1. **Recommendations**

1.1 That the Committee agree to authorise expenditure from the scrutiny programme budget of up to £9,000 to cover the cost of the seminar, subject to the agreement of Transport Committee at its meeting on 11 September.

1.2 That the Committee note that the Executive Director of Secretariat will commission external contractors to carry out the work set out in this report.

2. **Background**

2.1 At its meeting on 11 September the Transport Committee will be recommended to examine what further policies may be applied to reduce and manage traffic congestion across London through a seminar with guest speakers at City Hall in February 2008.

2.2 As part of this project the Transport Committee will be asked to recommend to BMAC expenditure of up to £9,000 for the costs of the seminar including up to £1,500 to commission a specialist in traffic management policy to advise on potential speakers and provide technical briefings.

3. **Issues for Consideration**

3.1 At its meeting on 25 April 2007, the Committee agreed to include in its work programme examination of progress made since January 2002 when the then Transport Policy Committee organised a successful seminar on alternatives to congestion charging. That Committee subsequently published a report which summarised the main themes of the seminar and made recommendations.¹

3.2 Since the 2002 seminar there have been a number of relevant policy developments. Much of the focus on local transport policy in England over the last year has related to the Eddington Transport Study and the development of business cases for the award of Transport Innovation Fund

¹ Alternatives to Congestion Charging: Proceedings of a seminar held by the Transport Policy Committee, 31 January 2002
http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport/congestion_charge_alternatives.pdf
congestion reduction funds. Both are concerned with congestion reduction and thereby improving productivity.

3.3 As Eddington notes, congestion, and the associated unreliability of journey times, adversely affects business efficiency, and thus the attractiveness of London as an economic centre in competition with other cities around the world as well as within the UK. Yet some congestion is a sign of economic dynamism and efficiency. The seminar would be an opportunity to explore the perspective and priorities of the London business community.

3.4 It is widely accepted that congestion requires a package of integrated measures. The seminar would be a way of examining a few of such measures in detail and taking a broader view of the range of measures that might be considered, as was done in the highly successful 2002 seminar. For example, one of the focus points of the 2002 seminar was reducing the demand for travel, particularly travel by car, through travel planning, both at the workplace and in the home. Following the seminar, TfL initiated a series of pilot studies, trialling different home based travel planning approaches and has now made a major commitment to travel planning. The Department for Transport has also been studying the potential of travel planning – Smarter Travel – to reduce car use by sponsoring sustainable travel demonstration projects in three towns. The interim findings indicate that significant reductions in car use can be achieved bearing out the findings from Perth, W Australia, presented at the 2002 seminar.

3.5 There is also an international perspective. Along with London, Singapore and Stockholm are the only cities with congestion charging schemes. Stockholm’s has only just been introduced, following a seven month pilot in 2006 and, like London, is focused on the city centre. Singapore has had road pricing since 1975, and a relatively sophisticated system of Electronic Road Pricing since 1998. Paris has reduced space for cars in the centre, is encouraging the use of bikes and is investing in a peripheral LRT system. The Dutch Government is planning to introduce a national road pricing system by 2012. New York is among a number of US cites recently awarded Federal funds to progress congestion pricing measures.

3.6 Thus a topical and relevant set of topics is likely to include:
- an overview of possible congestion reducing measures – “setting the scene”
- the needs and priorities of the London economy
- the Eddington transport study
- TIF and congestion reduction
- travel planning
- an international perspective

3.7 The seminar would provide a vehicle for the Committee to encourage debate on how to tackle traffic congestion across London and to examine existing policies and local, national and international initiatives designed to reduce congestion. It would provide an opportunity for leading authorities on particular aspects of tackling urban traffic congestion to inform and encourage debate among those responsible for managing London’s transport networks and services and those with a direct interest in the quality, efficiency and cost of transport within London.

External advice

3.8 In preparing for its 2001 seminar the Committee commissioned a transport specialist as consultant to the seminar to propose and subsequently liaise with prospective speakers; and to prepare technical briefings for the speakers on the areas to be covered. It is proposed that similar advice is commissioned for this seminar.
3.9 Traffic management policy is a technical and specialist field. Ensuring that the seminar provides a suitable combination of prospective speakers requires specialist and in-depth knowledge of both the issues and the individuals best placed to discuss them. Such specialist knowledge is not available within the secretariat.

3.10 Commissioning a consultant with knowledge of this area of policy would help to attract high quality and influential speakers. This would, in turn, generate interest in the seminar and ensure that it is an attractive offer to potential delegates. The consultant would also ensure that the speakers are suitably briefed on the areas to cover and that the contributions from the speakers covered all the relevant topics to be addressed.

3.11 The Assembly’s Decision Making Framework includes a requirement that all four of the following criteria be considered by committees in deciding whether external technical assistance is required and appropriate on any given project:

- that the proposed project requiring technical assistance is clearly and tightly defined. This would ordinarily mean that the consultant would be used for a discrete piece of technical analysis or research rather than simply as an adviser for the whole of a scrutiny;

- that the proposed project cannot be readily undertaken by in-house staff, either because of a lack of necessary expertise or because of a lack of capacity;

- that the analysis required from consultants is not readily available and cannot be acquired elsewhere;

- that the information required from consultants would be a significant contribution to the aims of the scrutiny. Technical assistance to scrutiny committees involves in most cases the analysis of information or data provided to the committee, rather than primary research.

3.12 Paragraphs 3.8 to 3.10 of this report are designed to demonstrate that all four of the criteria set out in the previous paragraph have been addressed and that external support for this project is necessary and appropriate.

3.13 Initial discussions with prospective consultants with a specialism in this field suggest that the cost of identifying and liaising with suitable speakers and providing technical briefings for them in advance of the seminar will not exceed £1,500.

4. Strategy implications

4.1 This report relates to the Committee’s programme of meetings and inquiries, some of which may be relevant to the Mayor’s strategies and will assist the Assembly in fulfilling its wider role of investigating issues affecting Londoners.

5. Legal implications

5.1 Under s59 Greater London Authority Act 1999 the Assembly has the power to keep under review the exercise by the Mayor of his statutory functions. The powers of the Assembly include the power to investigate and prepare reports about:

- any actions and decisions of the Mayor;

- any actions and decisions of any member of staff of the Authority;

- matters relating to the principal purposes of the Authority;

- matters in relation to which statutory functions are exercisable by the Mayor, and
• any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Greater London.

5.2 S34 GLA provides that the Authority, acting by the Mayor, by the Assembly, or by both jointly, may do anything (including the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of any functions or the Authority exercisable by the Mayor or, as the case may be, by the Assembly or by both acting jointly.

5.3 Section 54(1) GLA Act enables the Assembly to arrange for any of its functions to be discharged by a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly or by a single member of the Assembly.

5.4 Under paragraph C6 of the Business Management and Appointments Committee’s (BMAC) Terms of Reference, BMAC is empowered to approve scrutiny-related expenditure, in conformity with the Assembly’s decision-making framework procedure.

5.5 Consultants are going to be contracted with to assist with the seminar. Under Section 4, paragraph 4.2 (bullet point 4) of the Authority’s Contracts Code of Practice, any consultancy contracts must be approved by BMAC irrespective of value. Accordingly, BMAC must approve the proposed expenditure on the consultancy contract.

5.6 In addition, the Assembly’s decision-making framework requires that four conditions must be considered in determining whether any external technical assistance is required by the Authority in the form of consultancy. These four factors are covered in paragraph 6.7 above.

5.7 The Contracts Code enables the Executive Director of Secretariat to procure technical support. Procurement of the consultants/external assistance must comply with the Authority’s Contracts Code of Practice. This requires that a minimum of 3 written quotes must be sought with regards to contracts with an estimated value of between £5,000 and £24,999.

6 Financial implications

6.1 The estimated cost for the event is up to £9,000, including all catering (tea/coffee, food and drink at post-event reception), printing costs, speaker expenses and the external advice described in paragraphs 3.8 to 3.13.

A breakdown of costs based on up to 150 delegates is provided below:

Event costs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catering, staff &amp; equipment hire</td>
<td>£ 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker expenses (max cost)</td>
<td>£ 2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing (invitations, stands etc)</td>
<td>£ 1,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency @ 10%</td>
<td>£ 670</td>
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<tr>
<td>External advice</td>
<td>£ 1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£ 9,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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