
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item: 8

PC163

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Transport for London bus strategy and 'road maintenance condition'

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To provide background to presentations by TfL on their bus strategy and 'road maintenance condition'.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1. That members note the report.

3 Background to members bus services discussion

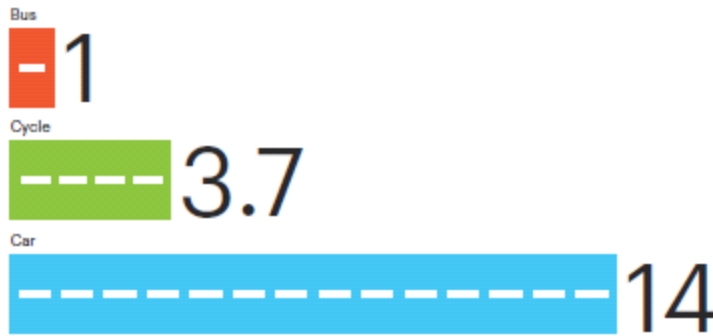
- 3.1. London's bus service is the only public transport network that covers the entirety of London, operates 24/7, is accessible to almost everyone and is the most affordable.



Taken from TfL's Accessible Travel in London guide

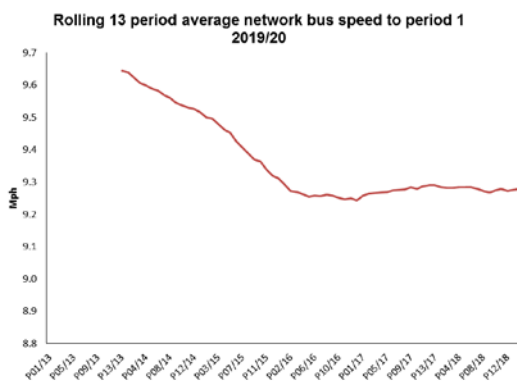
- 3.2. There are over 6 million bus journeys a day. Bus accounts for double the number of journey stages of either Underground or National Rail. Bus is the most efficient user of road space.

Figure 4: Indicative average amount of road capacity required per person
Based on 2011 morning peak period, inbound central London cordon count and national transport modelling assumptions

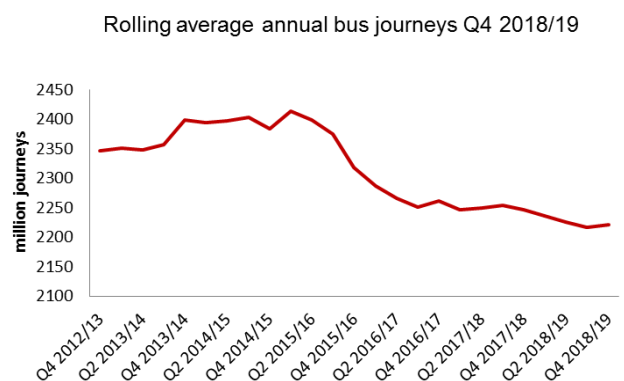


Taken from TfL's Roads Taskforce, 2015

- 3.3. Between 2000 and 2014 London's bus services had been improving with more and better services. More mileage in service for passengers was being run. Passenger numbers had closely followed this additional mileage.
- 3.4. Reliability of services improved with better control of services by the bus companies, using iBus and incentivised by their contracts. The central area congestion charging zone, along with additional bus priority, in the form of bus lanes and traffic signals set to favour buses contributed to improved performance.
- 3.5. However, since 2014/15 ridership has declined. TfL have linked this decline to bus speeds along with other factors set out below. The charts below demonstrate the decline in bus speeds and ridership.



Derived from TfL's published data

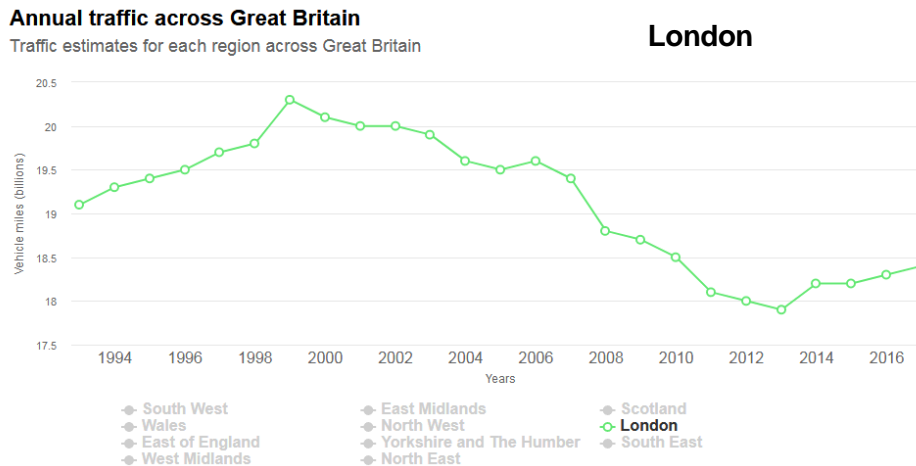


Derived from TfL's published data

3.6. The reason for the deterioration in bus speeds and passenger numbers is much debated. The deterioration in speed happening elsewhere in the UK along with a reduction in ridership, though it London ridership is down more.

3.7. The decline in bus speeds is likely to be a combination of:

- the improving economy (post the 2008 financial crash) and rise in population which has led to a rise in motor vehicle traffic, particularly vans. This is demonstrated by the chart below that DfT has produced from its road traffic estimates;



DfT's traffic estimates derived from annual rotating counts

- TfL's 'Roads Modernisation Programme'. For example the cycle superhighway programme, Tottenham Court Road two-way; Baker Street two-way; Aldgate gyratory removal etc. This has particularly affected central London where these schemes have substantially reduced motor vehicle capacity and removed bus lanes. The reduction in motor vehicle capacity will also affect roads beyond central London as traffic management (TfL's traffic signals capability) is used by TfL to slow traffic coming into the central area;
- an improvement in other modes, for example the Jubilee line has attracted bus passengers from the Finchley Road corridor;
- the rise of mini-cab Apps both attracting passengers and adding space inefficient motor vehicles to London's already congested streets;
- changes in lifestyle. For example home working, internet shopping, takeaway food delivery and home entertainment etc.

3.8. TfL have been responding to the reduction in ridership in three ways:

- there have been selective reductions in bus frequency;
- the central London bus changes will removed bus service capacity in central and inner London;
- there has also been some additional services to respond to growing demand in outer London. The business plan suggests there will be a 9% reduction in bus kilometres operated in inner London and 1.5% increase in outer London.

3.9. Looking to the future, TfL are forecasting, in their latest business plan, that bus speeds and reliability will deteriorate and ridership will fall further.

Figure 23: Operational performance in the future

	Forecast	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Bus forecasts						
Passenger journeys (millions)	2,203	2,144	2,113	2,080	2,054	2,034
Customer satisfaction score	86	86	86	86	86	86
Bus excess wait time - high frequency routes (minutes)	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Average bus speeds (mph)	9.2	9.2	9.1	9.0	9.0	9.0
Service volume (million km operated)						
Inner London	147	137	134	134	133	133
Outer London	325	326	327	327	329	330
Sections of routes outside the Greater London Authority boundary	10	10	10	10	10	10
Total	482	473	471	471	472	473

Transport for London Business Plan 81

Taken from TfL's latest business plan

3.10. London TravelWatch has done much work to get bus priority back onto the agenda. There is a reasonable budget for bus priority. However, buses are now also competing for road space and priority with cycling provision. There are some bus priority schemes being developed, but it seems too little to stabilise and return bus speeds, and therefore journey times, to where they once were.

3.11. London TravelWatch has been clear that buses should be prioritised on all the streets they use. We have campaigned for:

- extending the operational hours of congestion charging so that the scheme operates for longer hours, seven days a week. This would benefit cycles;
- extending the operational hours of bus lanes – many could operate 24/7. This would benefit cycles;
- extending the operational hours of the Red Routes, again benefitting both bus services and cycles;
- reviewing parking restrictions on roads used by buses with the view to increasing priority for bus services;

- increasing the number of bus only streets like the Tottenham Court Road scheme, and
- investigating a wider and more sophisticated roads pricing scheme.

4 Background to roads maintenance

- 4.1. London's roads are maintained either by Transport for London or the London boroughs. The London borough councils receive a needs based grant from TfL to maintain their primary road network.
- 4.2. The objective has been to generally ensure that greater than 90% of the network is in good maintenance condition and not in need of repair. TfL have told us previously that 90% was a sustainable target. London TravelWatch has had some regrets that the 'road maintenance condition' target was not better than 90%, because road condition affects all the users of London's roads. But we have accepted this figure.
- 4.3. Recent business plans and budgets have omitted a budget for major road renewals (as opposed to minor and safety related repairs). First for two years, but latterly it appears indefinitely, though this is unclear. The outcome of this is a forecast fall in the percentage of carriageway not needing repair from 90% to 87.5%. This is a substantive issue and will be noticed by users of London's roads.

Figure I9: Operational performance in the future

	Forecast	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan	Plan
Asset condition	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
State of good repair – carriageways (%)	90.0	88.5	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5
State of good repair – footways (%)	93.4	90.4	89.9	89.9	89.9	89.9

Taken from TfL's latest business plan

5 London TravelWatch priority

- 5.1. Maintaining the performance of the London bus network is an established priority for London TravelWatch because it is the only fully accessible, 24/7, affordable public, transport network covering the whole of London.
- 5.2. The bus service is also a priority for us because London TravelWatch recognises that its users tend not to represent themselves as well as the users of other modes. We try and give a voice for bus passengers.
- 5.3. Members have previously been concerned that we monitor 'road maintenance condition' because it affects every user of London's streets.

6 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 6.1. London's bus service is the only public transport network available across the whole of London, 24/7, that is accessible and affordable to all Londoners. Any reduction in

London's bus services will disproportionately affect low income Londoners and groups with protected characteristics that tend to be more reliant on bus services for many reasons.

7 Legal powers

- 7.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 requires London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to consider, and where it appears to it to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to any service or facility provided by or for (or in the case of Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, licensed by) Transport for London, other than a matter relating to the transportation of freight, if it has been the subject of representations made by or on behalf of users of that service or facility.

8 Financial implications

- 8.1. There are no financial implications for London TravelWatch.