

Outer London's Lost Cyclists

Who has the Mayor left out of his cycling revolution?

A report by **Darren Johnson**, Green Party Member of the London Assembly **Jan 2016**

(This report sets out my views as an individual Assembly Member and not the agreed view of the entire Assembly)

Foreword

The Mayor of London, shortly after his re-election in 2012, proclaimed a cycling revolution. From the centre to the suburbs, Boris Johnson promised "a civilised city where people can ride their bikes safely and easily in a pleasant environment."

He found that half of all car trips in the suburbs could be cycled in just ten minutes. But he knew that luring these Londoners out of their cars would need something more than hire bikes.

As the Mayor's time at City Hall nears its end, central London is finally starting to look more welcoming for cyclists. Soon a wide new bike lane will allow families, tourists and commuters to cycle east to west across the city centre.

But little has changed for those who want to cycle in outer London boroughs like Havering, Barnet and Bromley.

For a young family in Finchley getting around the town centre on two wheels remains challenging. Lewisham cyclists hoping to use the Mayor's new superhighway to commute to work feel cheated that he axed it.

People in Bexleyheath were thrilled that their council planned to build a network of safe local cycle routes. Their hopes were dashed when the Mayor refused funding.

Getting more Londoners onto bikes could save the suburbs from a congestion nightmare. And there are other benefits. A cycle ride is an easy way to fit enjoyable exercise into the day. Fewer cars on the roads would cut pollution.

Cycling is a win-win for London. But while the outer boroughs are ripe for a biking boom, the Mayor has failed to make cycling feel safe or appealing there.

The next Mayor must draw up and see through a bold cycling action plan for outer London.



Darren Johnson AM, Green Party Member of the London Assembly



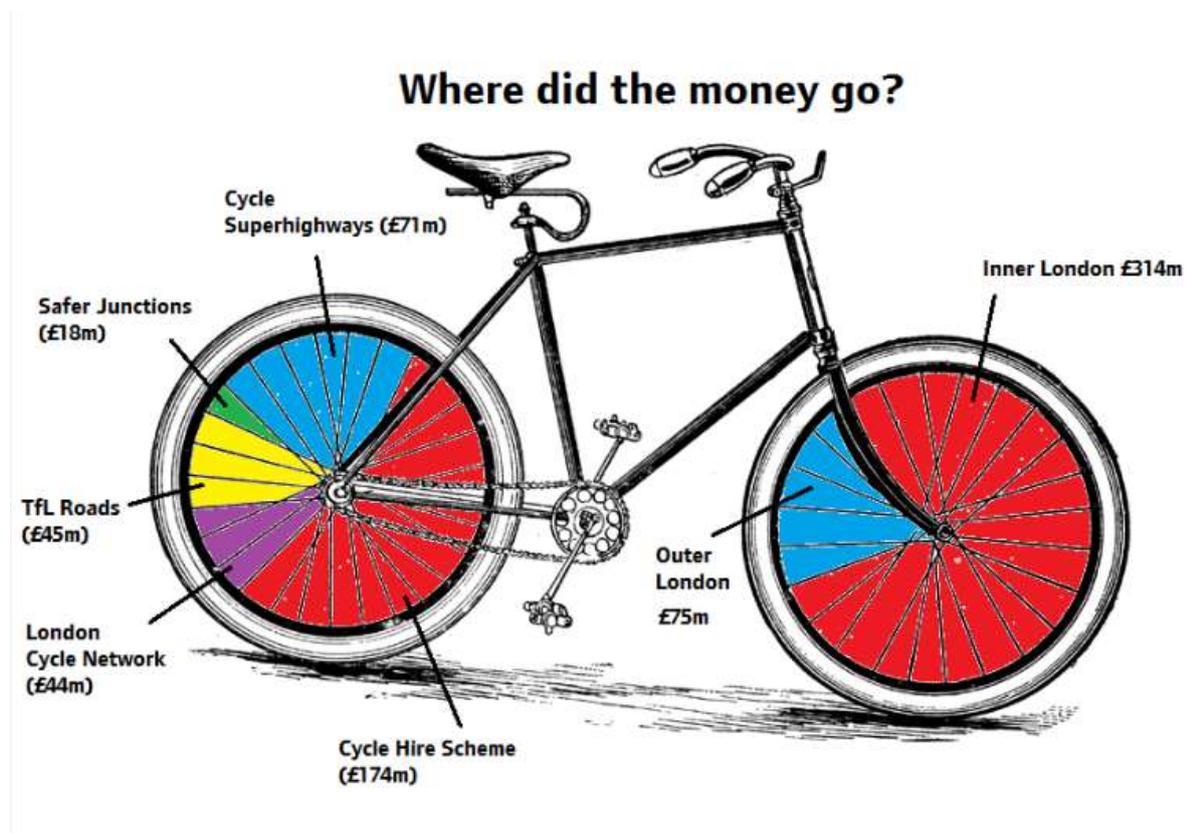
Outer London cycling potential

The Mayor's team studied Londoners' travel habits¹ and the story that emerged was one of incredible untapped cycling potential.

The Mayor found that:

- While over 2.7 million outer London journeys could reasonably be cycled every day from start to end, just a fraction of these trips - 133,000 of them - are taken by bicycle
- Outer London is the key to the capital's cycling revolution - almost two thirds of all London trips that could be cycled are made by residents of the outer boroughs

I asked TfL to break down the money the Mayor will have spent on cycling schemes from May 2008 until May 2016 (annexe 1). Inner London has benefitted from **£314m** of cycling schemes while outer London benefitted to the tune of just **£75m**.



How does outer London lose out?

The top 5 projects funded by the Mayor (left wheel) overwhelmingly benefit inner London.

- The cycle hire scheme's 10,000 bikes and 700 docking stations are a perk for the centre
- By May 2016 only three outer London boroughs will host any cycle superhighway
- The six big junctions the Mayor will have made safer by May 2016 are in central London

I have met with local people in Enfield, Hounslow and Richmond disappointed by the Mayor's lack of commitment to making cycling in their communities safe and appealing.

So why did the Mayor's cycling revolution fail to reach outer London?

Case study 1 - Biking Boroughs (Brent)

The Mayor planned to get outer London cycling through this programme. Yet despite the pivotal role the suburbs would need to play if he were to hit his cycle growth target, the Mayor stumped up just £300,000² over three years for each of the thirteen boroughs.

He was advised³ to give the programme a higher status in his cycling revolution⁴. After all, it would take time and commitment to bring about change in the car-reliant suburbs as opposed to the quick wins promised by his cycle superhighways.

But funding was low⁵ and so promotional activities, new road signs and cycle training were prioritised. There wasn't enough money to pay for new bike lanes or to rebuild dangerous junctions – physical changes to the roads that would make cycling safer and more appealing.

If you want to bike, you need to be comfortable taking on the traffic. Most people aren't.

Take Brent as an example. 95 per cent of potentially cyclable trips are made by car, rail or bus.

The Biking Boroughs scheme did nothing to tackle the big barriers there that put people off cycling such as the difficulty of crossing tube lines or the North Circular trunk road.



Cycle parking and road signs were installed in Kensal Green, a part of the borough relatively close to central London where cycling was already popular.

But proposals to allow cycling on Hazel Road, to introduce contraflow cycling on Clifford Gardens and make biking easier in Brondesbury Park were never realised⁶.

There just wasn't enough money to pay for engineers to draw up decent plans and see them through. The result? The programme did little to boost cycling numbers, either in Brent or anywhere else in outer London.

Case study 2 – Deleted cycle superhighway (Hounslow)

The Mayor promised⁷ twelve fast, direct cycle routes into the city. But only five⁸ will be totally finished by the time his Mayoralty ends.

In July 2015 I met⁹ with cyclists from across Hounslow borough frustrated by the Mayor's failure to even start building cycle superhighway 9 (CS9).

As well as connecting Hounslow and Hyde Park this route could have linked the centres of Hounslow, Brentford and Chiswick, providing an easy alternative to short local car trips. The Mayor's original plan was also to provide a clear cycleway for those biking to work at Heathrow.



But the Mayor let the plans get bogged down¹⁰ by an inflexible local council¹¹ when he could have sought powers to take over local roads where necessary to complete his network of cycle superhighways¹².

The Mayor should have cut the red ribbon on CS9 last summer but it never happened.



If you want to get to Chiswick School from your home nearby you may need to cross Hogarth Roundabout (above). But as there's no safe, direct way to do so, you steer well clear of the danger.

And if you're on Brentford High Street (left) battling with the traffic rat-running through to the South Circular or M4, confusing road markings and a lack of a dedicated cycle lane mean it's unclear which position you should adopt.

TfL are consulting¹³ on plans to improve the existing two-way cycle route along the A4 West Road and a 'Hounslow Cycling Spine' could be built along the A315. But it has also been suggested that a quietway on local backstreets could suffice.

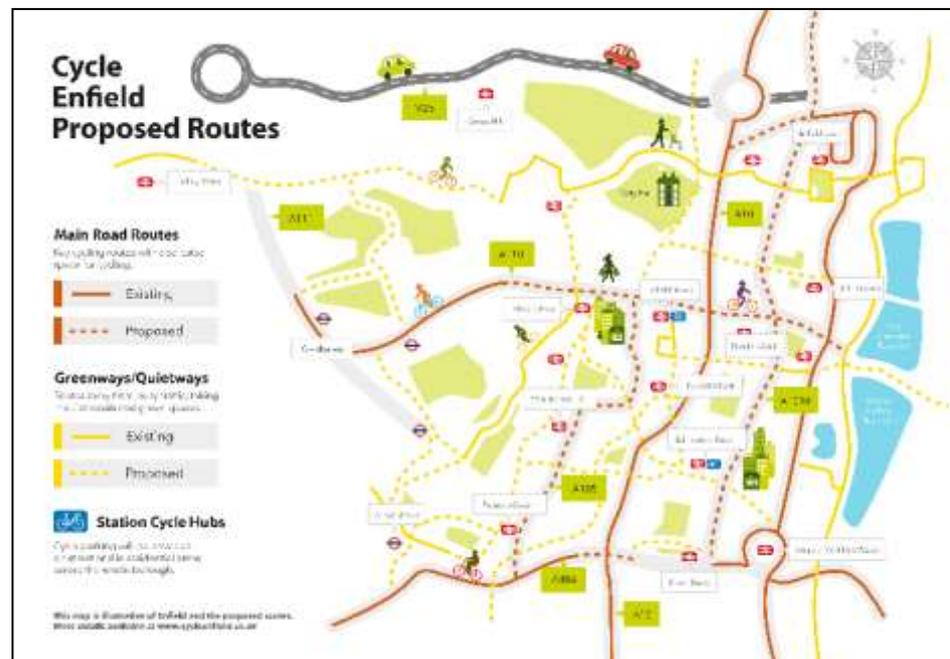
20,000 people cycle on average in Hounslow every day¹⁴. A quiet, meandering route won't be able to cope with such numbers or accommodate potential future increases. The next Mayor must get on and build a fast, direct route into the city centre, both to make cycling more pleasant for locals who currently bike but also to encourage new cyclists to give it a go.

Case study 3 – Mini Hollands (Enfield)

In 2013 the Mayor invited outer London boroughs to bid for a share of £100m to make their local town centres more appealing for walking and cycling.

Of all the Mayor's schemes, this one had the potential to unlock the biggest number of new cycle journeys and to encourage groups who rarely cycle to give it a try (annexe 2).

Enfield, Waltham Forest and Kingston-upon-Thames won £30m each – enough to make a real difference – but sixteen boroughs went away empty handed¹⁵, despite being praised by the Mayor for their excellent proposals.



I went to Enfield¹⁶ (below) to see how their mini Holland is shaping up. Progress has been so slow that the scheme won't be finished until the end of 2018.



The Mayor predicts that the Waltham Forest and Kingston schemes will take just as long to finish.

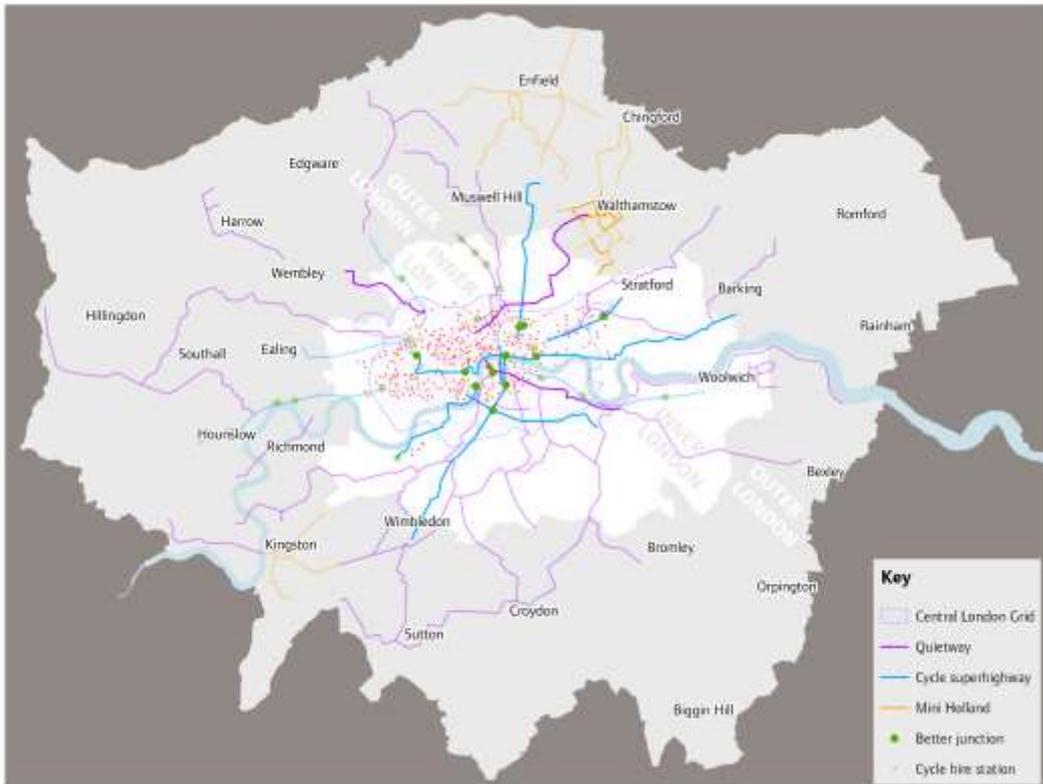
When cyclists continue to face danger on the roads and traffic is choking town centres, such a slow pace of change is unacceptable.

Transforming the car-dominated suburbs will require tough choices. Space wasted on car parking must be reclaimed for people on foot and bike. The gridlocked streets must be freed-up for people, not vehicles.

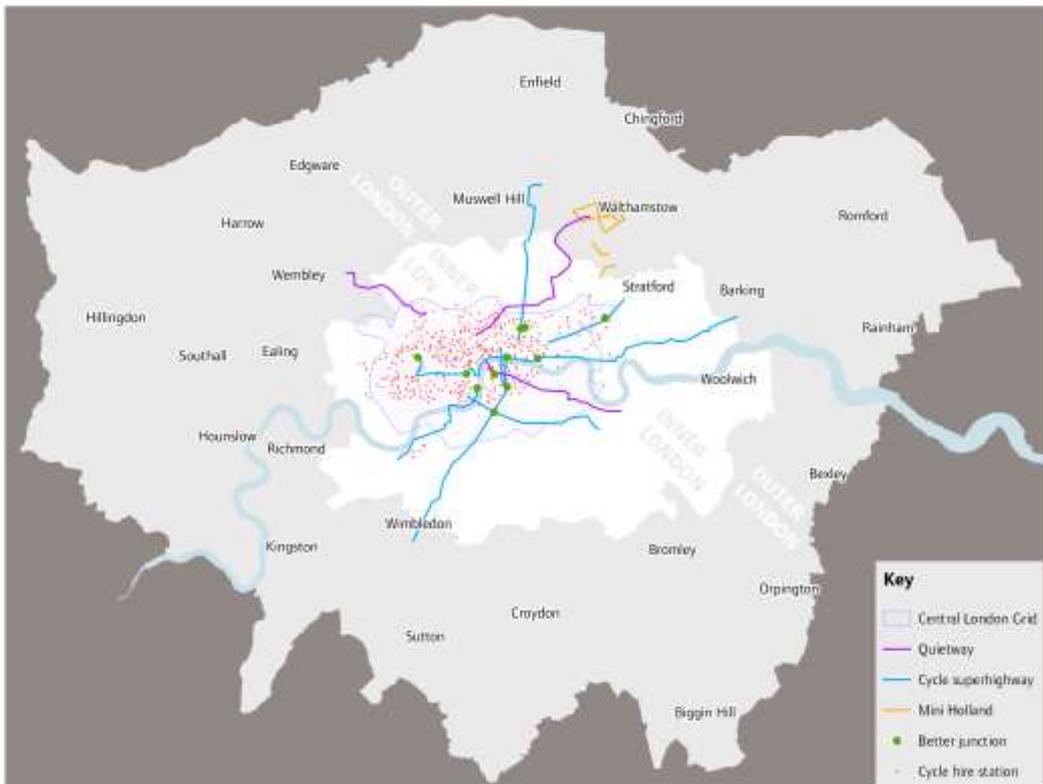
When Enfield's mini Holland is complete, the benefits for local people will be huge. The borough must seize this once in a lifetime opportunity to make the local environment more pleasant and appealing while giving people an easier way to get from one town centre to another. The Mayor must support the borough all the way.

The Mayor's cycling legacy

This is how London could look for cyclists if Mayor's successor finishes the projects he started.



But because he cancelled some superhighways and delayed others, gave councils just pocket money for the Biking Boroughs scheme and failed to roll out Mini Hollands London-wide, this is all that will be in place on the ground by the time he leaves in May 2016.



My Recommendations

The Mayor is doing a follow-up study on how cycling has changed in outer London since 2010. But we already know that most cycling potential in the outer boroughs lies unfulfilled. The next Mayor must draw up an action plan for cycling up to 2020 based on these principles.

Proper funding

London spends less than half the amount per person on cycling than Copenhagen. The next Mayor must boost cycle funding in TfL's next business plan, the money coming from its reserves, and stop underspending the cycling budget¹⁷.

In 2015/16 London's cyclists will receive just 1.4 per cent of transport funding yet they complete 2.5 per cent of all trips¹⁸. They should at least receive funding that matches their share of journeys and an even larger proportion could revolutionise cycle safety and encourage many more Londoners onto bikes.

Bold cycling growth targets

Copenhagen set a goal to get half of all trips made by bike by 2015 but Boris Johnson aimed for 5 per cent by 2026. He later dumped his target when he realised he'd fall well short¹⁹.

The next Mayor must set an ambitious Londonwide cycle growth target as well as appropriate goals for each borough, taking into account population growth and local cycling potential.

Schemes to cater for both novice and confident cyclists

A city worker may be happy to commute on a busy superhighway but those taking their children to school on local streets may prefer a quietway. London needs cycle routes that feel safe and convenient for both experienced and inexperienced cyclists.

To bring about a truly inclusive cycling revolution the next Mayor must stick with the plan and build all of the quietways, mini Hollands and cycle superhighways that are in the pipeline. It must be safe for people to cycle on trunk roads, inner city streets and local town centres alike.

Closer co-operation between London's transport authority and its boroughs

The next Mayor must make sure that TfL shares its transport planning and engineering expertise with boroughs so that only top quality cycling schemes are rolled out across London.

He or she must also make sure TfL challenges boroughs to speed up the delivery of schemes where progress has been unacceptably slow, for example the quietways programme.

Take control of local roads where necessary to see the superhighways through

London needs a network of fast, direct cycle superhighways. If councils' objections jeopardise the routes, the Mayor must step in and take control of borough roads.

Exploit London's cycling successes

Some of the capital's planned cycle schemes may cause traffic delays and draw criticism while they are being built. Some have run into local opposition from pro-car groups.

So it's crucial that when the three mini Hollands inject new life and prosperity into Enfield, Kingston and Walthamstow, the next Mayor must shout about it, publicising the link between traffic-free spaces and boosted trade.

Let me know what you think

If you have any thoughts on this report or on solving London's transport problems, get in touch.

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Annexe 1 – money spent so far on improvements set to be delivered by May 2016.

Money spent in inner London only **£278.45m**

- Central London grid £3.6m
- Cycle hire £173.7m
- Better junctions £17.9m
- Cycle superhighways £53.25m
- TfL roads £30m

Money spent in outer London only **£39.05m**

- Biking boroughs £3.1m
- Better junctions £0m
- Cycle superhighways £17.75m
- Mini Hollands £3.2m
- TfL roads £15m

Money spent in both inner and outer London **£71.6m (£35.8m each)**

- Cycle parking £10m
- Cycle safety & enforcement & on street £4.7m
- Cycle to school partnerships £2.2m
- Quietways/Greenways £10.5m
- London cycle network £44.2m

Explanatory notes

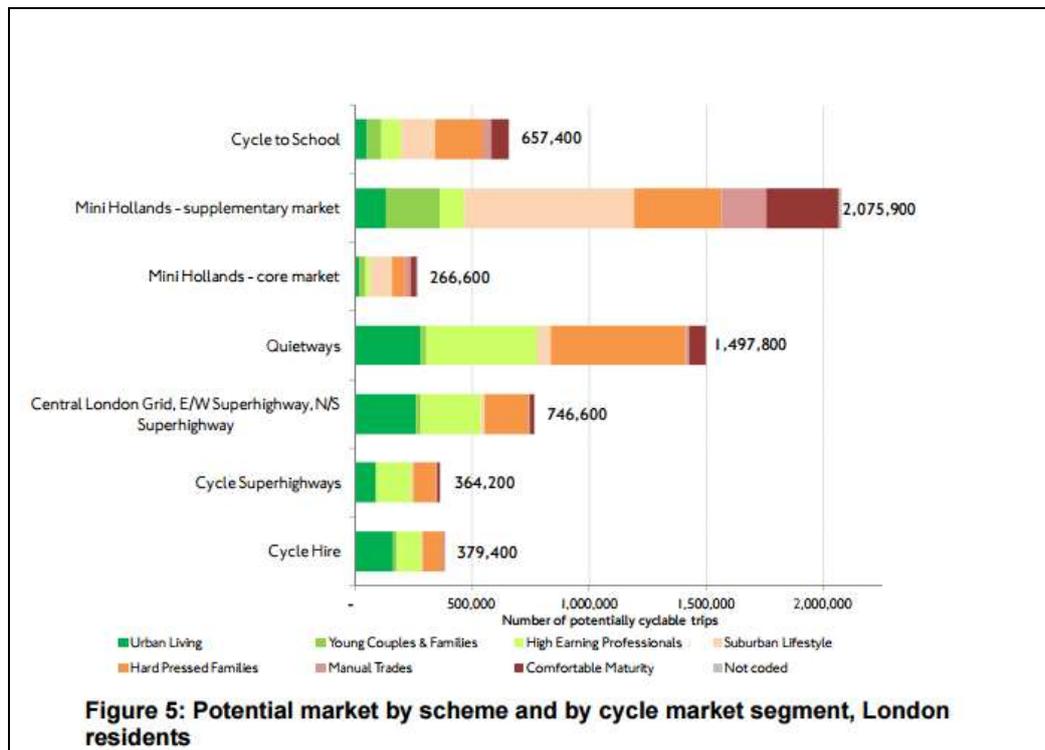
Better junctions – all of the six major junctions the Mayor is certain to have finished transforming by May 2016 are located in inner or central London. He will have reviewed 14 outer London junctions on paper by Dec 2015 but no improvements will have been made on the ground by the time the Mayor leaves and there is no schedule for construction works.

Cycle superhighways – Just three of nineteen outer London boroughs (Haringey, Barking and Dagenham and Merton) will have any superhighway running in them by May 2016 compared to nine of the fourteen inner boroughs. Dividing the £71m total superhighways budget by the twelve recipient boroughs means an average of £4.18m spent in each. $3 \times £4.18m = £12.54m$ for outer London. $9 \times £4.18m = £37.62m$ for inner London.

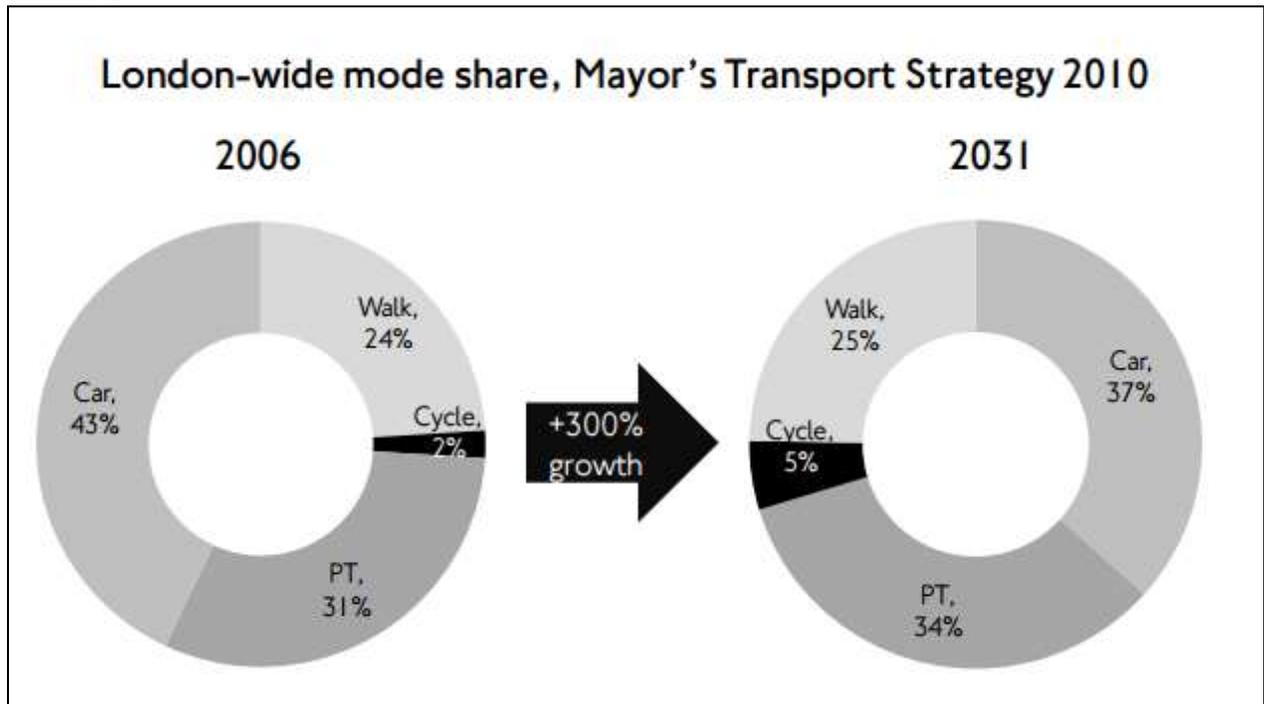
Annexe 1 continued

Project Spend £M	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Better Junctions / Cycle Junction Review	0	0	0	0	0.3	5.1	7	5.5	17.9
Biking Boroughs	0	0	0	0	0	1.6	1.3	0.2	3.1
Central London Grid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	2.8	3.6
Cycle Hire	0	0.9	16.9	61.2	36.7	14.6	29.1	14.3	173.7
Cycle Parking	0	0	0	2	1.7	1.4	2.2	2.7	10
Cycle Safety & Enforcement & On Street	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.6	3.1	4.7
Cycle Superhighways	0	0	4.8	21.2	14.9	3.3	10.3	16.5	71
Cycle to School Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6	0.6	2.2
London Cycle Network	16.1	19.3	8.8	0	0	0	0	0	44.2
Mini Hollands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	3	3.2
Quietways / Greenways	0	0	0	2.2	0.9	1.9	4	1.5	10.5
TLRN	10.9	14.2	11.2	3.2	2.5	1	1	1	45
Grand Total	27	34.4	41.7	87.8	57	29.9	58.1	51.2	389.1

Annexe 2



Annexe 3

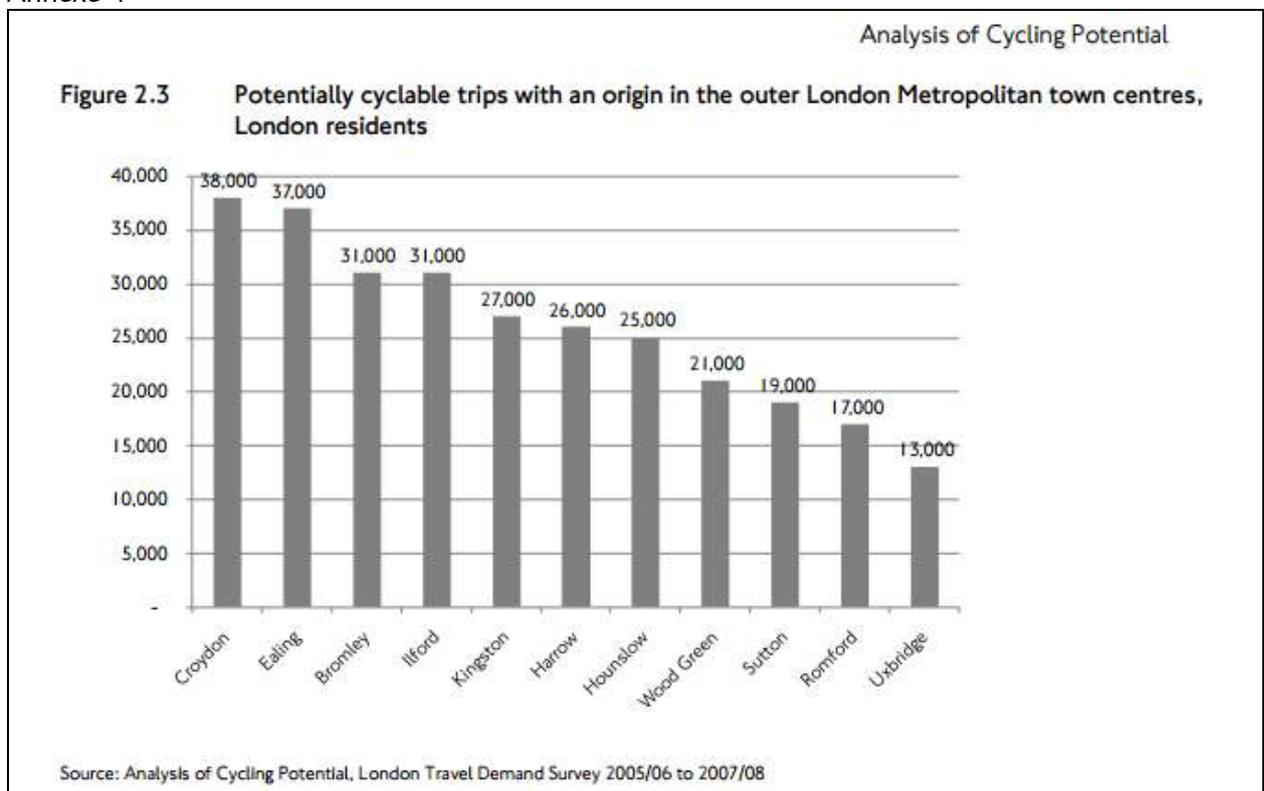


Source: TfL 'Analysis of Cycling Potential' (2010)

PT = Public Transport

N.B. The Mayor's targets wrote off many would-be cyclists and much of the anticipated growth in cycling would come from London's population increasing anyway.

Annexe 4



References

- ¹ Transport for London (2012), Analysis of Cycling Potential, <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/analysis-of-cycling-potential.pdf>
- ² Answer from Mayor to question 0781/2011, <http://mqt.london.gov.uk/mqt/public/question.do?id=35376>
- ³ London Assembly Transport Committee (2010), Written submissions received for the Transport Committee's review of the cycle hire scheme and cycle superhighways, https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/Full%20Doc.pdf
- ⁴ Transport for London (2010), Cycling Revolution London, <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cycling-revolution-london.pdf>
- ⁵ Answer from Mayor to question 2011/0672, http://questions.london.gov.uk/QuestionSearch/searchclient/questions/question_35238
- ⁶ Vole O'Speed blog (05 December 2014), Whatever happened to the Biking Boroughs money?, <http://www.voleospeed.co.uk/2014/12/whatever-happened-to-biking-borough.html> (plus photo on page 3)
- ⁷ Mayor of London (2010), Mayor's Transport Strategy, https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mts_chapter_5_pt2_0.pdf
- ⁸ Transport for London (2015), Cycling Portfolio Update – Delivering the Mayor's Vision for Cycling, <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/stp-20151022-part-1-item07-mayors-cycling-vision.pdf>
- ⁹ Get West London (09 August 2015), Hounslow cyclists let down by Boris Johnson over delayed cycle superhighway plans, <http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/hounslow-cyclists-down-boris-johnson-9811659>
- ¹⁰ Answer from Mayor to question 2014/2696, http://questions.london.gov.uk/QuestionSearch/searchclient/questions/question_276679?findQuestionsByQuestionSequenceId=MQ%202014%20/2696
- ¹¹ Get West London (11 September 2015), Greens blast Boris Johnson and Kensington & Chelsea Council over cycle superhighway failure, <http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/greens-blast-boris-johnson-kensington-10015195>
- ¹² Answer from Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon to written question - HL1904 tabled by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2015-09-07/HL1904/>
- ¹³ Transport for London (Jan 2016), Consultation on A4 Great West Road Junction Improvements, <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/a4-great-west-road>
- ¹⁴ The London Borough of Hounslow Local Implementation Plan for Transport 2011-31, Chapter One – Borough Transport Objectives, states, 'The Department for Transport (DfT) National Road Traffic Census Count site recorded a daily average of 19,745 cyclists in Hounslow, with only one other outer London borough (Richmond) exceeding this with 23,821. It should be noted that the London Travel Demand Survey (LTDS) estimates only around 12,000 trips per day (2005-8 combined)'.
- ¹⁵ Get West London (13 March 2014), Majority of outer boroughs denied 'Mini Holland' cycle funding, <http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/majority-outer-london-boroughs-denied-6808627>
- ¹⁶ Barnet Today (8 October 2015), Cyclists show city hall dangers of borough's roads, <http://www.barnet-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=7693&headline=Cyclists%20show%20city%20hall%20dangers%20of%20borough%20s%20roads§ionIs=news&searchyear=2015>
- ¹⁷ London Assembly Press Release (11 March 2015), 'Embarrassing' cycling underspend called unacceptable by Assembly, <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/cycling-underspend-motion>

¹⁸ Answer from Mayor to question 2015/1704,
http://questions.london.gov.uk/QuestionSearch/searchclient/questions/question_282411

¹⁹ Get Britain Cycling (March 26 2015), TfL drops target for 5% of trips by bike, <http://getbritaincycling.net/tfl-axes-5-cycle-trips-target-by-2026/>