

CCC Response to Gospel Oak – Fleet Road area safety scheme

To: Transportconsultations@camden.gov.uk CC: Simi Shah, Sam Margolis, Steve Cardno

19th July 2019

This response to the consultation on the proposed Gospel Oak – Fleet Road area safety scheme is from Camden Cycling Campaign, the local borough group of London Cycling Campaign. We represent the interests of cyclists living or working in Camden and aim to expand the opportunities for all to cycle safely in the borough. We have discussed this consultation by email and online (using Cyclescape).

Introduction

Fleet Road and Agincourt Road together form a clockwise gyratory between Mansfield Road and South End Green with AM peak flows of 600 and 800 PCUs respectively (figures supplied by L.B. Camden in 2016). Neither of these streets provides any protected cycle infrastructure. In addition, Cressy Road, which links the two sides of the gyratory is one-way northbound from the ambulance station to Agincourt Road. This means that people cycling through the area face unpleasant interactions with motor vehicles as well as needing to make diversions in order to reach destinations in the area.

TfL's SCA (Strategic Cycling Analysis) Fig 1.1 shows top 5-10% flows along Gordon House Road and Mansfield Road while Fig 2.2 shows a top 10% potential cycling demand all along the link on Gordon House Road, Mansfield Road, Fleet Road and Pond Street. In addition, Fleet Primary School is situated on the north side of Fleet Road with the gate between the junctions of Parkhill Road and Lawn Road. It is important to provide safe cycle routes between Fleet school and roads in its catchment area e.g. Constantine Road, Pond Street, Lismore Circus and South End Green.

The consultation notes that this is the first phase of a longer-term plan for Gospel Oak to improve streets for walking and cycling but it fails to indicate the final goals. Our position is that, considering the location of Fleet School and the indications in the SCA, Camden's goals should include the provision of a safe two-way cycle link along Fleet Road between Mansfield Road and South End Green, together with two-way cycling in the full length of Cressy Road between Constantine Road and Fleet Road. We discussed these requirements with Camden officers at a meeting in June 2016 and are very disappointed to see virtually no progress towards these goals in the current consultation.

The use of cycling as a transport mode is severely inhibited by the traffic level and the dangers it poses on Fleet Road and other roads in the area. The proposals in this scheme do very little to change that situation.

Creation of space for cycling

Currently the road space in Fleet Road is devoted entirely to motor vehicles either in the form of a pair of motor traffic lanes with parking on one side or as a single motor traffic lane with parking on both sides of the road. For safe two-way cycling, at least 4m of this width must be allocated to protected cycle tracks (e.g. stepped tracks). This can only be achieved by reducing the motor traffic to a single lane and removing some of the parking.

We welcome the proposed conversion of a single yellow line to double yellow line with double blips at the following locations: the nearside of Fleet Road between Mansfield Road and Parkhill Road; on both sides of Fleet Road between the junction of Parkhill Road and the pedestrian crossing outside Fleet Primary school. But to make any progress towards creating sufficient space for cycling, it will be necessary to make a much more radical reduction in the number of parking spaces

We note also that the consultation drawing shows cycle logos in the nearside lane between Parkhill Road and Cressy Road. This appears to amount to an informal allocation of space for cycling but a mandatory cycle lane (or even better a stepped track) should be provided together with a blended junction¹ at Lawn Road.

Permeability for cycles

We are very disappointed that this consultation fails to propose two-way cycling in the full length of Cressy Road and ask that such provision be implemented as an addition to this scheme.

¹ A blended junction has continuous footway and a continuous cycle lane across the side road.

Proposals 3 and 4

The consultation notes that *cycling along Fleet Road can be intimidating with motor vehicles passing close to cyclists, and especially difficult where the road is narrow or the traffic lanes are not clearly marked. This is particularly problematic at the junction of Parkhill Road, where left hook collisions on cyclists by motor vehicles are a significant risk.*

The consultation proposes as a solution that:

- the nearside lane on Fleet Road west of Parkhill Road is converted to a dedicated left turn only for motor vehicles travelling westbound.
- the pedestrian island on Parkhill Road is widened to create a dedicated 'turn left' lane for vehicles turning into Parkhill Road, with a gap to allow cyclists to travel straight ahead.

The drawing shows cycle logos in the left turn lane so we assume the intention is that all cycles including those eventually going straight ahead use this lane.

This arrangement has its own hazards:

- Drivers are very likely to attempt to overtake and cut in on the cycles in the left turn lane;
- The alignment of the junction still allows left-turning motors to travel at too high a speed;
- Cycles will need to be in the primary position in order to make it through the gap;
- People who decide to cycle in the ahead lane may be squeezed between two lines of cars.

We therefore reject proposals 3 and 4. Noting that allocating two lanes for westbound traffic on Fleet Road between Southampton Road and Parkhill Road is totally unnecessary, our alternative proposal is:

- Reduce the motor traffic to a single lane and provide a mandatory cycle lane (or even better a stepped track) with a blended junction at Parkhill Road.

Proposal 1: the junction of Cressy Road and Fleet Road

We support the installation of a new zebra crossing over Cressy Road but we believe it is too far from the pedestrian desire line.

Proposal 2: the junction of Lawn Road and Fleet Road

We support the footway widening on Lawn Road to make a shorter crossing for pedestrians, whilst encouraging slower traffic speeds for motor vehicles. But as mentioned above, we believe that a blended junction would work much better for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Summary of our comments

- Camden's goals for Gospel Oak should include the provision of a safe two-way cycle link along Fleet Road, together with two-way cycling in the full length of Cressy Road.
- Proposals 3 and 4 are not sufficiently ambitious and there is little point wasting money and time in making small improvements when big improvements are needed and possible.
- We welcome the proposed conversion of a single yellow line to double yellow line with double blips at locations in Fleet Road.
- We ask for a segregated cycle lane on Fleet Road between Mansfield Road and Lawn Road with blended junctions at Parkhill Road and Lawn Road².
- There is an urgent need for two-way cycling in Cressy Road.

Please acknowledge receipt of this response. We would be very happy to discuss any aspect of our comments; contact details are below.

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² We suggest that a mandatory cycle lane might be an acceptable interim solution, but to slow motor traffic, the Parkhill Road and the Lawn Road junctions still both require a continuous footway and cycle lane across them.