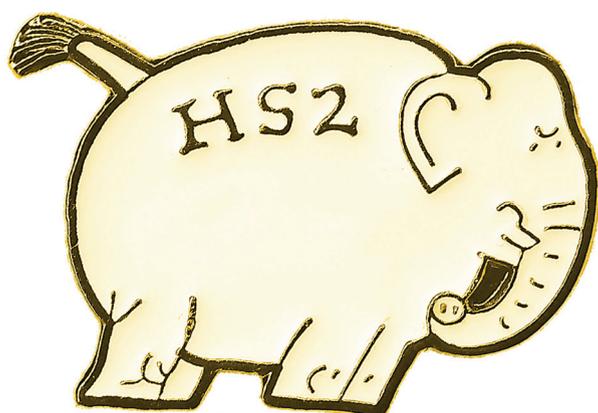


Whither HS2?



Although there is no unanimity as to whether HS2 is a good thing, we can be pleased with some progress made over the last six months.

The false notion that it was about speeding up journeys has been jettisoned, and so has the link to HS1 that would have been so damaging to Camden and to the capacity of the North London Line.

Most of us agree the need for increased rail capacity. In 1994 privatisation was seen by the then government as managing gentle decline. Railtrack Property was a bigger player than Railtrack Operations. Now there is widespread acceptance that railways are in demand and we need more of them.

How we achieve this remains problematic. Governments like a take it or leave it option to avoid pitting voters from constituency A against those from constituency B, but for this to work they have to get it right first time. A brand new line inevitably takes plenty of land and property from individuals, and it cannot be constructed with-

out some disruption to the existing lines with which it must ultimately connect.

Upgrading existing lines will also involve some land take, and more disruption to existing lines, but that happens anyway. It is clearly a cheaper option and therefore cannot be rejected out of hand. A third option, transforming the Chiltern line into a High Speed Line, must be taken seriously because it was built to a higher loading gauge with the intention of linking to the planned Victorian version of HS1.

Before the options can be assessed however, the government needs to be clearer what the capacity issues are: where they are now and where they might be in fifty years time. Although I have travelled on some overcrowded inter-city trains, except where there have been serious delays and cancellations the overcrowding manifests itself only on the approaches to major population/employment areas. The top ten worst overcrowded trains are all commuter trains.

As high value goods be-

come smaller in size there is an increased role for railways in moving freight. Indeed it is somewhat scandalous that the freight lobby has been publishing figures about the proportion of freight travelling by road as though it were a good thing justifying more and more roads (and more and more nitrous and nitric oxide, particulates, etc.). Freight trains travel at a slower speed than passenger trains, with little cause to stop. They work in terms of days rather than minutes. Where levels of passenger use are low, they dovetail successfully with the passenger service and can be kept away during the peaks.

However, as demand for passenger services rises, as witnessed on the London Overground, existing lines are inadequate. Although it involves land take, freight can be accommodated by the provision of more passing loops where trains can stand to let passenger trains by. There is some flexibility in siting these loops, so existing productive uses of land need not be disturbed.

The impact of HS2 outside London is beyond the scope of this article for a London newsletter, but there are towns and cities well served by existing inter-city lines which would not be served by the high speed route. By far the greatest capacity problems in the north stem from the inadequacy of trans-Pennine routes, and on the evidence of electrification of the West and East Coast lines the greatest beneficiary of HS2 will be London and the south-

east. If its advocates continue to pretend otherwise, they will lose the argument.

It can therefore be confidently asserted that HS2 would support growth in the south-east, and would need to be supported in turn by enhancements to other parts of the infrastructure: supply of energy, water, sewerage, and housing.

Nowhere is the supply of housing more out of kilter with demand than in Camden. We simply cannot afford to lose a thousand homes on the outskirts of Euston station. Fortunately, there are several ways of avoiding this catastrophe.

The High Speed route could end at Old Oak Common, with hybrid trains continuing to the south coast as they are planned to continue north of Curzon Street, Birmingham. Old Oak Common would provide a speedy link to many ultimate destinations. It will be linked to Heathrow if still needed, and to HS1. Or there is the Lord Berkeley box scheme, which retains the use of Euston but avoids years of disruption to existing lines there and the loss of precious housing, with scope to continue beyond Euston. Or there is the Chiltern route.

The success of Thameslink (and the Manchester tram) derives from keeping land in the most expensive area productive: running trains through rather than terminating and standing idle for around thirty minutes. Terminating at Euston makes no sense whatsoever.

Andrew Bosi

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: chrisjbarker@gmail.com: 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.

Previous issues of the newsletter can be found at http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/london_local_group#letter

ISABEL DEDRING

London's Deputy Mayor for Transport will speak about the Mayor's 2050 Transport Infrastructure Plans

- GLA's City Hall
 - Wednesday 16th July.
 - At 16.00
- Please let us know if you plan to attend. Contact Chris Barker on 020 8347 7684 or by email at chrisjbarker46@gmail.com
 Organised by CBT London Group

Surface Transport to Heathrow

This is the conclusion to a paper by Richard Bourn for the Campaign for Better Transport.

Adequate surface access assessments of Heathrow airport and the proposals for its expansion have yet to be carried out. The airport is located in the most congested quadrant of London's road network. The road and public transport infrastructure is under considerable stress and is set to become more stressed as London's population grows even if the airport is not expanded. Road journeys from London to the West Country and South Wales are already made more costly and unreliable by congestion on the country's main west-bound routes. Capacity created by expansion of the existing Piccadilly underground line and the construction of Crossrail will be quickly filled by the growth in employment and population in London and the areas around Heathrow. Even with Crossrail and without more runways at Heathrow, TfL predict that rail crowding in the Heathrow corridor will be worse in 2031.

Expansion of the airport in the middle of this high-pressure setting is under discussion again. The surface transport implications of expansion will have to be clearly explored and set out. When expansion at Heathrow was last backed by central government, the Department for Transport proposed to leave it to the planning process

to deal with how passengers, employees and indeed freight would travel to and from an expanded Heathrow. Now in 2013, Heathrow Airport Ltd in its latest proposal leaves it to others to deal with the effects of expansion and presumes that all rail and tube projects will go ahead and that passengers travelling to and from the airport will effectively have priority over others on London's crowded trains and tubes.

Heathrow is a difficult site to serve by public transport and TfL predicted that more runways and terminals would make serving it by public transport more difficult. In contrast to Heathrow Airport Ltd, the evidence from TfL's professional transport planners is that access by public transport as a share of all journeys would go down with expansion. Expanding capacity on the road network would not be feasible due to its layout and the environmental implications. Previous capacity increases have not brought significant, if any, reduction in congestion.

How people arrive in London matters. Both tourists and business people are attracted to London as a world city. But expanding Heathrow risks bringing the road network, including the M4 and M25, to a standstill and producing conditions on public transport that would not be acceptable. Tourism and business would be seriously harmed if trains do not have the capacity to cope. Those promoting expansion at Heathrow claim that London's economy would benefit. But the difficulties of surface access to the airport, and the costs from road congestion and overcrowding on public transport that would re-

sult, would be likely to outweigh any benefits.

Whether it is possible to provide for the surface transport needs of Heathrow under different proposals for its aviation and air passenger capacities is a question that

must be considered and answered before those capacities themselves are determined.

The full report can be seen at <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/files/surface-access-final.pdf>



Photo: PHILIPPA BRANSON

Mayor's 'Go Dutch' competition

The mayor's competition for boroughs to share a £100 million fund for 'mini-Holland' cycling schemes has been won by Kingston, Enfield and Waltham Forest which each receive £30 million. Their schemes are as follows.

- **Enfield** – Introducing a Dutch style roundabout, with protected cycle lanes, in Edmonton Green, segregated routes along main roads and a 'Cycle Superhub' in Enfield town centre.
- **Kingston** – a New York 'High Line' style public space, as shown above, for pedestrians and cyclists, along the railway line and across the Thames, a new network of routes, a cycle boardwalk on the banks of the river and cars removed from part of central Kingston.
- **Waltham Forest** – A new cycle superhighway on Lea Bridge Road and a Dutch-style roundabout at Whipps Cross. The other finalists - Newham, Richmond, Ealing, Bromley and Merton - will receive smaller amounts. It is expected that Newham will receive funds from a different pot to remove the Stratford gyratory.

Oxford Street

John Cartledge replies.

Hugh Small, secretary of Westminster Living Streets, takes me to task for allegedly failing to take into account, in my defence of buses in Oxford Street, the health and well-being of pedestrians and cyclists.

It is true that until recently I was, as he says, London TravelWatch's safety and policy adviser – but I was not writing in that capacity, and my views are my own.

By common consent, the street

environment in Oxford Street is poor and any injuries to any road users, however minor, are deeply regrettable – though the total of 260 since 2006 which he cites must be set in the context of well over a billion pedestrian trips made during that time.

He criticises me for supposedly implying that bus loadings in Oxford Street are as high as the London wide average of 17 passengers per bus, which he says 'is obviously wrong', though it's not clear if he thinks the figure is wrong, or the imagined implication. But as 218,000 people arrive at or depart from stops in Oxford Street each weekday, and it is served by 5970 bus journeys, then even if people making through journeys between points else-

where are discounted, there must be an average of 36 passengers boarding or alighting from each bus at some point in the street.

Mr Small says that bus frequency is irrelevant when there is one bus every 25 seconds in each direction. Actually, the maximum one-way frequency on any one section is 116 buses per hour, at Bond Street, or one every 31 seconds. But these buses are not like the Victoria line trains below them, which all go to the same place. They're on 13 different routes, between different destinations, so the average frequency per route is less than nine per hour, or one every 6.7 minutes.

He claims that 'London bus companies are paid on the basis of miles

travelled by the bus, not by the passengers.' In fact, they are paid on the basis of the proportion of the advertised timetable they operate, with an incentive to run on time. They are not rewarded for running any extra miles. Net cost contracts (in which they kept the revenue to encourage them to carry more passengers) were abandoned in London because the companies have no control over either the frequency or the fares, the two main variables they could use to influence demand.

Mr Small offers no evidence for his assertion that 'TfL refuses to study the multi-route ticketing arrangements which other cities use

Brent Cross on again

George Osborne has backed a bigger car-based Brent Cross shopping centre in his budget (Evening Standard 19th March) but his colleague Eric Pickles has an 'Article 25' stop on the scheme, before his own independent, evidence-based decision.

Brent Cross is a strange planning application since it covers several square miles of built-up London, but with a single 'yes/no' decision. Only the shopping centre really matters, and the other unconnected sites, up to a mile away, are not touched by democracy at all.

Barnet Council's 1996 Brent Cross expansion plan was rejected by John Prescott and the High Court in 2002. The only Barnet study since then predicts over 29,000 extra cars a day at the £4.5 billion replacement scheme,

even with a distant new railway station.

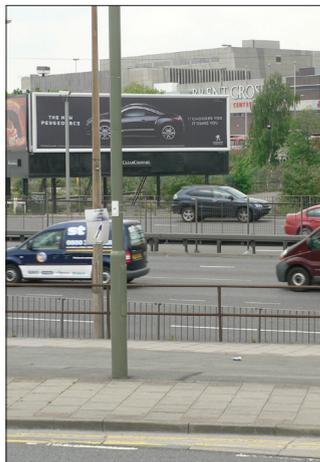
Ten years ago Mayor Ken Livingstone failed to develop orbital rail/tram corridors that could have connected all his north London development areas by now: from Park Royal (now Old Oak Common), Wembley, Brent Cross and Colindale to Finchley Central. Such a North Circular Road 'congestion-buster' could continue eastwards towards the Lea Valley.

We are left with Mr Osborne's Thameslink station, called 'New Cricklewood' in the plans, and paid for by risky credit. Money from the shopping centre will be wasted on a £60-million spaghetti junction at Staples Corner and the M1 to accommodate all the extra cars.

New shoppers from across north London and Hertfordshire could leave their cars at home if we build phase one of an orbital 'Brent Cross Railway', a DLR system for west and north London.

Boris is now backing light-rail in outer London. He's also suggested a London Overground service from Old Oak Common, via Brent Cross, to the Hendon RAF Museum. This would achieve part of the same thing.

There is £60-million of Brent Cross planning-gain money locked up in Eric Pickles's desk. It can be spent either on roads or on light-rail or similar. Which would you prefer?



to help passengers to reduce their mileage and speed their journeys' and it is not clear why he thinks such arrangements would result in fewer or shorter trips. London pioneered zonal bus passes, Travelcards and free concessionary travel long before most other British cities. The idea of time-limited tickets is covered in TfL's response to the London Assembly's Streets Ahead report, which can be found on the GLA website.

It is not in TfL's interest, or that of its passengers, to run buses unnecessarily in a street where their average speed is barely 4 mph. It does so simply because that's where 68 million bus passengers a year want to go, or to leave from – almost as many as the users of Victoria main line station. Unlike taxis,

which make less efficient use of road space, are relatively more polluting and could be diverted along neighbouring streets, there are no parallel roads suitable for buses which Westminster and Camden councils will accept. On the 'VIP' traffic free days, they've had to use Marylebone Road and Piccadilly, both of which are unacceptably distant.

Bus passengers and pedestrians are the same people, not two hostile camps. There's a problem in Oxford Street because the very popularity of buses has made them victims of their own success. None of their critics has offered a viable alternative. Polemics in place of evidence must not win the argument.

Feet first

Increased support for pedestrians from TfL and the GLA.

TfL's draft London Pedestrian Safety Action Plan has been published for consultation and comments.

It contains a number of recommendations including strong support for 20mph. In addition the GLA Transport Committee has published a report called Feet First - Improving Pedestrian Safety in London. This calls for the first time for a Vision Zero approach to road danger in London and for 50% of London's roads to be 20mph by 2016.

The proposed actions from the draft London Pedestrian Safety Action Plan include:

- Trials of 20mph on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) including London Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge to reduce casualties associated with speed.
- TfL will continue to encourage London boroughs to deliver more 20mph schemes in order to create safer environments for pedestrians in London.
- Greater enforcement of 20mph limits to ensure the safety benefits of lower speeds limits for pedestrians are fully realised.
- Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA) technology trial on a small number of vehicles in the bus fleet to understand the potential role of this technology on buses in promoting adherence to speed limits across the road network.

The highlights of the Feet First report are:

- Vision Zero approach to road danger in London with a longer-term aim of eliminating road death and injury.
- Increasing the percentage of London's road network that is covered by 20mph limits (from the current level of 19%) to 50% by 2016 and to have identified these roads by September 2014.

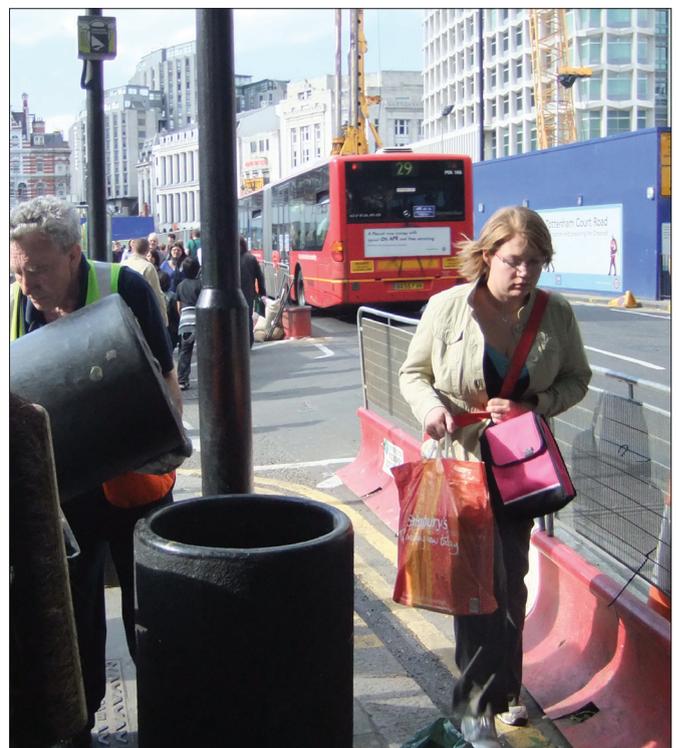
Full details can be found on the TfL website at

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/streets/pedestrian-safety-plan>

The Feet First report can be downloaded at <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/publications/feet-first-improving-pedestrian-safety-in-london>

Jeremy Leach, London Campaign Coordinator

20s Plenty for Us Tel 07415 243 015



NEWS ROUNDUP

Safer lorries again

To protect cyclists from falling under the wheels of HGVs TfL and the London boroughs are enforcing a requirement that all vehicles over 3.5 tonnes are to be fitted with side guards. The London Cycling Campaign and other organisations have been campaigning for this change for some time. A number of cyclists have lost their lives after being dragged under lorries and crushed by their rear wheels, the latest at Ludgate Circus on 3rd April. A plan to circumvent this problem has been put into effect at a junction Camden Town where cycle only traffic lights give cyclists a head start before other vehicles move.

Cashless buses

Despite concerns made by a number of organisations, including those representing vulnerable people, TfL have decided to end cash payment on buses. The only way to pay will be by Oyster, prepaid tickets, contactless payment cards or concessionary tickets. TfL claims that the change is unlikely to affect tourists as the vast majority use a prepaid ticket, such as Oyster, to get around the capital.

Oyster overcharging

London TravelWatch is urging rail companies to do more to alert passengers to the pitfalls of failing to swipe in and out. Passengers on national rail are three times more likely to be hit with the maximum fare than travellers on the Tube and buses in London. On the underground it is difficult to avoid touching out because there are barriers at most stations but they are rare at national rail stations.

The problem is made worse by the reluctance of National Rail operators to provide adequate signage by Oyster validators. South-eastern will shortly be putting DLR-style signage on its readers which should help and other operators are being urged to follow suit.

Heathrow from the west

Network Rail has put forward a plan to construct a short spur from Langley to Terminal 5 to enable trains from the Great Western main line to access Heathrow. This is cue for Heathrow's management to suggest that Heathrow Express could provide a service on the

line, running to Reading and perhaps later to Oxford or Swindon.

The Heathrow Express service from Paddington is likely to face stiff competition from Crossrail when it opens as it will enable passengers to travel direct to Heathrow from the West End, the City and Canary Wharf without changing. Maybe Heathrow's management are speculating about the possibility of abandoning Paddington and moving their class 332 trains west.

Central London Cycle Grid

The mayor has published a map of proposed Quietways, to be known as a BikeGrid, to supplement the Superhighways in the City and West End. Whilst the Superhighways are mostly segregated and on main roads, Quietways will be lower-intervention and mainly on streets with less traffic.

Whilst welcoming the concept the London Cycling Campaign have criticised details of the scheme. They say the BikeGrid must be designed in a way that makes it suitable for all people who ride bicycles, not just slow or novice cyclists. To help this they say that removing through motor traffic (using bollards, for example) should be a core principle, helping to ensure no-one cycles on a street with motor vehicles over 20mph or with more than a designated volume of vehicles.

They also say that cycle routes should be direct, with safe and convenient crossings of minor and main roads, in particular the inner ring road and the River Thames, and that there should be a coherent network of routes without major gaps that force people on to streets that are unpleasant or dangerous to cycling.

LCC are also critical of the timescale, urging completion within twelve months.

Time for pedestrians to cross the road

In Autumn 2010 TfL rushed out a list of 145 crossings all over London which they proposed to abolish outright. The aim was to smooth traffic flow showing that they regarded public streets as primarily a facility for drivers and not for people. It meant that London's pedestrians should pay the price by waiting longer to cross the road.

A campaign by Wandsworth Living Streets has resulted in victory at

a number of locations. For example, at Queen's Circus near Battersea Park, TfL have agreed to a redesign which will give cyclists a lightly segregated lane in the Circus and pedestrians a signalised crossing at each of the four entrances.

Wandsworth Living Streets are also concerned that TfL have cut 'green man' timings to a standard six seconds which, they say, is not long enough for many people.

The mayor's strategy concentrates on speeding traffic flow but attention now needs to be directed at speeding pedestrian flow. Since 2009 TfL's traffic signal reviews have reduced traffic delays by eight per cent. For pedestrians, the figure is only one per cent.

An end to the gyratories?

£300 million has been allocated by the mayor to deal with 33 gyratories and roundabouts in London to make them safer for cyclists and pedestrians. He said that these are 'relics of the sixties which blight and menace whole neighbourhoods'. They will be replaced by segregated cycle tracks and new traffic-free public space. The London Cycling Campaign, which has been amongst the most vociferous supporters of this change said 'this announcement vindicates the actions of the many thousands of people who have supported recent LCC campaigns to make junctions safe by adopting international quality of provision for cycling'.

One proposal has attracted criticism. The present plans for eliminating the gyratory at Vauxhall involves destruction of the recently installed bus station but, according

to Lambeth Council leader Lib Peck, TfL are still assessing whether two-way working will be possible, after which there will be a further look at what that will mean for the design of the district centre and the interchange arrangements, including the bus station.

One of the most expensive changes proposed involves dismantling the Hammersmith Flyover and relocating the link in tunnel which could be up to two and a half miles long stretching from the Hogarth Roundabout to Earls Court Road. This would enable the large area which was cut by the Great West Road in the 60s to be reunited and redeveloped and to provide an opportunity to pedestrianise the centre of Hammersmith.

HS2 in Camden

There was enormous opposition when plans appeared showing the disruption which would be caused to Camden Town resulting from building a link between HS2 and HS1. Coincidentally or not, the link has now been abandoned. There will be no through trains from Birmingham and the north to Paris or Brussels, at least for the foreseeable future.

Whilst this relieves residents who live near the North London Line those living on the route into Euston still face years of misery. Plans to scale back the redevelopment of Euston station and contain the HS2 lines within the present curtilage of the station have been reversed. Patrick McLoughlin, the transport secretary, has backed new proposals for a multi-million pound rebuild of the station which includes the reinstatement of the Euston Arch.

