

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## Mayor's Office

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### **Val Shawcross AM**

Chair of the Transport Committee  
City Hall  
The Queens Walk  
London SE1 2AA

**Our ref:**

**Date:** 10 January 2011

Dear Val,

### **RE: Transport Committee report - Pedal power: the cycle hire scheme and cycle superhighways**

I read with interest the Transport Committee's recently published report entitled 'Pedal Power: the cycle hire scheme and cycle superhighways'. I am pleased to read that the Committee welcomes the introduction of the Mayor's flagship cycling schemes: Barclays Cycle Hire and Barclays Cycle Superhighways and that the report acknowledges that these schemes have an important role to play in increasing cycling in London.

It is disappointing, however, that the report is generally negative in its review of the Cycle Superhighways pilots' impact and their potential benefit going forward, and does not accurately represent the broad range of views expressed about the pilots since launch.

There are a number of issues I feel the need to raise prior to TfL's formal response to the report, which they will provide to you before your 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011 deadline.

### **Transport Committee online survey**

I have concerns regarding the impartiality, viability and statistical robustness of the London Assembly online survey, on which key report conclusions are based. The London Assembly have themselves acknowledged the limitations of their survey, in which respondents are self-selecting. It has been a good conduit to gather a large selection of views, but it is not representative of the views of many cyclists who have used the Cycle Superhighways since their launch.

It is extremely disappointing that the scrutiny was timed when the independent data gathering by TfL was still underway and could not therefore form the basis of the report. The report could have proved far more helpful for the public and useful to TfL and the rollout of future phases had TfL's independent market research been taken into account.

## **Cycling demand along the Cycle Superhighways**

The report questions the enthusiasm for the Cycle Superhighways amongst cyclists and raises doubts about the ability of the highways to deliver the planned significant increase in cycling. It is disappointing that the Committee did not acknowledge the figures from TfL's snapshot summary noting a year on year increase in cycling numbers by 25% across both routes (based on August data) and over 90 per cent along some sections of route 7. It is not clear where the 5,000 cyclists per day figure quoted in the report came from (quoted on page 15 and elsewhere), as I understand that this figure was not submitted by TfL on 5 October as part of the scheme background evidence.

Since the report was published, TfL's own customer research – conducted via independent market research professionals – contradicts many of the conclusions within the London Assembly report:

- Research carried out with people living near the Barclays Cycle Superhighways and who made trips along the corridor by any mode found that 34 per cent of non-cyclists had started to cycle on the Barclays Cycle Superhighways. Of those who had cycled on the corridor since July 2010, more than half said that they had increased the amount they cycle on the Barclays Cycle Superhighways.
- More than four in ten cyclists on the corridor said that they had also increased the amount they cycle elsewhere in London as a result of the scheme and around three in ten had purchased a bicycle or cycle equipment since the launch of the Barclays Cycle Superhighways.

Additional count data from October 2010 is also now available, with results as follows:

- Cycle journeys along the routes have increased by 70 percent with increases of 100 per cent or more seen on some sections during peak hours, compared to October 2009.

Also not acknowledged in the report is that the success of the Barclays Cycle Superhighways should not be measured solely in terms of the number of new journeys it generates, but also needs to include benefits to existing users, which are quantified against such things as smoother journeys, provision of additional secure cycle parking, and improved predictability and reliability of journeys. Customer research has demonstrated that people also like the directness of the route, the visibility of the blue markings and the quality of the surface.

## **Safety along the Cycle Superhighways**

Your survey question relating to safety is poorly worded, and leads to erroneous conclusions: *"Do you feel safer cycling on a Cycle Superhighway than on an alternative route?"* From the "No" responses, it is not clear whether respondents feel less safe, or "no more or less safe" (i.e. they might feel equally safe on the Cycle Superhighway as they do on alternative routes, if they are confident cyclists). A substantial 40% do feel

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safer. There is no evidence here that cyclists feel less safe on Cycle Superhighways, but this is the conclusion some journalists have drawn from the survey as a result of the way it is presented (for example, on page 9 of the report).

Information from TfL's research shows:

- Three quarters of respondents to the Scheme Users Survey (carried out amongst 501 cyclists actually cycling along the routes), said that the Barclays Cycle Superhighways had improved safety for cyclists.
- The blue coloured surfacing made 61% of cyclists feel safer (32% said it made no difference to them).
- 21% of those cycling on BCS3 and 13% on route BCS7 said that they had changed their cycling route to include the Barclays Cycle Superhighway. The main reasons for doing so were that they felt safer, the route was quicker and more pleasant, and that it was less congested.
- The majority of LGV drivers believe that roadside safety mirrors will improve cyclists' safety, and they said they would change the way they used junctions fitted with roadside safety mirrors.

TfL continues to closely monitor the first two pilot Cycle Superhighway routes, and are applying the resulting insights from this monitoring to the new routes that are being delivered this year. Whilst I appreciate the value of independent scrutiny, I think it only fair that the Transport Committee take into account the breadth of information and data available before drawing conclusions and making recommendations. I also believe that it would have been more appropriate and of greater use had the Committee undertaken its investigations once a reasonable period of time had passed from the start dates of the schemes.

Needless to say, The Mayor's flagship schemes, Cycle Hire and Cycle Superhighways have changed the landscape of the Capital and have put cycling firmly on London's map. Both have drawn attention from around the globe, but more importantly it is clear that as a result of these schemes, Londoners are embracing cycling unlike ever before.

Yours sincerely,



**Kulveer S Ranger**

Mayor's Transport Advisor & TfL Board Member

cc: Victoria Borwick AM  
James Cleverly AM  
Jenny Jones AM  
Murad Qureshi AM

Steve O'Connell AM  
Joanne McCartney AM  
Caroline Pidgeon AM  
Richard Tracey AM

