



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.

**Follow us on our website at:**  
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**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://bettertransport-london.org.uk>.

## Play Streets boost children's activity levels

**A pioneering Hackney project to get children playing outside in the streets and estates where they live has reached more than 1,600 youngsters and led to thousands of hours of active play, an independent report by a children's play expert shows. Parents who volunteered to run the Play Streets said they are helping create a greater sense of community – making streets feel friendlier and safer.**

Hackney Council's Health and Wellbeing Board commissioned Hackney Play Association, a local charity, to deliver the Play Streets project. The charity provided training, mentoring and practical support for residents and schools wanting to start a Play Street. The report shows that in the

12-month period until September 2014 the project led to 380 hours of street play sessions in 29 locations - reaching around 1,600 children and nearly 800 families.

The research also revealed that there was minimal impact on traffic – with an average of nine cars affected per session. Play streets in Hackney typically happen in quiet residential streets, often at weekends, and have now spread to most parts of the borough, including areas of disadvantage.

Interviews with volunteer organisers revealed a strong consensus about the perceived benefits for children, families and communities – especially in terms of improving social interaction among neighbours, and giving children more freedom and

choice in how they play.

The full report - available at [www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets](http://www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets) - also indicates residents are broadly accepting of the scheme. The Council has received a total of 18 letters opposing Play Streets since the scheme was first introduced in September 2012, averaging less than one complaint per participating street.

As of May 2015, there are 34 Play Streets in Hackney. Several of these have been running for well over two years. During the sessions, children ride bikes and scooters, bring out and share their own toys – with games of yesteryear like hopscotch, chalking and skipping making a comeback.

Jenny Lewis, head teacher of Thomas Fairchild School in Hoxton, said: "Traditional

games were very popular; children loved them and one parent asked 'where do I buy a skipping rope?'"

Hackney residents interested in play streets can email: [hackney@playingout.net](mailto:hackney@playingout.net) and go to [www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets](http://www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets).

There are a number of other London boroughs with play street policies – including Enfield, Ealing, Croydon, Haringey, Lambeth, Southwark and Waltham Forest. Support is available from the following organisations:

- London Play: [www.londonplay.org.uk](http://www.londonplay.org.uk)
  - Playing Out – the national street play organisation offering inspiration and free resources -
  - [www.playingout.net](http://www.playingout.net)
- Claudia Draper*

# Election special

## Now we have a Conservative government what are the prospects for transport in London?

The Conservative manifesto was indecisive on airport expansion. They say they will 'respond to the Airports Commission's final report'. They are committed to HS2 and to Crossrail and Crossrail 2. They are in favour of increased investment in and electrification of the railways. They said little about congestion although they plan to double cycling by 2050. At the same time they propose to make things easier for motorists

by, for example, abandoning the fuel duty escalator.

Things would not have been much different if Labour had formed the government. On airport expansion they said: 'Following the Davies Review, we will make a swift decision on airport expansion'. Like the Tories they are fully in favour of HS2. They made no mention of Crossrail or Crossrail 2 nor of issues around congestion.

The Lib Dem manifesto had a generally bolder approach. They are opposed to the expansion of any of London's airports and are for no net expansion of runways. They said they would 'Ensure London's transport infrastructure is improved to withstand the pressure of population and economic growth'. They would also 'Work to encourage further private sector

investment in rail freight terminals and rail-connected distribution parks' which would reduce congestion on London's roads.

The Greens have a more radical approach. They oppose any airport expansion and advocate higher taxes to discourage air traffic. They are against HS2 and say: 'The money to be spent on this hugely expensive project, which at best will reduce journey times for a few passengers, would be much better spent on improving the conventional rail connections between various major cities'. They would also like to improve rail freight services and reduce the number of empty or partially loaded lorry trips by using cargo bikes for last-mile deliveries to replace some white van trips.

UKIP are also against the expansion of London's airports but

advocate a new airport at Manston (in the constituency from which Nigel Farage was hoping to be returned). They are also opposed to HS2 thinking that the money could be better spent on other priorities such as the NHS.

It is interesting that a number of aspirations for transport are things which are already in existence in London. The Conservatives, Labour and the Greens mentioned smart ticketing in their manifestos which Oyster already brings us. Labour and the Greens want more control over public transport and an integrated transport system. The Lib Dems want an extension of low emission zones and the Greens want to introduce Ultra Low Emission Zones to ensure air pollution is reduced to comply with EU limits.

Chris Barker

## Tunnels under London

### The Mayor's latest suggestion for dealing with London's traffic is to put it underground.

His plan for an inner London tolled ring tunnel to replace the inner ring road would cost £30 billion and, Isabel Dedring, deputy mayor for transport said: 'it's not about creating a motorway through the centre of London. It's about freeing up capacity on the city surface, improving air quality and reclaiming space for public parks, pedestrians and cyclists.' Nevertheless, by making it easier to cross London by car, it would attract more road traffic and increase congestion and pollution on the approach roads.

Other ideas for shorter tunnels would not necessarily increase traffic because they aim only to put existing traffic underground and not to create new roads. Their main attraction is freeing up land for development away from the fumes, danger and noise from traffic. The first scheme to be studied is a fly-under to replace the A4 viaduct at Hammersmith This has now been followed by a mini tunnel at the A13 in Barking Riverside, decking the A3 in Tolworth, a fly-under at the A316 at Chalkers Corner and decking the A406 in New Southgate.

Although superficially attractive these schemes assume continuing growth in car journeys and use money which could better be used

for improving public transport and promoting more sustainable means of transport. They also fail to take into account the significant disruption which would have to be endured whilst they are being constructed.

At Hammersmith a replacement road tunnel, perhaps as far as the Hogarth Roundabout, through Hammersmith and to Earl's Court would transform the environment but the proposal seems unrealistic and unworkable. In April 1960 the Evening Standard said 'The heated flyover will cut jams in Hammersmith'. It's a shame therefore that the Greater London Council used salt on the road instead, and rusted the embedded steel cables.

The Evening Standard suggested that the flyover only has a 15-year life but TfL has replaced the tension cables and added modern waterproofing, giving it a further life of 60 years, because the flyover is structurally sound otherwise. A long flyover life instantly means compulsory purchase orders to take land for a tunnel or works sites might fail in the courts, if any landowner chose to fight.

Building a short tunnel would be very disruptive in downtown Hammersmith. Building the whole tunnel would still mean surface traffic, unless there were slip-roads to and from the tunnel – and that would surely require far more expensive land.

Existing traffic jams in Hammersmith would remain, since few people currently avoid the flyover, merely for the joys of the gyratory system, and then rejoin the A4. Talk of a north-south 'Shepherd's Bush-to-Fulham' tunnel as well is spending all of Boris's roads budget in just one borough.

London's population is growing by 100,000 a year, and extra roads are not the answer. We need more rail and light-rail, with more frequent trains on all existing routes, and new orbital lines and trams in Boris's political heartland, outer London.

Another £200 million may be spent in the A406 North Circular Road and Staples Corner area, effectively just so that shoppers to a bigger Brent Cross Shopping Centre can get to the new multi-storey car parks. But light-rail is equally feasible there as well.

Long term, all express trains should divert into new rail tunnels from the edges of London, to allow more space for local trains within our city. Rail, not roads, is where Boris's investment should go – and not subsidising a mere 'nice-to-have' road tunnel.

Chris Barker and John Cox

### HOLE IN THE EAST-WEST CYCLE SUPERHIGHWAY

A big hole has appeared in the route of the east-west cycle superhighway. Officials at the Royal Parks are refusing to allow safe space for cycling outside Buckingham Palace. Under the current plans the cycle superhighway vanishes by the Queen Victoria Memorial next to Buckingham Palace. Cyclists will be expected to use the existing shared-use area – mixing with thousands of pedestrians at one of London's most popular tourist destinations. If cyclists choose to use the carriageway instead, they will have to mix with six lanes of motor traffic on the unacceptably dangerous Spur Road gyratory.



London Cycling Campaign is urging the Royal Parks to give permission for the east-west cycle superhighway to continue on a dedicated, segregated cycle track in front of the Queen Victoria Memorial. Otherwise there will be a high risk of collision between all road users in the area of the Memorial, including the millions of tourists who visit Green Park each year.

## London Overground takes on new routes

**On 31st May London Overground will assume responsibility for the routes from Liverpool Street to Enfield, Cheshunt via Seven Sisters and Chingford currently operated by Abellio Greater Anglia.**

London Overground will also take on the shuttle service between Upminster and Romford including provision of a Sunday service and extra evening trains.

As with London Overground's rejuvenation of the Richmond, Watford and East London services there is an ambitious programme to improve the reliability of train services and the appearance of stations. Existing Class 315 and 317 units inherited from Abellio will undergo attention to seat repairs, etched graffiti and door and panel damage together with internal and external deep cleans within the first year. By 2018 there will be 31 new four-car trains featuring wide gangways, walk-through access and air conditioning. Although the seating configuration has not finally been decided there will be a mix of transverse and longitudinal seating.

Uniform London Overground branding will be applied to all stations which will undergo a major refurbishment. This will involve deep cleaning, provision of standard platform surfaces and tactile tiles, attention to glazing, disability-compliant staircases and new deterrents to roosting pigeons. All stations will be staffed from 15 minutes before the first train to 15 minutes after the last train. Every station will have at least one ticket machine and through ticketing to any Network Rail station is to be maintained.

The franchisee is under a strict obligation to



improve revenue protection and all stations will be gated by 2017. Unfortunately at Walthamstow Central (above) this has involved erecting a cage-like structure along the platform to segregate London Underground passengers from London Overground passengers all of whom must exit and re-enter the station if they wish to change trains here. It is hardly a thing of beauty and many fear that it will pose safety risks when large numbers of passengers are trying to use it in both directions.

The London Overground West Anglia services will be included on TfL's maps and many standard TfL features will be provided. These will include at least two help points at every station and inclusion of West Anglia lines within the 'Plan Your Journey' service. Improvements to CCTV and information systems are also planned. Less certain attaches to the methods of operation of London Overground trains into and out of Liverpool Street. Whether there will be dedicated platforms or the flexibility of current operations remains to be seen.

Stephen Garrett



## Wheelchairs or Buggies, which come first?

**A recent judgment by the Court of Appeal has clarified the scope of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the rights of disabled bus passengers. The Act requires providers of services to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled users are not subject to discrimination or detriment.**

The case arose from an incident in 2012 in which a wheelchair user was denied access to a bus because the wheelchair space on board was already occupied by a child in a buggy. Its mother refused a request from the driver to remove the child and fold the buggy because the vehicle was full.

The presiding judge asserted that 'common decency' required that non-wheelchair users should vacate such spaces when possible, but concluded that the Act did not require or empower the driver to compel another passenger to vacate the bus irrespective of circumstances.

The user is seeking leave to appeal to the Supreme Court on the grounds that the effect 'is to deny wheelchair users any practical legal right to occupy the [only] space on a bus that is designed for [their] occupation...'

Even if this ruling is overturned, it may have no practical effect because the law has since changed. The pithily-titled Rights of Passengers in Bus and Coach Transport (Exemptions and Enforcement) Regulations came into force on 19 August 2013. These disapply the relevant sections of the Equality Act to anything that is governed by an EU regulation which provides that

'Carriers ... shall not refuse ... to take on board a person on the grounds of disability ... except ... where the design of the vehicle ... makes it physically impossible ... to carry [them]... in [an] operationally feasible manner.'

So argument about 'reasonable adjustments' may give way to argument about what is 'operationally feasible.' And in London there is further uncertainty. The regulation defines carrier as 'a ... person, other than a tour operator, travel agent or ticket vendor, offering transport ... services to the general public.'

Transport for London determines the policy on use of the wheelchair space on its routes, but does not own the vehicles or employ the drivers. So while TfL undoubtedly 'offers transport ... to the general public', it is less obvious whether in circumstances similar to those encountered by the user in this case, it would be TfL which actually denied him access.

John Cartledge

## NEWS ROUNDUP

### Rails to Barking Riverside

The January meeting of CBT London discussed the proposed extension of the Gospel Oak to Barking line to Barking Riverside. There was concern that the scheme showed a terminus on a viaduct, and that the cheapest option was being urged by the potential developers of Barking Riverside, when the 2050 Strategic Review indicates that TfL foresees scope in an outer London orbital route of which this would form a part.

The following day, however, the report on the recent consultation was published and it appeared to recognise the need to provide for a future extension south of the Thames.

The response to concerns about the capacity of Barking station was less clear. However, TfL have subsequently commented as follows:

‘The issue of overcrowding at Barking station was a common theme during the 2014 consultation. We are still assessing the impact of our proposals on Barking station and will provide more information during the next consultation, which we anticipate will take place this spring.’

### Electric buses

Route 312, running between South Croydon and Norwood Junction, will become the first route in London to be operated entirely by electric buses. TfL currently has six Optare electric buses - four operating on route H98 (between Hayes End and Hounslow) that entered service in July 2014 and two on route 312 that entered service in December 2014. Two additional electric buses manufactured by BYD operate on route 507 (Waterloo to Victoria) and 521 (Waterloo to London Bridge), which entered service in December 2013. With these trial routes, TfL is developing plans for greater use of electric buses in central London in the future, contributing to the Mayor’s vision of a central London Ultra Low Emission Zone.



### Roads to nowhere

A report by Darren Johnson, Green Party member of the London Assembly, has contrasted the cost of Boris Johnson’s road plans with alternative transport provision. Road plans include the Silvertown tunnel and two Lower Thames bridges but also the 22 mile inner orbital tunnel. Total cost is estimated to be nearly 28 billion pounds of which 25 billion is for the orbital tunnel.

The alternatives include promotion of walking and cycling but the big money is for public transport schemes and are estimated to come to just over 25 billion pounds. They are mostly schemes which are mentioned in the Mayor’s strategy but are so far unfunded. The largest item is Crossrail 2, estimated to cost £22 billion. Other schemes include a new orbital railway and extensions to Tramlink, the Overground and the Bakerloo Line.

Darren Johnson said: ‘The Mayor has set out his stall, and it looks a lot like the car-centric dreams of transport planners in the 1950s. He isn’t learning from past mistakes – for example, learning that new roads simply create more traffic and do little to reduce congestion.’

### Living Streets

Living Streets London Campaigners group issued a manifesto for the general election. The demands they made started with a walking strategy or vision with measurable targets. They went on to demand a rebalancing of London streets to include road pricing and more car free days.

They wanted policies around planning to reduce need to travel longer distances and to create ‘walkable neighbourhoods’.

They called for the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street and a 20 mph limit throughout the central London zone.

### Environmentally friendly taxis

The Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA) and Clean Air in London (CAL) have called for a transformation package for the taxi and private hire industry in London. It involves requiring electric or plug-in petrol electric hybrids with a minimum daily range of 40 miles for all newly licensed taxis.

Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the Licenced Taxi Drivers Association, said: ‘London

taxi drivers want to be able to purchase and drive, clean modern taxis. With the right incentives and by working with the trade Boris has the opportunity to ensure that London is the first city in the world to have a taxi fleet comprised exclusively of Zero Emission Capable vehicles.’

### Safer lorries

The campaign to force lorries to be fitted with side guards and mirrors has been successful. All lorries over 3.5 tonnes will have to be equipped by September. The added mirrors will decrease the chances of collisions between HGVs and vulnerable road users from occurring, minimising the driver’s blind spot where cyclists often wait at junctions. In the event of a collision, the side guards will provide valuable protection for cyclists and pedestrians alike, as they increase the chances of victims being pushed away from, rather than under, the vehicle’s wheels.

The scheme represents a significant move in targeting lorries, which are disproportionately involved in seriously injuring or killing London’s cyclists. From 2008 to 2012, vehicles over 3.5 tonnes were involved with 53% of London’s cycling fatalities, despite representing just 4% of road miles travelled. Current designs put the driver up in the air too far away from people on the street, with chassis too high from the ground and cabins with inadequate window coverage, limiting the driver’s ability to see their immediate surroundings.

### More railways for London

International infrastructure and support services company AECOM has issued a growth manifesto for a new ‘London City Region’ in 2065 including new rail lines. A major proposal is for an inner orbital railway to link three new ‘Metro Cities’ of Brent Cross, Woolwich and Croydon with Heathrow airport. Alignment of a Crossrail 3 is also suggested, connecting Old Oak Common near Heathrow with new areas of growth in south London around Battersea, Clapham and Woolwich and the Thames Gateway in Essex. Crossrail 3 has been mooted in the past, but until now transport chiefs in London have been guarded as to where such a route should go.

A further measure in the manifesto relating to transportation is a need to review the current

greenbelt arrangement, particularly around train and Underground stations, to encourage further housing, but the Campaign to Protect Rural England’s planning officer John Rowley said of the suggestion: ‘The idea of removing greenbelt is deeply flawed. Greenbelt policy has been incredibly successful at not only protecting vital green space but also promoting urban regeneration. New development should be focused on brownfield sites within the existing urban area’.

Also proposed is an outer orbital railway linking Cambridge with Milton Keynes, Oxford, Reading, Guildford, the Medway towns, Chelmsford and Stansted airport.

### Old Oak Common

Following consultation TfL have decided that there will be two new Overground stations to serve the Old Oak Common development and HS2 station. One will be built on Old Oak Common Lane for the Richmond branch and the other on Hythe Road for the Clapham Junction branch. CBT London campaigned for a joint station on the Old Oak Common Lane site with the Clapham Junction line being diverted to serve it. A problem with the Hythe Road site is that it is 650 metres from the HS2 and Crossrail station although it has been suggested that the eastern emergency exits could be upgraded to be a second main line station entrance, reducing the distance to 480m.

The ‘Crossrail-to-the-West Coast Main Line’ project has been shelved for now, but some works will still be added to the HS2 hybrid bill in June. That will also allow the existing connection to the High Wycombe line to be retained after all.

### Transport for All demands accessible transport

Transport for All members across London have been calling their parliamentary candidates to sign up to their demands for accessible transport. The demands include:

- Doubling the funding to make rail stations accessible
- Protecting staffing levels at rail stations.
- Audio-visual information on every bus.
- Backing our Right to Ride – wheelchair priority on buses.
- Introducing mandatory disability equality training for bus drivers.