

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

Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

28 February 2019

Dear Sadiq,

Freight in London

I am writing to you on behalf of the Transport Committee to share findings from our recent investigation into the challenges related to freight in London and to feed in to your forthcoming Freight and Servicing Action Plan.

Freight is vital to London's economy. But the volume of freight traffic in London contributes towards congestion, poor air quality and carbon emissions, and impacts safety on London's roads. Freight patterns in the capital are changing. TfL's Freight and Servicing Action Plan is a timely contribution to help deliver safe, clean and efficient freight in London.

We believe as Mayor, you and TfL need to show leadership in working with the freight sector and other stakeholders to reduce the impact of freight traffic in London and improve the efficiency of the sector. TfL currently does not have a dedicated freight team. Responsibility for freight sits with Alex Williams, Director of City Planning.¹ Freight impacts on many of TfL's areas of delivery and is a critical area to address in order to reach key targets in your Transport Strategy (MTS), such as the 80 per cent sustainable mode share. Natalie Chapman, from the Freight Transport Association (FTA), highlighted that they want to see "more leadership on freight".² A dedicated freight team should build strong relationships with the freight industry to help it navigate new regulations such as the Direct Vision Standard and the introduction of the ULEZ. Through initiatives such as the London Freight Enforcement Partnership, this team would help provide a vital link between boroughs, the freight industry and other relevant stakeholders to ensure freight in London is safe, clean and efficient.

Recommendation 1: We recommend that TfL reinstates a dedicated freight team, led by a senior officer in TfL, which can work with teams across the organisation and external stakeholders to deliver a holistic freight strategy for the capital in line with the Mayor's Vision Zero and Healthy Streets agenda.

¹ Alex Williams, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

² Natalie Chapman, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

You and TfL need to work closely with the boroughs and London Councils to develop, where possible, consistent approaches to managing freight demand in London. We heard that it can be challenging for the freight industry to navigate different policies in each borough. We also heard that boroughs do not always have the expertise required to engage with the freight industry.³ Below we set out three key areas where you and TfL could better support the boroughs to work productively with the freight industry and associated stakeholders.

Retiming deliveries

Retiming deliveries is one mechanism to reduce the number of vehicles making deliveries during peak hours, and therefore reduce congestion. Natalie Chapman praised the work done by TfL after the 2012 Games through its retiming deliveries programme. But she highlighted that this programme was resource intensive.⁴ Going forward, TfL plans to work with partners to prioritise certain freight movements and retime others to quieter times.⁵ In order to do this successfully, TfL will need to dedicate resource to working closely with the boroughs and other stakeholders.

Another key factor relating to retiming is the London Lorry Control Scheme. London Councils is currently reviewing the scheme. We heard from both the FTA and TfL that there is scope for reform in this review. Alex Williams said:

“That is a debate that we need to have with London Councils to get them to loosen the reins a bit on this, really, to realise that technology has moved on and that you can have more people delivering later in the evening or earlier in the morning without the negative effects that people feel.”⁶

Recommendation 2: We recommend that TfL works closely with London Councils in its review of the London Lorry Control Scheme in order to achieve a system that gives greater flexibility to transport freight outside of peak hours, while continuing to protect Londoners from road danger, noise and other disturbance.

Identifying logistics space

During our investigation, we heard that availability of logistics space, particularly in central London, is a key factor in enabling the freight industry to be cleaner and more efficient. Rob Fowler, from DPD, said:

“The enabler is property. The key point of that is I cannot ask somebody to get onto a small vehicle, a micro-vehicle which is designed for tight city spaces, and drive down the A13 from Dagenham [...] The location enables that switch. Whether that is a micro-vehicle, a cargo bike or a foot solution, the property has to facilitate that.”⁷

³ Natalie Chapman, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

⁴ Natalie Chapman, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

⁵ TfL, Freight and Servicing Action Plan, presentation for Assembly Members

⁶ Alex Williams, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

⁷ Rob Fowler, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

There is a challenge in identifying logistics space. Rob Fowler highlighted that stakeholders, such as boroughs, are not always aware of the kind of space required.⁸ TfL recognises the need to work with boroughs to identify logistics space. In particular, we suggest TfL needs to facilitate discussion between boroughs and the freight industry, to identify possible logistics space, and under-used space, such as car parking, that could be converted to logistics space.⁹

Positive engagement with the freight industry

Stakeholders emphasised that they would like to see more engagement with boroughs, particularly in relation to new initiatives such as zero-emission zones.¹⁰ We welcome TfL's commitment to publish guidance for consultation on zero-emissions zones.¹¹ This guidance should help develop consistent practice, particularly around engaging constructively with stakeholders such as the freight industry.

There are other areas where TfL could help facilitate engagement between boroughs, the freight industry and other key stakeholders such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). For example, we heard a lot about consolidation during our investigation. Jace Tyrell, from New West End Company, shared the example of the waste consolidation pilot on Bond Street. The result of this was a reduction in daily waste collections from 144 down to nine companies.¹² Other potential areas for consolidation include restaurants sharing deliveries and offices sharing supplies such as stationery. Consolidation does not work well in all cases. Stakeholders highlighted that consolidation needs to be looked at "on a sector-by-sector basis", for example it may work well where the products are homogenous, but less in other instances.¹³ Another barrier to consolidation is where large companies have national contracts in place across their business for goods and services. TfL should work with boroughs and BIDs to identify potential future consolidation opportunities and to share good practice examples of successful schemes.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that a dedicated TfL Freight team has resource for officers to work closely with boroughs to deliver a joined-up and strategic approach to freight across the capital. TfL needs to support boroughs to engage with the freight industry and other stakeholders to:

- retime deliveries, where possible, outside of peak-hours
- identify potential logistics space supporting smaller cleaner vehicles for the last mile
- share good practice and identify opportunities for consolidation schemes

⁸ Alex Williams, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

⁹ Jace Tyrell, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

¹⁰ Natalie Chapman and Rob Fowler, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

¹¹ TfL, Freight and Servicing Action Plan, presentation for Assembly Members

¹² Jace Tyrell, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

¹³ Rob Fowler, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

Londoners need options to help them make the best delivery choices. Click and Collect facilities allow Londoners to order items to a location of their choosing and collect them at a time convenient to them. Stations are good potential locations for Click and Collect facilities as they form part of many Londoners' commutes and mean items can be delivered closer to people's homes. Greater use of Click and Collect facilities would help to reduce the number of repeat deliveries made due to people not being at home when parcels are delivered and consolidate the number of locations parcels are delivered to.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that TfL expands the network of Click and Collect facilities at its stations and encourages Network Rail to do the same. We welcome TfL's proposal to promote consumer options such as Click and Collect through its marketing campaigns, and recommend it uses this to promote new Click and Collect facilities.¹⁴

TfL needs to better understand the factors driving the rise in freight and servicing traffic. In London, about 90 per cent of freight trips, and the majority of servicing trips are carried out by road.¹⁵ Lorries and vans make up a significant amount of road traffic – around one-fifth of road traffic in London and about one third in central London during the morning peak.¹⁶ Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) particularly contribute to traffic on London's roads. As well as contributing to London's congestion, road freight also contributes to poor air quality, carbon emissions and noise pollution. TfL's own analysis shows that van kilometres, in particular, are forecast to grow by 43 per cent by 2041.¹⁷

Understanding the factors driving the growth in LGVs in London is important in order to address the negative impact of this on London's environment. In our committee meeting we heard that LGVs are less regulated than Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), and as such it is harder to understand what LGVs are being used for. Natalie Chapman argued that there are a lot of assumptions that van traffic and e-commerce growth are "inextricably linked", and more needs to be done to understand the growth in van traffic.¹⁸ To effectively address the rise in LGVs in London, TfL needs to understand what is driving this increase.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that TfL conducts further research in order to understand the growth in LGVs in London and identify the sectors that are particularly reliant on the use of LGVs.

TfL needs to show leadership and demonstrate best practice in relation to using the river and rail to transport goods associated with construction. We welcome TfL's plans to work with stakeholders to protect and reactivate wharves and to promote best practice. We also welcome TfL's ongoing commitment to work with Network Rail to grow rail freight and re-route rail freight not serving London.¹⁹ But beyond this, TfL should be demonstrating best practice through its own use of the river, rail and canals. During our committee meeting, Alex Williams highlighted a range of examples where the river, rail and canals were being

¹⁴ TfL, Freight and Servicing Action Plan, presentation for Assembly Members

¹⁵ The Mayor's Transport Strategy

¹⁶ The Mayor's Transport Strategy

¹⁷ TfL, Freight and Servicing Action Plan, presentation for Assembly Members

¹⁸ Natalie Chapman, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019

¹⁹ TfL, Freight and Servicing Action Plan, presentation for Assembly Members

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Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, Chair of the Transport Committee

used to move aggregates, construction material and waste. Some of these examples were TfL projects, such as the Northern line extension where spoil is being removed using the river. He also highlighted where TfL could learn from other projects, such as the Thames Tideway Tunnel where the river is being used to remove spoil but also bring materials into the construction site.²⁰ Our recent report on rail in London recommended a single rail strategy for London. This rail strategy should address freight in London and set out TfL and Network Rail's plans on rail freight; Click and Collect at stations; and a commitment to use the river, rail and canals to transport construction materials and waste for large rail construction projects.

Recommendation 6: We recommend that TfL fully assesses the potential for using the river, rail or the canals to move building materials for all of its major projects set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy and shares this good practice with other large construction projects in London.

We hope you will consider incorporating these recommendations into the Freight and Servicing Action Plan. I would like to request a formal response before Friday 5 April 2019. When providing your response please copy in the Committee's Assistant Scrutiny Manager, Grace Pollard (grace.pollard@london.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

²⁰ Alex Williams, meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee, 5 February 2019