

KNIGHTSBRIDGE

PARTNERSHIP

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on proposals to make permanent the temporary traffic and cycling arrangements on Park Lane.

Knightsbridge Partnership is the Business Improvement District representing around 300 businesses on the Brompton Road and Knightsbridge. We include much of the Knightsbridge International Centre and as such our district is of particular importance to the wider economy and global attraction of London.

We work in partnership with local amenity groups and together our goal is to improve constantly the district for those who live, work and visit here.

We understand and appreciate the Mayor's ambition to reduce private vehicle use in the centre of London to create a better environment and to reduce congestion. We are also aware of his desire to encourage increased cycling and public transport use as alternatives.

While the specific Park Lane proposals do not directly affect our district, they do have a significant immediate impact on Knightsbridge from Hyde Park Corner and subsequently on the Brompton Road.

We are concerned about any negative impact on our local roads, particularly in terms of congestion and air quality, of removing a significant element of the previously six lane Park Lane system. We fear that such a reduction has the potential to create bottle necks on Knightsbridge and Brompton Road which will cause local congestion and increase pollution in our district.

We have asked Kensington and Chelsea Council for data on the impact of the temporary changes on our district to inform our response. They have told us that they no longer have the ability to monitor congestion as a result of TfL funding cuts. We have received no data from Westminster City Council.

In the absence of this data we are unable to make an informed assessment of the impact of the temporary scheme in our district. This therefore leads us to question whether TfL can make a decision on the long-term nature of this scheme without such information.

If TfL has this information, then we would request that you share it with us and allow us the opportunity to comment based on this. If TfL does not have this information then we suggest that TfL undertake a study over a number of months to assess the wider impact on local traffic and air quality.

Only with this data on the wider local impact can TfL assess the full impact of the Park Lane scheme on traffic movement and air quality.

Recommendation One: Before deciding to make the Park Lane scheme permanent, TfL should publish or collect data on the impact on traffic movement and air quality in the wider local district as a result of the temporary scheme to enable a complete and informed assessment to be made.

We note that one of the key purposes of the scheme is to create a less intimidating environment for cyclists using Park Lane which in turn should encourage greater cycle use. This aligns with the objectives of the Mayor's wider cycling strategy for London.

KNIGHTS BRIDGE

PARTNERSHIP

While the temporary scheme does achieve this, it does so at the expense of the loss of one carriageway on Park Lane. When this is combined with the other elements of the scheme, this produces a significant reduction of road space, leading to the concerns that we have outlined above.

We believe that the objective of creating a less intimidating environment for cyclists could be better achieved by creating a dedicated cycle way within Hyde Park. Arguably there is far greater opportunity to create a far less intimidating environment by moving the cycle lanes off Park Lane altogether and integrating them into the Hyde Park.

We agree that simply increasing cycle use in Hyde Park without enhancing cycle lane provision would lead to more confrontation between cyclists and other park users. A dedicated and managed cycle way would therefore be required as part of the wider scheme.

Any scheme that includes increased cycling facilities in Hyde Park must take into account the need to provide lighting so that users, particularly women, feel secure cycling through the park at night.

We appreciate that obtaining permission for such a scheme from The Royal Parks is not easy and that no agreement has been reached over the past two years. But we would urge the two authorities to continue exploring this option as a better solution for Londoners.

We believe that Hyde Park is constantly evolving, and TfL should continue to work with The Royal Parks to persuade them to play a part in the growing provision of more healthy travel facilities.

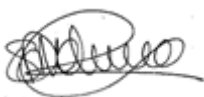
We believe that TfL should not make the current arrangements permanent until an agreement has been reached to move the cycle lanes into Hyde Park.

If this is not achievable, then we suggest that TfL looks at redesigning the cycle lane on Park Lane so that it can be incorporated without the loss of one traffic lane.

Recommendation Two: TfL should not make the Park Lane Scheme permanent until an agreement is reached with The Royal Parks to move the cycle lanes from Park Lane onto a newly created route in Hyde Park. If no agreement is reached then the Park Lane scheme should be redesigned to include the cycle lanes without the loss of a traffic lane.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these points with you in the hope that solutions can be found that meet the Mayor's objectives for Park Lane without adversely affecting London's strategically important district of Knightsbridge and Brompton Road.

Yours sincerely,



Steven Medway

Chief Executive