street. Both of these suggestions were made by staff representing the institutions in the area. Ultimately though, a dramatic reduction in motor vehicle traffic volume and speed would be required for us to support this section as appropriate to be labelled a Quietway.

Finally, and in general, the London Cycling Campaign would like to see all schemes given a CLoS rating (as well as adhering to the latest London Cycle Design Standards) that demonstrates significant improvement from the current layout will be achieved for cycling, and that eliminates all "critical fails" in any proposed design before being funded for construction, let alone public consultation.