

Transport survives the cuts - almost

Transport has done relatively well in the Comprehensive Spending Review. Compared to a 29% cut across government, transport suffered only a 21% cut in revenue funding and an 11% fall in capital funding.

But these figures mask a more complex picture. The previous government's rail spending plans have survived largely intact with some electrification and tram extensions in Nottingham, Manchester and Birmingham all going ahead. Road building has not done so well: the Highways Agency budget is cut by over 50% and few local authority major road schemes are likely to go ahead.

The biggest loser though is local bus services outside London which are being hit twice. Bus Service Operators Grant will be cut by 20% from 2012 and local authorities are already cutting their support for bus services in response to reductions in their own budgets. And rail fares are going to rise by 3% above inflation from 2012 – 2015 which will make them prohibitively expensive for many people. A winner is the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, suggested by Campaign for Better Transport, a pot worth £560 million over four years which local authorities can bid for to spend on initiatives such as travel planning, cycling and improving public transport.

London has done rather better than the rest of the country with a 21% cut in Department of Transport funding for

Transport for London over four years. But the DfT only provides about a third of TfL income (most of the rest comes from fares, borrowing, advertising, partnerships etc) so TfL's total revenue will only fall by about 8%.

All the big London public transport projects have survived. Crossrail and Thameslink (a Network Rail rather than a TfL project) will proceed, if somewhat delayed, with lots of new rolling stock. Tube modernisation is also going ahead though it's difficult to tell whether the

original schedule will be maintained. We're told that funding for bus services will also be protected – the original plan was to maintain bus service mileage for the next five years – but with a much reduced subsidy from TfL.

Though public transport fares in London will increase next year at no more than the rate already announced (Retail Price Index plus 2%) people largely dependent on the rail network (and that means many in south London) will be subject to the RPI + 3% rate that applies elsewhere. Also

the RPI + formula is an average and particular types of fares can be increased much more as we have seen recently with pay-as-you-go bus fares.

The major casualty in the CSR is TfL funding for borough transport schemes such as walking, cycling, road safety and demand management which will suffer a £75 million cut. These are precisely the sort of high benefit low cost projects that should be protected. To put them in context, their total cost is minuscule in relation to TfL's annual expenditure of around £8 billion and only slightly more than the £55 million a year that TfL will lose by abolishing the Western Extension of the Congestion Charge. The final decision to go ahead with this was announced, or hidden, on the same day as the Spending Review.

Richard Bourn

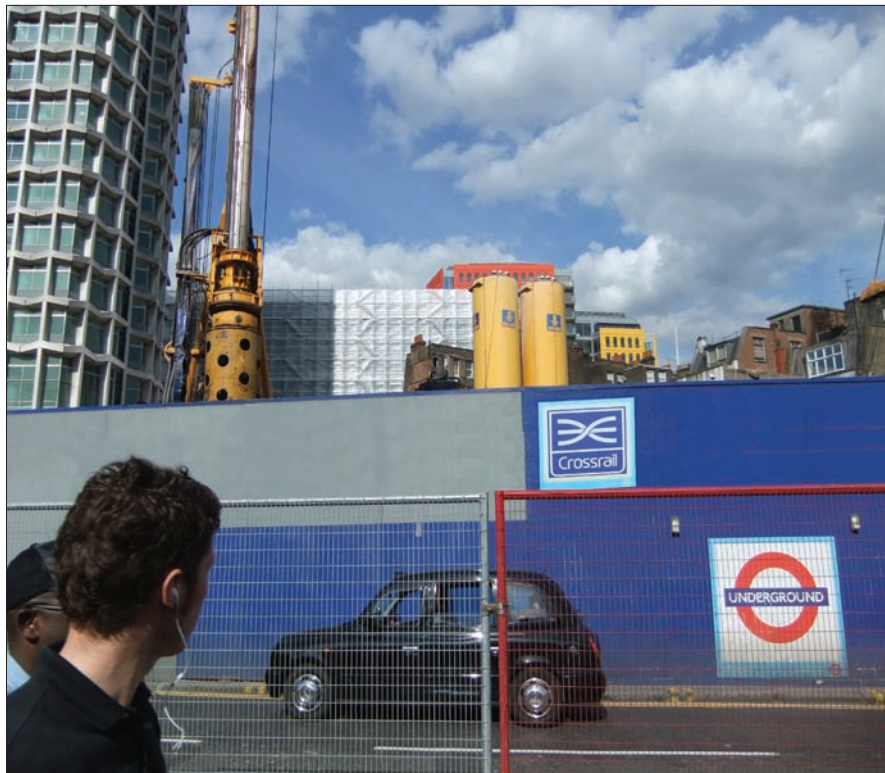
Our Newsletter is sent out to our London members and other contacts. The group exists to campaign for sustainable transport solutions in London and to support the work of the Campaign nationally. If you have not already done so we would be pleased if you would also join our group and take part in our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

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

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

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

design: Eve Barker



Crossrail.
Work going ahead at Tottenham Court Road.

NO LIGHT RAIL AT BRENT CROSS

Despite considerable opposition, Barnet Council in north London has approved the £4.5 billion Brent Cross Cricklewood planning application.

It offers mainly road-based transport investment, and rejects the evaluation of a light-rail line across the site. The Thameslink station proposed might well mean closing two others.

Three years ago, the developers met the London CBT group, but only offered to consider a light-rail solution at Brent Cross if London CBT signed that it would not oppose the planning application. Of course, that 'offer' was rejected.

We believe that the huge development areas of north London (Park Royal, Wembley, Brent Cross, Colindale, Mill Hill East, and so on) ought to combine their transport 'planning gain'. They might then finance an off-road, orbital rail scheme between them, and connect to all the radial Underground and main-line railways.

There is no evidence that the Mayor of London, Transport for London, or the London boroughs have ever done this necessary strategic planning (whatever the outcome of such studies).

Whatever the merits of the orbital Overground investment, it is largely across inner London, and it does not interchange very well with radial rail and Underground lines.

Light rail would create new employment opportunities, since peak-hour road congestion means many orbital journeys are just not feasible at present. Contra-flow travel on crowded radial railways would also be encouraged.

An orbital railway across lower-density outer London is only affordable if the higher-density development sites are used to subsidise it; otherwise, the opportunity will be permanently lost. Ealing and Harrow councils have voted to support in principle this light-rail plan, with Brent and Camden councillors also sympathetic.

John Cox



Cycle Hire scheme a success

In November last year reports went before both the Transport for London Board and the London Assembly Transport Committee on the Barclays cycle hire scheme.

The cycle hire scheme is clearly popular with Londoners, as in early October the number of journeys reached the one million mark, while registered users passed the 300,000 mark. Service levels at the customer service levels have continued to improve. Redistribution of cycles continues to be the major operational issue, particularly during the morning peak, with trials underway at key rail stations to use temporary pens to deal with extremely heavy usage at these points.

The scheme was launched with 315 docking stations, while the total number in November 2010 was 340 out of an eventual 400, with 4500 cycles now in circulation out of a projected 6,000. The scheme launched to casual, rather than pre-registered, users last December. However as this was seven months later than originally planned, TfL's income from charges has been affected, as it now expects to receive only 10% of the original projected sum for the 2010-2011 financial year. While TfL has reported that the planned extension of the scheme

eastwards will cost £45 million over a six-year period, the London Assembly Transport Committee considers that the 'costs and funding for the cycle hire scheme remain opaque'; TfL has not told the Committee how much Barclays have paid to date in sponsorship on the grounds of confidentiality.

The London Assembly Transport Committee has concerns about the safety of users of the cycle hire scheme, and about plans for expanding the scheme. TfL decided at the initial roll-out not to introduce helmets as part of the scheme, and instead has been promoting safety through the provision of cycle training in the nine boroughs in which it operates. It also provides stickers on the bike handlebars warning users not to overtake large vehicles on the left (the major cause of cycle accidents in 2009). The Committee has asked TfL to keep these measures under review. There is clearly enormous potential to expand the scheme – London's planned 400 sites and 6,000 cycles compare with 1,750 sites and 24,000 bikes in Paris. The rationale for Boris's planned eastwards extension is not clear, while the Committee would like to see all parts of the capital including areas of outer London considered as part of a balanced development of cycling across the capital.

Norman Beddington

Western Extension – threat of judicial review

The Campaign for Clean Air is claiming that the removal of the western extension of the congestion charge zone is likely to result in an increase in nitrogen oxide levels. As levels already breach limits established by European legislation, they say removal of the zone without putting in any mitigating measures would be unlawful and are threatening to apply for a judicial review.

New bus for London

Your correspondent had an opportunity to inspect a mock-up of Boris's new bus and was favourably impressed. It has three doorways each of which will be available for boarding and alighting at all times. Sometimes the rear door will be open and supervised by a conductor who will collect no fares but will be available to help with information. At other times the door will be closed but opened and shut by the driver. It will, in other words, have the advantages and disadvantages of the bendy buses – fast boarding and alighting and open to fare evasion. Although it will be shorter than a bendy bus surprisingly the amount of road space per passenger is practically identical. The bendy bus is 18 metres long and can carry 140 passengers. The new bus is 11.2 metres long and can carry 87 passengers, in each case an average of about 12.8 cm per passenger.



A prototype of the new bus is scheduled to be on the road early in the 2011 and in service on five Central London routes (which ones yet to be decided) in 2012.

Cycle parking

Something which puts many people off cycling is the difficulty of finding somewhere convenient and secure to store it at home. The mayor's new housing design guide recommends that all newly built homes should have one cycle storage space for each one or two bedrooms and two spaces where there are more than two bedrooms. In fact, many new residential developments include a provision for cycle storage but setting it out in the guidelines will help to spread this good practice.

Step-free access on the Underground

Aspiration and Reality



Not many tube stations guarantee wheelchair access

Step-free access is important for disabled passengers on London's Underground, especially for those in wheelchairs, but also for those temporarily handicapped, for example with a broken leg, and those travelling with baby buggies or heavy luggage.

Of course, the tube lines and stations were, for the most part, built when people were not expecting them to be disabled-friendly, but how great is the provision and what more is contemplated? TfL's booklet 'Getting around London: Guide to Accessibility' states 'a major investment programme is under way, delivering substantially improved access to tube stations and trains'.

The booklet, published in 2000, says that, of 247 stations on twelve lines, over 100 would be step-free by 2010. As at May 2010, there were in total 59 stations with step-free access.

But that booklet was published when Ken Livingstone was mayor. Boris Johnson, however, has given greater priority to 'enhancements like more accessible train design, wide aisle gates, improved information systems and way-finding' (all good things in themselves) in the run-up to the Olympics in 2010. Of 45 stations that had been singled out by Livingstone for step-free access, only seven are now to be proceeded with.

Look at the map Tfl provides in

the booklet. Step-free access is indicated by the conventional symbol of a 'matchstick' man with a wheel-chair. He or she can get on the train without having to negotiate steps to the platforms at Brixton, at the southern end of the Victoria Line, and cannot get off again and exit the station without facing steps until reaching Tottenham Hale, two stops short of the northern terminus at Walthamstow. He or she can start their journey at Morden, at the southern end of the Northern Line, but the first step-free station they can leave at is London Bridge. North of the river, such a passenger can join the Piccadilly Line at its northern terminus, Cockfosters, but the first step-free opportunity to leave is at Kings Cross. The Central Line has not one step-free access station in west London; the first on an eastbound journey is at Bank.

You need to be very selective about what shops you want to go to or where to have friends to visit by tube. If you want to transfer to a national rail terminus, make sure the line runs from Kings Cross, London Bridge or Waterloo. You will not find step-free access at Euston, Paddington or Victoria.

There is a further problem. A disabled traveller can arrive at a station and find that the lift is out of order, even at a station which has only recently installed them. A complaint meets with the response: the passenger should check before setting out. Yes, they would avoid a wasted journey, but it does not get them where they want to go. 59 out of 247 is not a lot. Is it too much to ask for the upgrades to be speeded up?

Margaret Deyes

Tackling pollution

London is in danger of breaching European Union legal limits for PM10.

The mayor boasts about his electric vehicle scheme set to launch in Spring next year, his 'new bus' designed to be 40 per cent cleaner and the cycle hire scheme but these seem totally inadequate to deal with the problem.

Now comes another idea. Instead of stopping pollution the latest wheeze is to stick it to the pavement. A solution made up of Calcium Magnesium Acetate is sprayed in very small amounts and prevents it re-circulating in the air. They are all worthy ideas but much more is needed.

Funding Crossrail

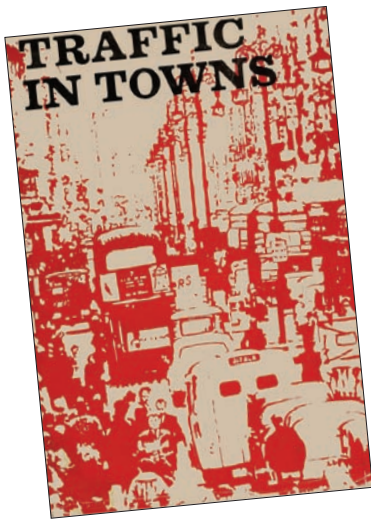
At the public examination of the draft replacement London Plan, TfL assured the Inspectors that Crossrail will be fully funded by sources of income including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments by developers. Peter Eversden, for the London Forum of Amenity & Civic Societies, challenged that statement and pointed out that there is not enough money in the budget to achieve the proposed upgrading and facilities at stations such as Ilford and Ealing Broadway, particularly for improved interchangeability at the latter. That was agreed by TfL and consideration will be given to how future CIL payments may be secured to further enhance Crossrail stations. There will be a public examination in 2011 of CIL implementation plans.



Fare's Fair Campaign for Better Transport launched a national campaign on 4th January against the recent rail fare rises with a demonstration outside Charing Cross station. Some of those hardest hit are commuters into London from Kent, who arrive at Charing Cross and who will suffer an increase in the price of their season tickets of over 12 per cent. Members of the London group took part in the demonstration.



CBT campaigns for more affordable and straightforward train tickets to encourage travellers to leave their cars at home and use the train. All our readers are invited to join the campaign. Visit www.fairfaresnow.org.uk



Buchanan revisited

This is a good time for revisiting the Buchanan report, that seminal work entitled 'Traffic in Towns' published in 1963, for Buchanan based his proposals on estimates of population and the number of motor vehicles in 2010.

He rather overestimated the population. His assumption was that it would be 74 million. The actual population according to the Office for National Statistics is some 65 million. His estimate for the number of vehicles, particularly private cars, was, however practically spot on. His figures and the actual number, according to the Department for Transport, are given in the table below.

	Buchanan's Projection	DfT figures
Cars	30,000,000	30,500,000
All vehicles	40,000,000	34,300,000

Because the population has not grown as much as he predicted he actually underestimated the extent of car ownership. His figures suggested that there would be 405 cars per 1000 population. In fact the figure is about 470.

Buchanan assumed that society desires to use motor vehicles to the full. In 1963 this meant the freedom to drive practically anywhere and to park near to your destination whatever the purpose of your journey, including journeys into city centres for work or shopping. If this is to be achieved, and based on the predictions he made about car and population growth, he made some startling proposals. In Leeds, for example, he suggested that there would need to be thirteen radials designed to motorway standard

through the inner suburbs. Six of these would need to be eight lanes wide.

In London he modelled an area bounded by Euston Road, Tottenham Court Road, Oxford Street and Great Portland Street. He rapidly came to the conclusion that it would be physically impossible to build enough roads and parking spaces for every commuter and shopper who wanted to arrive by car, particularly having in mind the predicted growth in the number of cars.

He then presented three possible models. The first and most radical would allow 20 per cent of 2010 commuters to come in by car. For this, the area would need to be totally rebuilt to accommodate multi-lane roads with grade separated junctions, feeder roads to allow access to destinations and multi-storey or underground car parks. Pedestrians and traffic would need to be separated and he suggested that the primary distributor roads would be below ground level, other roads at ground level, and pedestrians on raised decks.

But it is important to note that this is not what Buchanan was recommending. He was stating that this is what would be required if the aim was to allow maximum freedom for people to travel in by car. His third option, 'do the minimum', assumed six lane primary distributor roads such as Euston Road and Tottenham Court Road and that traffic and pedestrians would be separated, ideally vertically. This would still allow five per cent of commuters to arrive by car. He went further and suggested that even these changes might be rendered unnecessary if further action to influence demand was taken. He suggested 'a system of pricing the use of road space', controlling the number of parking places and subsidising public transport.

Buchanan is often thought of as the man who raised the spectre of wall to wall roads and indeed his report was taken by traffic planners of the day, such as Minister of Transport Ernest Marples, to give the green light to the rapid construction of new roads and proposals for urban motorways such as the London Motorway box which would have destroyed community life in much of London. In fact a more careful reading would reveal a more nuanced view, anticipating much of what has actually happened in the ensuing fifty years.

Chris Barker



Oyster, not yet quite the only ticket Londoners need

A year ago, in the January 2010 newsletter, I waxed lyrical about the extension of the Oyster pay as you go ticketing system to the capital's National Rail network that had taken

place at the beginning of the month. I suggested that the introduction of a fully multi-modal pre-paid smartcard could be the start of a ticketing and travelling revolution. From now on, I argued, it would be just as easy to leave home with the Oyster card and head for the bus-stop, tube or railway station, as it was to reach for the car keys and drive. I concluded that, despite the issues relating to Oyster Extension Permits, travel by public transport in London had become seamless, simpler, quicker, less stressful and more attractive and convenient.

It is clearly a wonderful thing, but unfortunately one anomaly has continued to tarnish my initial enthusiasm. Despite the many clear benefits that have been delivered through the extension of the smartcard to National Rail - including giving many passengers a cheaper option than buying a normal cash single ticket, Oyster pay as you go is still not quite "the only ticket that Londoners need" (to quote from the Mayor, Boris Johnson). Indeed, some travellers remain financially better off without it.

Why is this? Well, a decision, presumably involving ATOC, the TOCs, TfL and the DfT, not to provide discounts on Oyster pay as you go for holders of certain Railcards, while at the same time continuing the Railcard discounts on Off-Peak Day paper Travelcards, has done little to incentivise Network and Family Railcard holders to switch to using Oyster. After all, as a Network Railcard holder why use an Oyster pay as you go smartcard which has a daily cap of £8.00, when with a Network Rail card you can continue to purchase a zone 1-6 Day paper Travelcard at the weekends for £5.30 cash? In my view this anomaly needs to be addressed, because the discrepancy is potentially detrimental to the promotion of the use of Oyster and may undermine further development of smart-ticketing and the associated marketing opportunities that can be provided.

Clearly it would be possible, technically, for the discounts provided by Network and Family Railcards to be loaded on to Oyster pay as you go, as is currently the case for holders of the 16-25 Railcard and some other Railcards.

When I recently put these ideas to ATOC, John Horncastle, Customer Relations Manager, acknowledged that the current limitations of Oyster have worked against any solutions to date, in part because the product been designed primarily as a product for individual - rather than group - use. He also helpfully added though that the issue was very much on ATOC's radar and that they would share my suggestions with colleagues to help inform their future thinking.

But for the moment, as a Network Railcard holder with Oyster pay as you go, I will continue to use Oyster during the week but, in order to save up to 34 per cent on the fare, may well suffer the inconvenience of purchasing a paper Travelcard at weekends. And what will the cohort of travellers who may just travel by public transport at the weekends do? Well, they may well not bother with Oyster at all. So, Oyster is the only ticket that certain Londoners need, provided they only travel on a weekday. Still, I guess part of a ticketing and travelling revolution is better than no revolution at all!

Charles Martin

Charging utilities for digging up the road

Mayor Boris Johnson, business leaders and London councils are calling on the Government to approve regulations that would mean utility companies could be charged for digging up the city's roads at peak times. He is asking people to vote whether they think it's a good idea. You can add your vote at: www.london.gov.uk/

