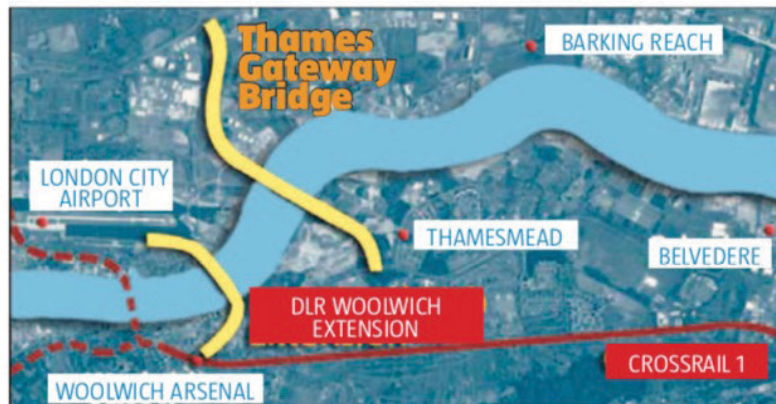


# Thames Gateway Bridge Inquiry reopens

Campaign for Better Transport  
London Newsletter  
September 2007

To the consternation of Transport for London and various business groups and the delight of environmental group such as Transport 2000, the inspector rejected plans for the proposed Thames Gateway Bridge.

It concluded that it was inconsistent with the London Plan (see below), would generate too much traffic and 'result in a negative contribution to ... reducing greenhouse gases'. Supporters of the bridge, however, have not let the matter rest there. The lobby group, Business First, for example, said that 'The planning inspector seems to have put dubious ... environmental concerns ahead of jobs and quality of life for may thousands of people in south-east London'. Responding to these concerns, Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, has decided to reopen the Inquiry, saying that the regeneration benefits of the bridge were not properly considered.



## Local Authority Workplace travel plans

**Workplace travel plans help organisations manage travel through measures which reduce car use.**

They improve the facilities for travel by means other than the car or make it unnecessary to travel (for example homeworking or teleconferencing). They reduce single occupancy car use by an average of about 18%.

Local authorities are often required to make it a condition of planning permission that future occupants of a development adopt a travel plan. But, even though they are often the largest employer and the largest travel generator in a borough, local authorities themselves do not always have their own travel plan in place. They should

lead by example. Transport 2000 (now Campaign for Better Transport) and Transport for London have just published a good practice guide to local authority travel plans. This is designed to help the 13 of London's 33 local boroughs which until recently had still not adopted their own plan. Richard Bourn

### New look for Transport 2000

Transport 2000 has changed its name and this is the first issue of the Newsletter of the London Group, one of several groups around the country. The Newsletter is sent out to all supporters in the London area and we would be pleased if you would also join our group and take part in our London based activities – see details at end.

### Campaign for Better Transport London

To contact the group write to Chris Barker, Campaign for Better Transport, 46 Redston Road, London N8 7HJ. E-mail: [c.barker@lineone.net](mailto:c.barker@lineone.net). Regular meetings of the group are held at the Impact Centre. 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.

## The London Plan

**The process for altering the London Plan is well underway. Consultation on the draft alterations was carried out last year and the Examination in Public took place in June and July.**

The altered plan will cover spatial development issues for the period from now until 2025 – it's broadly about what sort of development will occur and where. In that period both the number of people and the number of jobs in London are expected to grow by almost a million.

Transport 2000 is concerned that it is now proposed that the references to reducing the need to travel, which we worked hard to make sure were included in the original plan, are now to be diluted. The London Plan proposes that most of the new jobs will be located in central London and most of the new housing in outer London. A large amount of travel will be necessary between the two – hence at least some of the need for new public transport schemes.

This would work against locating far more jobs around outer London's town centres so that homes, jobs and amenities could all be close together and many more journeys could be made on foot and by bicycle. The Mayor's view is that it doesn't matter how much you travel as long as it's by public transport. We challenged that at the Examination in Public. The Panel's report is expected at the end of September. Richard Bourn



A modern tram on street in Sheffield. How would this look in Central London?

## The Cross-River tram

**The proposed Cross-River tram is a scheme to take a new tram route through the centre of London forming a new north-south link.**

The core of the proposed route connects Euston and Waterloo via Upper Woburn Place, Kingsway and Waterloo Bridge. Two branches are proposed at each end; northwards to Camden Town and Kings Cross, and southwards to Peckham and Brixton. Public consultation on route options, to which Transport 2000 London contributed, closed on 31st January.

We welcome the scheme for a number of reasons:

- Trams are more effective than buses in persuading people to travel by public transport
- Trams, compared with buses, are safer, more comfortable, faster, non-polluting, more economical on fuel
- Their introduction paves the way for measures to calm traffic and create a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

We made a number of comments on aspects of the route.

One option for Camden Town, which we strongly support, is to dismantle the one-way system in this area which makes Camden High Street into a one-way race track and inhibits its role as a shopping centre. The proposal would close the High Street to all except trams and buses.

The route between Euston and Kings Cross is mired in controversy. The obvious route is via Euston

Road. However, this would mean that only the Camden Town trams would serve Euston station and, it is claimed, would seriously disrupt traffic on Euston Road. The favoured alternative proposal takes the tram along Polygon Road through the middle of a housing estate which has incurred the wrath of local residents. A third alternative takes the route much further north and along Crowndale Road. Although this is a long way round it is the one which appears to have the least disadvantage and might well be the one eventually decided upon.

Between Euston and Waterloo



Busy Camden High Street

the tram carves a path through central London. The proposal involves extensive traffic calming measures along this stretch which would improve the whole area for pedestrians and cyclists.

There are various options for the routes south of Waterloo. Assisting regeneration projects in Elephant and Castle, Southwark and Brixton is one of Transport for London's (TfL's) stated aims for the tram scheme and this guides the proposed routes. The Peckham branch would (and the Brixton branch may) be routed via Elephant and Castle. Redevelopment of this badly designed and run down area is urgently required and the tram route, carefully threaded through, would enhance the ambiance of the area.

Two estates south of Elephant and Castle, the Aylesbury estate on the Peckham branch, and the Stockwell Park estate on the Brixton branch, are subjects of regeneration schemes to which the tram would make a welcome contribution.

We finished our contribution to the consultation by urging that TfL make every effort to build support for the scheme, particularly by holding meetings on the estates through which the tram will run, persuading them of the advantage of this modern, user-friendly and environmentally benign form of transport.

Chris Barker

## Improving London's air quality

In the teeth of opposition from operators, mayor Ken Livingstone is pushing ahead with plans to introduce a Low Emission Zone across the whole of London next year. From next February, all lorries over 12 tonnes entering the zone will be expected to comply with the new standard and this will be extended to lighter lorries, buses and coaches from July. Bringing non-compliant vehicles into the zone will not be prohibited but the daily charge of £200, backed up by a penalty charge of £1000 for failing to pay, is clearly designed to make it uneconomic to do so.

Vehicles will be monitored by Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras which could, in the future, be used for a capital wide congestion charge scheme should such a scheme be planned.

Road haulage operators say that this move will, at a massive cost, force them to renew vehicles some three or four years earlier than they otherwise would. However, it does mean that, during this period, air quality will be better and this could well save lives.

## Congestion Charge Zone extended

The congestion charge zone almost doubled in size on 19th February with its expansion westwards to cover more parts of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. Once again critics were forecasting all manner of problems and once again they were confounded. With no bad news to report the press quickly fell silent.

It seems that traffic volumes have now fallen in the western part of the zone by 10-14 per cent and congestion by more, 15-22 per cent. Both reductions were in line with predictions. Even Transport 2000 has been proved wrong: we were concerned that creating one larger zone rather than two separate ones would allow many residents of the western extension to drive round the whole of Central London for only 80p a week pushing traffic levels up again in the original zone. This has not happened; traffic has gone down slightly in the old congestion charge area.

The question now is what going to happen next to road user charging in London. In 2008 the Mayor is proposing to raise the charge to £25 a day with no residents' discounts for vehicles with the highest fuel consumption. There are discussions about introducing a congestion charge in Greenwich. But the big question is what will happen in the next mayoral term. If he wins again, will London-wide road user charging be the big trick of Livingstone's third term?

Richard Bourn



# The case for Biogas

**In one year's time the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) Programme will place an obligation on fuel suppliers in UK to ensure that, by 2010, 5% of all transport fuel sold comes from a renewable source.**

The reason for the 5% is that the EU allows petrol and diesel to be sold normally if it contains no more than 5% biofuels additive. As a result the spotlight has been directed onto biofuels as potentially providing the best way to meet this obligation, but with a heavy emphasis on the cultivation of

biocrops to produce biodiesel and bioethanol. The other main biofuel, biogas, is dismissed contemptuously by the DfT as a "niche product".

Biogas deserves much greater attention than this. There is a strong case for giving it top priority, ahead of biofuels produced from biocrops. Biogas is produced by the anaerobic digestion of any kind of organic waste, including sewage. By digesting these wastes methane is prevented from entering the atmosphere where it is 22 times more damaging than carbon as a

Greenhouse Gas (GHG). The residue can be used as a fertiliser, since the pathogens are killed off by the heat during the digestion process. Gas engines which run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), derived from fossil fuels, can be easily converted to run on Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) since both are methane gases. The big difference is that whereas CNG reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by under 20%, compared to conventional fuels, RNG reduces them by over 160%, because it prevents methane emissions (EU Report on Biofuels April 2006). These figures illustrate the urgency of the need to capture this methane and use it to replace fossil fuels.

Producing bioethanol and

biodiesel from biocrops is a short term, unsustainable method of meeting the demand for renewable transport fuels. Not only is the net energy gain from such crops low and in some cases negative but their use often leads to the displacement of food crops, raising food prices and in some cases destroying forest to bring new land into cultivation. A recent Dutch report has shown that bioethanol produced under present conditions in Brazil can meet the sustainability criteria but may soon change. Obviously biogas, produced locally from organic waste, deserves to be given priority.

Because RNG is derived from recycling organic waste it is carbon neutral – it does not add carbon to the atmosphere, as fossil fuels do. It also reduces toxic pollution very low levels. These are some of the reasons why it is widely and increasingly used in Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe although hardly at all in UK. In Lille the bus have been converting to RNG made from sewage since 1994 and will soon all be converted. In Stockholm all the inner city transport service now run on renewable fuels, including sewage gas (RNG). By contrast, in London, all 8,025 buses run on subsidised diesel (emitting 680,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> a year) with only seven hybrid diesel electric buses (New York will have 550 hybrids by the end of this year) and three fuel cell buses, supplied under an EU (not Tfl) initiative. TfL Mayor seems to emit more hot air than clean air when it comes to climate change!

The EU predicts that total demand for gasoline, kerosene or diesel oil for transport will increase by 34% between 2000 and 2030. This is of course quite unrealistic as oil supplies will have peaked long before then and supplies will not be available. The National Society for Clean Air (NSCA) *Report on Biogas as a Road Transport Fuel* (June 2006) calculates that resources of organic "waste" in UK are sufficient to supply enough biogas to meet 16% of all UK transport fuel requirements. This is more than enough to fuel all urban public transport buses in UK. Why not write to the DfT and TfL and ask them what their programme is for making this happen, before declining supplies of fossil fuels makes it too expensive to go on subsidising diesel fuel for buses at £1 million per day?

James Skinner

## Taxing the gas guzzlers

**About 26% of UK carbon emissions comes from transport (the other sectors being energy production, industry and domestic).**

It is the only sector from which emissions are forecast to grow over the period to 2020. Overwhelmingly the growth will come from the relentless increase in the number of private cars.

Although there are important developments in technology making vehicles more fuel efficient, the gains are outweighed by the increasing number of cars and the popularity of 4x4s and other powerful cars.

With its new found concerns about global warming the Government is beginning to take some action. Vehicle excise duty for cars has moved from a flat rate to one based on carbon dioxide emissions and the top rate was raised in the 2007 budget. Instead of £175 per year it is now £210, although it is doubtful whether people who can afford upwards of £40,000 for a car will be put off by this increase. Government research suggests that car tax of

£500 per year would encourage a third of buyers of large cars to consider less fuel hungry vehicles but others suggest that a tax of £2000 would be necessary and justified.

Local authorities have less scope than national Government to tax large cars, although many would like to do so. The mayor of London says he intends to increase the congestion charge for the most polluting cars to £25 per day. But one revenue source which they can influence is the charge for parking on the road in controlled areas.

Traditionally this is levied at a standard rate for each car, but Richmond has decided to do its bit to discourage gas guzzlers by charging different rates according to the car's carbon dioxide emission. Electric cars will be free. Hybrid cars like the Toyota Prius merit a 50% reduction. Small cars benefit from a 10% reduction, average cars rise by 10%, but owners of large cars like the Ford Mondeo have to pay 50% more and the largest suffer a 200% increase. Richmond has also decided to discourage the ownership of more than one car by raising the charge by 25% for a second car and 50% for third or



subsequent cars.

Opponents of the new policy generally took a broad libertarian line objecting to 'them' telling us what car to drive, but one argument was that it was not fair only targeting drivers who live in controlled parking zones. But reaction to Richmond's move has been surprisingly positive. In a poll 49% said they supported the move and only 39% were opposed.

Emboldened by this apparent success other Councils are now following Richmond's lead. In London, Lambeth introduced a scheme in May and Camden 'went green' in August. Haringey, which introduced a similar scheme on 1st July, unlike Richmond, will make a profit from the

new charges. Only electric cars will benefit from decreased parking charges. Even the charge for hybrids will increase by £5 per year.

Reversing the increase in pollution from transport is an urgent need. Encouraging the use of smaller and cleaner cars can only be one part of the answer. Discouraging the use of cars at all must also be on the agenda. This does not mean making the use of cars impossibly difficult. For many purposes cars are not readily replaceable by other means of transport, but the continuing campaign must be to increase the attractiveness of alternatives, both other means of transport and other life styles.

Chris Barker

# Failure of Outer London Transport policy

## Victoria Reconstruction Announced

In April London Underground announced that Victoria Underground Station will benefit from a £509m reconstruction scheme. The project will result in a 50% increase in the total size of the station, and will include a new ticket hall, lifts and escalators, and step-free access to Victoria, District and Circle platforms. This investment will mean that entry to the station will no longer need to be closed for a few minutes several times each day in order to prevent overcrowding on the platforms, as is the case at present. The rebuilding will begin in 2009 and is due to be completed by 2014.

## London Overground

On 11th November Transport for London (TfL) will take over responsibility for running the former Silverlink lines in North and East London; when the new East London line opens in 2010 both networks will operate under the London Overground brand name. The North London lines are the North London line itself, the Gospel Oak to Barking line, the West London line from Clapham Junction to Willesden Junction, and the Euston to Watford line. The London Overground routes will be shown on the Tube maps, operate mostly to Underground frequencies, and Oyster cards will be usable on them. 24 new trains will be delivered for the North London line in 2009, while the Barking-Gospel Oak line will get 4 trains per hour from December 07 and all its stations will be manned from first train to last from 2010.

## Camden Town Modernisation

Camden Town Underground station is undergoing year-long modernisation works which began in May 2007 and will finish next May. The scope of work comprises improvements to the environment, safety and accessibility of the station, increased and renewed CCTV coverage, installation of help points, a new public address system and tactile strips on platforms and stairs. Improvements to interior surfaces will include the installation of new lighting, refurbishment of the ticket hall ceilings, and replacement or renovation of most existing tiling. Most heritage features will be restored. Two years ago LU's proposals for a complete rebuilding were rejected on appeal after a public inquiry.

**Outer London is crucial to the transport future of the city. Two thirds of Londoners live there and only 13% of journeys in outer London are made by public transport.**

While traffic in central London has gone down by about 15%, largely because of the congestion charge, and traffic in inner London has declined slightly as well, traffic in outer London continues to grow. Transport for London (TfL) estimates that it could increase by up to 14% between 2001 and 2016.

One of the main failings of the Mayor's position on transport is the absence of policies for outer London. The target in the Mayor's transport strategy is merely to reduce the rate of traffic growth in outer London from 7.5% to 5%, not the absolute amount. If TfL's forecast is correct even this will not be achieved. Meanwhile the need to tackle transport problems in outer

London is made more urgent by growing appreciation of the need to reduce global warming emissions.

Transport 2000 has been looking at transport in outer London in a programme of work funded by London Councils (previously the ALG). This culminated earlier this year in the publication of two reports and a briefing which summarised our conclusions and was widely distributed to the GLA, TfL and the boroughs.

Low Carbon Transport for Outer London showed that a 60% cut in carbon emissions could easily be achieved by a combination of improved fuel efficiency and traffic reduction. A reduction of 17% in car use from today's level could readily be achieved and is entirely realistic. More co-ordinated transport and land use planning would improve access and travel choice. Travel by other means than the car would have to increase

but only by realistic amounts: walking would go up by a third, cycling would quadruple from a very low base and public transport use would double.

In the second report *Making Way for Better Transport in Outer London*, Transport 2000 concluded that there is much the local authorities can do to encourage alternatives to the car and make better use of London's road network, 90 per cent of which they control. It identified four types of measures available to the boroughs:

- Promoting access and increasing travel choice
- Improving alternatives to the car
- Managing demand for car travel
- Changing travel behaviour

The problem is that while most boroughs are using some measures, good practice is not being followed across the board. Transport 2000 also found that there is still widespread scepticism about the benefits of walking and cycling schemes and other 'soft' measures.

Richard Bourn

The reports and the briefing are all available on Transport 2000's website at <http://www.transport2000.org.uk/outerlondon/index.asp>

## Transport 2025

### Transport for London's vision for the future

**Transport 2025 is a document published by TfL in June 2006 setting out the way in which TfL sees London's transport developing in a way that supports sustainable development, improves social inclusion and tackles climate change.**

The overall objectives contained in the document are ones with which it would be difficult to disagree. They include improving public transport, managing traffic congestion, improving availability and physical accessibility of transport and improving air quality. But these objectives are seen in the context of the Mayor's London Plan which often conflicts with Transport 2025 objectives.

One of the most glaring anomalies is the need to accommodate the Mayor's plan to concentrate employment in central London which inevitably involves increasing commuting. It is envisaged that there will be a 12 per cent increase in population in the period up to 2025 and a 20 per cent increase in employment. But peak hour commuting is forecast to grow by 30 per cent. This is a reflection of

the fact that, whilst employment growth is forecast to be concentrated on the central area (between White City and the Thames Gateway) population growth will be much more scattered. In fact as London, hemmed in by the green belt, becomes more crowded and house prices rise out of reach of most people, growth areas for population are likely to be in outer areas as far away as Cambridge or Ashford. Crossrail, the Thameslink upgrade and domestic services on High Speed 1 from Kent, useful as these developments might be, would chiefly be built to serve the needs of these long distance commuters.

The document lists Travel Demand Management as one of its policy options for achieving its objectives. Encouraging commuting makes this more difficult than it ought and ensures that more pollution is released into the atmosphere in violation of the objective to tackle climate change.

The issue of accessibility is addressed. Accessibility should not only mean the ability to travel but also the ability to access amenities such as work, shops, hospitals, leisure facilities and so on easily. Really this should mean that these amenities should be built into neighbourhoods at the planning stage. The biggest gain would be

reducing the need to travel making people's lives easier and contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gases. TfL of course is a transport provider and therefore has no influence over wider policy objectives. Although these points are acknowledged in the document there are no policy proposals to deal with them.

Finally to the issue of climate change. The document recognises the importance of this issue. 'Left unaddressed, climate change could be the single biggest problem facing humanity over the coming decades'. Proposals to tackle this problem are, however, confined to making vehicles more efficient. The points mentioned above could also reduce the need for transport and this would make a far bigger contribution to reducing carbon emissions. Being concerned with transport within London, TfL feels quite unable to tackle the issue of air pollution. 'Air travel is by far the most significant contributor to carbon emissions from transport ... but TfL has no direct control over it'.

Transport 2025 makes an important contribution to a progressive and long term vision for the transport future of the capital, but is inevitably limited by its inability to go beyond narrow transport issues and the terms of the London Plan.

Chris Barker