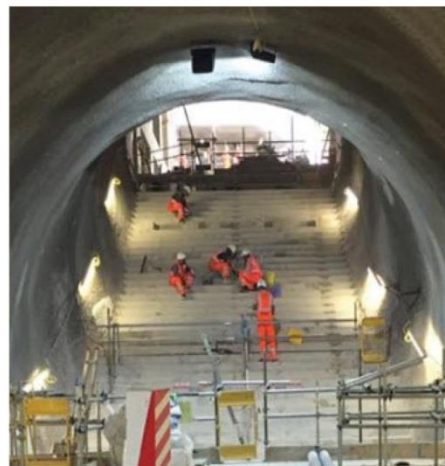


RESPONSE TO THE MAYOR'S DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY



From Caroline Russell AM
Green Party Member of the London Assembly
October 2017



SUMMARY

Since May 2016 I've lobbied the Mayor of London to cut traffic and deliver people-friendly streets alongside a fairly-priced, accessible public transport system.

I'm encouraged by the overall direction of his draft transport strategy. Unlike his predecessor, this Mayor recognises that car dependency must end. He has plans to reduce traffic and some ambitious targets to boost walking, cycling and public transport use.

The Mayor's vision for inclusive, healthy streets is timely. Londoners are ageing and increasingly inactive, suffering from the health impacts of polluted air. Better street designs could help people build exercise into daily journeys, cut pollution and make the city an altogether more pleasant place to live.

But unless the Mayor gets traffic down, his plans to shake up the city's streets will not work.

It is therefore surprising that the Mayor – despite the recommendation from the Assembly's Transport Committee, the widespread support from business and NGOs and the success stories in Singapore and Stockholm – has not set out a clear timetable for the introduction of road pricing in this Mayoral term.



Alongside his continued determination to build the Silvertown Tunnel, this is the biggest failing in his transport strategy.

It is also disappointing that the Mayor hasn't set a timetable and firm plans for introducing cycling and walking infrastructure across the whole city.

It is doubtful whether the Mayor will be able to accomplish all of his manifesto commitments, given his slow start and the time he's let slip away since the election.

He must speed up the pace of change if he is to turn this around. I hope his final strategy will include a clear delivery timetable for the new infrastructure London needs and a clear indication he understands the urgency of the task.

Caroline Russell AM
October 2017

TACKLING LONDON'S HOSTILE STREETS

My work on this

Apart from pockets of improvement in the centre, London streets can be hostile places to get around on foot or by bike. At City Hall, I've been pushing the Mayor to go further and faster.

In June 2016 the Mayor pledged¹ to work with me to reduce traffic. London's Transport Commissioner also committed² to use the new Healthy Streets Check tool. If used properly, this tool would ensure streets schemes offer people of all ages travelling on foot and by bike at least a basic level of service in the form of safe crossings, smooth pavements and continuous protected bike routes. London's streets should not just cater for the fit and young who are capable of taking their lives in their hands as they navigate heavy traffic.

I have also scrutinised the implementation of new types of infrastructure. The Mayor said he would trial zebra crossings at bus stop bypasses after I raised concerns about possible conflict between bus users and people cycling.³

And I'm investigating conditions for pedestrians and cyclists in outer London on behalf of the London Assembly Transport Committee.⁴

Most of London's cycling and walking potential lies in the suburbs. The Mayor will need to tap into this potential if he is to reach his overall mode share target. Yet as my investigation has found, the streets in outer boroughs are so traffic-dominated that people feel forced into a car just to navigate them safely. The Mayor should adopt the recommendations I will make in the final report later this year.



Delivery of healthy streets

The draft Transport Strategy contains some positive moves towards building healthy streets. In particular, proposal 1 embraces this agenda enthusiastically.

However the real test will be in what the Mayor builds, where he builds it, how quickly and to what standard. Whether he really embeds the Healthy Streets approach within TfL as he has promised.⁵

Some of the streets schemes coming through the Mayor's transport planning pipeline show he still has quite a way to go on this.

Plans drawn up under the previous Mayor, such as Fiveways junction in Croydon, in no way meet Healthy Streets objectives and actually build new dangers in for people walking and cycling. Yet this scheme was recently put out for consultation by Sadiq Khan. I urged the Mayor to scrap these dangerous plans.⁶ Nine Elms, Camberwell Green and Vittoria Wharf are other schemes that need a radical Healthy Streets overhaul.



Pro-car 'business as usual' schemes cannot be funded by TfL if the Mayor is serious about healthy streets. He should reaffirm his promise to apply the Healthy Streets Check tool and insist on a minimum score before releasing any TfL funds.

Get boroughs on board

The majority of London's roads are controlled by the 33 boroughs. It is crucial that the Mayor has a clear strategy and proper channels to secure borough backing for his ambitious London-wide plans.

As I have pointed out, his Walking and Cycling Commissioner Will Norman has an important role to play here.⁷

Good bike routes need to be connected in networks across the city. If a borough does not buy in to the vision, or have the resources required to do so, that potentially creates gaps in provision.

The Mayor and his team will need to monitor borough level enthusiasm and capacity for delivering Healthy Streets schemes and provide TfL assistance if necessary, learning positive lessons from the Waltham Forest Mini Holland experience.

The budget for healthy streets

I have been looking at TfL's investment plans through Mayor's Questions, the Transport Committee and the Budget and Performance Committee sessions. I continue to be concerned that a very high proportion is devoted to large capital projects, even when Crossrail is excluded. This is not just major public transport, which I agree is needed to unlock new housing, but also major new road schemes.

Prior to the election of the new Mayor, campaigners for walking and cycling were asking for a minimum of 10 per cent of this investment to go on these measures to create healthy streets.

The annual £154 million currently planned for cycling measures does not even match that spent in the final year of the previous Mayoralty.

The transformational Mini Holland changes are nearing completion in Waltham Forest. It is therefore disappointing that the Mayor's Liveable Neighbourhoods programme does not match the levels of funding offered by the previous Mayor's Mini Hollands.

Lastly, despite previous problems with underspending the cycling budget being labelled 'embarrassing' by the previous Transport Commissioner, and even though some momentum had finally started to build in the delivery of high-quality segregated cycling infrastructure, progress seems to have stalled, and yet again the budget lines for these projects appear to be backloaded so that most will be spent in 2020/21.

None of this is good enough.

In general, I believe that the key tests for whether the Mayor is investing even adequately in healthy streets should be:

- Is the amount planned for each of the next four years higher in real terms than in the previous term?
- Is the amount planned higher as a percentage of the overall investment budget (excluding Crossrail)?
- Is spending evenly spread over four years to keep up momentum for delivery?

The draft Transport Strategy does not meet these tests and the Mayor needs to devote more funding to these plans if his delivery of this agenda is to match his words.

Reducing road danger

Vision Zero

Vision Zero is an approach to road danger reduction that works towards the elimination of road traffic deaths and serious injuries by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles on London's streets.

The emphasis on Vision Zero in policy 2, reducing road danger and working to eliminate collisions where people are killed or seriously injured is very welcome. However, the target to achieve this by 2041 is just too slow. The tragedy of road death and injury is affecting far too many Londoners, their families, work colleagues and friends.

The recently released statistics for casualties in Greater London during 2016 use a new robust system of classification of injuries as serious or slight⁸. The figures show that more people are seriously injured each year than was previously understood.

Pedestrian casualties increased in 2016, particularly those crashes involving cars and motorcycles. Child car occupant casualties increased and there was a worrying increase in travel by car and motorcycle compared to 2015 following years of reductions in traffic levels. The number of licenced cars was the highest ever. This picture of increased risk to pedestrians and increased traffic simply emphasises how crucial it is that Vision Zero is properly embedded in all the work of TfL and the Mayor and that the police should be brought on board too.

Slight injuries should also be taken seriously with a robust target for reduction. Someone in precarious work who sprains an ankle or wrist in a collision may find their income reduced, become unable to pay their rent and find themselves in serious debt. The consequences for Londoners of slight injuries can be far from slight.

Speed limits

Transport for London has been trialling 20mph limits on fragments of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), but has not yet taken the step of rolling them out widely.

The Mayor has told me TfL is developing a programme to achieve his Vision Zero aim of reducing the number of people killed or injured on London's streets to zero⁹. He said this will include plans for the introduction of lower speeds across the network.

The final strategy should include introduction of a default 20mph speed limit, where the TLRN has pavements, homes, schools, workplaces, health care or shop frontages and where people are likely to be walking or cycling. This would show leadership to the boroughs who need to play their part in achieving Vision Zero.

The boroughs should be helped to introduce area wide 20mph speed limits. This will reduce death and injury giving people driving more time to anticipate risks and encouraging more people to make local trips on foot or by bike.

Speed is a factor in many collisions and with reduced road policing budgets there is a sense that some people driving do not think speeding is a serious matter. It would be good to see a commitment to using the Mayor and TfL's communications channels to raise awareness that speeding is anti-social, dangerous and unacceptable.



Safer vehicles used safely

The strategy gives Transport for London and the bus companies thirteen years before nobody is to be killed in or by a London bus. This is far too long. The Assembly Transport committee report Driven to Distraction includes multiple recommendations that will reduce danger and make it easier for bus drivers to drive safely¹⁰.

The bus drivers have produced a bill of rights itemising issues to be addressed to improve driver well-being and the safety of passengers and Londoners walking and cycling along streets with bus routes¹¹. Recommendations from both should be integrated into the final strategy.

TfL announced that intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) was to be introduced to all new buses from January 2017¹². The Mayor told¹³ me that new buses will now be fitted with ISA from 2018. This is welcome but there should be no further slippage and a retro fit programme should be included for older buses.

Lorries pose a huge risk to people walking and cycling. It is good that freight consolidation is so high profile in the strategy, but all lorries especially construction traffic pose significant danger especially from being run over from behind or from a left hook.

The Mayor announced¹⁴ a Direct Vision lorry standard¹⁵ with star ratings in September 2016 which is due for a second consultation phase this autumn. It would be good to see a clear timetable for direct vision lorries and the programme to get the most dangerous lorries off the road along with clear targets (in miles per annum) for provision of segregated bike tracks.



The use of bus lanes by motorbikes feels risky for people cycling. It is important that this is closely monitored and if evidence of danger to people cycling or crossing the road is established, there should be a rethink.

FAIRNESS SHOULD BE AT THE HEART OF LONDON'S TRANSPORT NETWORK

Air pollution

Polluted air is creating a public health crisis. Londoners across the city, in inner and outer London tell me they feel chesty walking to the shops or are worried by their children's asthma and the long-term effects of breathing dirty air.

The plans in policy 5 for the electrification of buses, delivery and any essential vehicles are comprehensive and I welcome the strong emphasis in the strategy on traffic reduction, and reducing exposure to diesel emissions.

The timescale to reduce air pollution to get it within legal limits 'as soon as possible' is too vague. There should be a declared date when all Londoners can expect to breathe clean air. The London Assembly Environment Committee has suggested 2020, which I support.

It's helpful that TfL have set up a Clean Vehicle Checker for people to look up the real urban driving emissions of vehicles before purchase¹⁶. This will put some pressure on manufacturers to meet EU standards fully, however as independent tests have shown, many new vehicles are not meeting declared emission standards in urban driving conditions¹⁷. This needs to be rectified.

In the build up to and during smog episodes, it is good to see the Mayor issuing health alerts,¹⁸ and the use, last winter, of public transport signage to advise people to 'cycle, walk or use public transport to help improve London's air quality'.



The strategy should include a commitment to extend this to ask Londoners to avoid driving during smog episodes.

Plans to reduce the number of Londoners affected by excessive road, rail and aviation noise are welcome. Restrictions on growth of aviation should not be limited to Heathrow's third runway. There should be no expansion at any London airport.

Accessibility

I support the following points from the responses to this strategy from the Alzheimer's Society and Transport for All¹⁹.

- Set a timeline for 100 per cent step-free access
- Commit to Turn-Up-And-Go
- Make a plan for people with invisible impairments
- Prioritise bus passenger safety
- Make cycle lanes work for everyone
- Guarantee door-to-door services for those who need it
- Make Oxford Street accessible
- Design London's buses to have space for everyone

Proposal 52 sets out reasonable goals for improving the accessibility of the transport network, but implementation and a suitable level of speed and ambition will be vital.

If this hasn't already been done, the deputy mayor and her team need to meet with these groups to discuss these policies in more detail.

Inclusivity and technology

I welcome the Mayor's commitment in policy 21 to manage new transport services so that they support the Healthy Streets approach. He has also committed to improve online and on-street navigation tools to increase the accessibility of London's streets.

But he should set out the specific technologies he will prioritise with an indicative timetable for each. Audio and visual information should be further rolled out on public transport. Accessible audio navigation should be prioritised. The Mayor should also ensure Londoners who do not use the internet are not excluded. At present TfL's 'Please offer me a seat' badges can only be applied for online. The Mayor should commit to inclusivity across all TfL platforms.

The cost of travel

Within the part of the strategy devoted to 'A good public transport experience', policy 10 rightly commits the Mayor to 'ensure public transport fare levels are set to enable access to affordable travel for all Londoners'.

The strategy also says that 'An affordable fares system, both now and in the future, is essential to encouraging a shift from car to public transport'.

However the only firm policy commitment within this section is to extend the Hopper fare

to allow unlimited transfers between buses or trams within an hour – an extension to the current two journeys allowed. This does not go far enough.

Simpler fares are needed

London's fare system remains far too complicated and is the most unfair on those living in outer London and those who depend on a combination of bus and national rail for their daily commute.

The new technology that will enable the extension of the Hopper could be used to create an unlimited number of transfers between multiple modes and one fare no matter what your journey.

I recognise that current revenue-sharing agreements with the national rail operators in London are complex, and that the strategy aims to secure more devolution to simplify this. However, more could be done prior to devolution by the Mayor to revisit these agreements and make the fare structure simpler and fairer for people using these services within Greater London – especially in the light of contactless and pay-as-you-go fare capping.

With new agreements negotiated as part of new franchises (and with efforts made to do this sooner for franchises that have longer to run), the Mayor could also extend the current fares freeze to cover the TfL portion of capped fares, weekly, monthly and annual travel passes. This is something he has not yet done, despite a manifesto promise to freeze 'all TfL fares'. Instead only single fares have been frozen, as the strategy admits.

Flexible fares

In our budget amendment for 2017/18, jointly proposed with Caroline Pidgeon AM, we asked for more flexibility and lower costs for part-

time workers, by reducing the cost of daily caps to match a fair proportion of the cost of a monthly travelcard, rather than the current position of basing this on the cost of a weekly pass.

This measure is much needed by London's growing population of part-time and precarious workers. I am very disappointed to see no consideration of this in the draft Transport Strategy.

Flatter fares

This is a long-term strategy and so it is frustrating not to see any efforts planned to address the much higher costs faced by residents of outer London who need to commute into zone 1.

With high housing costs forcing more people further from their workplaces, the structural injustice of a steep increase in fares as you travel through more zones will have more and more impact on lower income working Londoners. The Mayor should include an aim to do something about this in his final strategy.

A proposal to gradually flatten a wider range of London transport fares is not as difficult to put together as many other policies within this strategy and should be planned at the very least as a feasibility study. Many other cities have a flat fare structure on public transport, as indeed we have already introduced for buses, and an outline proposal to abolish fare zones by 2025 was part of the Green Party manifesto for London in 2016²⁰.



THE MAYOR NEEDS TO BE MORE AMBITIOUS TO MAKE HIS PLANS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Target traffic reduction

People may not even know they want to walk or cycle yet. The Mayor must plan for a future where people do realise this (not current levels) and invest accordingly. The target for 80 per cent of trips to be made by bike, foot or bus by 2041 is a welcome increase in ambition compared to the previous Mayor, who seemed to view rising car use as inevitable.

However, the target to reduce total London traffic by 10-15 per cent by 2041 is not ambitious enough. Traffic reduction targets are based on anticipated future (increased) levels not current traffic levels.

This seems defeatist; the final target should be based on current not future (higher) traffic levels. Cutting traffic will not happen without removing space for parking and introducing a road pricing scheme, rolled out with the wider ULEZ combining charges for emissions with distance and time of day travelled.

Car-free days and play streets

Community led play streets and area wide car-free days get people on board with using cars less and seeing what a Healthy Streets vision can do for them.

Proposal 8, suggests the Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, will work with local communities and cultural organisations to promote one-off, regular and trial closures of streets to some or all motorised traffic so that Londoners can see their streets differently. This is supported by Londoners,²¹ and was a Mayoral manifesto commitment.

Car-free days are straightforward to organise, former Mayor Livingstone used to hold them, so it is surprising these don't yet have more traction.

Smart road charging

The existing congestion charge is no longer effective, as proven by the worsening congestion inside the charging zone. The charge as it stands can encourage drivers to drive around more than they had planned so that they get their 'money's worth'.

The Mayor has only pledged to 'give consideration to the development of the next generation of road user charging systems'. His strategy does not include plans to consult in this Mayoral term on proposals for a new smart London-wide road-charging system. TfL will need to look fully into the financial, civil liberties and technological implications of any such system. This detailed work needs to start now and should be tied in with ULEZ work, it should not be left as a term two ambition.

He should also update the study commissioned by Greens on the London Assembly in 2011 that found London traffic could be reduced by 10 per cent under a road-pricing scheme.

The Mayor's final transport strategy must also fully reflect the findings of the independent congestion study committed to in the Memorandum of Understanding between his office, HM Treasury, London Councils and the Department of Communities and Local Government

Scrap road-building schemes

The strategy is largely free of large new road schemes for major new links or widening roads. This is right – long experience shows that new and bigger roads simply generate new traffic to fill them, with no long-term gains.

However, the exception is proposal 90 (more road crossings in East London) which needs to be scrapped. Not building major new road capacity will save funding for much-needed public transport infrastructure, much of which in these plans does not yet have secure funding.

Any new crossings in the Thames Gateway area must support housing growth in a sustainable way and not risk repeating the mistakes of the past by generating more traffic and more car dependency.

Proposal 88 – Silvertown Tunnel

At Sadiq Khan's first Mayor's Question Time meeting²² I urged him to withdraw the previous Mayor's application to build the Silvertown Tunnel, a huge urban motorway that would swamp east London with more traffic and more pollution. Evidence shows new roads bring new traffic. There can be no place for this type of road building project in the Mayor's transport strategy if he is serious about healthy streets. Read more about my objections to the scheme.²³

New river crossings must only be for walking, cycling and public transport. People in the Thames Gateway are likely to need links into town centres and the centre of London, and this policy must be rethought from scratch with reference to the principles for supporting new homes outlined in the draft Housing Strategy and the 2008 'Masterplanning Checklist' for the area produced by Transport for Quality of Life, supported by London Councils and Campaign for Better Transport.²⁴

Using data and technology for good

The ability to collect transport data and the rapid technological changes in app-enabled transport present both challenges and opportunities for London.

On the one hand, increasing convenience and choice can fill gaps in public transport provision. Examples include one-way car sharing, dockless bikes, and taxi hailing apps, all of which have recently launched in London.

On the other hand, this 'disruptive' technology can in places serve to reduce public transport usage, making TfL planning more difficult. Not all operators are seeking to engage properly with London boroughs or TfL as they start to do business, and of course any kind of taxi is essentially still a type of private car travel and not the most efficient use of road or kerb space.

Policy 21 and proposals 98-101 all recognise these challenges from new technology but also the potential benefits, which is good.

We need to learn the lessons from recent controversies and teething problems with some new app-based transport services, and strike the right balance between supporting convenient mobility and maintaining public standards and appropriate regulation.

In all its interactions with these new companies and technologies the Mayor and TfL must have the public purpose of transport at heart.

Taxis and private hire vehicles

I support the Mayor in seeking powers from Government to limit the number of private hire vehicles licensed for use in London. But he does have the power to remove the congestion charge exemption from private hire vehicles



himself. He should publish the results of the feasibility study he has carried out on this now.

He should also lobby Government for powers that would enable TfL to make workers' rights a condition of all future licensing for private hire operators, as agreed by the London Assembly when it passed my motion in March ²⁵.

Black taxis provide a well-regulated, quality service that helps fill the gaps in public transport, reduces the need to own a car and provides full wheelchair accessibility.

It is important that both taxis and private hire vehicles contribute to reducing London's congestion and pollution, so the Mayor should set out in his final strategy how he will encourage people to make shared journeys and more efficient use of both modes.

Parking and car clubs

In a city where street space is in short supply, a lot of space is currently allocated to parking private cars. The average car is parked at home for 80 per cent of the time, parked elsewhere for 16 per cent of the time and is only on the move for 4 per cent of the time. ²⁶

While walking, cycling and using public transport should always be the easiest choice, I welcome the Mayor's recognition in proposal 17 that car use must go down and that, through TfL and the boroughs, car club provision, paired with reduction in private parking, may help Londoners give up on car ownership.

The draft strategy includes a suggestion that new minimum standards for well-located and accessible cycle parking may be developed in the London Plan. It is crucial these are

developed and that the replacement of on street car parking with cycle parking (or other non-car uses) is embedded in policy.



Climate change

I welcome the sustainable drainage programme to enable the removal of 50,000m² of impermeable highway surface per year in London to tackle surface water flooding. This is a clear target for specific action. However, the 'evidence-based programme of measures' to make existing and new transport infrastructure resilient to severe weather conditions needs a clear timetable.

The continued research 'to understand and prioritise the risk of severe weather' should not be a substitute for the concrete actions Londoners need to ensure the existing transport infrastructure is resilient to the severe weather risks that must by now be very well understood.

TfL is the largest energy consumer in London. The strategy should include targets for renewable energy generation and targets for sourcing zero carbon energy through TfL's procurement programme. These targets should be consistent with the Paris Climate Change agreement of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees centigrade, which is not mentioned in the draft strategy.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I would like to keep hearing your views on planning for improvements in these areas of policy, so please contact me to share your ideas and solutions.

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This report sets out my views as an individual Assembly Member and not the agreed view of the entire Assembly.

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