

From the Chair

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Boris Johnson
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Your Ref:

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Dear Mr Mayor,

Way to go! Planning for better transport

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your 'Way to go!' document. In compiling this response we have applied the following principles:-

1. That all policies should be evidence based.
2. That the needs of all sections of the community are considered and respected.
3. That there is an appropriate consideration of value for money for both the taxpayer and transport user.

We have been guided too in our comments by the priorities set out in our pre-election document entitled 'Manifesto for the new Mayoral term 2008 – 2012, which I attach for your information. In that document we identified the transport challenges for any incoming Mayor. These we listed as follows:

1. Frequent, comprehensive and reliable public transport
2. A Transport network accessible to all
3. A fair deal for travellers on fares
4. Health services that everyone can reach
5. Room to breathe (reducing overcrowding on public transport)
6. Priority for buses (on the road network)
7. Transport systems that respect the environment
8. Travelling with confidence (reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour)
9. Walking with pleasure
10. A road network that is fit for purpose

Contd/.

Turning to the questions asked in your paper:-

Do you generally support our principles for developing policy? If not what other principles should apply?

As you can see there is a strong correlation between many of the principles that you have put forward and those that we suggested in the London TravelWatch Mayoral manifesto. However, we would urge you to consider the following points:-

- In respecting peoples choices, you should be aware that many people living in London with access to cars (and often from high income socio-economic groups) positively choose to use public transport out of preference, and do not necessarily regard it as a second-class option as against the private car or that public transport is their only option.
- Similarly it could be regarded as unhelpful to say that all young people are rude or make the journeys of other travellers unpleasant when in fact the vast majority of them behave in a considerate and respectful way when using the transport network. In addition, it should be noted that overwhelming majority of journeys made on the transport network are free from criminal or anti-social behaviour incidents and it is unhelpful to portray the transport system as systematically unsafe and therefore unattractive to users.
- Many of the points addressed in your paper also seem to be addressing the symptoms of stress in the transport system, rather than addressing the underlying causes.
- In addition, some of the policy goals stated appear to be contradicted by specific policy measures mentioned in the document. For example you say that you want to develop outer London with people encouraged to live and work in the same area, rather than be propelled with the great tide of people washed in and out of the centre everyday, yet you are also committed to schemes such as Crossrail that will accentuate the benefits of the centre and encourage more radial journeys.

Have we identified the key challenges facing transport in London? If not what other issues should we be considering?

In terms of the challenges you set out we would agree with many of your observations, and have campaigned on many of these issues for many years. However, we would urge to also consider what we believe are 'high level' challenges such as:-

1. Giving improved priority for buses on the highway; and to develop the bus network such that convenient access by bus is possible in all areas of London at all times of the day and week. It is of grave concern to us that Excess Waiting Times are actually projected to increase as reliability decreases due to traffic congestion.
2. Progressing a fully accessible transport network. We recognise the challenges and cost implications of implementing step-free access on the Underground and Rail networks, but are concerned at the slow progress made in making bus stops fully accessible. We would urge you to consider accelerating this programme as this is a relatively simple and cost effect way of extending travel options for people with disabilities.
3. Ensuring that the bus network is served by vehicles that are appropriate to the needs of users, and provide a safe, secure and low cost travelling environment. It is of

concern to us that the proposals for a new 'Routemaster' include the idea of an open platform, when all the evidence shows that this feature resulted in large numbers of serious injuries and in some cases fatalities amongst users. In addition the need to have a crew of two has serious implications for the reliability and cost effectiveness of the services being provided. Also, we suggest when tendering for routes Transport for London should prioritise cost to the passenger, accessibility, and fitness for purpose. We believe that such considerations may lead to a preference for articulated buses, and that opposition to them appears to lack an evidence base.

4. Accommodating the potential changes in travel demand arising from changes to health care provision in the capital. Reconfiguration of health care provision can have a serious impact on the need to travel – but proper dialogue in the planning process between health authorities and transport providers at the planning stage can help ensure that any adverse impacts are minimised. It is welcome that TfL and NHS London have recently jointly produced guidance to health authorities on how to tackle transport issues in relation to reconfiguration proposals.
5. Providing well designed and properly managed stations, stops and interchanges, so that the waiting environment is civilised, and the transition between one mode and another can be made as seamlessly as possible.
6. Providing a transport network where the fear of crime is reduced by providing clean and cared for vehicles, adequate numbers of suitably trained and motivated staff, and well lit (but energy efficient), stops and stations, with useful and accessible technology such as 'help points' and closed circuit television (CCTV).
7. Obliging all transport providers to be approachable, communicative, genuinely receptive to suggestions, able and willing to take complaints seriously and have proper means of redress for users when things go wrong.
8. Developing effective working relationships with the London boroughs as the key deliverers of transport planning and traffic enforcement in the capital. We welcome your commitment to this, and also listening to their concerns about, and learning from their experiences of operating both transport enforcement and transport planning.
9. Ensuring that the road network is fit for purpose and is managed in a way that reduces road casualties by engineering, education and enforcement.

We have emphasised an approach to encourage more people to walk and cycle. Do you agree with this?

London TravelWatch has long supported measures to encourage more people to walk and cycle. We are therefore encouraged by the emphasis placed upon improving the lot of the cyclist and pedestrian. We support your proposals to improve the urban realm – such as the removal of unnecessary and outdated signage, guard railing, and giving priority to pedestrians in the design of streets. However, we would your attention to the following points:

Some measures that you have proposed may actually have the effect of deterring or reducing walking or cycling, such as the introduction of motorcycles into bus lanes (where we await the outcome of the trial) and the reduction of pedestrian phases at traffic lights – where particularly the elderly, the mobility impaired and children require longer crossing times.

In addition we would ask that you ensure that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are acknowledged and taken account of in any measures to reduce obstacles to the free flow of

traffic and assist delivery vehicles. In the latter case there must be greater consistency in the application of waiting and loading restrictions.

We welcome the emphasis on 'barrier busting' for cycle routes to the centre, and overcoming gyratories and one way systems, but these must be carefully designed and implemented so as not to compromise the interests of other users and pedestrians, and any contra flow cycle lanes must be fully segregated and signed as such. We also support the introduction of a cycle hire scheme, where this can be done without installing additional 'barriers' to pedestrian movement.

We also support the greater emphasis that you have placed on enforcement of existing rules and traffic laws in relation to cyclists, and look forward to discussing how this can be achieved.

Are there things you think the Mayor should do to improve transport in London which are not identified here?

We would urge you to consider the following, which would complement and enhance the other items that you have identified as priority areas:-

1. In the interests of reducing overcrowding on the existing network, reducing social inequality and encouraging employment, proceeding with certain major schemes which would have the most benefit, i.e. phase 2b of the East London Line Extension between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction, the Crystal Palace extension of Croydon Tramlink and the Dagenham Dock extension of the Docklands Light Railway, when funding is identified.
2. Making full use of your power's to specify and fund service levels, station facilities, fares and ticketing on the National Rail network in and near London, in order to raise standards and achieve closer integration with other modes.
3. Cooperating with any proposed schemes of electrification of the National Rail network and the building of new High Speed Lines so as to maximise the benefit to London passengers and reducing the environmental impact of rail.
4. Initiating a full and open dialogue with London Councils and voluntary transport providers about the most cost effective and customer friendly means of providing door to door transport for the mobility impaired and elderly people – the current arrangements with Dial-A-Ride and the Taxicard can be inconsistent and confusing to users, and poor value for money to council taxpayers.
5. Improving the attractiveness of bus services in outer London in terms of network coverage, frequency and reliability.
6. Initiating a discussion about the scale and purpose of public funding for transport investment and operation, and the appropriate balance between funding from the taxpayer and that from the service user. In particular, it is our view that the cost of concessionary travel should be borne from general public funds rather than the fare box.

Finally, may I say that London Travelwatch has considerable expertise within its organisation, and is eager to develop a constructive dialogue with you on all aspects of transport operation and planning, for example, we are anxious to give a passenger perspective to any changes in the bus contracting regime, and have recently commissioned consultants to help us with this, and also to identify whether any current empty or 'dead' mileage in the system could be usefully made available for general public use. We have also

written to the Department for Transport in support of your proposals to introduce a permit system for road works, so as to minimise the impact on users.

I hope that you find this letter a helpful commentary on your document and we look forward to further discussions with you on this and the forthcoming revision to your Transport Strategy. Indeed we hope that you will find time to visit London Travelwatch and to learn more about the work that we do here.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Grant

Chair