

## Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014

This is a response on behalf of hfcyclists a group representing those who live, work and cycle in Hammersmith and Fulham as part of the overall London Cycle Campaign. We fully endorse the comments of the [wider London Cycle Campaign](#) and those of other campaigners and groups within the LCC especially those from the [Kensington and Chelsea group](#) and from [Rachel Aldred](#) and [David Arditti](#).

We have compiled our feedback on the grid into a few key sections which we will go through in order. We will start by considering the starting ideas of the grid – methodology and current cycle flows, then look at the issues we see in the grid as planned and suggest changes. Finally, we have particular comments on the engagement into this consultation by Kensington and Chelsea and TfL that we feel should be taken on board as the Mayor's Cycling Vision nears roll-out.

### 1. Aspirations of the Grid

- 1.1. The overall idea of the grid is a sensible one, one-off routes planned without full coordination between boroughs have not served London well to date.
- 1.2. Having boroughs work together in a board and alongside TfL has merits, but we feel it has issues we will return to later in this response.
- 1.3. The Mayor describes the network as 'everywhere you need to go, directly and easily'. We agree this is an important aim, but don't see it in the grid section closest to us in West London.
- 1.4. There is a danger of dual network design given the alternative ideas given for Quietways and Superhighways
  - 1.4.1. We support the idea that interventions should vary by the type of street and danger/issues being handled
  - 1.4.2. However, there is a basic minimum level that must be met. We don't know what the London Cycle Design Standards 2 will set that to be but good clear standards will be vital to making that work.
  - 1.4.3. In many cases, especially for cyclists coming from our borough into Central London the main roads are unavoidable and the grid does not make any difference to this.
  - 1.4.4. It is not enough to simply omit a main road from the consultation, as we will show there are many cycle journeys on main roads and many more that can be unlocked. If there were a high capacity quiet route from Hammersmith and Fulham to Central London we'd have found it by now. There isn't and boroughs must not be allowed to pick and choose about working on main roads. You should do the grid properly.
  - 1.4.5. However, we don't think it follows that you don't do it at all, but find ways to resolve the differences. The lack of engagement to do so is a concern. Though we welcome being able to comment at this stage.

### 2. Counts of cyclists indicate cyclists are coming from Hammersmith and Fulham into Central London

## Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014

- 2.1. We note that the Central London Grid has built upon the Central London Cycle Census of Summer 2013. Sadly counts for the census barely stretched out of Hyde Park into West London. We have as part of other work mapped data from DfT count points for rapid review and make use of that work in this response.
- 2.2. Details of our work on this publicly viewable on our blog <http://hfcyclists.org.uk/s4c-maps/dft-annual-average-daily-flow-vehicle-counts-mapped-visualised/>
- 2.3. Taking line which is bound by Westway to the North, Thames to South and along a rough alignment of the Western boundary of Hyde Park extended to meet these boundaries we have analysed figures at a number of count points to identify East-West cycle journeys to help assess the grid. This is to create a East-West screen line to assess the grid with.
- 2.4. At a headline level this identifies about 16,050 cycle journeys a day – we give rough figures rather than exact to pick a figure which avoids extreme variations in DfT data. From North to South these are:
  - 2.4.1. Around 300/day at CP 942878, on Westbourne Grove
  - 2.4.2. Around 350/day at CP 17640, on Pembridge Villas
  - 2.4.3. Around 3000/day at CP 73642, East of Notting Hill Gate
  - 2.4.4. Around 200/day at CP 942885, on Holland Street
  - 2.4.5. Around 4500/day at CP 38590, at SW corner of Kensington Gardens
  - 2.4.6. Around 750/day at CP 6121 on Cromwell Road (A4)
  - 2.4.7. Around 800/day at CP 7607 on Old Brompton Road
  - 2.4.8. Around 1500/day at CP 18268 on Fulham Road
  - 2.4.9. At least 1250/day at CP 37707 on King's Road
  - 2.4.10. Around 3400/day at CP 3417 on Cremorne Road (A3220)
- 2.5. Of these it is plausible that perhaps the first three counts have journeys that are most likely to be taken on by Cycle Crossrail, presuming that it links well into the road network in Hammersmith. However, even amongst those cyclists we are not hearing strong belief that Cycle Crossrail will improve their journeys. The attraction of taking the existing, shorter route will remain.
- 2.6. That means there are at best a proportion of 3,650 of 16,050 cycle journeys a day being provided an alternate route. For the remainder the only East-West routes on the grid are more problematic. The grid will not be transformative for cyclists in West London undertaking East-West journeys. We will now cover these in detail.
- 2.7. Incidentally we note that in *The Way Ahead* by Mike Hudson (FoE Books 1978) a count is given for cyclists on Kensington High Street and Earl's Court Road. This shows 206 cyclists at that junction in 1976 as opposed to 180 in 1975. This count covers an hour so implies in 1976 there was a count 1000-2000/day at that point. Nearby counts indicate 3000/day (CP 36946). This is slow long-term growth but clearly would have involved a greater decline in-between. None of the physical interventions advocated in this or his later books are to be seen on the roads of Kensington nearly 40 years later. It is little wonder we considered by

## Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014

some to be not only 40 years behind the Dutch but still so if we haven't yet got that message.

### 3. Issues in the grid as planned

3.1. We turn our comments to the routes in particular. We think as a general comment that it isn't true to call the grid in Kensington and Chelsea a grid, especially as it reaches further west. We are focusing our comments on this section of the grid, as it has deficiencies we consider to be obvious and intentional.

3.2. We will now consider the routes that cover an East-West alignment in Kensington and Chelsea in order from North to South from the Westway to the Thames

#### 3.2.1. Cycle Crossrail

3.2.1.1. This presumably will have no entry and exit in Kensington and Chelsea. The usefulness of this route will hinge upon good quality linking routes in Hammersmith and Fulham and at the other end. We await consultation on this route from TfL.

3.2.1.2. We have had several conversations with developers planning to work on the White City Opportunity Area, none of whom have known the alignment.

3.2.1.3. The lack of a high quality cycle strategy in the White City area like that for Nine Elms means we are not convinced there will be much improvement with development in this area.

#### 3.2.2. Routes heading in an arc from Abbotsbury Road and Clarendon Road to Talbot Road

3.2.2.1. These routes seem very indirect.

3.2.2.2. It appears that there has been a refusal for cycling in Holland Park (but this is not made clear either way). Please clarify this and make clear the reasons for Holland Park to continue to block cycling. We feel cycling in Holland Park would help many cyclists who wish a quieter route to Central London and are aware of many who use the park currently, who mostly dismount and further delay and inconvenience their journeys.

3.2.2.3. The northern extent of this route places it a block away from counts where we identify about 650 E-W cycle journeys a day. It may be able to tempt some of these journeys further north but only if it is safer, and more pleasant using the quietway interventions of reducing through traffic volumes and speeds. If a taxi can race a cyclist along the route then this unravelling will not have happened.

3.2.2.4. At the western extent some linking routes are shown to make it reach the well segregated (best crossing of the West London Line by some distance) route built by Hammersmith and Fulham Council in the 1980s. None of these routes is direct and all involve a major detour to the south. Alternately they involve cyclists dismounting and crossing the West London Line at the busy station of Kensington Olympia.

**Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014**

- 3.2.2.5. It is therefore rather obvious that for East-West routes this quietway is less convenient than the main roads, and most journeys will remain upon them. Interventions should be considered there, and superhighways constructed if this is the only option available as a quietway. There is no way this is a direct alternative or part of a successful grid on its own. Major complementary routes are necessary.
- 3.2.3. Route materializing on the Western edge of Holland Park towards Hyde Park
- 3.2.3.1. It is unclear how you reach this route if you can't cycle in Holland Park
- 3.2.3.2. Even if cycle in Holland Park is allowed, cycling could be encouraged along Phillimore Gardens to reach this route.
- 3.2.3.3. The section at Duchess of Bedfords Walk is currently one-way and needs much work to be two-way given tight corners and high (30mph) speed limit.
- 3.2.3.4. A 20mph speed limit along this route at the very most (perhaps even 10 or 15mph) would be sensible.
- 3.2.3.5. It is hard to envisage this route catering to mass cycling for the cyclists currently using nearby major roads for which no interventions are proposed. Currently perhaps 2-300/day use it. We avoided it for our ride with 70 people for Ride London on grounds of the issues of meeting traffic. We imagine families with children would still see the same issue if riding alone. Contraflow cycling with parking and through-traffic retained failed to provide high quality space for cycling to encourage mass use.
- 3.2.3.6. The quality of the crossing over Kensington Church Street is vital to this route, and there are further sections of narrow alleys with dismount signs along this section.
- 3.2.3.7. It needs serious detailed design to get right, and may cater to a section of the cycling audience but fails the majority of cycle journeys especially those to the nearby busy high streets and mass commuter journeys. It is unsurprising that it has the low usage it does currently. Measures of serious nature would be necessary to change that.
- 3.2.4. Route starting at Earl's Court Junction and heading for Exhibition Road but not reaching it
- 3.2.4.1. We are often receiving interest in cycling over the bridge that faces this route from Hammersmith and Fulham.
- 3.2.4.2. Unfortunately having failed to connect to a single existing east-west cycle route from Hammersmith and Fulham this links to a road with no cycling facilities. Strong continuations are supportable and worthwhile. We understand from the Flyover study that 50% of the traffic on the A4 in Hammersmith joins after this junction and therefore space is available to use this corridor for cycling. We would support that.

**Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014**

- 3.2.4.3. The nearby Earl's Court site is proposed for massive redevelopment and again like White City fails to have the quality of design work even at this early stage that Nine Elms has. It needs to happen here as well.
- 3.2.4.4. Currently a good number of cyclists continue along the A4, some even swear by riding over such obstacles to others as the Hammersmith Flyover nearby. Interventions on the A4 itself are surely also of merit as well as this quietway.
- 3.2.4.5. The route ends a street from Exhibition Road with no further measures. Queen's Gate is clearly wide enough for measures. How are cyclists meant to reach Exhibition Road? This is not a grid route. It is an East and West stub linking to a north-south route on Kensington Palace Gardens. It fails your own vision
- 3.2.5. Route starting on Earl's Court Road and heading for Harrington Road
  - 3.2.5.1. This route stops the wrong side of Earl's Court Road. How are cyclists from Fulham meant to reach it?
  - 3.2.5.2. You count around 400 cycles a day in your nearby census point (site id 100). We see 800/day on the nearby DfT count (CP 7607)
  - 3.2.5.3. You counted 2000 cycles/day on Lille Road (site id 73) in the cycle census and are providing nothing for them.
  - 3.2.5.4. This route does connect to the grid, but a more direct route into central London through perhaps Basil Street where you recorded very little traffic (site id 102) would surely be more direct and convenient.
- 3.2.6. Superhighway terminating at the borough boundary of Kensington and Chelsea turning left to cross the river
  - 3.2.6.1. Why not extend this superhighway to follow the Thames towards Fulham? Thousands of cyclists a day and you surely realize the Thames means alternate routes are harder to reach for many. The simplest option may not be a complicated quietway but to intervene on the main roads.
- 4. Suggested additional routes (all in Kensington and Chelsea)
  - 4.1. We consider that the grid work has made much effort to find suitable quietway alignments to provide East-West cycling. We think these efforts have failed and consider the failure to enable cycling in Holland Park even with further consultation to show this approach to be flawed.
  - 4.2. Superhighway 9 along Kensington High Street
    - 4.2.1. We don't think cycling along narrow roads like Holland Road can provide suitable priority to the 4,000 or so cyclists who reach the top of Kensington High Street at a crossing between two narrow streets over a busy pedestrian crossing is unlikely.

**Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014**

- 4.2.2. We strongly advise and suspect this in line with some advice within TfL that a superhighway along Kensington High Street as part of a complete Superhighway 9 route is vital.
- 4.2.3. Also, even if cycling were enabled in the Royal Parks 24 hours, given the traffic generation of the Royal Albert Hall and Imperial College any such superhighway could only turn away from the main road at the junction with Exhibition Road.
- 4.2.4. It is still vital that workable quietway arrangements are found, as these are key to creating the right density for a genuine grid of routes.
- 4.3. A superhighway along Holland Park Avenue
  - 4.3.1. Given the figures shown to be cycling along Holland Park Road consideration should be given to a superhighway alignment along this road and the extensions of it into West London.
- 4.4. A superhighway along the A4
  - 4.4.1. This would enable a longer route from perhaps the Hammersmith Broadway using existing roads that the Flyunder proposal implies are not as busy in Kensington and Chelsea as may have been believed. As much as 50% of traffic on the A4 in Hammersmith and Fulham starts in the borough it appears.
  - 4.4.2. There is potential to shift the mode of this traffic to bike and public transport to provide further space to enable cycling.
- 4.5. Continuations of existing cycle routes from Hammersmith and Fulham
  - 4.5.1. Given the failure to link to existing routes in Hammersmith and Fulham we feel it is vital the grid links to at least some of the existing routes in Hammersmith and Fulham. We think it best these links are in Kensington and Chelsea.
  - 4.5.2. With limited exceptions adding extra routes in Hammersmith and Fulham and abandoning existing routes to join to this grid means writing off existing investment by Hammersmith and Fulham
  - 4.5.3. Careful consideration must be given in combination to form a grid but we suggest the focus of such thinking should be from Earl's Court south into Fulham – focusing on Old Brompton Road, Fulham Road, King's Road and Lots Road. At least two of these will be necessary to make a successful link of the grid into Fulham.
- 5. Engagement from Kensington and Chelsea Council
  - 5.1. We are particularly concerned with the quality of the response by Kensington and Chelsea. It appears to be of a distinctly lower quality in many ways than that in any borough.
  - 5.2. Due to the alignment of boroughs policy on cycling in Kensington and Chelsea and to a lesser extent Westminster can shape more of the cycling environment of Hammersmith and Fulham residents than the actions of their own council. There are similar effects for residents further out on commuting and leisure journeys into the center of London.
  - 5.3. No event has been held to our knowledge to enable engagement between Kensington and Chelsea council and Londoners who wish to talk about

## Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014

cycling or street environments. This is unlike the actions of Westminster and City of London who are in other respects similar.

- 5.4. There is a clear political dismissal of many concepts before they can even be consulted on. In particular this approach has been taken with Superhighway 9. No formal announcements are made by either council or TfL but everyone has to assume and spread rumours. That's not a sensible way to engage with campaigners and risks making a tense relationship even more fractuous. Unless we can understand your decisions we are going to be even more critical and will have to assume the worst. RBKC need to be more open.
  - 5.5. The lack of an open approach means that cycle campaigners are dependent on shared correspondence and Freedom of Information requests to understand the decisions affecting their safety.
  - 5.6. Bikeminded RBKC have promoted the consultation but have neither been able to be critical or much informed on the issues. The council should not use this group to promote cycling changes in this way as it risks conflict. We would prefer to engage with councilors and officers directly as in other boroughs.
  - 5.7. The bi-borough nature of Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea on transport clearly changes things at the officer level but is showing no improvement in coordination in cycling policy. Within democratic legitimacy we would like to see some more imaginative joint thinking. We are neighbouring boroughs and need more cooperation. It is no good to see politicians promote superhighways in one borough at elections only for another to block them and not even announce it directly.
6. Engagement from TfL
- 6.1. The map of routes has been presented as a single PDF with almost no street names or indication of route names. We have detailed feedback on this:
    - 6.1.1. We can only feel sorry for the officers who have to combine the feedback you are getting from many parties into a sensible whole.
    - 6.1.2. As we have seen from dealing with point data for the Space For Cycling campaign in LCC it is vital to collect good point data and map it to actual roads. We are making efforts to this problem such as our map of the Space For Cycling asks (which clearly shows desire for protected space on main roads).  
<http://maps.hfcyclists.org.uk/legend.html>
    - 6.1.3. Any future consultation from TfL on changes to a grid of routes should be provided in a range of formats. If you are unable to provide a good tool to handle the consultation then a tender or joint working to provide a tool may help increase responses.
    - 6.1.4. We have ourselves made attempts to combine accident data, vehicle counts and the grid routes to help assess them.  
<http://maps.hfcyclists.org.uk/grid.html>

**Response to the Central London Grid Consultation – February 2014**

<http://files.hfcyclists.org.uk/Central%20London%20Grid%20With%20Counts%20and%20KSI.kmz> (kmz for Google Earth)

- 6.1.5. We have also used this to help engage the public by showing the combination of the grid with existing roads and cycle routes.  
<http://hfcyclists.org.uk/2014/01/central-london-cycle-grid/>  
<http://hfcyclists.org.uk/2014/02/london-cycle-grid-response-west/>
- 6.1.6. Such tools we have shared but we think TfL must be realistic and provide a more interactive and open approach to data which supports stronger consultation responses.
- 6.1.7. A map which interactively allowed respondents to indicate points and roads for interventions would surely make everyone's feedback more useful. This process will be repeated several times over as mini-hollands, other quietway alignments and more occur. Bare PDF is not sufficient.
- 6.1.8. Please think about ways you could share route alignments as shapefiles and KML. The cycling community may be able to help you with visualization if resources aren't available and then we can provide mapping and other visual responses to help you inform stakeholders.
- 6.2. A clear signal from TfL on the superhighways as a complete programme should have been given before the grid consultation
  - 6.2.1. We have no idea as to the exact fate of Superhighway 9 and are basing our feedback on omission, not announcements and certainly not any explanations.
  - 6.2.2. We are concerned that this may be to reduce negative publicity rather than to coordinate timings of consultations.

That concludes our lengthy feedback. We hope it is useful and that we can work together to improve cycling and deliver an enhanced coherent grid that enables all-ages and all-ability in cycling with the best quality available in the least time necessary.

Alex Ingram  
Coordinator  
hfcyclists