

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, Chair of the Transport Committee

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Sir Peter Hendy CBE
Commissioner
Transport for London
Windsor House
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31 October 2014

Dear Peter

Transport Committee response to consultations on the north-south and east-west cycle superhighways

I am writing, on behalf of the Transport Committee, to set out our response to TfL's consultations on the proposals for the new north-south and east-west cycle superhighways.

Our response is based on our relevant past work on cycling. This includes our recent meeting on 14 October 2014 when we discussed, in broad terms, the proposals with the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner. We therefore offer some comments in response to the consultation questions seeking views on the overall proposals (question 19 for the north-south proposal and question 20 for the east-west proposal). We are not commenting on the specific details for each section of these proposed superhighways.

In overall terms, we support the proposals for the new north-south and east-west cycle superhighways. We note that both proposals provide for continuous, high quality, substantially segregated cycle routes. We also note that, in order to create the space for such routes, it will require reallocating road space from other traffic and changing the operation of some junctions. We endorse such changes because we have long called for more segregated cycle space to make cycling safer. In our report, *Gearing Up? An investigation into safer cycling in London* (November 2012), we found there could, and should, be more segregated cycle space. However, there is often a lack of political will to take road space away from motorised traffic.

Our work has shown that the lack of protected space for cyclists on London's roads is a major issue. In our report on the initial operation of the first two cycle superhighways, *Pedal Power* (November 2010), we highlighted that many users of these routes had concerns about their safety. More recently, in our update on cycling in London (February 2014), we showed such concerns remain. Over two-thirds of respondents to our survey of over 6,000 cyclists did not feel safer when using cycle superhighways. Moreover, the single biggest factor that these cyclists cited as adversely affecting their journeys by bike was a lack of segregated cycle lanes. There is therefore a strong case that any new proposed cycle superhighways provide as much segregated space for cyclists as possible.

We note that the proposals for the two new superhighways, especially for the east-west cycle superhighway, have received some high-profile criticisms. While we are concerned about the potentially adverse impact of the proposals on pedestrians and other road users, we would not want to see the proposals diluted to such an extent that they no longer provide substantial segregation for

cyclists. The Mayor's Cycling Commissioner told us that the current consultations provide for organisations and individuals to offer comments on ways that the proposed routes could be improved. He also reported that there was commitment to work with those concerned to see if there are ways to address their issues. This is welcome. However, at the end of this consultation process, we would not want to see changes to the proposals that significantly reduce the benefits for cyclists.

As our past work has shown, delivering more segregated cycle space in London will take political will. It will require reallocating road space from other traffic and changes to the operation of road junctions that may adversely affect other road users. These consequences need to be considered carefully but, at the same time, they need to be reviewed alongside the potential gains from making such changes. The Mayor's Cycling Commissioner told us that the two new cycle superhighways could provide a huge amount of new transport capacity at relatively low cost. For example, the north-south cycle superhighway could provide for an extra 3,000 cyclists an hour in London – the equivalent of 41 extra buses on that route. Moreover, while TfL's modelling work may show some consequences for other road users from the proposed routes, the reality can prove different. New infrastructure may not result in the impact forecast. It is, therefore, important that TfL learns lessons where this is the case and develops its modelling techniques accordingly to improve their accuracy.

We want to see more segregated cycling space in London and support the proposals accordingly. The new cycle superhighways represent a step-change in cycling provision in the capital and will offer more continental-style cycling facilities for Londoners. We want to see these new superhighways delivered in the shortest possible timescale. In our update on cycling in London (February 2014), we argued that cyclists should not have to wait until 2016 for improvements to cycle superhighways and called for the delivery of improvements by 2015 where possible. We are concerned to hear that the whole of the north-south cycle superhighway may not be delivered by May 2016 and we would welcome details of the action being taken to ensure both routes are delivered in full at the earliest opportunity.

We trust that TfL will take our comments into account and look forward to hearing the outcomes of the consultations in due course.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

Cc: Isabel Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport; and Andrew Gilligan, Mayor's Cycling Commissioner