

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## Mayor's Office

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**Date:**

**14 APR 2011**

Dear Caroline

### **Re: Transport Committee's report 'Walk this Way: making walking easier and safer in London'**

Thank you for your letter of 24 February further to the publication of your rapporteurship report on walking last October. I am grateful for the work that you have done in helping to identify what can be done to increase the attention given to walking and improving the walking environment in London.

I am determined to make London a more walkable city and 2011 will see a range of improvements to London's streets and public spaces as Transport for London works closely with partners to encourage Londoners and visitors to consider walking as one of the best ways of getting around the capital. Specific examples of what will be delivered include more Borough Key Walking Routes funded through the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding, the further roll out of Legible London way-finding system, delivery of new and improved walking and cycling routes in and around the Olympic Park, improvements to the Strategic Walk Network as well as further improvements to the pedestrian environment on the TLRN.

I understand your concern that the dropping of the Year of Walking (YoW) title could be perceived as a lowering of my interest in the subject. This is not the case. After a lot of consideration it was agreed that rather than focus on a solitary year, it would be beneficial to support walking throughout 2011 and beyond. This is especially true with the Olympic and Paralympic Games fast approaching when thousands of additional visitors will be moving around this great City. It was decided, therefore, to revert to the familiar branding of, "Making Walking Count", as set out in my transport strategy. I hope you will agree that the substantial programme of activity that TfL has developed will deliver a significant boost to walking in the capital. The success of the programme will of course be dependent on working closely with a wide range of partners including the Boroughs, the NHS and relevant stakeholder groups such as Living Streets, The Ramblers, Sustrans and Walk England to name a few. TfL meets regularly with these Groups to ensure a coordinated approach is maintained.

You have asked in your letter for further detail on some of TfL's responses to the recommendations in your report. TfL's previous submission was sent in January 2011, after the publication of Walk this Way (October 2010). I hope you will find the information below helpful:

**Recommendation 1 – Key Walking Routes**

*TfL's response made no mention of either target in the recommendation: to ensure that half of boroughs had a Key Walking Route by the Year of Walking or that all boroughs should have one by 2013/2014. I would welcome more information on:*

*a) Exactly how many new boroughs are developing Key Walking Routes?*

Six new boroughs are developing key walking routes in 2011/12. These boroughs are:

- Bexley
- Enfield
- Hammersmith & Fulham
- Hounslow
- Islington
- Kingston

*b) What specific targets TfL has "with the aim of significantly increasing the number of Key Walking Routes by 2013/2014".*

TfL has a target of 22 boroughs having either completed or be progressing a key walking route scheme by 2013/14. In 2011/12 17 new LIP funded schemes that qualify as Key Walking Routes will commence in boroughs across London. These routes are as follows:

- Albany park station, Bexley
- Euston to St Pancras, Camden
- Cheapside, City of London
- Riverside walk, City of London
- Silver Street station, Enfield
- Edmonton Green, Enfield
- Meridian Water, Enfield
- Riverside walk, Hammersmith & Fulham
- Syon Lane, Hounslow
- Hornsey road, Islington
- King's cross and Caledonian road, Islington
- St James' road, Kingston
- Grass routes, Lambeth
- Lower Downs Road, Merton
- Chadwell Heath, Redbridge
- Wanstead phase 2, Redbridge
- Worcester Park, Sutton

## **Recommendation 2 – Urban Design London**

*It would be useful to know what “suggestions” TfL has made to Urban Design London about how to tailor its training programme during 2011 and any changes which have been made to the course in light of the current economic situation.*

TfL, working with Urban Design London, has prepared a training programme for 2011/12 that reflects the increased focus on walking this year. This includes more of a focus on walking in design surgeries, urban design training and technical support events. This walking focus programme includes courses on: assessing street quality and walking environments; Pedestrian Environment Review Software (PERS), Street Audit, Pedestrian Levels of Service; Shared Space and Level Surfaces; Understanding Movement; and Designing for Pedestrians.

The courses on Designing for Pedestrians will focus on the provision of good design for those on foot. This will be supported by two courses on pedestrian audit tools, including PERS and Community Safety Audits.

A programme on shared space design and issues has also been included as a result of the increasing profile and interest in the topic among the boroughs. These courses will be joined by a new programme of site visits to completed Key Walking Routes, led by those responsible for the schemes. This will allow officers and engineers the chance to view good practice and question the scheme designers in person, sharing information and knowledge. These walking courses will be complemented by urban realm content, reinforcing the links between walking and the urban realm.

No changes have been made to the UDL courses, in terms of its walking focus, in light of the current economic situation. Indeed, the focus on walking in these courses has increased, reflecting the priority we attach to promoting walking.

If you or any of your team would like to attend any of the UDL courses mentioned above or one of the site visits, I would be delighted to get TfL officers to arrange this.

## **Recommendation 3 – Community Street Audits**

*TfL’s response indicates that it is “urging” all boroughs to use Community Street Audits (CSAs) while preparing Key Walking Routes. Does TfL monitor the use of CSAs during the planning of Key Walking Routes, and if so, how many have made use of them thus far?*

TfL advises boroughs in its ‘Walking Best Practice Guidance’ to use CSAs when preparing Key Walking Routes. TfL monitors the use of CSAs and PERS as part of the planning stage of implementing Key Walking Routes. CSAs and PERS have been used to deliver the four Key Walking Routes that have been implemented to date in London.

Key Walking Routes that have used CSAs to date to inform their design include Wanstead (Redbridge) and Chadwell Heath to Marks Gate (Barking & Dagenham). The Clear Zone Corridor (Camden, City of Westminster & City of London) and Willesden Green (Brent) Key Walking Routes have used PERS audits to identify pedestrian issues prior to scheme design to date.

The benefits of using walking audit tools such as PERS and CSAs ensure that existing street issues affecting pedestrians are captured at the scheme inception stage, before significant investment and construction has occurred. Consequently, the scheme is more often than delivered right first time, meeting the needs of all pedestrians and avoiding potentially expensive revisits to a scheme to rectify design faults affecting pedestrians. As an example, a CSA at Wanstead identified that park lighting was poor with personal safety concerns. These factors were a barrier to local walking. The designed scheme provided lighting and CCTV through the park, removing the perceived safety barrier to walking.

Walking audit tools also allow for prioritisation of resources and their most efficient use. For example, PERS uses a common methodology that allows audited areas to be scored and then compared. The area or route with the worst performance for pedestrians can then be prioritised for investment. TfL has used this approach across the Transport for London Road Network to focus walking investment where it is most needed. The approach has been demonstrated on Farrington Road in the City of London.

## **Recommendation 4 – Pedestrian crossings**

*I look forward to hearing TfL's update on the number of pedestrian crossings which:*

*(a) Do not meet DfT standards*

TfL has published the locations of those pedestrian crossings that were introduced before the Department for Transport's (DfT) guidance on pedestrian crossing timings changed in 2005, and which therefore do not meet the latest guidance. These can be found at the following link <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpartners/publications/5353.aspx>

*(b) Which are not fitted with audible signals*

4,539 (91%) of the 4,970 signalised pedestrian facilities across London have either tactile cones and or audible guidance to assist visually impaired people. TfL is bringing all its signals up to current standards through its rolling modernisation programme and in the delivery of other traffic signal schemes on the network.

*(c) Which do not have a tactile cone by June 2011. I would also welcome information on the timescales to ensure all crossings are brought up to the minimum DfT standards.*

In 2010/11, 75 pedestrian crossing facilities will be modernised or upgraded as part of these ongoing programmes, bringing the total number incorporating either tactile cones and or audible guidance to 4,614 (92%). The number of traffic signals being upgraded or modernised in future years is dependent on the provision of future funding.

TfL will write to the Committee again in June 2011 to confirm the proportion of pedestrian crossings remaining which either do not meet the latest DfT guidance on signal timings, or which are not fitted with audible signals and tactile cones.

## **Recommendation 6 – Major infrastructure projects**

*The report noted both the Mayor's support for projects through the Great Outdoors programme and the work being undertaken at Exhibition Road, both of which are welcome. However, as was noted in the example of New York, there is a need for the Mayor to have a constantly evolving vision for how London might look in the future, using a mixture of support for both local projects and ones which help to transform areas central to city life. Recent press reports have indicated the Mayor's support for a 'floating walkway' on the north side of the Thames, which has similarities to the London Promenade project highlighted in my report. I would welcome a further update from the Mayor on these projects, specifically on their funding and feasibility.*

I am very much in favour of the London River Park proposal, winner of the Mayor's Award for Planning Excellence at the 2010/11 London Planning Awards, and work is currently being undertaken to establish its feasibility.

## **Recommendation 7 – Promotional events**

*I have noted my disappointment concerning the lack of initiative around a large-scale event for what was to be the Year of Walking. TfL said in its response that it is "reviewing the practical considerations of implementing a pedestrian event" and I would like an update on how far this review has gone and what, if any, conclusions it has come to. I would also like more information on the toolkit mentioned in the response: what its exact purpose is, what kind of support it will offer, and who are the partners that are helping TfL to develop it.*

I appreciate your concern at the lack of a large-scale event for what was to be the Year of Walking. TfL has assessed the opportunity to undertake a large-scale event in London in 2011. This assessment has revealed that the large number of other road closure events and Olympic test events planned over the summer means that the window of opportunity to hold such an event this year is small and the potential for walking messages being lost during the time is high. Therefore, no pedestrian event will unfortunately be held in 2011.

However, TfL is currently developing a toolkit as part of Making Walking Count 2011 programme. Using the Walking Core Delivery Group partners, TfL has identified a need for press, media and publicity material support. Therefore, TfL is investigating the scope for a media toolkit to support local partner walking events and activities. This toolkit could include the provision of key walking messages and photo libraries, support with material design and information provision.

## **Recommendation 8 – Walking incentives**

*I was disappointed that TfL's response merely repeated information concerning a pilot incentivisation scheme that had already been run in Wimbledon and Bexleyheath. I had received information about this in TfL's original written submission in September 2010 and it was one which was highlighted and commended in the report. The recommendation asked specifically about how TfL might develop such an idea as a pilot scheme to a wider group of people, as well as ways in which it might be linked to Oyster. I would ask that TfL report back and address the actual recommendation.*

TfL is not currently planning to extend the school pilot incentivisation programme.

Nevertheless, TfL is constantly assessing new ways to encourage walking, including the possibility of a walking incentives scheme. TfL will seek to work with partners in order both to develop better

initiatives and to reduce or eliminate delivery costs. For example, TfL has been undertaking some scoping work on how the private sector might work with TfL to develop a walking and cycling rewards scheme. This has yet to lead to any specific proposals to date.

### **Recommendation 9 – Journey Planner**

*In response to a question on improvements to Journey Planner to help pedestrians in September 2010, you indicated that TfL is “is open to suggestions on what further improvements could be made”. A popular suggestion during our investigation was to default walking as the preferred option for journeys under 30 minutes. TfL has said that that costs are “likely to be significant” to achieve this. I would like a more detailed breakdown on what these costs would entail and if any work has been undertaken within TfL, especially in light of the Olympics in 2012, to help prioritise walking. The response also makes no mention of the specific recommendation concerning targeting the 108 tube journeys which are quicker on foot for a programme of signage and information provision. I would like a full response to this in your follow-up.*

As you will be aware, customers are already able to select a walking option through the functionality available on Journey Planner; they can choose between three defined walking speeds (average, fast, slow) and, they can, should they wish to, decrease or increase their walking times up to 1 hour. TfL’s Travel Information Contact Centres have already changed their default setting from 20 minutes walking to 10 minutes because customers continually ask to be taken as close as possible to their destination and to reduce the possibility of getting lost if long walking times are involved.

We have investigated the cost of introducing walking as the ‘default’ option on the journey planner. It would cost in the region of £150,000 and may result in ‘knock-on’ issues. For example, the processing time of Journey Planner (JP) may be increased for all journey calculations resulting in poorer response times for all users, the majority of whom are looking to use Public Transport. Nevertheless, TfL will continue to investigate how we can improve the journey planner for pedestrians.

TfL recognises the role walking can play in meeting London’s transport demand for the 2012 Games and beyond. Further realising the value of TfL’s investment into Legible London, TfL is currently working with the ODA to create Games time walking maps, using the Legible London mapping system, for the general public. TfL also has a joint active travel programme with LOCOG which is focused on encouraging spectators to walk and cycle to the Games.

TfL will not be focusing on the 108 Underground journeys that might be walkable in 2011. The 108 figure is a helpful headline and draws attention to the possibility of walking these journeys. Further research was undertaken within TfL and it was found that the 108 figure indicates journeys that are possible but are not necessarily made by underground passengers. We therefore need to target our measures on those journeys which are currently made by public transport which might readily be made by foot and for which there is likely to be an operational benefit to TfL both before, during and after the Olympics, e.g. by reducing station crowding. This is supported by recent research into arrivals at central London mainline rail termini.

Therefore, TfL, will be focusing on encouraging more people to travel from these severely constrained transport hubs, such as Waterloo, by foot during 2011 and beyond.

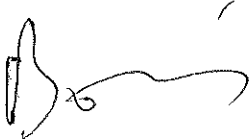
This will be achieved through new information campaigns at target stations and supported on-street by an expanding Legible London system, for example, most recently implemented on-street outside St Pancras and Kings Cross mainline stations.

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TfL believes that walking can help to reduce congestion on the Underground network where very short journeys are taking place and hopes to target selected London Underground station pairs where scope has been identified to reduce Underground demand and achieve mode shift to walking. This will be delivered, like the Network Rail programme, through information campaigns and use of Legible London.

I trust that you will find this additional information of use and I hope that you will be fully supportive of all the excellent work that will be going on in 2011 and beyond to support walking in London. You may wish to meet with my Transport Advisor, Kulveer Ranger, to discuss this further.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written over a horizontal line.

**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London