

Consultation response

About

Wheels for Wellbeing is an inclusive cycling charity based in south London. We are a grassroots disability organisation, running five sessions a week at our three inclusive cycling hubs. Using any of our fleet of over 200 cycles (handcycles, tandems, tricycles, recumbents, wheelchair cycles, side-by-sides and bicycles) disabled people of all ages can discover or rediscover cycling, whilst enjoying its health and wellbeing benefits. Every year around 1,200 disabled people, aged from 18 months to 99 years-old, cycle at our hubs. We are also a campaigning voice for disabled cyclists across the UK.

Summary and recommendations

- As a yardstick for assessing the inclusivity of cycling infrastructure, designers should incorporate the following question into their design plans: *“Would a competent 12 year-old be comfortable cycling there?”*
- More cycle superhighways need to be built and to fully inclusive standards;
- Further trials of bus stop bypasses are needed, involving both disabled cyclists and disabled pedestrians;
- The Quietways programme should be re-evaluated;
- A wider range of cyclists should be consulted at the earliest design stage, including disabled, family and freight cyclists;
- Cycle parking must be designed to accommodate non-standard cycles;
- Greater investment in e-cycles is needed.

Response

1. *What progress on new cycling infrastructure has been made under Sadiq Khan, and what are his long-term plans?*

1.1 CS9 and CS4 have gone to consultation and extensions to CS6 and CS3 are being completed, albeit slowly and in a re-worked plan.

1.2 Changes to the network have not stemmed from discussions in the election campaign about issues relating to congestion, but rather relate to issues around budgeting, political will and feasibility.

2. Has TfL resolved the problems that delayed some cycling schemes under the previous Mayor?

2.1 New problems appear to be arising and it is unclear that there is as yet any regular plan for delivery. It is welcome, however, that new funding streams (e.g. Liveable Neighbourhoods) are annual.

3. Has segregation delivered the anticipated benefits on the Cycle Superhighways? How many cyclists are using these routes?

3.1 Segregated cycle lanes afford everyone a greater degree of safety and security, which is particularly the case for the most vulnerable road users (e.g. children, older people and disabled people). As Chris Boardman has stated, whenever cycling infrastructure is built it should always bear this question in mind: *“Would a competent 12 year-old be comfortable cycling there?”* This should be the yardstick by which all cycling infrastructure is measured and will go a long way to increasing the numbers and diversity of people cycling (a good indicator of a well-designed inclusive cycle network is the variety of users from under-represented groups using it). To this end, segregated cycle lanes offer a good design solution. We do not have any data on the numbers of disabled cyclists using cycle superhighways, but would urge TfL to collect such data in future.

3.2 Having said this, the normalisation of cycling and ‘de-lycrafication’ are not instant, but depend upon routes being fully inclusive. The rapid growth of cycle routes across London is welcome, however the density of cycling and the numbers of cyclists using them often comes at the expense of less confident cyclists and those who require additional space, such as disabled, family and freight cyclists. In order to encourage such groups to make greater use of cycle superhighways, more must be built and to fully inclusive standards (see our [Guide to Inclusive Cycling](#)).

4. To what extent has segregation had negative consequences for other road users and, if necessary, how can this be mitigated?

4.1 A conflict of interest can arise between cyclists and pedestrians (particularly those with visual impairments) at cycle track crossings: bus stop bypasses bring this issue into sharp focus. Our position is that bus stop bypasses are a good thing if they are planned properly for everyone's safety. An entirely satisfactory solution still has to be found for this issue, for the benefit of all cyclists and all pedestrians.

We recommend further trials, involving both disabled cyclists and disabled pedestrians, in order to develop fully satisfactory solutions to the issue of safety and perceived safety for vulnerable pedestrians. An audio message on buses should alert all passengers to the fact that they are alighting on a bus stop island (as on Westminster Bridge). Similarly, technical solutions should be developed to help alert cyclists to the fact that pedestrians are going to be crossing the cycle lane, without the use of existing signalised crossings.

4.2 Many issues for riders of wider cycles and less confident cyclists are also stemming from the use of anti-terror barriers on central London bridges, which we would urge TfL to look into further.

5. *Have Quietways delivered their anticipated benefits? How many cyclists are using them?*

5.1 No network has been delivered as yet and the quality of Quietways is highly variable. We would suggest that the project be re-evaluated.

5.2 Of even greater concern is the Central London Grid, which is not delivering what it set out to and has failed to put in place a network that is inclusive of all types of cycles and cyclists.

6. *What are the differences in infrastructure between inner and outer London? How can TfL ensure infrastructure in different areas is sufficient and appropriate to the location?*

6.1 The main differences appear to be in the scale of investment.

6.2 Generally speaking, the quality and inclusivity of outer London cycling infrastructure is inferior. The same is true of pedestrian infrastructure and there are too many busy roads where crossing is rarely safe or convenient.

6.3 TfL and councils should make more of the approach used in Mini-Holland bids, such as Waltham Forest's, which highlighted the need to revise junction design to create safer and more inviting conditions: not just to answer current recorded collisions.

7. *Is TfL's approach to public engagement working effectively to improve scheme designs and meet stakeholder needs?*

7.1 The main issue concerning public engagement is twofold: a lack of capacity within councils to adequately handle new cycle schemes and a dearth of political interest/will in discussing cycle schemes.

7.2 A wider diversity of cyclists needs to be consulted at the earliest design stage possible, including disabled, family and freight cyclists.

7.3 Given that cycling infrastructure is often transformational, more should be made of the potential it represents to bring beneficial changes to communities and businesses. Inclusive complementary measures would help support the desired broader use of new infrastructure, rather than just for commuting.

8. Are Londoners sufficiently aware of the cycling infrastructure available to them, and how can awareness be increased?

8.1 There is very little awareness. TfL's own cycle maps barely cover the new cycle infrastructure and, if anything, highlight the paucity of it. A clear campaign and communications strategy is needed, but this could plausibly be delayed for whenever a suitable network size is reached.

9. How is TfL using infrastructure to attract a more diverse range of people to cycle in London?

9.1 Anecdotally, it would appear that high quality, inclusive cycling infrastructure (such as many of the cycle superhighways) is attracting a more diverse range of cyclists e.g. family, freight and disabled cyclists. However, whilst we do not have exact data on this we would suggest that TfL should collect this in future. Furthermore, undertaking more research (such as TfL's upcoming focus group on using cycles as mobility aids - which is greatly welcome) will help in establishing an evidence base of the types of people benefitting from high quality infrastructure.

9.2 A cycle network that meets the needs of disabled cyclists - by being step-free, barrier-free and spacious - is, by default, accessible to everyone: two-wheeled bicycle users, as well as individuals, families and businesses who use tricycles, tandems, trailers and cargobikes (the latter of which are increasingly used to transport children and freight). Equally, any measures enabling cycling by disabled people are likely to support a growth in cycling by novice cyclists, including children and young people, as well as older people. It will also improve conditions for those using mobility scooters. To this end, those sections of London's cycle network that meet these standards will by virtue attract a more diverse range of cyclists.

10. Is there sufficient cycle parking in London, and is it in the right locations?

10.1 There is generally insufficient cycle parking in London and, where it is located, it is not always positioned in the best place strategically.

10.2 There are very few cycle parking facilities designed to accommodate non-standard cycles. Almost all cycle parking stands (e.g. the Sheffield Stand) are intended for use by standard two-wheeled bicycles and generally placed too close to each other to fit a three-wheeled cycle between them.

This is not the only way that cycle parking can exclude disabled cyclists. For example, it may be that cycle parking facilities are not located on ground level (and without lift or ramp access), or that accessing a parking stand relies on the user having the strength and dexterity to operate technology whilst standing (e.g. hydraulically-assisted double-stacking racks).

A range of possible design solutions, along with a set of technical recommendations, are outlined in our [Guide to Inclusive Cycling](#).

11. How are the lessons of the Mini-Hollands and other previous cycling schemes being applied elsewhere?

11.1 Largely through Liveable Neighbourhoods, which are in the successor programme to them. However, there are many different ways in which councils and TfL can cause changes to an entire area, such as with major superhighways or in planning major developments. More analysis should be done into the effects of the Mini-Hollands, in order to enable further similar investment to be made throughout Outer London.

12. Should cycling infrastructure be oriented toward longer-distance commuting journeys, or more localised trips?

12.1 It should be aligned with a mixture of present and future cycling potential. Well-designed cycle networks can cater to all ranges of journeys.

12.2 We would like to see greater investment in e-cycles, which would enable cyclists to commute longer distances and, at the same time, dramatically broaden the demographic of people who can access cycling. Electric assistance technology is particularly beneficial for older and disabled people, as it allows them to cycle longer distances and in greater comfort, by reducing the amount of physical effort required.

We would recommend that all TfL cycle hire schemes should include e-cycles, which would support longer-distance commuting journeys (particularly for those living in Outer London) and would also reduce reliance on cars.