

Summary

Southwark Cyclists is the local borough group of the London Cycling Campaign.

We reiterate the London Cycling Campaign's consultation response. In particular,

- We oppose this interim design as being unsafe
- We would like to see a new interim design as soon as possible which removes the potentially lethal cycle-vehicle interactions.
- We would like to see rapid progress on a permanent design which provides safe space for cycling suitability for all ages and abilities.

As an addendum to the LCC response, we include here specific comments on details of the proposals; an overview of nearby cycling routes, and their inability to function as alternatives; and a list of contradictions between these proposals and the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Specific comments on proposals

Starting at the west end of the scheme:

- There is a serious left hook risk from traffic turning into Medlar Street from the outside lane whilst cyclists continue straight in the bus lane. We would like this risk removed, e.g. by preventing entry from the outside lane and/or changing the geometry of the junction so that vehicles are not crossing cyclists at an oblique angle.
- The green surface is worse than useless, being slippery in the wet, so we support its removal.
- We are concerned that this colouring is the only change to the cycle lanes on Camberwell New Road. If the advisory cycle lane is genuinely wide enough for safe passing by vehicles in the adjacent lane, then there is enough space for a protected mandatory lane. Since this is an interim scheme, such protection could be added quickly and cheaply with temporary materials such as bolt-on bollards.
- If a separate cycle phase will not be added to the signals, then the cycle lane should at least be signalised so that cyclists are not led into conflict with left-turning traffic. For example, at the junction of Borough Road and St George's Circus, cycle lights indicate that cyclists should not enter the ASL whilst traffic is moving. This could be combined with light segregation that allows cyclists to move into the general traffic lane further back, whilst retaining some protection for waiting cyclists.
- Removing the Camberwell Church Street crossing on the east side of Grove Lane - Artichoke Place removes a useful south-north link for cyclists avoiding Camberwell Green Junction. This would be less of a concern if the current proposals included safe and pleasant cycling through the main junction. However, since they do not, a significant number of local residents will continue to use Kimpton Street to access e.g. Camberwell Library, and as such these side roads need to be considered together.

Nearby cycling routes

We want to see a dense network of cycling routes separate from motor traffic, whether on quiet streets without high levels of motor vehicles, or protected lanes on main roads.

Considering the scarcity, indirectness and heavy traffic flows of alternative cycle routes through the area, space for cycling must be found on the direct routes i.e. the main roads through Camberwell Green junction. Camberwell New Road/Camberwell Church street should be the main east-west route through the area: it is, in theory, Cycle Superhighway 5.

Alternative north-south routes

Grove Lane / Kimpton street

This depends on a cycle crossing of Camberwell Church Street, in conjunction with Southwark Council, as described above.

Quietway 7

This depends on modal filters at Champion Hill and Camberwell Grove, and is over 400m away, providing no access to Camberwell Green or nearby facilities.

Flodden Road / Councillor Street

Likewise, the nearest direct crossing to the west is ~500m away, when a comprehensive cycling network needs routes every ~400m. Using the western route as an alternative could add a kilometer detour to short local trips.

Alternative east-west routes

Love Walk

A useful east-west connection could be made by creating a new pedestrian + cycle toucan crossing of Denmark Hill, linking Love Walk to Coldharbour Place. From here, cyclists could turn down Coldharbour Lane (for cyclists heading towards Brixton); or cross to Crawford Road and Warner Road. Cyclists going on to Oval could equally use this route to bypass most of Camberwell New Road, joining it close to Oval at Foxley Road if modal filters were restored e.g. on Calais Street and elsewhere. There is currently a high volume of traffic and cyclists suffer regular close passes along this route.

This new crossing on Denmark Hill was consulted on in the Camberwell Regeneration plans (launched 2012) and was part of the 2015 plan for improving safety around the Camberwell Green junction.

We hope that Quietway 7 will open up some east-west cycling access to the north of McNeil Road. But there are multiple barriers (both metaphorical and literal) between Denmark Hill and destinations to the east.

Wyndham Road / Bowyer Place

The nearest crossing of Camberwell Road to the north is over 500m away, and the route continues to diverge from Camberwell Church Street on the east side.

We reiterate our comments from our previous submission in 2015 that a cycle bypass could be provided for some movements through the junction, e.g. the right turn from Camberwell Church Street to Camberwell Road. If the bypass was very well engineered, maintained, and waymarked, with lights appropriately phased to provide a green wave, it could be as direct and high capacity as the junction, and therefore be chosen by a majority of cyclists.

Mayor's Transport Strategy

We would like to call attention to the following points in the Mayor's Transport Strategy (emphasis ours):

Executive summary, page 10

“Local streets and neighbourhoods will be designed to make them **pleasant** places for people to walk, **cycle**, use public transport and spend time.”

Many members of Southwark Cyclists who use a bicycle as their primary means of transport will not cycle through Camberwell Green. Aside from it being an unpleasant place to spend time because of the noise and pollution, it is a scary and stressful environment to cycle in. The current proposals do nothing to change that.

“High-quality public transport services that connect seamlessly to other forms of active and sustainable travel are required across the city to provide alternatives to car use. Looking at our transport system as **a single, connected whole** is the key to addressing London's current and future challenges.”

“Particular attention must be paid to how the complementary modes of **walking, cycling and public transport interconnect** at transport hubs and on streets across London.”

Chapter Four – A good public transport experience, page 114

“The Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, will use the Healthy Streets Approach to direct complementary public transport and street improvements to provide **an attractive whole journey experience** that will facilitate mode shift away from the car.”

“The walk to and from the stop or station, however short, can be an important part of staying healthy. A key measure of a more integrated transport system will be to achieve year-on-year increases in the proportion of people who walk at least once a day and the average number of times people walk during a day. **The healthy, sustainable choice must be the easiest option every time, particularly at places where people change between transport modes.** This will require good quality, secure cycle parking at a level that meets current demand and provides for future growth. Buses, cycle hire, Dial-a-Ride and

community transport services will also need to be easy to access and navigate to, and taxi ranks should be accessible.”

Camberwell Green is a bus interchange. But this junction is not safe to travel to by bike or to cross on foot. There is insufficient cycle parking in the area, but that is the least of the problems for pleasant and easy cycling. Elderly residents, for example, will not be using cycles as mobility aids to access buses. The few seconds’ head start in the current proposals is of no use to anyone who lacks the ability to accelerate to 20mph before the motor traffic behind them starts moving.

Shaping and growing the bus network, page 133

“It will be important to make the most of the flexibility of the bus network to reduce and remove existing services where they are no longer required in central and inner London, and use this freedup capacity to provide new or improved services in outer London.”

“Central London is where there is the greatest opportunity to improve bus journey times and reliability through the deployment of bus priority measures. These will include 24-hour bus lanes and bus- and cycle-only corridors, all of which will help future-proof the bus network from further congestion as well as improve air quality. **Where possible, new bus priority corridors in central London will be located away from the key cycle routes.**”

CS5, a key east-west cycle route, passes through this junction. Going forward, we expect Camberwell Green to be built for the bus network that TfL is creating, not the existing network, and hence more space provided for walking and cycling. Reduced demand for both buses and private motoring would be facilitated by sufficient progress on Quietways in the area.

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“Many of the main radial roads in inner London are key bus routes to central London. They carry large numbers of people and it is essential they continue to do this reliably. **But these bus routes must also work well for the communities and town centres they pass through.** Measures to improve bus reliability on these routes will include **revised bus lane hours, traffic signal priority, policing and enforcement, behaviour change initiatives and priority measures.** To improve air quality, low-emission buses will be deployed along these routes.”

The Green does not work well as a town centre. From a cycling perspective, it is very difficult to access the shops by bike. The road is too dangerous for most people, and too busy to easily hop on and off between shops, whilst the pavement is crowded enough that wheeling a fully-laden bike is not easy. If bus movements need to be prioritised, we need more bus priority measures on the roads around the Green, taking capacity from general traffic. The capacity should not be made by keeping the Green itself as a dangerous junction.

In our view, the current proposals are incompatible with the Healthy Streets agenda of the Mayor’s Transport Strategy.