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Dear *Caroline*

'Managing road congestion in London'

Thank you for sending me the Transport Committee's report, '*Managing road congestion in London*', which I and colleagues across Transport for London (TfL) have read with interest.

The report correctly highlights the current and future congestion challenge, as set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Under the Mayor's leadership, TfL has already taken concrete steps to improve the management of the road network including re-phasing 1,000 traffic signals a year, introducing the London Permitting Scheme and Code of Conduct to reduce the impact of roadworks and enhancing our capacity to manage unplanned disruptions such as accidents and breakdowns. TfL has also continued to invest billions of pounds in public transport improvements and promoting more sustainable travel options such as cycling. However, I accept more needs to be done if we are to meet the congestion challenge head-on and TfL has taken on board many of the recommendations made by the Committee.

As you know, managing the road network effectively is important to the delivery of the Mayor's broader objectives for the transport network, particularly to support economic growth and development but also to improve quality of life for all Londoners and to contribute to environmental objectives relating to climate change and air quality. Consequently, managing road congestion remains one of the Mayor's main transport priorities.

As the Committee recognises, measuring and understanding the dynamics of congestion and the likely impact of future growth is complicated and our understanding continues to evolve. TfL appreciates the constructive and informed approach that the report adopts and looks forward to a continuing dialogue with the Committee over the coming months.

The report made a number of important recommendations and I would like to address each in turn:

Recommendation 1

By September 2011, TfL should provide figures for future congestion projections based on its best current understanding of the situation. It should give revised estimates of congestion levels if nothing is done to alleviate it by 2031 and the figure assuming the implementation of the measures in the Mayor's Transport Strategy. TfL should also explain in more detail the reasons for any adjustments.

I am sorry for any confusion caused, as at the meeting on the 9th March TfL did not mean to imply that the forecast was out of date. As Garrett Emmerson, Chief Operating Officer, Surface Transport, explained:

Valerie Shawcross (Chair): *OK. You are trying to cast doubt on the projections that are in the MTS but those projections are still there and at the worst end.*

Garrett Emmerson (Chief Operating Officer, London Streets, Surface Transport, TfL): *I do not think I am trying to cast doubt on them. What I am saying is any strategy document - and I was involved significantly in writing it in my previous role - is a point in time document. It says this is the best available information we have at the time we set it to paper but that work is continuing and it is continuing at a very fast pace, particularly on our understanding of the interventions.*

The other point though is about the figures. As Mike has said, the 14% is a measure of congestion related to speed and congestion is a much more complex phenomenon in terms of the way people understand it. That only relates to a 5% growth in traffic over that period. One of the issues with it is, because the population growth and the economic growth is not evenly spread, that growth is not likely to be evenly spread across the city. In some areas of London you are looking at significantly less than 5% traffic growth and you are not looking at major problems. In other areas, particularly in the east, you have got concentrations of development and concentrations of population growth that are going to give you some very specific problems potentially on key corridors and

on key roads. It is a mistake to think it is a pan-London issue; it is an issue that you have got to target.

TfL's new sub-regional transport models will enable us to better understand the spatial distribution of future increases in congestion and we will, of course, share this information with the Committee in due course. However, we do not currently intend to publish a new London-wide headline forecast.

Recommendation 2

In the Network Operating Strategy's quarterly assessments, TfL should establish benchmarks for each of the four main congestion metrics: journey speed and delay, journey time reliability, disruption caused by planned and unplanned events and volume of road works. To provide a detailed picture of congestion, the assessments should include data for central, inner and outer London, as well as for the AM peak, the inter-peak period and the PM peak, on weekdays and at weekends. TfL should also outline in its response to this report how it will ensure measurements of all traffic, both vehicle and pedestrian.

TfL recognises the importance of properly understanding congestion and its impact on the road network. Over the past few years TfL has significantly increased its analytical capacity in this area, benefitting from new technologies including Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), Global Positioning System (GPS) and SCOOT signal data which has enabled a more diverse range of appropriate metrics to be developed.

TfL's Traffic Directorate measures how it performs against key performance indicators, including journey speed and delay, journey time reliability, disruption caused by planned and unplanned events and volume of roadworks. This data can be broken down by time of day (i.e. AM peak, inter-peak and PM peak) and day of the week although not yet by geographical area (i.e. central, inner and outer London).

TfL agrees that benchmarks are important in driving on-the-ground improvements and to enable a meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of TfL's management of the road network. TfL's Business Plan now includes targets for all of the measures that the Committee recommends, with the exception of speed and delay which is reflected in the target for journey time reliability instead. The targets can be found on page 11 of the TfL Business Plan at the following web address:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/tfls-business-plan-2011-12-to-2014-15.pdf>

TfL collects a wealth of data about cycling, walking and travel behaviour, including undertaking regular customer research and surveys. However, TfL

agrees that more quantitative traffic data needs to be collected on non-motorised transport. Significant progress has already been made with improvements to the way that cycling data from general traffic counts is used. TfL has also put in place additional scheme specific cycling monitoring for Barclays Cycle Superhighways, Barclays Cycle Hire and the Biking Boroughs programme and additional scheme specific pedestrian monitoring for Key Walking Routes and the Great Outdoors Programme. TfL is now reviewing how data collected through manual and automatic cycle and pedestrian counters across the network, as well as through customer research and surveys, can be improved. This reflects TfL's determination to have the right information to support further improvement in the way that the road network is managed for the benefit of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

Recommendation 3

In the final draft London Plan the Mayor should reinstate a hierarchy of road users, which would ensure that future schemes would support economic development and encourage more people to use sustainable and public transport.

The practical purpose of a road user hierarchy is to ensure that limited road space is allocated in the most appropriate way, providing for the needs of all road users - including 'place' activities - while supporting mode shift and ensuring that roads used by vulnerable groups such as cyclists and pedestrians are as safe as possible, and also while recognising that some trips - e.g. the majority of freight - have few options other than to go by road.

TfL has spent a great deal of time looking at how to achieve these objectives including different options for a "road user hierarchy". The appropriate balance should, according to the current MTS, make as great a net contribution as possible to the six goals of supporting economic and population growth, enhancing the quality of life, improving safety and security, improving transport opportunities, reducing transport's contribution to climate change and improving its resilience, and the London 2012 legacy.

Having looked at this in detail TfL has concluded a single pan-London hierarchy is too rigid and this is reflected in the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Instead, TfL uses a flexible, targeted approach reflecting the specific traffic composition of each road and its role in the broader London road network. Plans are tailored to meet those conditions, rather than reflect an inflexible 'pan-London' set of priorities which cannot reflect local circumstances.

In practice this means that in some locations such as town centres, pedestrians, cyclists and buses would be at the top of the hierarchy; in other places, such as industrial areas, freight and other vehicles would be given higher priority, though the needs of pedestrians would still be met. By adopting this approach vulnerable road users can be prioritised where it is most likely to

be beneficial to them, supporting mode shift, while also maintaining the essential economic role played by our transport system in facilitating the movement of goods and services.

A good example is the introduction of the Barclays Cycle Superhighways, which were conceived to provide additional cycling facilities in London as part of the Mayor's aim of increasing cycling journeys by 400% by 2026. Schemes such as the new cycle lanes on Stockwell Gyratory, Grosvenor Road and Millbank have all seen highway space reallocated from general traffic in order to provide an enhanced facility for cyclists. This was done where traffic modelling showed that there would be sufficient remaining capacity for traffic, so that reallocation would not disrupt traffic flow beyond a point that could be managed.

However, under this approach the onus is on TfL to clearly explain how it takes into account the needs of more vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians in the decisions it makes and to demonstrate how non-motorised transport is prioritised where appropriate. The report comments (page 25) that guidance to TfL's Network Management Group (NMG) is not currently publicly available and I have asked the relevant TfL officials to consider how we can make the process more transparent. I would expect their recommendations to be included in the final Network Operating Strategy to be published by the end of this year.

While I acknowledge that TfL can do more to better explain its approach I hope that our record investment in cycling, major infrastructure schemes such as Crossrail and the Tube Upgrades as well as ongoing investment in the bus network, improving the urban realm, walking and promoting smarter travel demonstrate TfL's commitment to creating a more balanced and sustainable transport network in London.

Recommendation 4

By September 2011, TfL should publish a plan outlining how a pilot lane rental scheme would operate in London. This should include details of the confirmed list of Congestion Management Areas, the type of charges which utility companies would have to pay, more detailed targets for how it would ease congestion, and how TfL's own works could be affected by the scheme.

Following the announcement of the start of consultation on a national lane rental scheme by the Department for Transport, TfL began its own consultation on a London-scheme on 23 August. This includes the specific details the Committee seeks, including details of the scope of the scheme, the charging structure, targets for congestion reduction and what effect it would have on TfL's own works which were included in the consultation's supporting documents.

TfL's consultation documents are available via this link:
https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/streets/lane-rental/consult_view

Recommendation 5

The Mayor and TfL should use the publication of any future plan on river crossings to outline in detail how any projected benefits in road capacity or congestion relief are measured against potential negative impacts on public health, sustainable transport and the environment. It should also examine various mitigation measures which might be established to manage potential negative impacts.

In progressing any new highway river crossings TfL would need to apply for powers for construction under the Transport and Works Act or the Town and Country Planning Act (in association with other consents). In submitting an application under either of these consent routes, TfL would need to prepare a detailed Environmental Impact Statement which would cover all the points the Committee recommend.

Recommendation 6

By September 2011, the Mayor should outline in more detail how road user demand can be reduced. This should include:

- The level of increase in congestion necessary to trigger a consideration of further road user charging;
- The broad principles to which any scheme would have to conform;
- How the Mayor will protect smarter travel funding in future LIP rounds;
- Any work undertaken by TfL to examine the potential market for car clubs in London and how it might develop support in the future; and
- Any work undertaken to look at changing freight delivery practices.

Your report correctly highlights the future congestion challenge, set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, that congestion could increase by as much as 20 per cent by 2031 unless decisive action is taken to address it. The Mayor's Transport Strategy already sets out the broad policy framework for tackling congestion, of which managing demand is an important element. A whole range of demand management and other measures are listed in the Strategy and work is currently underway to turn these into a comprehensive approach which can be properly resourced and implemented over the period to 2020. The approach will need to acknowledge that the expected increase in congestion is not evenly spread across London and that there will be different policy and infrastructure needs in each region, reflecting different patterns of growth and other factors.

This analysis will inform TfL's future Business Plan needs and Mayoral and TfL discussions with Government about future funding for London. The areas identified by the report as requiring further detail will be considered in TfL's work and it is my intention for TfL officials to engage with the Committee on an ongoing basis as the work progresses.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that managing the road network and, in particular, addressing the future congestion challenge is one of the Mayor's main transport priorities. This is reflected in the ongoing work taking place in TfL to ensure that the correct policies and activities are in place to respond to the future challenges our City faces. As always, TfL appreciates the constructive and informed approach that the report adopts and looks forward to a continuing dialogue with the Committee over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Hendy', written over the 'Yours sincerely' line.

Peter Hendy