

Response to the Pedestrian and Cycle Review

Camden Cycling Campaign
January 2008

The existing set of cycleways has been in place since the 1970s. However, attitudes have changed since then – people are now very concerned about problems associated with climate change and childhood obesity – and the importance of sustainable transport is widely recognised.

Camden Cycling Campaign (CCC) therefore made a case¹ for the introduction of some new shared-use paths on the Heath to link existing cycleways and thus create a viable network for leisure cycling and for green travel for school children and for trips to destinations such as Kenwood, the swimming ponds and the tennis courts.

We have studied the Cycling Review² very carefully. Our response has the following sections:

1. General comments on the Cycling Review;
2. Summary of arguments for additional shared-use paths.
3. Specific reactions to the review of each of our proposed links;
4. Remedial measures for the existing cycleways;
5. Other aspects related to Cycling;
6. Conclusions;
7. List of documents submitted by CCC.

1. Comments on the Cycling Review

We commend the scientific method of analysis which uses:

- numerical scores from 4-5 (good) to 1-2 (poor) based on compliance to LCDS³ guidelines for shared-use paths. However, LCDS makes no mention of gradient;
- alphabetic scores from A-B (good) to C-D (poor) for Platoon Level of Service (LOS) which are calculated from the peak pedestrian flow and the minimum width of a particular path.

However we are disappointed that Atkins has made recommendations which appear to be based on assumptions which have not been validated. They rule out shared use of a path on the grounds that it might result in increased cycle flows on a non-designated path, or on a sometimes congested cycleway.

The Cycling Review has failed to include origin and destination studies, so it is not possible to tell whether a new link to an existing cycleway or to a non-designated path will in fact decrease or increase its cycle flow.

The Cycling Review has not considered whether better routes and better signage will reduce numbers on cycle free routes and add to the peace and safety that people feel when using cycle free paths

The Cycling Review judges the suitability of routes according to flows on the busiest days of the year rather than average days. In particular, it rejects shared use for a path that is very crowded for short periods in the afternoon on summer weekends, ignoring both its usefulness and the fact that people can cope with occasional overcrowding: if cyclists encounter a crowded path they will accept that pedestrians have priority; many would choose to avoid the path at busy times.

The Cycling Review suggests widening some of the existing paths to improve their LOS - why is this not considered for the proposed new links? A modest increase of about 1 metre in a natural material is all that would be needed – avoiding the addition of asphalted surfaces on the Heath.

On page 13 of our response to the Heath Management Plan Consultation, we say: “City of London could show that our suggestions are being considered seriously by commissioning a report that will specify the remedial measures needed to bring the paths up to a standard for shared use”. Unfortunately City of London has failed to do so in commissioning the Cycling Review. We agree with the identification in the

1 Response to the Heath Management Plan Consultation. CCC. April 2007.

2 Hampstead Heath Observation Studies. Atkins Intelligent Space. Dec 2007.

3 London Cycle Design Standards. Transport for London. May 2005. Section 4.5.

Review of certain difficult areas but we cannot accept that a whole route is downgraded because of problems at individual locations, which could be solved with minor interventions.

The Cycling Review pays no attention to the reasons we gave for additional links, particularly cycling to school, and unfortunately provides no information about children cycling. This should be taken into account in the next stage of the review process.

Opponents of increasing the number of shared-use paths on the Heath often argue about danger to children and disabled people. However, Sustrans 'Disabled people and the NCN, 1998' points out that all traffic free routes are of benefit to all – children and the disabled as well as fit people. They argue that new off-road paths enable new people to stop driving. This should apply to routes on the Heath.

2. Summary of arguments for additional shared-use paths.

Since the Cycling Review has not considered our arguments for the need for the proposed links, we summarise them here. In the remainder of this document, we will refer to the existing cycleways as A-D and our proposed new links as 1-7 as shown on the map in Executive Summary of the Cycling Review (p 14).

Safer routes to school: In Autumn 2006, CCC carried out a study⁴ of routes based on desire lines from home to 10 schools: three Camden primary and three private schools in Hampstead, three Camden secondary schools in Parliament Hill and one Camden primary at Gospel Oak. The most popular desire line to all of the Camden schools is from the south of the Heath. But taking all desire lines into account, our analysis provided very strong arguments for allowing cycling on Links 1, 2, 3 and 7 as well as a good case for cycling on Link 4. These routes also depend on the use of Cycleways A, B and C.

Green travel to destinations on the Heath: Camden's Green Transport Strategy is designed to reduce the dependency on motor vehicles, implying that people should be encouraged to come to the Heath destinations (including Kenwood, the Swimming Ponds, Tennis Courts, Athletics Track and Sports Ground) by cycle. Taken together, these destinations emphasise the importance of cycleways A, B and C and provide strong arguments for allowing cycling on Links 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7.

Leisure routes: We requested shared use on Link 5 so as to enable a fairly long leisure route between Cycleways C and D, taking in the new footway path on Spaniards Road, on which Camden Council has recently consulted.

3. Specific reactions to the review of each of our proposed links;

Link 1 (Lido path) and Link 7 (Savernake Bridge)

The Cycling Review (p 89) recommends that Links 1 and 7 should be considered for adoption as shared use routes. CCC's cycle counts⁵ in October 2006 indicated that a small number of children were already cycling to school via the Lido path. In July 2007, CCC visited William Ellis school to talk to students about routes to school. A small sample of six year 8 and 9 students gave us their routes: 5 used Cycleway A, of which 3 joined it via the Lido path and 2 via the Savernake Bridge. Two other secondary schools are nearby.

CCC urges the Heath Management to adopt these two Links for shared use so that:

- a safer route to school will be available to students who feel they should not use a non-designated path;
- by being able to enter the Heath via designated cycle routes, students will avoid establishing a habit of riding on non-designated routes.

The fact that these routes have received a high rating and that they form part of a safe route to school makes it absolutely imperative that they should be opened up to shared use.

Link 2 – on edge of Heath between Parliament Hill (road) and Cycleway C

The Cycling Review (p 89) states that although this path is mostly about 3.5 m wide, it is not suitable for shared use on account of the high pedestrian flows (Max 1079 persons per hour – PPH). On inspection of the pedestrian counts in Figures 160-185 of the Cycling Review, it can be seen that this maximum

4 The potential contribution of the Heath to safer routes to schools. CCC. Autumn 2006.

5 Appendix A of Response to the Heath Management Plan Consultation. CCC. October 2006.

occurred on 'Sunday' between 4 and 5 pm and that the next largest count was 470 PPH between 5 and 6 pm on 'Sunday'⁶. Weekday counts show a maximum of 114 PPH.

The Cycling Review (p 80) states that for a 3 m path, the LOS is A for up to 120 PPH and B for up to 710 PPH - but Link 2 is a 3.5 m path. Therefore following those criteria, Link 2 must be suitable for shared use except on summer weekend afternoons. According to the Cycling Review, Figures 201-210 (p 210 ff), 143 cyclists used this path on 'Sunday', 77 of them in the afternoon, demonstrating that users can cope with congestion.

The standard sign reminding cyclists of pedestrian priority and of the speed limit should be placed at the Parliament Hill entrance to the Heath as at the entry points for most of the other cycleways. On the Heath it will be clear to all users that pedestrians always have priority.

Possible beneficial effect of Link 2 on Cycleway C: Without Link 2, cyclists travelling between Cycleways A and C must make a long detour via the busy East Heath Road. The presence of link 2 will allow them to get from A to C, mostly on local roads and without using the narrow part of Cycleway C by the Hampstead Ponds causeway, reducing the pressure on this section.

Conclusion: Considering mainly its importance for routes to schools; but also that the the LOS will be A or B almost all the time and that Link 2 may relieve pressure on the narrow part of Cycleway C, we ask the Heath Management to adopt Link 2 for shared use, at least on weekdays. In addition, making Link 2 a cycleway will enable cyclists to enter the Heath from Parliament Hill (road) via a designated cycleway.

Link 3 – Lime Avenue

The Cycling Review (p 89) recommends that although this path would have LOS B, it is not suitable for shared use on the grounds that this would increase cycling on Path X1 (the continuation of Lime Avenue across the Heath to Millfield Lane).

CCC did not ask that Path X1 should be considered for shared use for reasons given in our Response to the Heath Management Plan Consultation (p 11), where we conclude that Cycleway B is a better alternative.

If Fixed Penalty Notice (FPNs) were to be instituted to deal with anti-social cyclists, then that would provide a way of dealing with the fear that if Link 3 was cyclable people would continue onto the rest of Lime Avenue.

Parents and children cycling to the Hampstead schools from Highgate will retrace the correct route on the return home. But for other cyclists without this knowledge, the route to Highgate via Cycleways C and B should be marked at the intersection of Lime Avenue and Cycleway C.

Scope of the study: The reviewers appear to have overstepped both their remit and their expertise. Their remit⁷ was to assess the suitability of proposed links for shared use, not to comment on potential use of non-designated routes. Using their reasoning, any route could be rejected because it intersects with a non-designated route. The reviewers have not claimed expertise in 'cyclist behaviour' and do not consider the fact that by increasing the number of designated routes there will be an increase in compliance with the rules, provided that routes are well linked and sign posted.

Beneficial effect of Link 3 on Cycleway C: The Cycling Review (p 85) states that Cycleway C is suitable for shared use except at the narrow section by the Hampstead Ponds causeway. Without being allowed to use Link 3, lawful cyclists travelling between Highgate and Hampstead are forced to choose between the northern and southern ends of Cycleway C. Thus, the availability of Link 3 should decrease cyclist numbers on Cycleway C to the north of its junction with link 3 and south of its junction with Cycleway B.

Conclusion: Taking into account mainly its importance for routes to schools; but also that the possible effects on Path X1 should be discounted and that the presence of Link 3 will alleviate pressure on the narrow part of Cycleway C, we urge the Heath Management to adopt Link 3 for shared use.

⁶ The hourly figures for 'Sunday' appear to be derived from two 5 minute observations each hour on three different Sundays (Cycling Review p 118)

⁷ Hampstead Heath Monitoring Strategy. May 2007. Intelligent Space Partnership.

Link 4 – extension of Millfield Lane

The Cycling Review (p89) states that this path is not suitable for shared use, because it is extremely narrow in parts. However, it considers Link 4 in two sections (p 86 Fig 100):

- the City of London section is given LOS B with shared use;
- the English Heritage section is given LOS D with shared use.

Jean Dollimore of CCC and Matt Winfield of Sustrans met with Paul Griffiths and Freddie Drake of English Heritage on 31st August 2007 to discuss cycle access to Kenwood by means of our proposed Link 4, whose route north of Millfield Gate is inside the Kenwood Estate. CCC and Sustrans made a case that more people should cycle to Kenwood. Paul Griffiths was sympathetic to the idea but said it may be difficult to change Kenwood bye-laws to allow cycling on this path. However, he promised to discuss the possibilities with his colleagues and get back to us eventually.

We request that the Heath Management should approve their section for shared use which would provide more than half of the route to Kenwood. Link 4 is also relevant to people travelling to the swimming ponds from the north – judging by the number of cycles parked, many people do cycle to the ponds. There is quite a lot of sense in having a partial route as it leaves only a short section to be walked.

Then if English Heritage agrees to adopt their part of the link for shared use, they may be able to obtain from TfL 'Cycling on Greenways' funding to carry out the work necessary to bring it up to a suitable standard.

Link 5 - across Sandy Heath

Since before the consultation in 2001, CCC has suggested that a long route over the Heath would be very beneficial to leisure cyclists. We proposed that Cycleway C could be extended along Spaniards Road and across Sandy Heath so as to join up with Cycleway D on Sandy Road.

Earlier this year, LB Camden obtained 'Cycling on Greenways' funding for the path on Spaniards Road and hopes to implement it during Spring 2008. With that accomplished, Link 5 will be the only missing section of our long route.

The Cycling Review (p 89, Fig 103) states that Link 5 is not suitable for shared because some sections are below 2m in width and it is also a horse path. The maximum pedestrian count is low (115 PPH); a horse count has not been supplied to us.

We request that the Heath Management should consider applying remedial measures to this path with a view to its being adopted for shared use. It seems quite likely that 'Cycling on Greenways' funding would be available to continue the work started by Camden Council.

Link 6 – cycleway C to Hampstead Heath station

The Cycling Review (p89, Fig 103) states that although Link 6 would have LOS B if adopted for shared use, it is not suitable for such use, because it is likely to increase the number of cyclists at the congested part of Cycleway C.

If someone arrives in South End Green with a bike, planning to ride on the Heath, it is highly unlikely that they will change their mind just because Link 6 is not designated for cycling. But it is very likely that they will decide to access Cycleway C, either via the Fairground site or by walking or cycling on Link 6.

This is confirmed by the cycle counts in the Cycling Review (pages 149-173) which show that a fair proportion (about 35%) of cyclists using the Hampstead ponds causeway on Cycleway C also used Link 6, rather than using the path through the Fairground site.

Nothing seems to be gained by refusing cycle access on Link 6 and much seems to be lost in terms of cycling on non-designated paths. In fact if cyclists enter the Heath via a well-signed cycleway, they may learn that the cycleways exist and try to follow them.

CCC therefore asks the Heath Management to adopt Link 6 for shared use.

4. Remedial measures for the existing cycleways

Narrow sections near to Hampstead Ponds Causeway on Cycleway C

The Cycling Review (p 85), in summarising the state of the existing cycleways says: "There are two sections which are currently below LOS B:

- the section to the west of the Hampstead Ponds Causeway at LOS C;
- the section which includes the causeway and path up the hill to the east at LOS D.

This is due to the very high levels of pedestrian flow here and the path being relatively narrow in places". The Review goes on to point out that the causeway itself is perfectly adequate for shared use even with very high pedestrian usage (CCC estimates it is 6-7 m wide).

Unfortunately the figures on pages 82 and 88 (by including the causeway in the same section as the path up the hill), give the misleading impression that the causeway is the problem.

Diverting cyclists on to other paths: Although the number of cyclists on the causeway is very small (Max 77 PPH) compared with the pedestrians, it would be worth considering the benefits of paths that divert cyclists on to other routes, in particular Links 2 and 3.

Improvements: The section of path above the Hampstead ponds is described in the Cycling Review (p 201) as having a width of 2.5 m higher up the hill and being bounded with shrubs and grass. CCC asks the Heath Management to consider widening this path to 3.5 or 4m throughout to bring it up to LOS B as suggested on p 89.

Cycleway B

This cycleway is a really vital link between Highgate and Hampstead and will be even more useful if Link 3 is adopted for shared use. We note that the Cycling Review (p 88) recommends widening this route, which would be welcome in bringing it up to the LCDS standard. However, the path provides few problems in practice because pedestrian flows are usually low and the maximum cycle flow is 25 PPH (Cycling Review (pages 150-1769)). In addition, we ask the Heath Management to consider improving a short section of the path close to its junction with Millfield Lane.

5. Other aspects related to cycling

We request that the Heath Management should address the following issues that we discussed in our Response to the Heath Management Plan Consultation:

- Cycle Parking;
- Signage of Cycle routes;
- Enforcement Issues.

In our note about strategic issues⁸ we requested the establishment of a forum for getting input from cyclists. We wrote as follows: "Even though a minority, cyclists are an interested user group whose numbers will increase. We ask that cyclists should be represented and that a direct line of communication between cycling groups and Heath management should be established. This will be a benefit not only to cyclists but to other Heath users. It might be achieved for example via the Sports Advisory forum or a similar separate forum."

Link across Hampstead Heath Extension

Barnet Cyclists have made a case for shared use on the path across Hampstead Heath extension from Hampstead Road to Wildwood Way. We support this request and hope that it will be reviewed as suggested at the Heath Seminar on 12th December 2007.

6. Conclusions

We have reiterated our arguments that our proposed links are needed to enable green travel to schools near the Heath and to destinations on the Heath as well as providing routes for leisure cycling. We have also shown that, given the will to implement them, every one of those links could be adopted.

It has been seven years since the last Cycling Review – a very long time to wait. For the health of the environment and of our children, we ask the Heath Management to agree to shared use on all of the proposed paths. Even if this has to be phased in over a few years, it would be preferable to waiting another seven years. Consider those parents and children who have demonstrated that they want to cycle to school in Hampstead and those other school students who currently do ride to school in Parliament Hill. Do they have to wait until they have left school to be given the right to cycle over the Heath?

⁸ Letter to Erica Sutton. CCC. 10 April 2007.

7. Documents submitted by CCC

The following documents were submitted to City of London as our response to the Heath Management Plan consultation.

Response to the Heath Management Plan Consultation (April 2007)

<http://www.camdencyclists.org.uk/info/tforum/Report> on Cycling on Hampstead Heath.pdf

The potential contribution of the Heath to safer routes to schools

http://www.camdencyclists.org.uk/info/tforum/Potential_of_Heath_for_safer_routes_to_schools.pdf

Note to Erica Sutton (10th April 2007) about strategic issues accompanying our response.

<http://www.camdencyclists.org.uk/camden/campaigns/hampsteadheath0506/CCC-response.pdf>

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