

CAMCYCLE



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Women and Equalities Committee
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17th October 2016

Disability and the built environment inquiry

Dear Women and Equalities Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 'Disability and the built environment inquiry'.

Camcycle works for more, better and safer cycling in and around Cambridge. We represent the interest of over 1,200 members and many others who cycle within Cambridge and nearby villages.

Cambridge has the highest levels of cycling in England and Wales, but also has a higher proportion of women and older people cycling. Research from Dr Rachel Aldred of the University of Westminster shows that over 25% of commuters who have a disability cycle to work in Cambridge¹.

We are only too aware how a built environment that caters for safe cycling encourages participation from a wider demographic, including from those who are not allowed or cannot afford to drive, or who have difficulty walking. Cycling expands the area people can travel under their own power, enabling exercise to be built into daily routines and promoting health for vulnerable groups. Good, properly-built cycling infrastructure helps promote independent living for people with disabilities who walk, cycle, or use an electric-powered mobility aid.

Protected Cycle Lanes

The main requirement to enable cycling for a wider demographic is protected cycle lanes and junctions, separated from both pedestrians and motor vehicles.

In contrast, on-road cycle lanes discourage all but the fastest and bravest from cycling, removing options from those who would like to cycle, but do not want to cycle in traffic. Countries where many more people across the population cycle provide protected cycle lanes, and at junctions separate cycling movements from motor vehicle ones.

Cycling should be separated from walking: pedestrians do not like sharing with people cycling, any more than people cycling want to use the road. Vulnerable pedestrians, such as those who are slower or less stable or have sight impairments, are likely to be particularly alarmed to have people cycling next to them, and are less likely to walk in such environments. Shared-use paths often give up at junctions, and do not provide priority for crossing minor side roads, as someone cycling on the road would have.

Shared-space, which we take to mean spaces without demarcations between walking, cycling and motor vehicles, are unsuitable for all but the quietest roads. Cul-de-sacs and other routes with no through motor traffic can be quiet enough for people to feel confident cycling with motor vehicles, but as soon as the level of traffic is increased, people cycling must feel protected from traffic, or they

will not cycle. Poynton, which introduced shared space on major through-routes, has lower-than-average levels of walking and cycling even in the UK context, which shared space has done nothing to alleviate, or to widen participation.

We have produced a document, 'Making Space For Cycling' <http://www.makingspaceforcycling.org/> which outlines road treatments for the kind of cycle infrastructure which will give many more people the option to cycle.

Providing for all kinds of cycle

Although some people with mobility impairment can use a standard or minimally-adapted bicycle, for others a tricycle, handcycle, tandem or recumbent cycle is necessary to be able to cycle. It is essential that facilities providing for cycling cater for all types of cycle, or they risk preventing cycling by those groups with fewer options. For example

- Chicanes or narrowly-spaced bollards on cycle routes will prevent use by non-standard cycles used as mobility aids
- Requirements to dismount make cycling very much harder for those who struggle to walk
- Sharp turns should be avoided: tricycles are at risk of tipping over if required to make sudden turns, while longer bicycles have a greater turning circle
- Transition kerbs must be dropped or flush, and should be safe to approach at a shallow angle

E-Bike Support

The market for electric-assisted cycles in other parts of Europe has greatly expanded, enabling people to cycle later in life, and to cycle further and in hillier environments. Where people are used to cycling in a safe environment, they often like to continue cycling as they become less physically able, maintaining independence while still getting regular moderate exercise. The government is working on measures to subsidise and support electric cars, motorbikes and scootersⁱⁱ, while ignoring electric-assist cycles. It is a huge oversight of the government to support use of some electric vehicles on emissions grounds, while excluding from consideration those vehicles which have no emissions and also enable riders to maintain some level of physical activity.

Mobility scooters and cycle-only lanes legislation

Class 3 invalid carriages are not permitted to use cycle-only lanes. This is not the case in the Netherlands, where it is common to see people on mobility scooters using cycle paths alongside people cycling. The top speed of 8mph of a class 3 invalid carriage is incompatible with pedestrian spaces, but far too slow to be comfortable and safe using the road: using cycle infrastructure would enable faster journeys for those using mobility scooters. An environment designed properly for cycling, with wide lanes, smooth surfaces and transitions with dropped and flush kerbs, is ideal for use by mobility scooters as well.

London-based charity Wheels for Wellbeing (<http://www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/>) promotes cycling for people with disabilities, and has resources for further information on how to enable cycling for everyone.

Cycling is part of the solution to problems of congestion, air quality, health and transport independence, but only if we build an environment for cycling which is comprehensive, inclusive and makes people feel safe. The alternative is the situation much of England and Wales finds itself in today, where, as a result of poor infrastructure, cycling is largely excluded as an option from

everyone except the fast and fit.

Your sincerely,
On behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign

Hester Wells
Vice-Chair Camcycle

ⁱ <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01441647.2015.1014451>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/35-million-boost-for-ultra-low-emission-vehicles>