

London Cycling Campaign

23 February 2016

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 in support of our local Westminster Cycling Campaign group and with input 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 too many sections of this Quietway.

So, while we support the principle of a direct cycle route along this alignment, and we support several of the bold measures taken – particularly segregation on New Cavendish Street, we wish to raise several serious concerns regarding this route and the detail associated with it:

Bayswater Road – the current design fails to deal with eastbound traffic stacking across the junction. This behaviour will likely obstruct the crossing and make it a fraught and hostile experience.

Stanhope Place – several sections fall within the 3.2-4.0m widths listed as a critical fail in the new London Cycling Design Standards' "Cycling Level of Service" (CLOS) matrix. This is unacceptable. Parking should be staggered further to avoid this issue, and ideally provide more contra-flow lane. The removal of parking bays to provide the initial section of lane is welcome.

Seymour Street, Connaught Square and Connaught Street – there is a raised entry treatment provided at the entrance to Stanhope Place, but nowhere else in this section are speeds controlled. Creating raised tables running across junctions, sinusoidal speed humps and a raised zebra crossing on Connaught Street should all be considered to appropriately ensure speeds are low and driving is calm in this area. Right turns on Connaught Street – into Porchester Place or Connaught Square – are not adequately protected either.

We also believe the relocation of a parking bay all the way from Stanhope Place is meaningless. And generally believe Westminster should be far more bold in removing parking bays. Removal of parking bays on one side of Connaught Square would, for instance, free up space for a segregated and contra-flow cycle track.

An alternative idea to the current design would be to route cyclists via the east side of Connaught Square and into Portsea Place. This would be more direct northbound.

Kendal Street – we do not believe that the right turn pocket on Kendal Street is sufficient to appropriately guide less confident cyclists (the theoretical target for the Quietway programme) to perform this turn. A raised table as a minimum, as well as the pocket, would

be required. The carriageway widths again are a critical fail on CLoS – approximately 3.5m each. Removing parking from one side could provide enough room for a two-way cycle track on one side of the road. This could continue along most, if not all, of George Street also (with potentially shared use sections for the tightest points).

George Street – Again, CLoS critical fail widths are in evidence. And as above, there's an opportunity to create physically-protected safe space for cycling. As well, further speed control measures should be considered on Kendal Street, George Street and throughout – raised junctions and zebras, sinusoidal speed humps etc. – wherever appropriate.

As an alternative to George Street, Upper Berkeley Street/Portman Square should be considered – it is already quieter and well-used by cyclists according to the Westminster Cycling Campaign. And the road layout could be reconfigured easily to enable bi-directional cycling through Portman Square.

Seymour Place junction – this busy junction features a design that neither removes "hook" risks, nor enables cyclists to turn in all directions safely and conveniently.

Gloucester Place junction – again, hook risks remain currently, as does a failure to facilitate safe and convenient turns for cyclists. Advanced Stop Lines (ASLs) alone are not an appropriate design solution for safety or convenience, particularly at such busy junctions.

Baker Street junction – here, the proposal to reintroduce two-way motor vehicle flow may introduce new hook risks. To the east of the junction, George Street also appears to be busier and more narrow. More traffic calming is definitely required as a minimum – but more could be done to properly quieten this section, perhaps with an opposing section of one-way.

Manchester Square – as cyclists use their own energy to move around, there should be as few deflections to any longer route as possible. The south-north deflection of this Quietway to go round Manchester Square on that basis is undesirable.

Hinde Street/Mandeville Place/Thayer Street junction – once more for a quite busy junction, ASLs on their own are not an appropriate design solution to make a junction safe and feel safe for less confident cyclists.

Welbeck Street – if it's feasible to fit in a 1.6m mandatory lane and 3.9m one way carriage, then in this location why not put in a 3.2m or less carriageway and then use fully or semi-segregated protected space for cycling? There should also be further speed-restraining traffic calming to help southbound cyclists.

Wimpole Street – this street often features quite fast-moving motor vehicle traffic. The current proposal does not go far enough to calm speeds or likely driver aggression. Traffic-calming methods should be employed. And the right turn into New Cavendish Street should be improved to enable less confident cyclists to perform this manoeuvre with ease.

New Cavendish Street – we welcome the addition of contra-flow tracks with parking protection. That said, we wish to confirm that a door "zone" is appropriately built into designs. And that on top of the track, semi-segregated protection (as a minimum) is included on sections that do not run alongside parked cars. On top of that, again we must highlight

carriageway width "critical fails". Widening the cycle track and using more traffic-calming measures would deal with this issue.

An alternative idea to the contra-flow tracks would be to create two with-flow cycle tracks on two parallel streets (e.g. New Cavendish Street and Weymouth Street). This would involve greater diversion, but result in higher quality tracks and more inviting safe space for cycling in both directions. At current, the contra-flow design risks worsening conditions for cyclists travelling westbound with-flow in the carriageway.

Harley Street junction – the junction once again retains potential hook risks, for cyclists riding along Harley Street primarily. But it also is designed so less confident cyclists are encouraged to merge across a lane of traffic in order to ride westbound along New Cavendish Street, between turning traffic and westbound ahead traffic that will move left into them across the junction to avoid the contra-flow facility. This is likely to cause significant and aggressive conflicts and surely a better solution is available here to separate cyclists in time and/or space from motor vehicle traffic? On top of that, speed control measures would be very welcome here.

Portland Place junction – as it currently stands this junction design would not, again, protect from hook risks, nor facilitate turns from and to the Cycle SuperHighway. Further designs are clearly needed to appropriately ensure safety and convenience for cyclists.

Great Portland Street junction – again, hook risks are retained, speed is not controlled and cyclists' turning movements are not enabled. On top of that, from Portland Place onwards, the contra-flow track appears to feature no physical protection. This is also in no way appropriate.

Beyond Great Portland Street at the end of New Cavendish Street it is also unclear where the route will continue or connect to in Camden. Howland Street is currently one-way westbound.

Overall for this section, it is simply unacceptable to have such a busy street as New Cavendish Street as a Quietway with so many critical fails, so many conflict points and current traffic speeds and volumes essentially retained. There are several potential solutions to this issue – but to be very clear, the current designs cannot be supported, despite the contra-flow track, because they do not deliver a safe, convenient and quiet Quietway suitable for a wide range of cyclists.

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.