Board meeting 07.05.13



Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item: 8

LTW434

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Roads Task Force update

1 Purpose of report

1.1. To inform members of the progress with the Mayor of London's Roads Task Force.

2 Recommendation

2.1. This report is for information only.

3 Background

- 3.1. In July 2012, the Mayor of London sought responses to a consultation on various issues related to roads. The scope of the consultation is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.2. London TravelWatch's response to the consultation is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.3. A link to Transport for London's document summarising other consultation responses can be found here: RTF consultation report final draft Dec2012.pdf

4 Current position

- 4.1. At the meeting of the Board on 7 May 2013, members will hear a presentation from Mike Keegan, Transport Strategy Manager at Transport for London, about the current thinking of the Roads Task Force. In addition, the Policy Officer will update members about the Roads Task Force stakeholder event due to take place on 2 May 2013.
- 4.2. The former Deputy Chair of London TravelWatch, David Leibling, who has been acting as a link between London TravelWatch and the Task Force, will be available to give information from the perspective of a participant.
- 4.3. The Roads Task Force is due to report in May/June, with TfL expected to respond to the report shortly thereafter.

5 Equalities and inclusion implications

5.1. No implications of this nature arise directly from this report.

6 Legal powers

6.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).

7 Financial implications

7.1. No implications of this nature arise directly from this report.

Appendix 1: Scope of consultation in support of the Roads Task Force

Letter from Isabel Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport.

Dear Colleague

Mayor of London's Roads Task Force

I am writing to ask you whether you would be prepared to help shape the future of London's road network.

Roads are vital to the Capital's economy and to movement around the city; roughly 80% of all passenger trips and many freight trips in London are made by road. London's roads are also important public spaces and are the location for economic and social activity.

However, London's roads face a number of challenges in the short, medium and long term:

- Conflicts between competing uses and users
- Need for significant investment in London's road asset, to ensure they are fit for a 21st century city
- Growth in London's population and employment will add to existing pressures on the road network.
- Rising expectations of quality of public space
- Imperative to continue improving safety on London's roads

To meet these challenges, London needs a strategy for the development, design and management of its road network, building on the work of the Mayor's Transport Strategy. This would complement Transport for London's (TfL) strategy for rail based modes and would form an important part of TfL's contribution to the Mayor's 2020 vision for the capital, to be produced over the course of this year.

We need to develop a road system fit for the 21st century that supports London's sustainable social and economic growth and all the Mayor's strategies: one which is more reliable, no more congested than it is today (and ideally less congested), safer, cleaner, healthier, better serves local communities, and contributes positively to the urban realm.

A re-invigorated, integrated approach is needed to achieve this vision. The Mayor has asked for this vision to be developed by a Roads Task Force.

I am seeking your views to help inform the work of the Task Force, and would value your contribution. Your response will be collated with those of others and submitted to the Task Force with a view to being discussed at a stakeholder event later this year. In particular I would like to understand your views on the following:

1. Challenges - What are the main challenges facing London's roads, over the short medium and long term?

- 2. Approach How should the competing demands on road space be defined and managed? For example the balance between the competing demands of different road users or between the role of London's roads as corridors for the movement of goods and people and their role as public spaces.
- 3. Solutions What are the range of policy and investment options available to meet the short, medium and long-term challenges facing London's road network and how might these vary across London?
- 4. Delivery Which of these options would you prioritise given the inevitable constraints in terms of physical space, funding and delivery capacity?
- 5. Any other issues you might want to raise.

Given the likely level of interest in the work of the Task Force, please can I request that you limit any written submission to no more than 10 sides of A4.

Responses should be provided by Friday 14th September. Please enter your response directly on the TfL consultation website: https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/taskforce.

Alternatively, you can email it to: RoadsTaskForce@tfl.gov.uk or post it to:

Roads Task Force secretariat 10th Floor, Windsor House 42-50 Victoria Street London SW1H 0TL I look forward to hearing your views on this vitally important topic.

Yours sincerely,

Isabel Dedring
Deputy Mayor for Transport

Appendix 2: London TravelWatch response to Roads Task Force consultation		



Submission to the Roads Task Force

September 2012









London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience for all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.

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Submission to the Roads task Force



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1. Introduction

London TravelWatch is the statutory watchdog representing all transport users in London.

In its contribution to the recent mayoral election, 10 policies to get Londoners moving we called for "A road network which is fit for purpose" and noted "Congestion on London's roads affects all travellers and is forecast to worsen as the population grows and economic activity increases, particularly in outer and east London. London TravelWatch wants to see a coherent plan to address these pressures"

London TravelWatch therefore welcomes the mayor's ambition for a road system for the 21st century and the formation of a Roads Task Force. We are pleased to be invited to contribute to its work.

London TravelWatch has established policy regarding the use and management of the road network in London. These policies have been developed by the Board over many years from consideration of research that we have undertaken ourselves¹, research undertaken by others and presented to members, dialogue with the London boroughs and other statutory bodies in various fora, engagement with a cross section of users and their representatives (for example the RNIB, Age Concern and Transport for All) and, of course, the appeals case work that London TravelWatch handles on a daily basis.

London TravelWatch members regularly hear from, and debate traffic and transport issues with TfL and other statutory organisations, such as the City of London Police who have innovated on roads enforcement through their Operation *Atrium*. London TravelWatch holds informal engagement sessions directly with the public in various town centres and transport interchanges. London TravelWatch has sat on the Metropolitan Police's Strategic Traffic Forum and now sits on TfL's Cycle Safety Working Group (CSWG) and the London Transport Community Safety Partnership (LTCSP). We are a member of the parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport Safety (PACTS).

This submission is based on previous papers prepared for members, particularly i) Making the most of London's Roads, July 2003, ii) the Board's response to the Draft Mayor's Transport Strategy, iii) its submission to the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee inquiry into Effective road and traffic management, January 2011, research reports Bus Passengers' priorities for improvement, May 2010 and 'Getting to the Station' 2004.

¹ Our research



An accessible public realm is assumed in all of the work of London TravelWatch.



2. Identifying the problems

Congestion

Except in the congestion charging zone, much of inner London's traffic is stationary (or at best crawling) at busy times. There are also congestion hot spots in outer London town centres, along the busy radial "high road" corridors, and on some orbital routes. It is forecast² that this congestion will worsen, particularly in outer and east London.

The costs of such congestion fall on the whole community. The 2011 Londoner survey³ reported that reducing traffic congestion was the second most important aspect of transport in London in need of improvement. Our research⁴ into the priority of bus passengers found that, despite a decade of improvement in bus service performance reliability remains the top priority. The unreliability of bus services is generally attributed to traffic conditions.

There has been much recent focus on this issue. In 2004 the Government implemented a Traffic Management Act. In 2008 the Mayor of London initiated a series of actions under the policy of 'Smoothing the Traffic'. Despite many positive initiatives to manage London's roads TfL's measure of congestion 'Journey Time Reliability' is, at best remaining constant⁵ despite declining traffic volumes across London. TfL's Business Plan targets suggest little prospect of improvement.

Bus service reliability and consistency of journey time.

In 2010 we conducted research into bus passengers priorities for improvement. Passengers told us that the top priority for improvement should be the reliability of the service such that more buses are on time or within 5 minutes of the when they are scheduled to arrive. In addition, amongst young people under 25, and those over 60 it was felt that buses must have a consistent and predictable journey time. Buses account for nearly 7million passengers each day in London (more than all other public transport modes combined). As buses use the road network, any changes to the road network need to fully take into account the needs of buses and bus users. In addition, the bus network has the potential to make a significant contribution to reducing traffic congestion, by providing an alternative means of travel to the private car.

² Mayor's Transport Strategy

http://www.london.gov.uk/get-involved/consultations/annual-london-survey/2011

⁴ Bus passengers priorities

⁵ Our Tfl performance reports



However, buses face significant difficulties in achieving their potential without greater priority on the road network. Items that can improve bus service reliability and journey time consistency include:- accessible bus stops, the replacement of bus lay-by's with bus boarders, greater enforcement of traffic regulations and giving greater priority at traffic lights.

Kerb space conflict

London's main roads will never have enough kerb space to satisfy all the competing interests: bus stops, taxi ranking, loading/unloading, and parking. Parking space is in particularly short supply, and parking stress has long ceased to be a purely inner London problem. Commuter parking around stations is a particular source of conflict. In 2004, London TravelWatch published 'Getting to the Station' which examined the issues around station access, in particular car parking. The recommendations of this report give guidance on ways to reduce the impact of commuter parking and also how to encourage the use of rail for a greater proportion of journey length.

Obstructive parking

The conflict over kerb space is one of the reasons why parking regulations are ignored so often, causing delays to traffic. Obstruction of bus stops is particularly problematic, as it prevents buses from pulling up close to the kerb and thereby neutralises the features provided at them to assist boarding and alighting by users with impaired mobility. All bus users' mobility is impaired if bus stops are obstructed with the result that bus journey times become less reliable and less consistent. In the last decade TfL and the London Borough's have improved the effectiveness of enforcement utilising new powers and techniques. This is to be welcomed, though there are siren voices that continue to urge less enforcement.

Roads policing

We note that in recent years there has been a steady decline in the amount of police time and resources devoted to roads policing. We know that the numbers of vehicles on the road that are uninsured, untaxed and without the relevant safety certification has increased significantly. The presence of these vehicles (and drivers) considerably increases the risks and costs to other road users through increased insurance premiums for example. We would like to see an increased emphasis on roads policing.



Street works, road condition planned and unplanned events

Further obstructions are caused by the numerous utility companies, which have, until recently enjoyed a largely unfettered right to open holes in roads as they please. There seems too little co-ordination, so that roads may be dug up twice or more in quick succession or several sets of works may affect the same area simultaneously. However, new powers and recent focus on this issue appears to be reaping positive results⁶.

Poor road and pavement condition has a significant impact on all users of the road network: potholes ,rutting and protruding ironworks are especially dangerous for cyclists, and can cause significant damage to road vehicles: cracked and uneven pavements are a trip hazard for pedestrians. Preventative maintenance should therefore be a priority.

Planned and unplanned events are often unavoidable, but can be managed. Again, recent focus on this aspect of the management of London's roads appears to be yielding positive results⁷

Connectivity between London and its' surrounding area

The road network connects London to the surrounding area. Road policy in London has an effect on adjacent areas, and vice versa. Poor public transport connectivity outside of London for example, can lead to significant demand in road usage within and through London. Co-ordination of transport policies between London and its surrounding areas therefore needs to be recognised. e,g. tolling policies on the Dartford river crossings can have a significant impact on the pattern of road demand within Greater London.

⁶ See our performance reports

⁷ See our performance reports



3. Managing roadspace

The capacity of London's roads is likely to remain similar to that which it is today, though there may well be some schemes to increase or decrease capacity at a small number of locations across London. Where increases are proposed caution is advised that measures should be taken to 'lock-in' the benefits as it is well understood⁸ that additional traffic can be induced by additional capacity. Similarly, soft measures to change behaviour and adopt more space efficient modes, whilst welcome can also simply free up road space for others. Again researchers advise that⁹ there needs to be measures to 'lock-in' any gains from travel behaviour change.

Clear priority must be given to those classes of traffic whose presence is most beneficial to the community at large – the most space efficient people movers. The traffic regulations required for this purpose must be generally respected and systematically enforced. Political leadership is needed in making the difficult but inescapable decisions about who should be the winners in this process, and who must be the losers.



⁸ SCTRA etc

⁹ Sloman et al



[Taken from a presentation to London TravelWatch in October 2008 by TfL's Head of Traffic Manager's Office. This demonstrates the efficiency of buses as people movers compares to other modes]

Main roads are important for the distribution of goods as well as the movement of people. Roadspace must be managed in such a way as to optimise their net mobility (or minimise net delay). But the wider aim of securing modal shifts should provide opportunities to reallocate it in ways which favour the more space efficient modes.

Bus service performance has improved remarkably over the last decade. However, our research looking at bus users' priorities tells us that passengers still regard improvement in performance as a priority. It is essential to create a climate of opinion in which abuse of bus lanes, bus stops and other bus priority measures becomes socially unacceptable and a source of shame to anyone tempted to commit it. A determined effort is required, London-wide, to free up the roads – particularly bus routes – from parked obstructions and to ensure that the space thus created is not invaded by less-essential categories of traffic. This requires the active support of all parties involved in providing or enforcing traffic management: TfL, the boroughs and the police. We welcome the joint initiative of TfL and the Metropolitan Police in creating a new operational command unit to focus on this need, as well as tackling vehicle crime and taxi touting.

Charging for congestion

There is no doubt that congestion charging has been a success. All of the monitoring before and after implementation has demonstrated positive benefits for bus services and a rapid increase in cycling ¹⁰levels. Essential car use and freight distribution has benefited from less congested streets and there have been opportunities to reallocate road space to other uses.

London TravelWatch has consistently supported congestion charging in central London. We were disappointed that the Western extension was removed and wanted to see the development of road user charging on a zonal basis with much more sophistication both technically and in terms of pricing and operational hours.

We would counsel caution, however, in assuming that the apparent success of the central London experiment could readily be extrapolated to other parts of the capital, except in special cases such as Heathrow. The wider implementation of road user charging must be accompanied by an improvement to public transport services and the encouragement of more cycling and walking.

¹⁰ Various TfL monitoring and DfT cycling statistics.



4. The bus network

As noted above, London TravelWatch's research in 2010 on bus passenger priorities for improvement showed that improving bus reliability and journey time consistency were the areas in which bus passengers felt that significant progress needed to be achieved.

Previously London TravelWatch was a partner in the London Bus Initiative (LBI). The recognition that, in terms of passenger numbers, geographical coverage and accessibility the bus plays a central role in London's passenger transport provision has been the most welcome improvement of the last decade. The initiative included measures such as:

- (a) Providing additional bus lanes, bus advance areas and other priority measures through known pinch points on the network;
- (b) Constructing contra-flow bus lanes on one-way streets to eliminate costly and circuitous diversions;
- (c) Installing selective detection equipment more widely, to permit bus activation of all traffic lights;
- (d) Bus stop clearways and, where suitable, pavement "boarders" to ensure that buses have unobstructed access to stops and can always pull close to the kerb; and
- (e) A determined assault on obstructive parking.

Crucially, the LBI operates on a whole-route basis, which is more likely to offer a stepchange in speed and reliability than the previous more ad hoc approach (which tended to prioritise sites which were easiest to tackle, rather than those where the impact would be greatest).

London TravelWatch regrets that further LBI type initiatives, in development by TfL, under the banner of 3G were dropped in 2008/09. The most significant initiative we would want to see the Roads Task Force promote is a further round of whole route bus priority. Bus services are a strategic London asset and there development should be planned on a London wide basis rather than relying on borough council's to promote individual schemes, or worse still take out bus priority at will for local reasons.



5. Car and vehicle parking

The ability ,ease and cost of parking at the beginning and end of a journey is a key determinant in the decision making process by users as to whether or not they should use a car as against other means of making the journey or making it all. The provision or not of parking therefore is a key driver of demand on the road network.

The availability of private non-residential (PNR) parking (e.g. at workplaces, shops and leisure facilities) is a key factor promoting car travel. We are keen that the boroughs and TfL should be committed to reducing it, by negotiation. It can be done, particularly if it is clearly seen to be linked to public transport improvements: for example, IKEA in Croydon now offers fewer parking spaces because it is served by Tramlink. Boroughs should also be reducing the volume of public off-street parking and, as major employers themselves, setting an example by reducing their own staff parking levels.

Given the growing population pressure in London, the scarcity of land, and the amount of space which parking occupies, proposals for car-free housing development should be encouraged. Demand for this is not restricted to either end of the housing market. Lack of car ownership does not preclude car use, when appropriate. Hire cars and car clubs offer an alternative, with the added advantage of not occupying scarce space with under-used vehicles. Car clubs cars are now widely available across inner London provided by private sector companies.

Of course, the "stick" of parking reduction has to be accompanied by the "carrot" of more and better public transport, if it is to be made acceptable to those whose travel behaviour it is intended to influence. In particular, access to town centres and orbital journeys in outer London must be made easier. But it is not tenable to argue that traffic/parking restraint can only follow such improvements, because in the short term only the bus network offers the means to achieve them, and this will only be possible if the necessary roadspace is first vacated.

Reducing parking is not just a tool for removing obstructions but also for promoting traffic restraint. It should be an explicit aim (with targets) in boroughs' plans, in order to encourage a shift to public transport, cycling and walking – particularly in town centres. Buses should be given priority for kerb space over private parking, e.g. for access to local shops.

Parking at rail stations

Our 2004 report 'Getting to the station' recommended the adoption of travel plans at rail stations. Subsequent adoption of this by rail operators and authorities has led to modal shift towards buses, cycling and walking as a means of access to the rail network. Adoption of such an approach by the Mayor to the stations that TfL either operate



directly or have influence over could have a significant positive effect on road demand. The Mayor should also examine how the pricing structure of London Underground operated car parks could be used to influence demand on the road network.

Parking in town centres

It is important that London's many diverse town and district centres remain viable, especially for local residents. This reduces the need to travel greater distances or use cars when it would be possible to walk to a local centre for shopping and services. London TravelWatch is aware of the frequent calls made for free or cheap parking to be provided in these centres. The rationale is that high cost of, or difficulty in, parking (e.g. as a result of bus priorities) will drive trade away – perhaps with people making longer car journeys to the next centre where parking is cheaper or more plentiful, or to parking-friendly out-of-centre developments. The smaller parades in particular are seen as vulnerable, because they lack the pulling-power of the major suburban centres such as Kingston, Harrow and Ilford. Traders often blame parking policies for a lack of demand for their products. However, this is questionable where products are of sufficient value and quality that customers will purchase them irrespective of whether parking is good or bad.

Research – e.g. that undertaken on the Red Routes¹¹ – has shown that the turnover of small retailers depends far more on pedestrians and bus users, and far less on car users, than many retailers imagine. We believe that abundant cheap parking cannot be a long-term solution to out-of-town competition. Creating a high quality, unpolluted environment that is friendly for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users is the best way to attract shoppers. Public transport improvements must be accompanied by the imaginative re-use of space liberated from parking in ways that will enhance the attractiveness of the area.

Servicing and deliveries

Road freight transport serves two main functions, long-distance haulage and local distribution, each presenting its own problems and solutions. London TravelWatch believes that there should be:

- (a) A presumption that on-street loading/unloading is confined to side road returns or off-peak times (these times may vary to reflect local conditions), and that it is not permitted on street where rear servicing exists;
- (b) Development of rear servicing facilities where these are absent or inadequate; and
- (c) Continuing effective arrangements for enforcement.

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¹¹ Various Tfl studies



More fundamentally, an integrated distribution strategy for London is needed. The notion that delivery vehicles – with or without flashing indicators - have the freedom of the kerbside at any time of day is simply not acceptable. But the necessary corollary of this is an acceptance that planning policies aimed at protecting the amenity of residents in shopping areas cannot unduly restrict the scope for making deliveries at quieter times of the day or week.

The Mayor should consider whether the experience of a more relaxed approach to night time deliveries taken during the Olympic and Paralympic games could be made more permanent. This has benefitted the distribution industry by allowing them to avoid busy times during the day, speeded up their journey times and enabled them to serve more outlets using less resources. The benefits to other users has been a reduction in commercial traffic (and therefore congestion) during the day, and of obstruction of the highway by delivery vehicles



6. Walking

There has been a seismic shift in the appreciation of walking and the notion of streets as places and not just transport corridors. The Board has debated the development of Kensington High Street, looked at street furniture clutter issues and endorsed the TfL commissioned Gehl Architects report '*Towards a fine city for people'*. We have conducted research at several transport interchanges¹² looking both inside the interchange, but also at the walking experience between modes utilising the street.

London TravelWatch wants to see wide, clear, continuous and level footways. We want to see single stage, direct crossings located on pedestrian desire lines. We want to see the development of public spaces, more pedestrian friendly high streets and transport interchanges.

We have endorsed the Legible London wayfinding system and want to see it consistently rolled out across London rather than the present piecemeal manner at the whim of the London Boroughs – pedestrian wayfinding is a strategic issue!

One of the work streams that has developed from our Interchange and Walking Report and our work looking at the accessibility of London's Olympic venue stations has been the issue of highway obstructions. It is clear that London's streets should not be obstructed without lawful excuse and that local highway authorities have a duty to clear obstructions. TfL has recognised this issue following its Better Streets initiatives. ¹³

However, TfL and the local highway authorities are not diligent in this duty, and all manner of obstructions are placed randomly on the pavement. This is a real problem for wheelchair users, the blind and partially sighted. We would want to see the Roads Task Force recommend that TfL and the boroughs comply with their duty to keep their pavements clear of obstructions.

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¹² Walking and interchange



7. Cycling

London TravelWatch supports the Mayor's targets for cycling to become a much larger proportion of travel in London. We have conducted a survey of stakeholders and produced a report¹⁴ on Cycling in London.

Representing all transport users we want to see a holistic approach to developing cycling in London. We want to see greater emphasis on education, training and enforcement. Cycling should take place on the carriageway and tackling problematic junctions is our key safety priority for investment.

Improvement in cycle parking at stations and where possible of off road cycling and walking routes also contribute to reducing demand on the road network.

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^{1. 14} www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/3765/get



8. Enforcing the rules

Parking controls, bus lanes and other forms of traffic management must be enforced consistently to ensure that bus passengers are not delayed, and that buses can pull up beside bus stops. Pavement obstructions, cyclists ignoring red lights, dropping litter, and motorists driving uninsured vehicles are all unacceptable forms of behaviour which must be discouraged.

We would welcome a recommendation from the Roads Task Force for more roads policing and greater enforcement activity from highway authorities.



9. Ending the gyrations

Gyratory road systems were developed in the 20th Century as a means of speeding up traffic flow. But their utility becomes less once traffic levels reach saturation point. In many ways such systems are problematic for all travellers:

- (a) They often use residential roads, which could be returned to more appropriate uses;
- (b) they tend to exclude buses from key traffic objectives in one direction and/or make it difficult for passengers to find bus stops, both of which make bus use both unattractive and confusing;
- (c) They often impose lengthy and difficult routes on pedestrians, which can be made shorter and easier;
- (d) They are often dangerous for cyclists to negotiate and for pedestrians to cross; and
- (e) There may be opportunities to create a pleasanter street scene, or for better use of land that is currently wasted (e.g. in the middle of large roundabouts) or isolated (e.g. surrounded by a one-way system).
- __(f) They are confusing to inexperienced and unfamiliar road vehicle drivers.

The improvements made at Trafalgar Square and Shoreditch are the two most significant examples of the reversion of road systems to two-way operation and resolve some or all of the above problems.

However, gyratory systems were designed to accommodate high and growing traffic levels. They are maintained because the traffic engineers and planners are relying on traffic models to design London's streets. The traffic models inevitably suggest any change to a more hospitable road network will be detrimental to traffic flow or traffic will divert to less suitable roads. However, it has been demonstrated that reducing road capacity does not necessarily have the lasting affect predicted by the engineers' models.

If London is to break out of the cycle of car dependency, promote modal shift and design a road system and city for the 21st century it will require a different approach to taken in the past, and a key part of this would be the replacement of the remaining gyratory systems in the London area.

¹⁵ SACTRA and EU research