

Input from Camden Cycling Campaign on 'Shaping the Future of the Kings Cross Area'

LB Camden October 2010

Since cycling relates to 'Transport routes and linkages' in 'Crosscutting issues' we will deal first with that and then go into more detail under the separate areas. We use italics to indicate quotations from your document.

Crosscutting issues

Transport routes and linkages

We believe that all of the issues identified by LB Camden are important.

East west links – The choice of routes between Kings Cross and Euston is quite limited and alternatives to Euston Road tend to be disjointed and illegible. Studies have been undertaken in the past to look at potential options and a long-term strategy is now required, particularly given government proposals for a new high speed rail terminus at Euston.

This issue is crucial for cyclists who need routes parallel to Euston Road on both sides.

- We will give details of a route north of Euston Road in the Somers Town section.
- A link south of Euston Road between Grays Inn Road and Tottenham Court Road will benefit from the new two-way cycling scheme for Endsleigh Gardens; two-way cycling in Argyle Square, St Chads Street and in Gower Place are feasible. The proposed redevelopment of the Town Hall Annexe should provide an opportunity to make a link between Bidborough Street and Argyle Street. We propose a shared surface in Woborn Walk. The last link between Gower Street and Tottenham Court Road requires further study.

Regarding Euston station:

- The station and the railway land behind it form a serious barrier to east-west cycling; it is essential to ensure new east-west links across the Euston station site to link in with Drummond Street, Euston Street and Hampstead Road to the west and Drummond Crescent, Grafton Place, Doric Way and Phoenix Road to the east.
- Current access by taxis via Melton Street has severe side effects in the Gordon Square area where taxis on Tavistock Place turn right across the cycle tracks to use Gordon Street. It would be infinitely better for cyclists and pedestrians in the Bloomsbury area if taxis were to travel to/from Euston on one of the major roads (Woburn Place, Gower Street, Tottenham Court Road) rather than rat-running through Bloomsbury.

North-south links – There is also scope for improvements to north-south pedestrian and cycle routes through the area, where Euston Road can be difficult to cross and longer distance routes to nearby areas like Camden Town are not as clear as they could be.

This issue is very important. Camden has two north-south cycle routes (Link 27 and Link 28). The Agar-Camley link has provided a popular new route via Pancras Road; we discuss detailed issues relating to this route in the Camley Street and Station Hub sections below.

Euston Road – The road itself is a major traffic route and is often seen as a barrier, both physically and psychologically, between areas north and south. Crossings are often

difficult to negotiate and not in the most logical place but this can be hard to resolve given the levels of traffic and that TfL are responsible for the road and its crossings.

This issue is very important to cyclists - Euston Road is a barrier:

- on Link 28, the popular crossing from Ossulston Street to Mabledon Place has been waiting for safety improvements for several years;
- on Link 27, the crossing from Melton Street to Gordon Street also awaits safety improvements;
- see our remarks in the Station Hub section about the difficulty of crossing Euston Road from Kings Cross Station.

Regents Canal – The canal is an important link between the Kings Cross area and Camden Town as well as an asset for recreation and biodiversity. A clear vision for the future of the canal is required including how to maximise its potential as a pleasant alternative route between Kings Cross and Camden Town which can assist in taking pressure of the Underground between these areas

The Camden Green CRISP study carried out in Summer 2010 addresses the cycling aspects of these issues. The final report is now available from Brian Deegan. Additional ramped access points in Camley Street, Kentish Town Road and Oval Road are key to the integration of cycle routes on and off the towpath. Widening the towpath by extending the paving over all the available space is another key aspect.

Important issues that LB Camden has missed:

Cycle Hire Stations and Cycle Parking

Detailed planning should include:

- a consideration of locations for additional cycle hire stations throughout the area;
- allocating a small budget for additional cycle parking in each new street scheme and ensure proper provision of parking and storage in new housing and office developments.

20 mph limit for the entire study area

We would like to see the entire area become a single 20 mph zone. Somers Town already is one and the Kings Cross Development will also become one.

The reduction of speeds saves lives, enables us all to walk and cycle more and reduces noise, making the streets much more pleasant to use.

The Station Hub area

The issues identified by LB Camden include:

Major roads and pedestrian crossings: Navigating the area can be difficult for pedestrians and road crossings are often convoluted and not very user friendly.

This should also consider the following cycling issues:

- sort out the traffic and taxi chaos on the southern end of Pancras Road. Riding south you have to cross the double white lines into the oncoming traffic because the lane is blocked with waiting taxis, plus you run the gauntlet of taxis turning in the road to join the end of the queue. Going north is chaotic with double parking,

cars pulling out, doing U-turns and overtaking around the St Pancras drop off area;

- easy exit for cyclists and pedestrians from Kings Cross and St Pancras stations. If you come in on the mainline Kings Cross platforms there is no natural place to get on your bike or get off it when returning.

Visitor Information: The availability of information for visitors in the area is mixed, with mismatched signage inside and outside station.

This should also consider the following cycling issues:

- sort out departure and arrival routes for cyclists. Getting to Grays Inn Road either requires confident running of the traffic gauntlet and a long detour going round the one way system or knowing how to navigate the streets south of Kings Cross. Whichever direction you are going southwards, those streets are made more complicated by all the one way streets, cut throughs, the one way round Regent Square, the cobbled bits and the lack of sufficient signage of the route across across Euston Road to get to them.

Important issues that LB Camden has missed:

Safety for cyclists

- safety measures in Goodsway and Pancras Road under the CTRL rails: 20 mph limit throughout and improved lighting in the tunnel.

Cycle parking

- adequate cycle parking at St Pancras and Kings Cross stations and in the street between the two stations and in Midland Road.

Cycle Hire Stations

- tackle the demand round the stations. The two docking stations south of the Euston Road are insufficient. Space should be found for additional docking stations close to the source of the demand – the stations themselves. And the road junctions across Euston Road should be modified as necessary to allow for the flow of cyclists to and from the stations.

Kings Cross Development

We have been unable to relate any cycling issues to those listed by LB Camden.

However, we have identified the following:

- solution to temporary lack of westbound cycling along Goodsway;
- 20 mph speed limit throughout; full access for cycles to all areas even where motor traffic is banned; safe routes during construction, including major highway works;
- Cycle Parking/Storage: Exceed UDP cycle parking percentages; access to cycle parking at street level, no steps and preferably no ramps; both secure and short-stay facilities;
- Permeability: Safe crossing of York Way (better junctions); widening of tow path and new ramps to access it;
- safety measures in York Way at all junctions and on the road itself in many places.

Somers Town

The issues identified by LB Camden include:

Limited connections – Currently connections through area and with emerging opportunities nearby, particularly east-west routes for pedestrians, are limited. This is a barrier to physical and social integration with surrounding areas and limits movement between the Kings Cross and Euston transport hubs.

Any connectivity study should also consider the following cycling issues:

- ensure east-west cycling between Midland Rd and Ossulston St through the new development site north of the British Library;
- increase legibility and usability of the east west cycle route along Copenhagen Street, Goodsway, Pancras Road, Midland Road, Brill Place and Phoenix Road;
- complete the link from Eversholt Street through Barnby Street to Hampstead Road;
- ensure a link across the front of Euston station as a part of the new planning brief for the station.

Camley St area

The issues identified by LB Camden include:

Accessibility – the area is currently difficult to access from the rest of the Kings Cross area. Improved routes including connections with the Kings Cross Central site will need to be considered if land uses are planned to change and sites be redeveloped in the future.

Any accessibility study should also consider the following cycling issues:

- signage from Goodsway to the foot of the link to Agar Grove;
- ramp access to the canal towpath at the oblique bridge;
- improve the part of Camley Street north of the railway bridge where the Agar-Camley link arrives. In particular, keep the road clear across the entrance to the link;
- remove the cycle unfriendly barriers at the entrance to the cycle track and replace with a single post to prevent motor vehicle access; there is no need to have barriers at both ends.

Important issues that LB Camden has missed:

Safety for cyclists

- 20 mph speed limit in Camley Street (which also requires urgent resurfacing);
- since the partial closure of Goodsway, the taxis queue all the way up Pancras Road and across the traffic lights at the Camley St / Goodsway junction. Can this be stopped somehow?

Maiden Lane area

We have not identified any cycle specific issues.