

# Air pollution A London Health Emergency ?

**Air pollution is one of the biggest public health threats of our time, up there with obesity, alcohol and smoking.**

Both in terms of transport policy and its impact on the public, there are grounds for viewing it as an issue on the level of total road traffic injuries and deaths. Perhaps the major reason why air pollution has never been taken very seriously is because its effects are largely invisible; if it were visible there would no doubt be a public outcry given the available statistics. An example is the estimate in the 2009 DEFRA report 'Air Pollution: Action in a Changing Climate' that the life expectancy of every person in the UK is reduced by an average of 6 months by air pollution. The annual cost to the economy was estimated at about £15 billion.

The most serious pollutants at work in the urban environment in terms of exposure are Particulate Matter – PM2.5 (fine) and PM10 (large), and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) including NO2. Light goods vehicles (LGVs), cars and taxis are responsible for 20% each of PM2.5, with buses at 5% and tyre and brake wear 25%. For PM10 the figures are similar, but with LGVs at 10%, and buses at about 10%, with tyre and brake wear responsible for 35%. So it is road vehicles that produce most of this pollution, and overwhelmingly diesel vehicles that are responsible for both PM10 and NOx. The impacts on the health of

Londoners of exposure to air pollution were measured by the Mayor's health study which estimated that 4267 additional deaths in London in 2008 were attributable to long-term exposure to PM2.5 at an average reduction in life of 11.5 years. Air pollution almost certainly contributes to a lesser degree to all cardiovascular deaths in London - a total of 15,800 in 2009. It is clear from these figures that London faces a public health emergency, especially in view of the repeated and continuing breaches of the European legal standards for PM10 and NO2 (in London and several other UK cities).

What have the Mayor and the government done in response to this situation, and to the requirement of the EU Air Quality Directive to meet limit values on NO2 by 1st January 2010? They are seeking an extension of the time limit to 2015, arguing unconvincingly that they can't meet the legal standards until 2025 in London. Broadly this government and the last have done very little to combat rising levels of road traffic, the increasing 'dieselisation' of the light vehicle market, and a greatly increased mileage by diesel buses.

The Campaign for Clean Air in London (CAL) argues that the UK should not be given more time to comply with the Air Quality Directive because of its record of inaction over a long period of time. CAL, [www.cleanairinlondon.org](http://www.cleanairinlondon.org), has for several years provided

excellent information on the causes of air pollution in London, the health risks to the population and the measures likely to be effective in reducing the exposure of Londoners, and are campaigning at a London and international level.

The Mayor is guilty of taking backward steps such as his withdrawal of the western extension of the congestion charging zone, and postponement of the Low Emission Zone to LGVs - both initiated by his predecessor. Unless the UK can convince the EU that its plans will be effective there is the prospect of fines of up to £300m per year per pollutant. According to the Guardian (24th April 2011) Britain could also face a fine of up to £175m unless it is able to reduce traffic levels by 30% over a period of a month during the 2012 Olympics. Let's hope the Mayor and UK government will respond to the threat of very hefty fines.

Germany provides a good example of coordinated and well thought-out action to reduce vehicle emissions in

urban areas. By January 2010 about 40 German cities including Berlin had Low Emissions Zones which ban diesel vehicles with high harmful emissions from entry to a central zone. Initial results show a 3% fall in PM10 and a 10% fall in NO2. CAL argues that we should now be campaigning for a Berlin-style inner LEZ, to be introduced in London by early summer 2012 in time for the Olympics. This would achieve the required 30% reduction in harmful road emissions and avoid a last minute Beijing-style odd/even-number plate ban. An inner LEZ in London could be introduced initially in 2012 on the North/South Circular Roads, and collapsed to the congestion charging zone on an ongoing basis. Action on this scale would begin to reduce the very serious hazards currently posed to public health by road vehicle emissions in Greater London and show the world how to tackle air pollution and wider sustainability issues.

Norman Beddington

Our Newsletter is sent out to our London members and other contacts. The group exists to campaign for sustainable transport solutions in London and to support the work of the Campaign nationally. If you have not already done so we would be pleased if you would also join our group and take part in our London based activities.

To contact the group write to Chris Barker, Campaign for Better Transport, 46 Redston Road, London N8 7HJ. email: [c.barker@lineone.net](mailto:c.barker@lineone.net); phone: 020 8347 7684.

Regular meetings of the group are held in central London. The Newsletter is edited by Chris Barker. Contributors are welcomed.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Campaign for Better Transport.

design: Eve Barker



# Station reopening campaign takes off

**Lea Bridge station on the line between Stratford and Tottenham Hale may rise again. Closed since July 1985, it is now the focus of a growing campaign for reopening.**

The context is improving access between Waltham Forest and Stratford with the new Westfield centre, and the prospect of improved Lea Valley line services in just five years' time.

Network Rail's London & South East Route Utilisation Strategy, just published, identifies the clear and pressing need for infrastructure investment to increase track capacity in the Lea Valley north from Stratford and Tottenham Hale for extra local train services to meet rising demand. In the wake of London's riots there is additional funding available to support economic regeneration in the Tottenham and Enfield areas. Specifically, the Stratford City development generated Section 106 funds for 'the Chingford Link Project' which can include reopening Lea Bridge station, and the approximately £5m apparently available may be near enough to do the job.

All these factors combine to generate a gathering groundswell of support for a probably unique opportunity to fill a gap in Waltham Forest's access to rail transport. An 'arc of access' already exists from Leyton tube station to the east to Blackhorse Road tube and mainline stations to the north, via Leytonstone and Leytonstone High Road, Leyton Midland Road, Walthamstow Central and Queen's Road, Wood Street, and St James Street stations. Three very high frequency bus services along Lea Bridge Road (48/55/56) extend the walk-up catchment area of the reopened station further into the Clapton area of Hackney and the Whipps Cross area of Waltham Forest.

Contrastingly, bus links between Walthamstow and either Stratford or Tottenham Hale are limited and slow, and links from Clapton to those two key destinations and interchanges are no better. Users

of bus routes 69, 158, 230, and 257 will bear witness. Future journey times to Stratford and Tottenham Hale from the catchment of the reopened Lea Bridge station would be halved. From this December's timetable change the Monday-Saturday service, the service likely to greet a reopened station, will become two trains per hour all day rather than the present weekday peak hours only with just an hourly service at all other times. Then with a four trains per hour available at the reopened station in the relatively near future, an attractive proposi-

tion develops for residents and businesses in the area as well as visitors to it.

The tasks ahead now include developing a detailed and credible prospectus for the station reopening, and to convince the 'movers and shakers' that now is the time to grasp the opportunity of a combination of favourable circumstances to make this happen. Some have dared to suggest that 2014 is a workable target date for the reopening of Lea Bridge station.

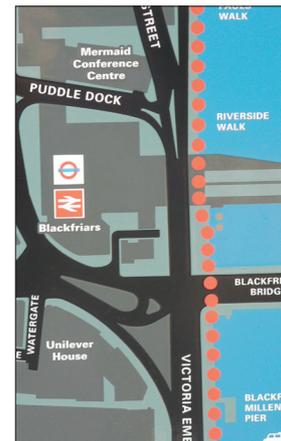
Roger Blake



Lea Bridge station - in need of some TLC

## Blackfriars Bridge

We reported the campaign against TfL's proposals for Blackfriars Bridge in the last issue of the newsletter. Amongst our demands is that the 20 mph speed limit on the bridge be retained. We are pleased now to report that GLA members have unanimously called on the Mayor to order a full scale review of the speed limit on the bridge.



## Cycling to work

More people perhaps would cycle to work if they had somewhere to change their clothes, have a shower, and store their bike safely. An initiative started in a former underground car park in Soho might just be the answer. For a monthly fee all that is available plus a cycle repair shop, lockers and a gym. It's called the H2 club. From an environmental point of view it can't be bad.



# THE NEW LONDON PLAN: A curate's egg

**Boris Johnson's London Plan, which sets out the spatial policies for the capital for the next twenty years, was finally published in July following a lengthy process of consultation and an Examination in Public.**

The recommendations of the Inspectors' report on the Examination accepted several of the arguments that had been made, particularly on transport policies, by Campaign for Better Transport and others. Nevertheless the Mayor rejected many of the Inspectors' recommendations and the final Plan is a mixture of good policies and bad.

The worst aspect is that the Mayor has once more proved unwilling to tackle the traffic on London's roads. For example, he has ignored the Inspectors' recommendations that he reinstate the road user hierarchy which places the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and buses first in planning before those of motorists and that he create a stronger policy in favour of road user charging.

The plan also retains a number of policies that have come under criticism from environmental organisations. These include increasing overall road capacity in the capital by 'smoothing traffic flow', allowing more parking in town centres and at new office developments, and endorsing new road crossings of the river, despite their high cost, their impacts on the environment and their effect on traffic levels.

The Plan does endorse policies to encourage more walking, cycling and travel by public transport while reducing the proportion of journeys made by car. But when London's population is forecast to grow by

more than a million in the next twenty years, as it is, a reduced mode share for the car would be quite consistent with an increased overall level of car traffic. This makes it more likely that TfL's prediction of a 14% increase in congestion in London by 2031, made only last year in the Transport Strategy and which some in TfL are already trying to down-play or deny, will

turn out to be accurate.

The policies on traffic, or the lack of them, threaten to undermine the positive aspects of the London Plan which sets out a strong framework for integrated transport and land use planning with a hierarchy of town, local and neighbourhood centres and various policies to protect local shops and services and to reduce the need to travel. It is important to protect this at a time when the national government is consulting on a retrograde draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the London Plan may turn out to be the largest remaining depository for the progressive policies in old system of plan-

ning policy guidance and statements. The London Plan may be required to obtain a statement of conformity with the new NPPF and may have to dilute some of its progressive policies in order to do so.

Richard Bourn



## Fair fares



**The Fair Fares Now month of action went better than we could have hoped.**

Hundreds of volunteers stepped forward to run events at over 40 stations across the country, from Maidstone to St. Albans, Exeter to Carlisle and everywhere in between. In many places, local MPs joined in to show their support. The response from passengers was overwhelmingly supportive, and the events also helped to generate a huge amount of local media coverage, whose importance in shaping political opinion is often forgotten. Together, campaigners gathered thousands of signatures on the petition demanding that the government reverse its plans to raise fares by 28% by 2015.

We capped off this groundswell of action with a successful demonstration outside Waterloo station on the date that next January's planned fare rises were announced. The turn-out was large, colourful and noisy, and after listening to speakers including Shadow Secretary of State for Transport Maria Eagle, we joined together for a mass 'pop-in', popping hundreds of balloons marked 'No 28% fare hikes' to show that it's time to burst the bubble on inflation-busting fare rises. The media were out in force, and we made our views heard loud and clear in every national newspaper and on every major TV and radio channel.

Now, it's time to focus on the government's fares review. We'll be working hard behind the scenes, demonstrating how dire the impacts of fare hikes will be, and pushing the government to commit to improvements like part-time season tickets or being able to pay advance fare up to departure – as well as reducing the cost of train travel overall.

There's no denying we've got a tough job ahead of us. But together, we've already made fare increases a political hot potato rather than an annual fait accompli. The government are now firmly on the back foot, having been forced to try to justify their 'difficult decision' in the public spotlight rather than staying silent or hiding behind the train companies. They've said they want to end the era of above inflation fare rises. The door is open, and – with the huge amount of new support and momentum generated by everyone's hard work over the month of action – we know we can win this campaign.

Alexandra Woodsworth CBT Public Transport Campaigner



# Together for transport



**The TSSA union, a national affiliate of the Campaign for Better Transport, has set up a community organising campaign under the banner of Together for Transport.**

With a focus initially in London, the campaign is designed to draw different groups together to defend and promote public transport by offering research, resources, training and networking.

Like so much of our society, public transport is under assault by the government's cuts agenda which will see the burden of subsidy passed to users through increased fares alongside the prospect of cuts to bus and train services and threats to free and reduced rate travel arrangements.

Already we have seen huge cuts to supported bus services across England, whilst in London the cost of fares continues to spiral at RPI inflation plus 2% as the Mayor, Boris Johnson, passes the effects of reduced subsidy onto passengers. On the railways, we are awaiting the government's full response to the McNulty Report which recommends sweeping cuts. The government's decision to increase rail fares by an average of RPI plus 3% - 8% from January 2012 is intended to make the fare payers foot the bill for infrastructure improvements at a time when so many people are struggling with increased prices and low or non-existent pay rises.

The community organising principles of Together for Transport have already seen it establish links with the Campaign for Better Transport, the National Pensioners Convention, TUC and other organisations.

In terms of the Campaign for Better Transport, Together for Transport has been working with the Fair Fares Now campaign, supporting the demonstration on 16th August and is planning to provide assistance with the Save Our Buses actions at the party conferences in September.

On September 1st, in conjunction with the Climate Alliance a packed public meeting was held in Derby to plan a way forward to reverse the government's decision to award the Thameslink train building contract to Siemens of Germany. Despite the government's rhetoric about favouring British workers, they remain intransigent about their decision which will see over 1,400 workers in Derby lose their jobs and UK train building cease unless we all take action now.

Together for Transport has also set up a website ([www.togetherfortransport.org](http://www.togetherfortransport.org)) that seeks to publicise the issues facing the users of public transport, provide research and encourage action and campaigning through petitions, polls and letter writing.

In addition, a training plan is currently being finalised that will be offered to community activists within organisations linked to Together for Transport as well to those individuals who want to volunteer as a public transport community campaigner with Together for Transport.

For more information, contact [Rob@togetherfortransport.org](mailto:Rob@togetherfortransport.org) and have a look at the website.

Whilst you're on the Website, why don't you take the actions, join the Campaign as a Facebook supporter and follow it on twitter as well as sign up for newsletters via the Website or by contacting me at:

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London NW1 2EJ  
[Rob Jenks, TSSA](mailto:Rob Jenks, TSSA)



# Keeping London Moving

**Come and hear Caroline Pidgeon, Chair of the Transport Committee of the Greater London Authority**

**The meeting is to be held in City Hall on Thursday 27th October, starting at 18.00.**

**GLA's City Hall is on the south side of Tower Bridge, ten minutes walk from London Bridge station.**

Please let us know if you wish to attend.  
email [c.barker@lineone.net](mailto:c.barker@lineone.net)  
phone 020 8347 7684.

## 20 mph – Sustrans appeals to the mayoral candidates



Sustrans, the national environmental transport group, are inviting people to appeal to the London mayoral candidates to commit to introducing 20 mph limits on mayoral-controlled streets.

You can do this on a postcard which can be obtained from Sustrans – phone 020 7017 2352. CBT are supporting the campaign.