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London Assembly  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London, SE1 2AA

Mayor of London  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
City Hall

18 September 2012

Dear Mayor

### **Response to TfL's consultation on a Road Safety Action Plan for London**

I am writing, on behalf of the Transport Committee, to set out our response to the consultation document *Towards a Road Safety Action Plan for London: 2020*. This response draws on our work covering road safety issues.

At the outset, we call on you to extend the deadline for responses to this consultation until at least 31 October 2012 to allow relevant organisations sufficient time to make detailed contributions. This consultation is being undertaken in just two months largely over the summer holiday period despite you stating that the safety of roads is an absolute priority which requires further work.<sup>1</sup> Although there has been progress in improving road safety in the capital, it is clear more action is needed especially for vulnerable road users. Whilst the annual number of people killed or seriously injured fell by 57 per cent between 2000 and 2010, London did not meet the targets for reducing the number of pedal cyclists and powered two-wheeler cyclists killed or seriously injured.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, between 2010 and 2011, the number of pedal cyclists killed or seriously injured increased by 22 per cent to 571 and the number of pedestrians killed or seriously injured increased by seven per cent to 980. Slight casualty rates for cyclists and pedestrians have also increased in recent years.<sup>3</sup>

We want the consultation period extended to help ensure the development of a robust Road Safety Action Plan that fully addresses the issues faced by vulnerable road users. It is important that relevant organisations can contribute detailed views and information on the problems experienced by pedestrians and cyclists so TfL can develop a thorough understanding of these issues. Organisations should have the chance to highlight all the evidence that needs to be taken into account in the development of the Road Safety Action Plan including qualitative research covering engineering and behavioural issues, based upon findings from individual road incident reports. Organisations should also have the opportunity to share their views on the levels of resources required to ensure further improvements in road safety are achieved.

The remainder of this response details our work relating to road safety. We have explored road safety issues for cyclists and pedestrians which relate to section five of the consultation document on proposed actions to protect different types of road users. We have also examined actions that may make roads safer such as 20 mile per hour (mph) zones which relate to section six on proposals to reduce risk. Our response is particularly relevant to consultation question three which seeks views on addressing the problems faced by vulnerable road users.

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<sup>1</sup> Mayor and TfL, *Towards a Road Safety Action Plan for London: 2020*, July 2012, foreword

<sup>2</sup> Mayor and TfL, *Towards a Road Safety Action Plan for London: 2020*, July 2012, p 6-7

<sup>3</sup> Mayor and TfL, *Towards a Road Safety Action Plan for London: 2020*, July 2012, Executive Summary, p ii

## **Addressing the problems faced by cyclists**

Our current investigation into cycling in London is exploring measures to improve cyclists' safety. In July 2012, we published the summary of our first meeting about the problems experienced by cyclists. Guests and members of the public suggested the recent rise in cyclist casualties could be due to various factors including: policies that seek to smooth traffic flow; cyclists' conflicts with Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs); and a lack of adequate enforcement against dangerous road user behaviour particularly by car drivers. Comparisons were drawn with other countries such as Holland where it was suggested dangerous driving by motorists was taken more seriously.

We are continuing to explore various measures proposed to improve cyclists' safety including:

- Better enforcement of safety measures such as Advanced Stop Lines to give cyclists confidence that measures designed to protect them will work;
- Changes to highway rules such as allowing cyclists to turn left at red lights;
- More HGV training programmes such as 'exchanging places' events, where lorry drivers and cyclists can share experiences;
- More segregated road space for cyclists; and
- Making one-way streets into two-way streets for cyclists, especially in congested areas.

In previous work on the cycle hire scheme and cycle superhighways, we also explored cyclists' safety. Our report *Pedal Power* (November 2010) set out findings from some users of the first two cycle superhighways who told us that they did not feel safer when using these routes. Some cyclists suggested that other road users did not always respect the superhighways and there was an inconsistency in the features on these routes.

We concluded that to improve the safety of cycle superhighways you and TfL could establish a minimum level of features for each superhighway. These features could include:

- All blue lanes are two metres wide and mandatory;
- All Advanced Stop Lines are five metres deep;
- All parts of the routes which are one-way are made two-way for cyclists;
- All junctions on each route are improved;
- 20 mph speed limits are introduced for all busy sections on the routes; and
- An MPS Cycle Task Force enforcement campaign for each cycle superhighway when launched.

## **Addressing the problems faced by pedestrians**

Our report *Walk this Way* (October 2010) explored initiatives to make it easier and safer to walk in London. The report highlighted that, for the last 40 years, the needs of motor vehicles have been consistently prioritised over walkers, as the popularity and dependency on the car has grown. As a result, there had been a steady deterioration of the walking environment in London. Cracked, narrow pavements, poor lighting, unsafe pedestrian crossings, a lack of useful street furniture and poor wayfinding to local amenities are all factors that actively discourage Londoners from walking.

We highlighted concerns that the smoothing traffic flow policy might be affecting pedestrians' safety. Some organisations suggested this policy had resulted in longer wait times at junctions, fewer pedestrian crossings and re-sequenced traffic signals which give people less time to cross the road. We showed that, as of June 2010, some pedestrian crossings in London failed to meet the Department for Transport (DfT)'s minimum standards for the time provided to pedestrians to cross the

road and other crossings were not fitted with either tactile (or revolving) cones or audible signals, thus presenting a danger to people with visual or aural impairments.

We identified various measures to improve pedestrians' safety and encourage more walking. We, therefore, recommended that you and TfL should:

- Expand the key walking route initiative so each London Borough has a key walking route by 2013/14;
- Integrate community street audits into the key walking route initiative;
- Ensure all pedestrian crossings meet DfT standards and have accessibility features;
- Support one large-scale pedestrianisation project in London per year;
- Support a new pedestrianisation event in central London and support boroughs to provide local pedestrianisation events;
- Develop a pilot scheme that offers Londoners an incentive to undertake more journeys by foot;
- Ensure the Journey Planner defaults to a walking option as the first choice for short trips; and
- Target the 108 Tube journeys which are quicker on foot and introduces a programme of signage based on Legible London principles to encourage people to walk these trips.

Other actions could also be taken to improve the safety of pedestrians with reduced mobility. In our report *Accessibility of the Transport Network* (November 2010) we highlighted that only half of London's 17,476 bus stops met all three of TfL's criteria for full accessibility. We set out the adverse effects for Londoners when bus stops were blocked by other street furniture and showed this problem was more prevalent in certain parts of London; in 15 London Boroughs the proportion of fully accessible bus stops was less than 50 per cent. In many instances, the inaccessible bus stops were located on roads controlled by London Boroughs but there were also inaccessible bus stops on the roads controlled by TfL.

Last year, we called on TfL to commit to making all bus stops fully accessible. In our response to TfL's draft report *Taking forward the Mayor's Transport Strategy Accessibility Implementation Plan* (November 2011), we acknowledged that funding might be limited but said TfL should build on its aim to make two-thirds of bus stops fully accessible by 2015. We also suggested that TfL should prioritise improving bus stops in the areas of London where most people with reduced mobility lived.

### **Other actions that could make roads safer**

Our report *Braking point: 20mph speed limits in London* (April 2009) highlighted the potential for 20 mph speed zones to make roads safer. We found that 20mph zones had made a major contribution to London's road safety record with a 42 per cent reduction in casualties in areas where these had been introduced. In turn, this had generated an estimated cost benefit of £20 million per year. We concluded that implementing a borough-wide default 20mph limit all at once may prevent more road casualties and prove more cost-effective than the current piecemeal approach of introducing individual 20 mph zones.

We suggested that there might be a case for you and TfL to support boroughs seeking to pilot borough-wide 20mph zones through TfL's road safety budget, and for TfL to develop a borough-led 20 mph pilot programme. We recommended that the effects of this borough-led 20 mph programme on road casualties, traffic flows, walking and cycling and pollution levels should be monitored at one, three and five-year intervals, and the results published and used to inform future TfL and borough policy.

In summary, we argue more should be done to improve the safety of London's roads. In the first instance, we want you to extend the deadline for responses to the consultation so relevant organisations have an opportunity to make detailed contributions on this important issue. The consultation process should result in the development of a robust Road Safety Action Plan that can fully address the issues faced by vulnerable road users. There is the danger that this will not happen if the consultation closes as planned on 28 September 2012.

Whilst our response has highlighted some measures for improving road safety, our work on this topic is ongoing. We will be publishing our report on cycling in the next few months, and it will set out our conclusions and recommendations on the current measures to improve cyclists' safety and the further measures that could be taken, drawing on good practice from the UK and abroad. We will be passing you a copy of this report in due course and trust this will also inform the development of the Road Safety Action Plan. We intend to continue to monitor the problems faced by vulnerable road users in London and the progress made in addressing these problems, and will return to this issue as part of our future work.

Yours sincerely

**Caroline Pidgeon AM**

Chair of the Transport Committee

Cc: Isabel Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport; and Peter Hendy, Transport Commissioner, TfL.