

## **Wanstead Park Online Cycling Consultation**

### **Background**

The Epping Forest and Commons Committee approved the Epping Forest Cycling Management Strategy at its meeting in March 2021. The strategy proposed a review of cycling in Wanstead Park with an aim to increase permissive cycle access.

You can see the cycling management strategy here:

<https://bit.ly/EFCyclingStrategy2021>

Currently there is one designated cycle path through the Park and one permissive route for cyclists. The rest of the Park is subject to a byelaw which prohibits cycling. Feedback from groups has been that this current mix is confusing for Park users.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Is cycling allowed in Wanstead Park?**

Cycling became a byelaw offense in Wanstead Park in the 1930's. This was in response to illegal cycle race events which were being organised in the Park and causing upset to other visitors. However, the ban was only applied to the 'enclosed' Park, when daily opening and closing of the Park was the norm. This has resulted in a position where cycling is permitted in the western area of Wanstead Park, but not in the eastern area because different byelaws apply.

There is a designated cycle path running from Warren Road (north) between Shoulder of Mutton Pond and Heronry Pond to Northumberland Avenue / Park Road junction. There is also a permissive cycle route linking the above designated path to Wanstead Park Avenue following an established desire line.

The attached map shows byelaw areas in Wanstead Park and allowed cycle routes **here**. The Park is split in two, with the western area (blue shaded on map) covered by Epping Forest land byelaws. The eastern area (orange shaded on map) is covered by Wanstead Park byelaws. The designated cycle path (blue dashed line) and the permissive cycle path (orange dashed line) are also shown.

#### **Why propose change to cycling in Wanstead Park?**

Over the past year during the pandemic – there has been an increase in the number of people visiting and cycling the Forest. In a survey (2014) it was estimated that as many as 10% of visitors to Epping Forest do so to cycle.

Since the Coronavirus pandemic, the Forest has seen a large increase in visitors. Recent snapshot visitor surveys put the increase of visitors at 350%. These visitors enjoy many different pastimes and cycling, in its various disciplines, is proving increasingly popular, growing from 10% in 2014, it now accounts for 12-18% (2020) of Forest visits.

Local interest groups are keen to see increased cycle access and the Epping Forest Cycling Management Strategy supports a move towards active means of local travel and allowing greater freedom to cycle in the Park would support this.

The current position with the varying different byelaws and cycle routes causes confusion for Park users and can result in user conflict.

### **What are the options?**

These options are:

**Option 1:** Do nothing: Leave the situation with cycling as it is, with cycling permitted in the Epping Forest part of Wanstead Park, but not permitted in the eastern area covered by Wanstead Park byelaws. The designated cycle route will remain.

Implications:

- ✓ Easiest option
- ✓ No byelaw implications
- ✗ Does not provide clarity of use
- ✗ Continued conflict with new visitors, who may then have a poor visitor experience
- ✗ Fails to address existing use, growth of cycling and byelaw violations

**Option 2:** Stop cycling – ban it in the Park altogether (except for the Warren Road to Northumberland Road permanent route. The permissive route would be withdrawn.

Implications:

- ✓ Provides clarity of use, although designated cycle path could still cause confusion for some
- ✓ Removes completely risk of pedestrian/cyclist collisions
- ✗ Restricts some user groups – in particular, family recreational cycling in a safe environment
- ✗ Does not support modal shift towards more sustainable, active travel for local journeys.
- ✗ Legal exclusion of cycling on Forest Land may impact on a wider area

**Option 3:** Allow cycling on paths throughout the whole Park (both western Epping Forest land and eastern Wanstead Park bye law area). This permissive cycling will be on the basis that pedestrians always have priority in Wanstead Park, and cyclist must follow the Epping Forest cycling code of conduct.

Implications:

- ✓ Provides clarity of use
- ✓ Supports modal shift towards more sustainable, active travel for local journeys.
- ✓ Increases access to visit the Park by bicycle
- ✓ Implemented via permission, can easily be revoked
- ✗ May increase user conflict if cycling code of conduct is not observed
- ✗ May impact on ecology or heritage features if permission is abused

### **When might changes be made?**

Subject to the outcome of the public consultation, and Committee approval, we anticipate changes will be implemented by Autumn 2021.

Any changes will be reviewed 18 months after implementation to analyse the impact and any issues.

### **Will there be more signage?**

This depends on the outcome of the consultation. If the majority want cycling across all the Park, then this will reduce the need for signage – as there will be one rule for cycling across the whole Park. The cycling code of conduct will also be displayed in the Park.

### **Will cycle racks be installed?**

We would like to see more cycle racks installed across the Forest, including Wanstead Park. In the first instance, we will work with local interest groups to raise funding for these but in time revenue from recently approved car Park charges will help to fund this work.

### **How will we minimise conflict between cyclists, other Park users and pedestrians?**

We encourage Park and Forest visitors to be courteous and have respect for one another. The Epping Forest Cycling Code of Conduct (view [here](#)) outlines that cyclists must give priority to pedestrians when visiting the Forest.

### **How will we ensure that the heritage assets of Wanstead Park are protected?**

Option 3 outlines that permissive cycling in Wanstead Park will be limited to paths only. This reflects most of the cycling which currently occurs. Protection of heritage assets is a priority, and we will monitor the impact of changes for any signs of erosion or damage to non-path areas. In line with the Cycling Management Strategy, we can restrict access to areas in the event that parts of the Park are suffering damage due to cycling.

### **What happens when the consultation closes?**

We are running a three-week online consultation exercise with survey questionnaire; this runs from 4.00pm Friday 16 April 2021 – closes at 9.00am Mon 10 May 2021.

The results of the consultation will be presented to the Epping Forest Consultative Committee and following their comments, to Epping Forest and Commons Committee in mid-Summer for a decision.

### **Further information**

More information can be found on this page <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/epping-forest/activities-in-epping-forest/cycling-in-epping-forest>