

Hammersmith Bridge



Future Transport London campaigns for sustainable solutions to London's transport problems favouring public transport, walking and cycling over private cars.

Membership £15 a year.
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The newsletter is edited by Chris Barker. Contributions are welcomed. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of Future Transport London.

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The present Hammersmith Bridge, designed by John Bazalgette, was opened in 1887. It seems always to have suffered from structural problems and on several occasions has been closed for strengthening work.

In 1997 it was closed to all but buses, emergency vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. There were dire warnings of traffic chaos on nearby bridges as a result of the closure. Miraculously this did not appear to happen and has been used as an example of 'traffic evaporation' where traffic seems to dis-

appear rather than appear as congestion elsewhere.

In 2020 further deterioration of the structure led to the total closure of the bridge, seriously inconveniencing many people, particularly those residents of Barnes and Castelna, just south of the bridge, who need to get to Hammersmith, including many school children who need to make a lengthy diversion by way of Putney Bridge. The closure is likely now to last a long time as there is no agreement on who should pay for the repairs. Estimates are that it would cost £46million to stabilise the

bridge and make it safe for pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic and up to £163million to fully restore it so it can be reopened to buses and motor vehicles. Currently there is no agreement about who should foot this bill. Certainly its owner, Hammersmith and Fulham Council, could not afford it.

Urgent talks about what could be done in the short term to restore a river crossing focus on a ferry for pedestrians and cyclists. Tenders for the ferry and the associated landing stages have been issued so it should be ready within the next few months although it

is now said that the bridge might reopen in the Spring for pedestrians and cyclists. A radical plan for temporary use of the bridge has been put forward. This involves constructing two decks above the existing structure, the lower one for pedestrians and cyclists and the upper one for vehicles including buses. Both decks would be clear of the existing structure which could be removed in stages for repair. Estimates are that this temporary structure could be in place within a year.

Andrew Bosi

Camden High Line



Plans are afoot to launch a walkway beside the North London rail line emulating New York's High Line.

The elevated line would start next to Camden Road station and terminate at York Way. Camden Council says that the line would be a beautiful and welcoming linear garden, punctuated with seating areas, cafés, arts and cultural interventions and spaces for charitable activities.

Future Transport London has doubts about these plans.

Unlike the High Line in New York this is a strip of land, varying in width from three to 20 metres, alongside a live railway. It is only half a mile in length but would need to be approached by flights of steps or a lift. It is claimed that it would be a pleasant traffic-free method of walking from Camden Town to King's Cross but the canal tow-path already offers this facility and ends up in Granary Square, the cultural heart of the new King's Cross development.

It is said that the walkway would be temporary pending it

being needed for widening the railway but Network Rail seems prepared to give the promoters a 25 year lease on the site with a 15 year break clause in case it is then needed for railway purposes. Given the amount of freight traffic on this line and the already heavily used passenger service the future use of this land for railway purposes seems likely and one can envisage a prolonged row if the walkway then has to be surrendered.

We would also like to see tracks reinstated, and all

four platforms to reopen at Camden Road station. Freight and passenger services would benefit. Some East London Line trains could then be extended west to Camden Road, on segregated tracks, and then (perhaps as a separate project) to continue across a very short stretch of widened viaduct towards a reopened Primrose Hill station perhaps continuing to Queens Park or the bay platforms at Willesden Junction station, near to developments at Old Oak Common. That would favour orbital public transport in north London, rather than continual investment in radial routes into the centre, a model perhaps permanently modified by Covid-19.

Ella's Law

The death of nine-year old Ella Kissi-Debrah caused by air pollution from traffic on the South Circular Road outside her home has accelerated demands for legislation to reduce this hazard.

All traffic produces tiny particles of dust which are particularly harmful for people with asthma and other breathing difficulties. But an added danger is from nitrogen dioxide which is emitted chiefly by diesel vehicles, encouraged in the noughties because they produce far less carbon dioxide, a potent greenhouse gas, than petrol engines. Levels of particulate matter and NO2 outside Ella's home regularly exceed the limits set out by the World Health Organisation and accepted by the EU and the British government.

Client Earth, the environmental charity which uses the law to create powerful change to protect life on earth, has won several court cases against the government establishing that pollution levels exceed legally agreed maxima. Clean Air London is proposing a new Clean Air Act to tighten health, environmental and legal protections.

Although the Mayor is taking some steps to clean the air - expanding the ultra low emission zone from October 2021, cleaning up London's buses, proposing the banning of sales of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points - it is the government which has the power to make a difference. A national road charging scheme, a diesel scrappage scheme, a stop to further rail fare rises and an end to the ten-year fuel duty freeze are actions which are urgently required to end the scourge of roadside pollution.



After COVID is over



Will movements of people and goods around London revert to the way things were, or will they be different – retaining some of the new COVID-determined patterns? And, if so, then what long-lasting changes to transport in London will result?

One new pattern which has affected most of us is greatly increased reliance upon on-line shopping, beginning during the lockdown, including free home delivery, for food and much else besides: e-retailing. The financial press records how Ocado is the biggest winner, not just because it has a middle-class clientele but because it also makes money from the use of its logistics software by other retailers.

Alongside this development there is another less obvious but associated one: increased consumer reliance on small neighbourhood convenience stores for supplementing the weekly on-line delivery. The Co-op is the big winner here, taking Sainsbury's Local

as a prototype and establishing scores of small stores crammed with a much broader range of goods.

Both these retail developments are broadly advantageous for the environment: the first involves less vehicle mileage (a single delivery van following an optimised route from distribution centre to many people's homes replacing multiple individual car journeys from home-to-store and return); the second has customers walking, or maybe cycling, to the local convenience store, perhaps on the way home from work.

Will people retain these shopping habits after the pandemic?

A second lockdown-imposed behaviour pattern affecting the professional lives of very many Londoners is home-working, instead of commuting daily to an office.

This development exploits advances in IT, including widespread and reliable high band-

width communications together with video conferencing and an ever-broadening range of professional applications software installed on workers' personal computers. Arguably, a revolution in IT-based working practices towards remote, distributed, on-line-professional working (following on from the successful lower-skilled distributed remote call-centre model) has been waiting to happen and the pandemic has provided the incentive.

How successful is this revolution from the viewpoints of workers and management?

Working at home instead of commuting saves workers the costs of commuting in time and money but may present challenges to management, however organisations are potentially making significant savings on office costs.

Many home-working professionals are enjoying the greater comfort and flexibility of the home working environment and have increased their productivity, partly because they are working longer hours, giving their employer some at least of their would-have-been-commuting time. But they are missing out on real face to face interaction with their fellow professionals and managers and this may become an issue.

Will home-working continue after the pandemic?

Full or part-week home-working would likely prompt extensive migration to Outer London or beyond so as to benefit from affordable bigger homes and gardens and cleaner air. And workers who are office based for just two days a week might choose to move further from London, but acquire a pied-a-terre close to the centre, or a share of one, for one or two overnight stays each week.

So: what would be the effect

of future homeworking on travel and the environment in the capital?

Commuter journeys will be fewer and longer: the weekly volume of commuter travel by car and rail being greatly reduced and the morning and evening weekday travel peaks would be reduced in volume and spread out in time.

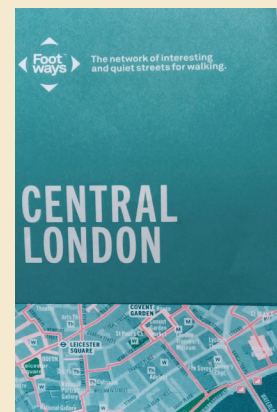
There will probably be a shift from car to rail for commuter journeys and fewer two-car families. Consequently, pollution would be reduced significantly.

Peter Osmon

Walking in London

London Living Streets and Urban Good, a community interest company established with the mission to improve life in cities, have researched and produced a walking map of Central London. The objective is to connect major places with welcoming, appealing and accessible streets, prompting Londoners and visitors to choose walking as the most efficient, enjoyable and healthy option.

The map is obtainable at a number of central London bookshops.



Financing the buses and tubes

The emergency financial package drawn up in April and accepted under duress by the Mayor funded tubes and buses to 17th October.

On 16th October it was announced that agreement on a further package had not been reached and the government was therefore extending the previous settlement by two weeks or £113m.

The results of the government review into TfL finances has not been made public but press reports suggested that the government wished to reverse two of the most significant decisions of the previous Mayor, now Prime Minister, and the current Mayor would not agree. The idea of extending the congestion zone to the North and South Circular roads brought

protests from Conservative MPs and their mayoral candidate. The Secretary of State then claimed he had not proposed it but only suggested it as one of a number of ways of raising money. In other words, it is OK as long as the Mayor gets the blame. If it is a money generating scheme it is not a charge on congestion – those who pay have an expectation that congestion would be reduced by it.

The previous Mayor's decision to fund an over-60 pass has grown in cost as the age for eligibility for the National Pensioners pass has risen. Ironically it was the present Mayor who as a junior Minister signed the order giving effect to this. The Mayor's review of finances, which now needs to find £160m. of savings, has claimed that the scheme costs £131m. per annum in lost revenue but is unclear what assumptions are made about the extent to which currently undertaken journeys would continue to be made by public

transport if the passenger has to pay. No decisions have been taken and unpopular ones are likely after the election rather than before.

The agreement signed at a quarter to midnight as the revised deadline approached avoided the worst scenarios and recognised at last the false economy of axing the under-18 pass. The agreement only lasts for five months meaning that a further agreement will be needed just as we enter the next period of purdah.

Boris Johnson's enthusiasm for greater powers to the Mayor seems to have evaporated with his changed role. The Northern mayors have complained that government decision making is London centric, but in reality both they and we are victims of over-centralisation as the pandemic has provided an excuse for draconian powers over the minutiae of our daily lives of which public transport is but a small part. Although the spat between

the previous Mayor and the incumbent brought criticism to both sides, London-based businesses recognised that the current Mayor was defending their interests and their private intervention probably explains why the government backed down. Nonetheless, the deal reached is far from ideal. It will require further negotiations in six months, whereas rail services across the country have been underwritten for eighteen months.

The planned fare increase has been delayed by two months in line with National Rail fares. With so few people travelling in tier 4 London, this is unlikely to be of significance to the deficit.

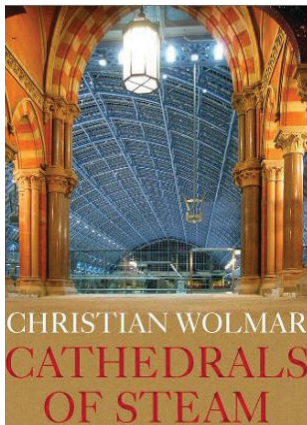
The most positive aspect is that the Mayor has at last been seized of the need to introduce a road pricing scheme sensitive to distance travelled, time of day, and popularity of route in place of the congestion charge.

Andrew Bosi

Cathedrals of Steam

On a rainy April Tuesday, I spent the day going round the London stations in order to complete the last chapter of my new book, *Cathedrals of Steam*.

The book tells the story of how London ended up with a dozen terminus stations, more than any other city in the world and how all but one of them was built in a forty year period of the 19th century and yet have survived through to the 21st century.



The last chapter of the book is a tour of the stations accompanied by the ghost of Sir John Betjeman, the poet who saved St Pancras and has been rewarded with a charming statue on the upper level of the station. Betjeman, who died in 1984, wrote London's *Historic Stations* in the early 1970s at a time when London's railway system was at its nadir. The historic features of Euston had just been demolished to make way for a ghastly airport terminal style hall that, hopefully, will soon also meet its maker, and other stations such as St Pancras, Marylebone and Broad Street were in what seemed like terminal decline.

The Location of Offices Bureau was busily encouraging companies and government departments to decamp to more salubrious towns and cities in the regions and London itself seemed to have passed its sell-by date with its decaying inner core and its ramshackle transport system.

Betjeman's book therefore was a depressing mix of nostalgia and fatalism, as he believed the

British Rail was intent on destroying any vestiges of architectural merit at these stations. However, partly through his efforts, St Pancras was saved and then he was strongly involved in the excellent refurbishment of Liverpool Street, though at the cost of the demolition of Broad Street. And the fortunes of the railways changed. London commuting started increasing again, and the railways were reorganised by British Rail with the highly successful creation of Network SouthEast. Not only were the remaining stations saved, but several were greatly enhanced by refurbishment, notably St Pancras, King's Cross and most recently London Bridge.

So on my 'tour' with Sir John, I suggested that he might be pleased with most of the recent developments and that the condition of the stations was a far cry from the time when he wrote his rather sad book. Except, of course, that the stations were far emptier than he would have ever seen them. Would I have been able to reassure him that this was all temporary?

I'm afraid not. My view is that the change in the pattern of people's working lives was happening any way but has been accelerated by the advent of Covid by 10 or 20 years. Both anecdotally and from looking at the research, commuting patterns will never be the same again. Straphanging for most people will be a thing of the past or, at worst, something they will endure for a day or two. Therefore these glorious stations, which I write about so enthusiastically in the book, are likely to be greatly underused, quite possible for ever. Their heyday was 2019, and now they are in a period of decline. However, as happened before, new uses may emerge, new patterns of work and leisure may be established and perhaps, just perhaps, they will flourish once again. Let's hope so for their sake and for the sake of the capital and its people. London only works as a thriving, bustling, hurly burly of a city.

Christian Wolmar

To purchase a copy of the book signed by the author at a discounted price of £18 – plus £3 p and p email Christian.Wolmar@gmail.com



PAYING FOR NEW RAIL LINES

It is well known that the financial windfall enjoyed by property owners and developers when new rail lines are constructed exceeds the cost of construction.

TfL estimated that a sample of eight prospective TfL projects, including Crossrail 2, the Bakerloo line Extension (BLE) and the DLR extension to Thamesmead, had the potential to produce land value increases of nearly two and a half times the costs associated with the schemes - £36 billion against £87 billion. A survey by Nationwide Bank, estimated that there is a 'transport premium' of 10.5 per cent within 500 metres of a tube station and that the Jubilee Line extension brought a property value uplift of 52 per cent. How can TfL capture this value?

An attempt was made when the Jubilee Line was extended from Green Park to Stratford. Olympia and York, the developer of Canary Wharf, promised £400 million of its estimated £2.1 billion cost. British Gas contributed £25

million. In the event Olympia and York went bankrupt and contributed nothing, the cost rose to £3.5 billion, and final developer contribution was estimated at 5 per cent.

A better result appears to be arising from the Northern Line extension to Battersea Park. Two thirds of the funding is coming from localised business rates retention agreed by the government in 2013, and one third from Section 106 agreements by which developers contribute to ease pressure on the social, physical and economic infrastructure. In fact this does not pay for 100 per cent of the cost. It amounts to one billion pounds whereas the estimated total cost is £1.2 billion.

TfL have been exploring ways in which this increase in land value can be captured and go to help finance schemes. One is to lobby the government to gain greater control of revenue streams which are enhanced by developments but too often accrue to the treasury such as stamp duty, capital gains tax and most business rates, rather than to the authority paying

for the development. TfL reckons that full retention of stamp duty would yield £6 billion for its sample of eight projects and that retention of business rates would yield £7 billion. A potentially high yielding method is to make greater use of the Community Infrastructure Levy and of section 106 options.

Methods that target developers are fine when there is an 'anchor' developer for the site, such as at Nine Elms. But in most cases most beneficiaries are residents or residential landlords. For Crossrail 2 it is estimated that 30 per cent of beneficiaries will be residential property owners, 25 per cent residents and 25 per cent businesses. The proposed transport premium charge is designed to capture those benefits. It would be based on the estimated increased value of properties within a certain distance of new stations, payable on sale and not by existing residents nor levied on social housing. It is estimated that it could potentially generate £13 billion to £28 billion which, with the £6 billion from stamp duty and the £7 billion from business rates would potentially cover the estimated cost of the eight schemes of £36 billion.

Many of these proposed methods of raising funds are within the legal authority of TfL although greater access to stamp duty or business rates would require government cooperation. A transport premium charge would require government legislation.

Since writing this article we have news of the government's proposal to 'streamline' planning laws, abolish the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106, and replace them with a single nationally determined infrastructure levy based on a proportion of the value of the development above a set threshold. Whether it will be possible to get the government to add the proposed transport premium charge to the new rules remains to be seen.

Chris Barker

DLR to Thamesmead

Thamesmead has always suffered from a lack of a rail connection. The Thames practically borders it on three sides making it difficult to build new rail infrastructure.

Fifty years ago the Greater London Council promised better connectivity and at one time it was envisaged that this would be the final destination of the Jubilee Line. There is hope that the Overground extension of the Gospel Oak line from Barking to Barking Riverside might one day be extended under the Thames to Thamesmead. There is now however a real possibility that the DLR will reach it under the Thames.

The DLR would be useful for radial trips into central London but it also excels as a more local, including orbital, transport asset. It can encourage modal shift from cars and enable new journeys for employment and leisure. That is still desirable, even within an overall planning framework that discourages the need for travel.

TfL's plan is for a simple y-junction off the existing Beckton station line. However, TfL has submitted the alternative of a triangular junction, using land near the DLR's Beckton depot. That would allow an orbital route for direct Beckton-Beckton Riverside-Thamesmead trains sometime in coming decades. Our route would skirt the northern boundary of the DLR depot towards the future station at Beckton Riverside. This would allow greater opportunities for development along Armada Way, without the DLR getting in the way.

Somehow the DLR should also reach Barking station in the north, and perhaps Abbey Wood station in the south.

E-scooter trials

E-scooter trials are underway in Middlesbrough, Milton Keynes, Birmingham, Coventry and Northampton. A number of problems have been reported. Middlesbrough suspended its scheme after under-age riders used the scooters on pavements. A shopping centre has put up warning signs after shoppers claimed they were terrorised by riders. There are disturbing reports that criminals are using e-scooters because they are silent and unregistered. It is reported that criminals are modifying them so they can reach speeds of 40-70mph.

In Massachusetts e-scooter hire firm Link has installed technology which cuts out the scooters' batteries when it detects that scooters are being ridden on pavements, using GPS. E-scooters are already fitted with GPS technology to track their location and allow users to find one to rent. Link is exploring the possibility of using this technology in the UK.

Voi is paying police to deter illegal and inconsiderate riding in Birmingham whilst in Northampton police are stepping up patrols. Meanwhile in Coventry, e-scooters are to be fitted with number plates to help identification. Cambridge are limiting e-scooter speeds to 10mph and Birmingham to 8mph.

TfL have announced that trials in London will start in the spring. A third of London's boroughs have expressed an interest in being involved. As in other parts of the country, speeds in London will be limited, down to 8mph in 'go slow' areas.

In October MPs on the Transport Committee called on the government to legalise the use of e-scooters in order to reduce road congestion.

Improving our main roads

Low traffic neighbourhoods clear traffic from residential streets. Critics say that this redirects them onto main roads where conditions for

residents are made worse. There is evidence to suggest that this does not happen and diverted traffic tends to disappear with drivers finding alternative ways of travelling such as walking and cycling or not making particular journeys. However, this does not mean that all is right with main roads. CPRE (the countryside charity) recently set out ten ways to make them less forbidding to users, adapted from a blog by Living Streets.

- Remove car parking bays on main roads, particularly free or uncontrolled parking. Space can then be reallocated to other uses such as bus lanes or 'parklets' where parking bays are given over to greenery or seating areas.
- Introduce bus gates and bus lanes.
- Establish 20 mph speed limits on main roads.
- Put in extra cycle and pedestrian crossings and make side-roads running off main roads easier to cross.
- Improve existing crossings and junctions, including more pedestrian crossings with shorter waiting times for pedestrians.
- Install wider pavements.
- Reduce the number of lanes on the road, reclaiming space for bus lanes, pavement and protected cycle track.



- Put in protected cycle track on main roads to tap latent demand for cycling by dramatically improving safety. This also reduces pollution and improves the pedestrian environment.
- Creating green screens to separate pedestrians from traffic to minimise exposure to pollution and road danger.
- Other measures to discourage car trips including the installation of low traffic neighbourhoods, controlled parking zones, a workplace parking levy, incentivising car clubs, consolidating local freight deliveries and a system of road user charging in which drivers pay by the mile for using the road.

The South London Line at Brixton

London Overground trains currently operate nonstop through Brixton on their orbital route between Clapham Junction and Highbury & Islington because the South London Line has no platforms there.

Brixton is a multicultural district identified as one of 35 major centres in Greater London. It is mainly residential with many shops and a lively street market, as well as Lambeth Town Hall and Borough offices.

A solution Lambeth Council wish to be considered is high-level platforms on the South London Line vertically above the existing Brixton National Rail station, which now only has platforms to serve the Chatham main line and is about 100 metres horizontal distance from the Victoria Line station. However, a controversial 20-storey proposed development, the Hondo Tower, would block the land required for access to new high-level platforms there.

A cheaper option, with different implications for local interchange, would be to rebuild and reopen East Brixton station on the South London

Line: it was closed in 1976 and then demolished, having lost traffic ever since the opening of the Victoria Line extension to Brixton in 1971.

School streets

TfL is encouraging boroughs to implement street closures around schools during start and finishing times in order to encourage walking, scooting or cycling, improve air quality and reduce road danger. During these times access for most motor vehicles would be banned.

Many London boroughs have enthusiastically embraced this policy. Over 40 per cent of Merton schools have implemented school streets whilst Hackney, with 39 School Streets implemented in total, has the most of any London borough and indeed of any local authority in the UK. Most of the participating schools are primary schools although 24 secondary schools in London have them. In total, as of November, 383 school streets have been installed and a further 68 planned.

At the other end of the scale a few boroughs have implemented very few school streets whilst Barking and Dagenham, Bexley and Barnet have so far implemented none.

Reviving the Croxley Link

The plan to divert Metropolitan line trains from its present Watford station to Watford Junction bit the dust in 2016 when new Mayor Sadiq Khan withdrew the promised financial support on the grounds that the line was not in the Greater London area.

There are now hints of a resurrection. Three Rivers District Council, which covers most of the planned extension, has agreed to write to the Department for Transport seeking funding for the £360 million scheme as part of government plans to support 'shovel ready' schemes.