

London Cycling Campaign

12 January 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 with input from our local Kensington & Chelsea Cyclists 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 Quietway.

The lower traffic volume residential streets included in this scheme often include features that will be offputting to cyclists who might otherwise seek out such routes. The low level of intervention – largely cycle logos painted on the carriage – is not enough to ensure these streets will be quiet and calm enough to attract more cyclists to them than already use the area to cycle in.

Specific problems on the lower traffic volume streets include the mini-roundabouts on Ashburn Place, and at Cornwall Gardens; the cluttered shared space area at Palace Place Mansions between Kensington Court and Kensington High Street.

As well as issues with the lower traffic volume streets, there are significant issues with the main roads this route crosses. At Kensington High Street, cyclists will be expected to weave between traffic to use mid-carriageway refuges without any signalised crossing. At Bayswater Road, they will be expected to use shared space pavement in an area with fairly high footfall, to access a toucan crossing. Both of these crossings will therefore remain significant barriers to cyclists, particularly those the Quietways aim to enable – and the Kensington High Street junction may well prove to be dangerous as less confident cyclists weave out between traffic or are forced to stop precisely to shelter at the refuges. At both junctions, alternative designs that are more direct for cyclists, and protect cyclists from motor vehicles, while not putting them into conflict with pedestrians, could and should be feasible.

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.