

London Cycling Campaign

4 December 2015

Consultation response for Quietway route from St John's Wood to Marylebone

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 has been developed in partnership with the chairs of our Infrastructure Review Group and feedback from the Westminster Cycling Campaign.

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 Quietway.

Most importantly, several sections of residential street through this Quietway would benefit from area-wide "cell" modal filtering plans. Greville Road, Hamilton Terrace perhaps also Carlton Hill could all be far more effectively quietened by removing through vehicle traffic. As could the area around Northwick Terrace, Lyons Place, Orchardson Street and Penfold Street, and arguably around Broadley Street and Wyndham Place and Enford Street too.

For cell filtering schemes to be successful, this requires the council to work effectively with local residents' associations, and mould the scheme to fit the area and residents' needs – and this requires less of a narrow route-based approach. But the benefits are felt far more widely than just for cyclists – with air pollution, community, walking and other wins too.

Failing that, more could and should be done to quieten these streets and make turns on them as easy and feel as pleasant for less confident cyclists as possible. That means ensuring vehicles are not able to pass cyclists at speed, nor put into conflict with them. And even minor junctions should be treated not just with raised tables, but other measures to reduce conflict and speed. For instance, regular sinusoidal speed humps on many of these roads would be a useful way of limiting speed also.

At the very least, roads like Hamilton Terrace should be redesigned to provide appropriate lane widths, ideally reducing parking and using it, or other already available lane width to create protected space for cycling. While with Broadley Street, more needs to be done to reduce speed and likely conflict between oncoming vehicles and cyclists, particularly in the stretch with two-way cycling, one-way motor vehicle provision.

The junctions of Abercorn Place and Hall Road and Hamilton Terrace should be redesigned to provide better protection for cyclists at what are fairly busy junctions for a Quietway. The London Cycling Campaign believes there is enough space at both, without losing much parking, to provide separation for cycling – ideally with cyclists getting their own signal time. These could be good locations to trial "all green" or "scramble" pedestrian and cyclist mixed phases, for instance.

Also note that the island at the crossing of Lisson Grove offers far from ideal protection for cyclists – particularly those on longer-than-usual cycles – such as some cargo bikes, bikes for carrying children and for those with mobility impairments. For this to be of worth it would need to be wider, with narrower vehicle lanes on Lisson Grove – or other methods of calming this crossing should be considered.

Pedestrian islands on Harewood Avenue, meanwhile, create "pinch points" that are a particular issue at this location. Crossings on raised tables would be preferable to also control vehicle speeds – and this street features too high traffic flows for a Quietway not just at its southern end, but from the turning into it.

It is also not acceptable to deflect cyclists from the route dramatically along fairly busy sections of York Street and Crawford Street when Wyndham Place could easily be used as a shared space solution. Nor are the crossings at York Street, Montagu Place or George Street of high quality enough to enable less confident cyclists to use this route at present.

As a result of the above points, the London Cycling Campaign cannot support the proposals as an appropriate "Quietway" – because we believe that this route, as currently envisioned, will not lead to many more less confident cyclists using it and only marginal safety gains for existing cyclists.