

## Transport Committee – 11 October 2016

### Transcript of Item 6 – Traffic Congestion

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** We move then into our main item today, which is our second big hearing on the issue of traffic congestion.

Let me welcome our guests today. First of all, we have Alan Bristow, who is Director of Road Space Management at Transport for London (TfL). We then have Alex Williams, who is the Managing Director of Planning at TfL. We have Iain Simmons, who is the Assistant Director of City Transportation at the City of London Corporation. Then we have Steve Melia, who is a Senior Lecturer in Transport and Planning at the University of West of England (UWE). Thank you very much for coming. Our final guest, Councillor Feryal Demirci, will be with us, hopefully, shortly and is from London Councils.

If I kick off the questions with really quite a general opener, what are the main causes of this increase in traffic congestion that we have seen particularly in the past two to three years?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** As ever, it is not a straightforward question to answer, but essentially what we have seen over the last few years as a result of the economic recovery is an explosion of development both in the private sector and also in the public sector, particularly in central London.

What we have seen is, if you like, the roadworks phase of that development over the last two or three years, which has taken capacity off the network, particularly in central London. The result of that has been a reasonably dramatic increase in congestion in particularly key points - and we have had Vauxhall Cross, the Embankment and Elephant and Castle, to name but a few - that have had fairly significant roadworks on them to enable those junctions to be resculpted. That has caused particular congestion there.

Traffic flows into central London have either dropped a bit or stayed relatively stable, but in outer London we have seen a 2% to 3% increase in traffic flows. Therefore, the situation in outer London is a bit different in terms of an increase in the actual flows on the network.

What we have also seen is a differential in the mix of the flows themselves. Private hire vehicles (PHVs) coming into central London have increased quite dramatically by about 52%. There are more PHVs operating in London generally. They have gone up quite considerably to about 106,000. We have seen an increase in light freight vehicles of about 11% as a result of the increase in online shopping. There is a whole mixture of things in there that have created this issue of increasing congestion from the 2012/13 levels over the course of the last couple of years.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Thank you for that, Alan. Yes, as we have started this subject, it is far more complex than you might think immediately. Alex, do you have anything to add to that?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** That was a really useful summary about the causes of congestion.

The only thing I would add to it is that often, when we debate about this, there is a tendency to focus on central London because it is the area we know best and the area with the greatest amount of change. However, we all know that in outer London the congestion problems are significant and can be acute as well, particularly where the ability to shift to public transport is not as great as it is in central London.

That is all I would add to Alan's [Bristow] point, really, because he is much closer to the detail in terms of the numbers, but it is always important to remember the wider London dynamic with this as well.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. Iain, from a borough point of view, what do you think are the main causes that you have seen?

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** Obviously, I have a very limited agenda in terms of the City of London, just opposite, over the river.

What has happened in the City is pretty common for much of central London. As well as all the development activity that Alan [Bristow] referenced, very much for us in the City but also in central London, there is the immediate impact of the Cycle Superhighways. It was known and understood that there would be a change and that change has landed and the schemes have been very much in operation for about six months. However, there is always a time lag for individuals or organisations to modify and adapt and that is the phase that we are in at the moment.

Therefore, for me, the call to me from my politicians is one of looking back, "Something is different to how it was. Go and fix it", and so there was an immediate reaction. In contrast to that, what I am also being asked by politicians at the City is to say, "We are on a journey of change now. What else could be done to reduce motor vehicles of all types in the City of London so that that journey of change means that there is less demand and dealing with congestion in that way by reducing demand rather than somehow magicking up a different capacity?"

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. I welcome Councillor Feryal Demirci, who is Vice Chair of the Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) at London Councils. You are very welcome.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** In preparing to come today, I watched pretty much the whole of the first half of your last session, which was very useful. Amongst the things that I picked up from that was that I noticed there was a fair degree of consensus and some differences.

One of the key points was not picked up on, which is that there is an apparent difference between what Edmund King [OBE, President, The Automobile Association] and what Stephen Glaister [CBE, Professor of Transport and Infrastructure, Imperial College London] were saying on this question of the congestion equilibrium. If you recall, Edmund King took the long view and said, "Over time, congestion, particularly in central London, probably has not changed since the days of the horse and cart", and then Stephen Glaister said, "No, the evidence says that it is getting worse".

It is important to understand how to reconcile those two apparently contradictory views because they are both right in slightly different ways. You have to consider the difference between the short, the medium and the long term. The statement that Edmund made is broadly correct in the long term. I will come back to why that is and what the implications of that congestion equilibrium are, but in the short term all kinds of things can cause congestion to go up or down. Then, in the medium term, people's behaviour starts to change. It takes time for people to readjust.

We know that, for example, in itself, closing roads does not cause congestion because there are lots and lots of examples all around the world where cities have closed almost the entirety of their city centres and have not suffered worse congestion. In fact, in many cases, they have a better situation than we see at the moment in central London. That is a short-term issue.

In the medium-term, people change their behaviour. Long term, you then start to get spatial changes. People move. Companies move. People make decisions about where to locate stuff. Those two factors together tend to bring congestion back to its equilibrium level.

With all of that, I am talking there in a context of where there is more potential demand than there is potential supply. I would argue that that exists across most of London, not just central London but many of the centres of outer London as well. Once you reach a point where, even if you want to, you cannot not satisfy the supply, congestion will always tend back to its equilibrium level.

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** Thank you, Chair. I am here both as Vice Chair of TEC and also as the cabinet member for neighbourhoods at the London Borough of Hackney, where we take a great interest in the growth of congestion, especially when car ownership in our borough continues to decline but we still see increasing congestion.

I would say that there is recognition from all of the members on London Councils' TEC that increasing congestion, over the past two years, has been most linked to the increasing works around the Cycle Superhighways, which is a programme of works that they believe was crammed into a very short period of time, hence increasing congestion.

The other point that the members make is that there is an increase in development within central London, which also has contributed to congestion within London, and then the added increase in PHVs within these two years. Therefore, we have had the works around the Cycle Superhighways crammed into a couple of years and we have the increase in development in central London. Added to the increase in PHVs, that has caused a huge increase in congestion within inner London.

With my own borough, whilst we have, I believe, a fantastic programme of trying to move our residents from car ownership to more sustainable forms of transport and we have noticed a steady reduction in car ownership, a lot of the journeys and a lot of the congestion within our borough are from vehicles that originate from outside the borough. Therefore, when we are looking at tackling congestion, we need to look at not just the inner London boroughs but London as a whole because, say, my borough, which is not within the Congestion Zone, continues to suffer congestion.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Lovely. Thank you for that. Can I ask - Steve and others may know - whether other global cities are seeing similar trends in terms of congestion and about what steps they might be taking?

Also, picking up on Steve's point, is there considered to be a normal or acceptable level of congestion? We know the delay in minutes per road kilometre has gone up in every part of London, but is there an acceptable level that is seen as, "OK, we can manage the road network with that"?

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** The simple answer to that is: if there is, I have never heard of it. There are quite big variations if we look at things like vehicle speeds across cities with no obvious explanation for that.

In terms of what is happening, the other key point that I made in my written submission is that there has possibly been a tendency so far in this inquiry to focus a lot on specific issues within London. However, if you look at the national situation, it is not very different from the other cities. In fact, the other day I was disaggregating from the Department for Transport (DfT) statistics the other major cities. If I separate inner London and outer London, outer London has become a little bit worse a little bit faster, but they call in the middle. Bristol has been worse, for example. The main causes of these short-term changes have been the recovery in the economy, the growth in population and the fall in the price of fuel. London has been slightly worse than the average city because it has had a faster recovering economy and a faster rate of population [growth]. Those are the main factors. Do not be side-tracked into believing that some of these specific local things are the main causes.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Other cities nationally and around the world are in a similar position?

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** I have picked up one or two international figures, but it is difficult to get that up-to-date data.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** It is worth noting if you are comparing us with other cities that it is worth looking at what has happened in London over the last 15 years. If you think about the reliance on the car and the reliance on public transport, we have had a radical shift away from reliance on the car to public transport. No other city in the world comes close to what London has achieved in that regard. We have had over a 10% shift from the private car to public transport.

Most other cities are going in the other direction. It is very easy to look at other cities and, clearly, we need to learn from what is happening elsewhere, but let us not forget that over the last 15 years there has been continual success in this field with getting people out of their private cars and shifting to more sustainable modes: public transport, walking and cycling.

The foundation for that is an excellent public transport system and an affordable public transport system. We see it as a real challenge to see how we can go further in that regard, particularly as London grows. If we are a city of about 9 million now and potentially will be a city of about 10 million by the 2030s, our challenge is to make sure that that mode shift continues but that we also address congestion issues at the same time. We should not lose sight of the success we have had with getting people out of their cars as well.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** In terms of the modelling is there some sort of normal level of congestion that you can work with? Is there something in the work you do that says, "We will accept this level"?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** I do not think "accept" would be the right word. I suppose there are parameters within the models that you can and cannot achieve depending on which mode of transport you are trying to get through and there is always a balance in that.

I would add to what Alex [Williams] was saying in that we are committed to sustainable transport and walking and cycling as one of the key mixes any city must have for moving people around. It is actually a very efficient way of moving people. We are seeing a lot of activity on the Cycle Superhighways. We are getting about

3,000 people an hour in the peaks moving along the Embankment and we are moving 5% more people. That has caused difficulties for people in vehicles but, in terms of moving people in a way that is sustainable and good for their health, it is surely where we need to be going.

They are also moving much more safely because the key in a lot of this for vulnerable users is their safety. We had to do something about the scale of cycling deaths on our network and also vulnerable pedestrians as well. Those need to be addressed so that people can move around the city safely.

When you are doing that in the modelling, you have to balance the increase in that capacity given for those reasons to the capacity you then have to play with for the other elements. The objective is always to make it as best for everybody as possible, but it is maths and, if someone goes up, someone goes down. Each scheme is slightly different. It is a very difficult question to answer: is there an acceptable modelling level? Not really, no. Generally, it is something that we have to judge on a scheme-by-scheme basis.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Are there any specific congestion reduction targets that the Mayor has set for TfL?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** We have a congestion reduction target of 30% of serious and severe congestion over the next three years. That is split down into targets for each year. If I could explain that, now that the roadworks in central London have reduced and backed off and we are looking at the network settling down, we are trying to make that network now operate as efficiently as possible and with less disruption than it is currently experiencing.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Is that publicly available? Is that in the submission? No. I wonder whether you might give us those details and the targets that you are working to, please. That would be really welcome. Are the boroughs doing anything similar to that and looking at congestion reduction targets?

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** For the boroughs, it is not specifically looking at congestion but looking at reducing reliance on private cars, hence the impact that will have on congestion. There are increased efforts around reducing speeds with the implementation of 20-miles-per-hour across most of the London borough. We are also improving cycling infrastructure and a whole host of other things around car-parking, car-capping and revenue developments, trying to reduce private car ownership, which will ultimately have an impact on congestion. There is not at the moment a borough-specific take on congestion.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** Could I just urge a little caution on that? I must admit this is the first time I have heard that congestion target. My initial reaction is: good luck to you all. Bearing in mind what I was saying about the equilibrium, if TfL really did succeed in reducing congestion by 30%, there would be a large behavioural reaction amongst many people who would think, consciously or unconsciously, "Whoopee, I can now drive on these roads!"

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** Could I clarify that? It is a TfL target and it is about serious and severe congestion, not congestion as a whole. The incidence on the network when we have a road traffic accident or something that interferes with the flow we categorise as "serious and severe congestion". What we are trying to do is to reduce the incidence of that serious and severe congestion by 30%, not the overall picture. That is something slightly different.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Just on TfL roads, it is 5% of the network?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** Yes. That is a TfL target rather than a mayoral one. I am sorry if I have been unclear on that.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** No, that was helpful.

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** It is a personal target for me, if you see what I mean, within TfL.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** That was useful just so that we understand that more.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Steve [Melia] has just put his finger on something that was occurring to me while I was listening to the witnesses. I used to be a motorcyclist - I still am, but not much - and I used to commute on a motorbike. One of the many reasons, apart from simply staying alive, that I do not motorcycle anymore is congestion in central London. I would not dream of driving my car into central London because of the congestion and I do not use taxis for that reason as well. I do not really want to sit in a taxi and pay for sitting in a queue.

Is it perversely helpful in terms of encouraging people to use public transport for there to be congestion in central London? Steve put it very well. I understand what you have just said, Alan, about only on TfL roads reducing by 30% but, if London Councils or anyone else were successful in driving it down, is there not a danger that people will be encouraged back onto the roads and back into their cars and, in my case, back onto my motorbike?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The trick in all of this is to get this equilibrium that was being spoken about and, if there is suppressed demand, there is a danger that if you create capacity it will be filled. That is something that we are having to look at and come up with techniques to try to stop that happening.

We have introduced some technology called RODAT (Real-Time Origin Destination Analysis Tool), which enables us to understand the flows of traffic into central London and the mix of those flows. With the sophistication of the traffic light system that we have, we should be able into the future to enable the flow that comes in to meet the capacity as closely as possible so that we can control that reaction to increased traffic taking the system to overcapacity.

It is very much about trying to control the flows along the major routes into central London to ensure that what arrives is what is able to be accounted for within central London. If you think of it as a bucket, it can take only so much water. If you keep pouring water in, eventually it just overflows and stops. By being clever about the way that we use technology, we can try to manage that so that we never overflow the bucket, in simplistic terms. That will not always work, but it is what we are trying to achieve.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** On that, is a natural extension of what you have just said that you are - it might be a slightly cynical view of what you have just said - deliberately inducing congestion to deter other people from joining in?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** No. We are trying to ensure that we reduce the amount of inconvenience to the bare minimum and that we have the inconvenience in places where it can be managed, but we are not trying to induce extra congestion, no.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** That raises another really important principle to grasp, which is this. The capacity is well known: if you increase capacity, it fills up and it induces traffic. The same effect also applies to all kinds of other really good measures; modal shift to public transport, for example. There is a lot of talk about saying, “We cannot build our way out of congestion but we can improve the experience if we can make it more predictable and increase reliability”. That will also have the same effect unless you have some sort of restraining mechanism that prevents it and, obviously, we are going to look at some of those later on.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. Let us move into some specifics. Let us look at PHVs now.

**David Kurten AM:** I would like to just ask a few questions about PHVs and the effect that they have on congestion.

First of all, particularly thinking about the Congestion Charge in the central zone, black cabs have to pay the Congestion Charge and private cars have to pay the Congestion Charge, but there is an exemption for PHVs, as far as I understand.

What would be the impact of removing the Congestion Charge exemption for PHVs? Would there be an impact? What do you think it would be? Would it be a good thing to remove the exemption for PHVs?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** PHV usage in central London has increased. Within the Congestion Charge zone there has been an increase of 54% or about 15,000 vehicles.

We are at the moment analysing the feasibility of removing the Congestion Charge exemption for PHVs but no decisions have been made on that at the moment. Those plans are expected to be finalised later in the autumn and proposals would come out of that. That is where we are with that.

**David Kurten AM:** We are in the autumn now and so we should expect something soon?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** Later in the autumn.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Later in the autumn means the winter?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** I did turn my central heating on and so, yes, I suppose we are in the autumn.

**David Kurten AM:** You said there has definitely been an increase in PHVs in the centre and there has been a very large increase in the number of PHVs as well in London since, I suppose, the Congestion Charge was introduced in 2003. Iain, earlier you mentioned 106,000 PHVs in London now. Is that the up-to-date figure?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** It is 109,000.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** It is going up by about 500 a week or something. It is ridiculous.

**David Kurten AM:** At 500 a week, it would be about 26,000 per year that it is going up. Do you see PHVs contributing more to congestion on a year-on-year basis as there is such a large increase in the number of PHVs in London?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** That is the reason that the feasibility is being undertaken: to look at this and to really understand what that effect is. They are in the mix with everything else but the study will identify what it is that we should do about that increasing population. No firm conclusions have yet been reached but, when they are, then they will be taken forward as a result of those deliberations. There is no doubt that population is increasing, yes, and it is making a contribution to the overall problem that there is in central London.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I would add two more points to that. One: we have had a debate with the Government about whether it is appropriate to cap the number of PHVs and it is quite clear that it is not keen on that route of controlling this.

The other thing to bear in mind with the PHV exemption to the Congestion Charge scheme is that, whilst it is something that we should look at, it is not going to be a panacea to all of the problems in terms of PHVs because the greatest demand for PHVs in central London in particular is outside the hours of operation of the Congestion Charge scheme in the evening. If you are looking at the volume of PHVs going in there, it is greatest when the Charge does not actually apply. That does not mean to say that we should not look at it, but we need to be mindful that it is not going to be a panacea to all of the problems with PHVs.

**David Kurten AM:** Although you mention that, are there any legal barriers or legislative barriers to stopping the exemption for PHVs? Is that something you could do with no problem if you decided to do it?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** A full exemption would be relatively straightforward, but that would be subject to consultation. One has to have a look at this in the round in terms of whether that would disproportionately hit small operators and how it would affect their businesses compared to those larger operators who might be able to absorb it. Those are the things that are being considered in this analysis and it will reach whatever conclusion it reaches, but there is that effect on the industry itself that has to be factored into this.

**David Kurten AM:** Are there any other measures that you might consider to reduce PHV traffic in the central zone, given that it has increased so much?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The main one that is being considered, as far as I am aware, is this exemption from the Congestion Charge. Removing the exemption from the Congestion Charge and the general discussion as to how the PHV should be licensed and what we do in that area are the main areas that are being looked at.

**David Kurten AM:** I know, Alex, you mentioned smaller operators being hit, but there are a lot of larger operators as well who operate PHVs and some of those operators are known to have interesting tax arrangements in the Netherlands and so on. I was wondering. Thinking about protecting smaller operators, it is admirable. However, when it comes to larger operators, they would not take so much of a hit. Do you think that there would be some way of distinguishing between the two?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I am not an expert on tax arrangements, I am afraid. One thing I would add, though, is that what you find with PHV operators is that certainly the bigger firms do congregate around certain big honeypots around the West End and around Heathrow as well. There are practical actions that we need to take to enforce how they behave and there are extra resources going into that issue.

As I said, I cannot answer the question on tax; it is not my specialism. In terms of controlling behaviour at certain honeypots, it is something that we are looking at as well.

**David Kurten AM:** I look forward to your report coming out later in the autumn to see what is happening. Do any of the other members of the panel have anything to add on that?

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** Yes, a couple of things. Another few days before coming here, I received an email from somebody at Uber. I thought, "Wow, I am being lobbied here", but he did not ask me for any money. I have to say that, if you read Uber's written evidence, it is very illuminating and does make some useful points.

The first point I would make, going back to my starting point, is that this is not making any difference to congestion, certainly not in the long term. It might be one of those short-term factors, but the same equilibrium will apply. If the number of PHVs is increasing, what is happening is that they will be displacing other vehicles. That is the main effect. You may think that that is a cause for concern. From that point of view, to the extent that PHVs are behaving like any other private car and are carrying one person or a couple of single people travelling together, then I do not see any reason why they should be treated any more favourably than private cars.

However, if you then think more about the future and potential, they could form part of the solution. Again, if we are thinking beyond just the central London problems and thinking about growing congestion in outer London centres and so on, where more of their business takes place, treating more favourably PHVs that act as a form of car-sharing might be a very good policy idea. How you enforce that and how you ensure if you give an exemption that that is what they are really doing would be a tricky question, but it is something that you need to think about.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** There are a couple of points and, again, you have pre-empted one of the points that I was going to ask about.

My consistency is in outer London and does not have a single Tube station in it. People therefore rely on their cars a lot. We do have buses as well, but cars are used extensively and there is a lot of congestion in it. It is not like central London but it is very congested.

I was going to ask you whether there is any evidence to suggest that PHVs could be an answer to that. If people can quickly and cheaply get an Uber - or anything else - from A to B without having to use their own cars and can keep their cars off the road, would that have an impact in a positive way? You have confirmed that that might be so.

The other thing I was going to ask, Alex, was on a point that you made about the Government not being happy about the idea of capping the number of private hire licences. I was unaware of that. What rationale did it give for that?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I am afraid that I was not close enough to the debate to answer that. All I know is that we have asked. It was under the previous administration. It might have been just a legislative time issue. It is probably best if I go away and find out --

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Would it require legislation to do that? Is it not within TfL's gift?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** For a cap, yes, it would. The exemption to the Congestion Charge is a decision that we could do through a variation order to the Congestion Charge scheme, but a cap does require legislation. I am straying into an area that I am not an expert on and so it is probably best if I come back to you after the meeting with more detail on that.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Yes. I would be quite interested because the balance on this argument is interesting. Personally, I am drawn more to the idea of capping the number of private hire licences that are issued than I am to applying one rule to black cabs and one rule for PHVs because they provide the same service. I know that there will be people, particularly in the black cab industry, who will take issue with me in saying that, but I believe that that is so from a consumer point of view. I would rather there were a level playing field than to be favouring one or the other arbitrarily. The answer, then, is the licences issue.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Yes, I will come back to you with more detail on that.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** The next area we are moving to is commercial traffic.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Generally - and this is to all of our guests - does London need to reduce the number of delivery vans on its roads and how can this be achieved? Who wants to plunge in first?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** The short answer is, yes, we should. It is a problem and it is a growing problem with 17% of traffic coming to London being delivery vans. With the growth in population and the growth in internet shopping, those issues are problems that are set to get worse. The short answer is, yes, we need to look at that and to see how we can address that.

One of the issues we have with freight and commercial traffic generally is that London has 9 million people and is probably going to grow to 10 million people and that will attract a certain tonnage of waste, of goods coming in, of goods being bought and sold, and that tonnage is set to grow. What we need to work on is how we can get that tonnage moved in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Certainly something we will be looking at with the new Mayor's Transport Strategy and maybe with the new Mayor's London Plan as well is to see how we can encourage existing town centres to shift towards more consolidation and to reduce the number of vehicle deliveries that they have. It is something that we can look at through the planning process for new developments - and I know that the City of London was very good on this around the big developments at Bishopsgate - to get much more consolidation.

There is more that we can do to try to reduce the flow of internet deliveries to central London offices. We do not have the power to ban it, but we certainly need to look at how we can reduce that. We are looking at a pilot within TfL to try to encourage less of our own staff to get stuff delivered to our offices in central London. We have these click-and-collect places in some stations but, to be perfectly honest, they have not been as successful as everyone would have hoped and there is more we can do on that.

There is a lot to do here, but the nub of the original question is, yes, there is a problem and it is getting worse and so it is clearly something that we need to weave into the Mayor's Transport Strategy and the London Plan as they evolve.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** The click-and-collect thing is interesting. Graeme Craig [Director of Commercial Development, TfL] and the Commercial Development team at TfL has a whole range of ideas about a whole load of things. That is one of the things that they are quite keen to encourage, particularly for things like disused ticket offices in Tube stations and things like that. They were looking at driving up commercial income from the use of the stations.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Yes, we still are.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Is it just because it is early and there are teething problems? Why has it not been so successful?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I suspect that that is the issue. Graeme is much closer to this issue than I am. All that I know is that the expansion of it to stations has not been as fast as we would have liked. That is partly because some of the commercial providers are not ready. It may be new and innovative and maybe people are not thinking about it.

Some companies are picking it up. Argos is the one that stands out in my mind and there are a few other companies that are at the forefront of this. We would encourage more of this to happen, definitely. It is not something that we are stopping; it is something we would like to work with London providers to get more fully established and more used.

Part of the problem we have is that the culture is people getting it delivered to their offices. They do not get it delivered to the Tube stations that they come out of at the end of a working day. That is the cultural change that we need to see come about.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** I know that the Mayor does not have the power to arbitrarily ban this sort of thing, but could he be doing more to encourage freight operators and also companies not to allow their staff to have deliveries to their offices?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** The first start is for TfL to get its own house in order, to be perfectly frank. We are starting now with a pre-Christmas campaign to get our staff to be more aware of these issues so that one of our staff, not me personally, I hasten to add --

**Gareth Bacon AM:** TfL causing congestion in London? Perish the thought!

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, Transport for London):** Yes, of course. We need to apply it and see how that works in terms of a communication campaign.

We would certainly like to work with the freight industry to get a shift in behaviour as well. There are economies for them to make and that is the way to sell it to them. It might be easier and more cost-effective to get stuff delivered to stations and picked up at a later date rather than to have a continual series of deliveries every hour to central London offices.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You mentioned earlier on that the new Transport Strategy is being worked up at the moment. What is the publication date for that?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** There are two milestones for that. The first is that the Mayor is likely to publish very soon - this month, I think - a document called a "Towards" document, which is an overarching statement on the direction of travel and a whole range of strategies, on the London Plan, on environment, transport and equalities issues. That is likely to come out this month and then the Mayor's Strategy in draft will come out next spring.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Next spring and so probably March, we are thinking?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** March is the target but we give ourselves a season.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** That is fair enough. I understand why. It amuses me but I understand. Are you able to give us some teasers, then? Are you looking at more restrictions or incentives for freight operators in that?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** It is more about incentives than restrictions. With the legal framework we are working in, there is not a great deal we can do there in terms of actual physical restrictions. It is much more about incentivising.

It is also about using the London Plan to try to push for more consolidation when these new buildings get constructed. It is also about working with Business Improvement Districts. There is a really good example with the New West End Company (NWECC) working with the retailers in Bond Street. They had 47 waste collections a day and have gone to two, just through co-ordination and consolidation of activity and thinking about how to manage these functions with a very congested central London road network. It is about building on the best practice that you have in some areas, particularly in central London, and trying to get that rolled out more widely.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** An unintended consequence, because I think it was well-meaning, of some of the restrictions that have been placed on heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in London is that they have contributed directly - and there is some empirical evidence of this - to the increased use of vans rather than HGVs. Is that something that is being examined as part of the Strategy?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** There is a lot of talk about what people call the "London lorry ban" or the London Lorry Control Scheme that London Councils runs, but it is not a ban and the industry knows that. We had a long debate pre-Olympics on that issue. It is a routing strategy that says that if you are delivering overnight, you should use certain routes and other routes are not allowed. I would go back to the freight industry and ask, "Is it really that difficult to use some of the larger vehicles you want to use?" Having said that, in parts of central London, you could argue that they should be using smaller vehicles that are more suitable to a more congested, more constrained road network.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** There are restrictions under that scheme, are there not, for overnight and evening deliveries?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Yes, but, as I said, the restriction is a routing one. It does not stop them delivering.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** It is just the routes they take?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** It says, "If you are going to the [London] Borough of Hackney, you have to use these routes to get to that point and you should not be using residential roads", when you do not want those kinds of vehicles using those roads at night.

As I said, in common parlance it is called the "London lorry ban", but it is not. It is a control scheme that says, "If you are going to deliver overnight, we want you to use certain routes". We would be interested in a debate with London Councils on that scheme, but it is recognising that it is highly likely to stay.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Is there any evidence - again, it is probably an unintended consequence if it happens at all - that the restriction on routes has led to more HGVs going in the daytime rather than at night?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I am not aware of any evidence to support that argument, no. We could certainly look at that. This is a 30-year-old scheme and so it has been there a long time and the industry is well aware of it, but it is also well aware that it just about routing rather than an actual ban.

The more common constraint on overnight deliveries is actually planning conditions associated with individual sites. What has happened is that it is quite common for local authorities to apply standard planning conditions that say, "You will not deliver overnight", and they are unnecessarily constrained sometimes. Often they say, "You will do deliveries only between 8.30am and 6.30pm". London is a city that is open for business before 8.30am and open for business after 6.30pm. That is not to say push them all to overnight, but there is certainly an argument to say that some of those standard conditions are too constraining of deliveries.

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** I just wanted to add that the restriction is to protect the quality of life of our residents. I do not think that anyone on the Committee would want Tesco or Sainsbury's delivery trucks stopping or going through their residential roads at midnight or loading and unloading outside right next to their house at 1.00am. As Alex said, there are restricted roads, but these are residential roads and they are to protect our residents' quality of life at a time when they should be sleeping. As I said earlier, with the improved global positioning system (GPS) technology, if you allow HGVs to use all residential roads, you will just increase congestion and all activity along those roads. It is not a ban but a restriction just to ensure that, for those very few hours that residents get to relax and sleep, they do with comfort.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** I understand that London Councils is now reviewing the scheme, though. Is that correct?

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** Yes, but it would be discussed at the December [TEC] meeting. We are happy to update the Committee in written format about that.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** That is a TEC review?

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** That is the TEC.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** At the December meeting, will it be the final report or will it be a progress report on the review?

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** It would just be a discussion, as you asked earlier, to look at the impact of it currently and to find out the experience of individual boroughs of that. It will be an initial discussion on the effectiveness and issues relating to it.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Is that likely to be a report for information or is that going to be a report with action points?

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** Just for discussion and information.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** It is unlikely, then, that that is going to lead to change or is that something just for them to keep their fingers on the pulse as to what is happening?

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** There is unlikely to be any change at this point. Any suggestions for any changes will follow the December meeting.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Do we want to bring in the City to see what work you have been doing with business around trying to reduce deliveries and other things? Are you doing some work in that area?

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** We are. We have quite a developed work stream on that. I had not moved quite as fast as my politicians would like because I could not get people to work for me, but now we have overcome that difficulty.

The question was asked about freight and the direction of travel for London. The capacity that we have has to work smarter. If there are lots of people around during the day, one has to move freight at night. That is certainly the position that we have established at the City and a piece of work will lead on from that.

The first two things that we can do as a local authority is to price and permit. Either you can either have a ticket to get somewhere or we price you to get there. If all that fails, then we come down to encouragement.

With the direction of travel that we are on, as Alex [Williams] said, lots of the buildings now that are being given planning permission are not able to service through the day, morning, midday and evening, and that is because the congestion we have is people on foot. There are so many of them that we cannot have vehicles in that space because much of the highway is used by people on foot, whether it is demarked as carriageway or footway, and so we are working towards that.

Then the natural conclusion for the development industry and the occupiers is that they have to consolidate. A number of businesses do that in the City already and they do that primarily because of security concerns. They do not want any vehicle arriving at their building that is not screen-checked and all the rest of it, but that has great benefits in terms of reducing the number of vehicles. That is going to become much more mainstreamed and we are working towards - there is a very strong drive from the politicians to do this - more goods servicing to take place at night.

That is quite a key change. It is not without its difficulties because people have to change. First of all, the commercial operators have to put that operation into effect and we are talking with them because a number of the big owners, developers and occupiers may have to band together.

Of course, with all of these things, it is very easy for the big boys to do it. They have the commercial interests. The place for us as the local authority in the City is how to provide that same service for the small and medium enterprises so that, again, they can get their goods in. The things that we are looking at there include using our carparks for consolidation so that goods can be taken in at night and they can either collect them or have them delivered out from there during the day by bike or by foot and things of that nature.

It is quite a radical change, but I would go back to the thing about time. We will have so many people on foot. We have now and we will have so many more people on foot when Crossrail opens in certain parts of the City. We know that we have to make our streets work in three or four different ways throughout a 24-hour period. It is no longer that you put some infrastructure in and it serves a purpose all the way throughout the day. It will be much more nuanced about some streets being available only for pedestrians at peak times because there will be so many of them and then for certain classes of vehicle.

We are probably at the extreme focus of this, but I am sure that that will roll out across London a lot more. We literally just have to be smarter in using the infrastructure that is available.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Fantastic. That is some really interesting work that you are doing.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** Could just refer to what I mentioned in my written evidence? There is a website that we were involved in helping to create with various partners across Europe, which is at [evidence-project.eu](http://evidence-project.eu), and that summarises in plain English evidence about measures to do with, broadly, sustainable transport across 24 different themes. I would urge you all to have a look at that.

There is one particularly about freight consolidation, which is one of the themes. The evidence shows that quite a few cities have tried it and they all seem to find that it brings benefits, but nobody has ever done it on a large enough scale to make any measureable difference to broad patterns of travel as yet.

For the future, you might want to start thinking about some more radical ideas. I noticed last time people were talking about tunnelling and whether that is realistic or not or whether it is pie-in-the-sky.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** You might just want to think about some of the most intensely developed places where there are these multiple potential conflicts at night-time and so on. Is there a role there for something underground? I will leave that as a question.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** We will come on to more roads and tunnels later. Let us move on to roadworks now.

**Navin Shah AM:** TfL operates various schemes and systems to reduce the impact of roadworks on congestion. My question to start with is for our TfL guests. What could TfL do to reduce the impact of roadworks and congestion?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The numbers of roadworks in London are very high and they are related to some degree to the amount of development that we have. We are committed to working with the utility companies and major scheme developers to reduce the impact of their works on the road network and, indeed, with our colleagues in the boroughs. This is a problem that we all face.

There is more that we can do to harmonise the efforts that we make with the utility companies further into the future and the master-planning issue of understanding what the big works programmes are going to be and then trying to harmonise those as far out as possible. There is a lot more work that we can do with our colleagues in the utility companies to make those come together. The further out that you can plan these things, the more you can reduce the effect that you have on the network when you do it.

The emergency works tend to have a much larger effect because we do not get the time to do the planning and the notification for those that we do for the longer-term planned works. We are working with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the utility companies to try to come to an arrangement where we have this longer-term planning in effect.

The short-term answer is that we have something like 34,000 roadworks applications on the TfL Road Network (TLRN) every year and there are something like 420,000 in London as a total and so there is a lot of activity is going in this area on the roads. We have the London Permit Scheme (LoPS), which we run with the boroughs, to control that work, which we have had for a while now. Before the advent of that, we were unable to dictate conditions to people for how they would work on the road. Now we can control that. We have the Lane Rental Scheme, which has been in effect for a while now, to try to encourage both ourselves and utility companies to avoid the most busily trafficked roads at the busiest times and work in other places. There are a number of things underway to try to reduce the impact, but it is a large-scale activity that brings with it difficulties.

**Navin Shah AM:** Do any other guests want to come in on this as to what more TfL can do to improve the situation?

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** I do not think it is just for TfL because, from the information we have, 95% of the roads and streets in London are managed at a local level. A lot of people work incredibly hard in my authority - and I know in many others - to minimise the length of time that holes are open and to try to ensure that if something is happening three or four utilities will come in at the same time.

Alan [Bristow] mentioned the sheer number of holes being dug. The reality is that we are trying to manage and mitigate something that is, effectively, third world: putting all of the utility cables underneath the highway. The ideal is that you put it underneath the footways and dig those up but, in many parts of London, the City and west of central London, the whole highway is completely full of cables, pipes and all sorts of bits of infrastructure. It is highly complicated and, every time somebody digs a hole, they do not know what is in there. They can never turn up with the right bits of kit and always have to manufacture very special bends, junctions, valves and all sorts of things, which is why then the public - and many of you - will see that holes seem to be open for long times.

London collectively through TfL and the boroughs is doing an incredibly good job, but it is a very difficult task and I do not know the answer to what I term when I talk to colleagues about it as literally a third world situation where we have allowed ourselves through decades and decades of legislation to have all this kit in the highway. We deny that space for movement because we are digging it up and doing something with utilities.

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** I would like to echo that. Boroughs have huge road improvement programmes and TfL has annual road improvement programmes and then you have the utility companies. These works have to be completed because, for example, I do not think any resident would accept potholes or collapsed lamp-posts. The works have to be

carried out and every institution and every organisation has to carry its work out, but there is much improved co-ordination between boroughs, TfL and utility companies.

Could this get any better? Yes. We are constantly looking at improving that co-ordination and also improving the communication so that people can take alternative routes and diversions are put in place, and making sure that communications improve. We are constantly working on trying to improve that between boroughs and TfL.

**Navin Shah AM:** Alan, you mentioned the LoPS. I believe that there were 99 occasions when companies were in breach and therefore were prosecuted; 37 times it was BT that was subject to prosecutions and National Grid was prosecuted five times.

The question is: how effective do you think this LoPS is? Given that there are repeat offenders, could that suggest that the scheme does not provide a sufficient deterrent?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** Prior to the LoPS, we did not have the ability to put conditions on people who were operating on the road network. The LoPS has enabled the boroughs and us to impose conditions, which has enabled us now when people break those conditions to prosecute them. We are in a better position than we were, having both the Lane Rental Scheme and the LoPS, to be able to take people to task if they are breaking the terms of those permits.

I am not sure what the statistics you are talking about are for TfL because each borough has its own version of the LoPS and we operated it as a federation. That is probably the best way to put it. I am sure that the boroughs are also prosecuting people who break their permit regulations. We in TfL always prosecute people who seriously breach the conditions that we have laid on them. I have 109 occasions on my piece of paper and you have 99 and, for BT, we prosecuted them 38 times. I meet with the utility companies every month at director level. These statistics and their performance generally are shared with them and we put them under pressure to do better, obviously.

The LoPS has been a really good tool for us and the boroughs to be able to start to dictate how works will be done on the network and it gives us a mechanism for sanction if that is not done. Can more be done with it? Probably, yes, but - and I hope you would agree, Iain - it has been a very good initiative for London since it has been introduced.

**Navin Shah AM:** I believe that the figures I have are to do with schemes that TfL is monitoring.

If we can move on to the Lane Rental Scheme that you mentioned, it seems to be working pretty well as the figures suggest that there was a pretty good decline since the scheme began in the serious disruption on the roads covered by TfL. What is the current picture in terms of the scale of impact that this scheme has had?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** What we have seen from introducing it on our busiest roads is a 32% increase in utility companies working outside of those hours, particularly into the evenings. Now 99% of our works - because the Lane Rental Scheme also applies to us as a local authority - and about 88% of the utility works have put in place mechanisms under the scheme to avoid paying the charge by doing something in those sensitive areas: either working inter-peak, working in the out-of-peak hours, plating over the works or using new technology like cut-and-cover; any way that they can think of not to have to dig the road up in those sensitive areas. Of course, when they do or we do, then a charge is levied for doing it, but we have seen some significant behaviour change as a result of those strictures going in. Indeed, there

were 35,000 fewer emergency works that we saw on the network in 2015/16, which is probably an indication that this is working and that the emergency works are not appearing on the network in those places.

There is more that we can do with it, as with the LoPS, but in terms of its introduction it has been a very successful scheme and it has achieved the aim of changing behaviour. The ultimate goal would be to have no lane rental income coming in because nobody is working on sensitive roads at sensitive times, but that is probably me flying into fantasy there a bit. However, we have seen a success with that.

**Navin Shah AM:** If I can go back to Councillor Feryal and Iain Simmons, from a borough perspective, what is your experience of the LoPS as to how effective it is as well as what can be done, if anything else, with it?

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** If I start, it is highly beneficial. As well as direct benefits, it has encouraged authorities to think harder about what is being done and how it is being done and to go into that world of encouragement. It is always better to encourage people to do things rather than hit them with a big stick.

Just in terms of that and minimising congestion through all those sorts of things, we are building a scheme up at Aldgate and part of that involved working with National Grid gas to put a case to the regulator so that it could do its investments in advance. It put £6 million worth of gas mains in so that it would not have to come in a year or two afterwards and dig it all up. That whole scenario of sitting down and working with utility companies, even getting up as high as their regulators and helping with business cases, is all part of this constructive process to minimise delay and use all of these various tools more efficiently and more effectively.

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** I have not had anything written in my notes about it and so I would assume that it is working really well. As a councillor and a cabinet member, I rarely get any complaints about it from my own borough and so I presume it is working effectively.

**Navin Shah AM:** Thank you. Back to TfL, do you think TfL should deliver future Cycle Superhighways differently to minimise congestion impacts?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The generally held opinion of the speed at which the last tranche of Cycle Superhighways was delivered is that it was suboptimal. That is probably the best way to put it. We are certainly under instructions from the Mayor to look at the lessons that we have learned from doing that and to alter the way that they are delivered.

The intent is still to deliver a Cycle Superhighway programme. We are currently looking at extensions to the North-South Cycle Superhighway into the City and also the Cycle Superhighway 11 programme is under debate for tying down in the future. The Cycle Superhighway programme will go ahead because cycling safety demands that we keep this process going, but probably the issue was the sheer scale and speed at which the current batch of Cycle Superhighways were put out there, which we intend to learn the lessons from.

**Navin Shah AM:** All right. If I could come to my last question, it is again back to TfL. What does TfL hope to achieve with its trial of displaying roadworks information on buses? I believe that from August you have trialled the 344 bus route.

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** Yes.

**Navin Shah AM:** What plans do you have to expand, if any, and how has the trial worked out so far?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The trial is very much in its early days. We started by putting these signs up on taxis to see if that would work, but buses seemed to be a better option in the long run. The objective is to provide people with accurate information almost immediately in their area about what is happening with the road space.

Our initial results are that it is quite popular with people who are seeing it and it has a reasonably high approval rating in that way. It enables us to supplement the information because the same information that you would get on a variable message sign (VMS) on the roadside is being displayed on the bus and, as it comes to a geospatial area, the information comes up. It is a way of providing people with real-time information on the street.

As I said, it seems to be quite popular at the moment with our customers. The trial is in its early days and we will see how it goes. If it is something that adds to our armoury to be able to inform people what is happening on the network in an effective way, then we will look to roll it out further once the trial gives us the results.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** Could I just make one point? We were talking about the Cycle Superhighways. The first thing that just needs to be said is that I have noticed that there is an agenda here amongst some people to use this congestion issue as a means of attacking that programme. That should be resisted because, having just used it to come here and having spent a lot of time studying other European cities, the Cycle Superhighways are a great success for London and something that London should be very proud of. As I said, the main influences on congestion recently have been national, not local.

One other point that probably has not reached the political agenda yet - probably because it has never been that important but I notice it a lot in the Netherlands - is the importance of ensuring continuity of cycle routes during roadworks. They will go to great lengths. Whatever else gets closed, the one thing that never gets closed is the cycle route. They will go as far as building temporary bridges and so on over roadworks or whatever. As the Cycle Superhighways develop and as, hopefully, more and more people start to use them, ensuring that continuity needs to be given a higher priority.

**Navin Shah AM:** I must maintain that there is a clear commitment to delivering Cycle Superhighways and so let us have no doubts about that. It is just a question of making sure that, when those works are being undertaken at junctions and so on, there are not those issues. Therefore, how safely and how better we can deliver those is the question that we have raised and what the Committee is concerned about as we are looking at the impact of those roadworks.

We had in part 1 of our examination on congestion Paul Gerrard [Operations Director, National Joint Utilities Group], who talked about the noticeable impact when roadworks information is posted on social media. Then there was another issue picked up by Dr Aruna Sivakumar of Imperial College [London], who suggested that Google Maps, for example, could be used to provide more roadworks information to help bus drivers, for example, to plan their routes. Are those additional initiatives that you are also looking into or are delivering?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** We in London put all of the roadworks information on something called LondonWorks, which is available on the net. Both the boroughs and we put the information in there.

We have a travel demand management organisation within TfL that has developed since the Olympics, which is heavily involved in putting out heat maps for roadworks and informing people where the difficulties will be when we put in these larger works. We would use Google Maps if it added to that overall armoury of information for our customers.

We are investigating all the means that we can to be able to inform customers of what is happening as a result of roadworks in every way that we can, like social media. We have a Twitter service from our control room, which informs people what is happening on the network in real time, and we have about 850,000 followers of that now.

All of these mechanisms we are looking at in terms of ways of informing people what is happening on the network. There is no one answer. We need a wide capability in this area to inform people what is going on.

**Navin Shah AM:** Thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** We have the next really meaty area looking at congestion charging.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Yes, looking at congestion charging or road pricing. The first question: how could the introduction of a road pricing scheme help TfL to reduce congestion?

Just as a rider to that, given the evidence that we have already heard from you this morning, are we asking the right question about reducing congestion? We have heard Iain [Simmons] speaking about the numbers of people using the streets on foot and needing to allocate space for that. We have heard Steve [Melia] talking about congestion reaching an equilibrium and there being a certain amount of congestion always. Therefore, should we be asking if a road pricing scheme would help TfL to allocate space for getting people around more efficiently?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** In terms of road pricing, it is worth clarifying that there is no major work underway within TfL on an expansion to the road pricing scheme in central London. There is no active project there at all.

Personally, I think it is unlikely to figure significantly in the new Mayor's Transport Strategy. There may be a reference to it but, if you think about the first Mayor's Transport Strategy back in 2001, it was what we called a "flagship policy statement". We are not in that period anymore.

Having said that, there are two areas where we are looking at pricing but that is to achieve a slightly different objective to the narrow one of congestion. One is Silvertown; with the Blackwall Tunnel you have chronic congestion problems there. We are looking at tolling at the Blackwall Tunnel in order to pay for Silvertown and Silvertown will be charged as well. That is a way of providing extra capacity and funding while also ensuring it does not generate extra traffic. I know that will be a big issue in the hearing that is coming up.

The other thing I would emphasise in terms of pricing to achieve different objectives is the announcement the Mayor made yesterday. That is regarding a whole series of air quality initiatives with the "T-charge" or Emissions Surcharge, which is a £10 supplement to older and dirtier vehicles. There is also the earlier - and maybe bigger - introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). That is a kind of charging where if you do not have a clean vehicle you will pay a supplement. It is not a narrow debate about road pricing dealing with congestion. It is about pricing dealing with other policy objectives. Principally, it is dealing with air quality issues.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** If the leaders of any city or country were really serious about wanting to solve congestion in intense areas, there is really only one way to do it. That is to selectively constrain people's ability to drive at the times and in the places where congestion occurs.

I have described - and some of the others have also - the current Congestion Charge as a blunt instrument. It was done for understandable political reasons at the time to gain acceptance. It has a perverse incentive in that, once you have paid for the day, you almost want to make maximum use of it. With rapid population growth over time, there is going to be an important need to intensify the centres in outer London. You are going to start to see some of the central London-type problems in outer London. I would suggest that people need to be thinking about these sorts of issues in the longer term.

If you really wanted to solve congestion, the only effective way to do it is to have some more nuanced and targeted forms of road pricing and obviously over a wider area than we have at the moment. If people do not want that and if it is politically too difficult, then what they are saying is, "We are happy to live with congestion". It is as simple as that, I am afraid.

**Caroline Russell AM:** That is very clear.

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** What we are going through at City is very similar to what Steve has said. It is about evaluating both the time of the zone and when it operates. Having lived and worked in London for 35 years, I can see that London is now a very different place to the London that first experienced the Congestion Charge zone. It has done a job but it needs to be looked at and made a lot smarter and more effective.

As Steve said, it is the balance of acceptability. It has been expressed to me and the pressure coming down to me from the politicians is that it is a very different experience of life. That has happened quite quickly as well. We are talking about movement. It is balancing the whole issue of congestion with the world and place that people want as well. Therefore, there are many more trade-offs. I find that in the work that I do. At a small-scheme level there are many more trade-offs as to whether something is acceptable or not. Before, it used to be quite binary. It was about movement, whether it was good or bad, and the decision-making was wrapped around that. As what people want is very different, it is moving into the realm where the Congestion Charge - as it currently stands - has to be reviewed.

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** Whilst the Congestion Charge benefits the centre of London, some of the inner London boroughs that just sit outside it do not benefit from it. If you look at the air quality map and the congestion map, just outside the Congestion Zone is pretty bad. Any road charging or tightening of the Congestion Zone needs to look at expansion to cover the inner London boroughs. A lot of inner London boroughs have implemented quite a lot of initiatives to reduce car ownership and car use to bring about behavioural change and to get people to use more sustainable forms of transport. However, the traffic originates from outside those boroughs.

We need to look at - as has been mentioned - selective road pricing and smart pricing that will discourage use into those inner London boroughs that are not within the Congestion Zone currently as part of the expansion of the ULEZ to introduce selective road charging to reduce car use.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you. I am hearing that the current Congestion Zone is not a nuanced enough instrument to reduce traffic. We know that the Mayor is looking at bringing in a T-charge to deal with the

most polluting vehicles. We are hearing across the board interest in reducing traffic and reducing the number of journeys.

Is there a way to use a broader road pricing scheme across a much bigger area that could actually deliver more space? Iain was talking about thinking about the places where people want to live and work. Is there a way to use road pricing to deliver a London that uses its streets more efficiently to deliver what people need?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** There is no active work on a wider road pricing scheme beyond the current Congestion Charge scheme. We are not looking at that at all. We are looking at using pricing to achieve a different objective - principally around air quality - that is initially the focus of the T-charge or the Emissions Surcharge. If we extend the ULEZ to the North and South Circulars, that is a massive expansion of the current zone. It is 28 times the size. It will have huge implications for the air quality of London. There may also be issues we need to look at regarding its impact on the volume of vehicles and potentially even congestion levels as well.

I go back to what I said at the start. One of the great things that has happened in London over the last 15 years is this substantial shift away from the private car. It is a 10% shift from private car to sustainable transport modes. The Congestion Charge clearly had a role to play in that.

However, in my view, the most important determinant of that shift in behaviour was the quality of the public transport offered that improved substantially. It is easy to say you can only deal with congestion by road pricing. I do not agree with that. That is clearly a tool. Providing a credible and affordable alternative through the public transport network is really important. You do not get people to move away from their private cars unless they have credible alternatives to go to. That is what was good about the Congestion Charge in 2003, but that is not the only reason that 10% of the trips have gone away from the car to more sustainable modes.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** I have agreed with nearly everything these guys have said so far until I heard that. There has been a very substantial modal shift. The improvement to public transport was a big part of that. What I found looking at cities internationally is that improvements do not make much difference in themselves unless there is also constraint of some kind. You can improve your public transport network but, if there is no constraining factor, usually via the road network, then what that is more likely to do is just generate more travel.

What has happened in London, and a number of other cities, is that the improvement has been done in a circumstance where there was already a constrained road capacity. If that really was a solution to congestion, why is congestion in London getting worse at the moment? What Alex [Williams] is talking about is a modal shift. London has achieved modal shift successfully but that is a completely different issue from congestion, which goes back to this equilibrium issue.

**Caroline Russell AM:** That goes back to the initial question that I asked. Are we asking the wrong question? Should we be asking about how we reduce traffic rather than how we tackle congestion?

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** In most cases I would say yes. If you want to solve congestion I come back to the point - and several of the other witnesses have said this - that targeted road pricing is really the only effective way to do it. If that is politically not possible, then, frankly, I would say downgrade congestion as one of your objectives. Do not pretend that you can solve a problem you cannot if the tools to solve the problem are too politically unattractive.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Could we pick up on the technological challenges or barriers to implementing road pricing? If there were the political will to tackle congestion - and we are hearing that it needs to be tackled through a road pricing mechanism - what would be the technological barriers to implementing road pricing?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** The technological barriers are not as great as people sometimes make them out to be. If you were going to introduce a Congestion Charge scheme, you would not use the technology that is there now. You would not use the cordon or the cameras. Technology has advanced a lot and there are more sophisticated ways of managing a scheme like that.

One of the interesting things we need to think about for any substantial expansion of the ULEZ scheme to North and South Circulars is the debate regarding what technology and method of enforcement we use for a scheme that is so much bigger than the original Congestion Charge scheme. I do not see it as an impediment. I see it as an opportunity to use the best and most available technology that is out there now. Everyone accepts if you were to do the Congestion Charge now it would be very different. There may be the same boundary, but in terms of the technology I am sure it would be very different.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** The technologies you would need to use in order to track vehicles for some sort of variable scheme do sometimes raise issues about privacy. There has to be a lot of information collation. That was an issue that I gather featured in the decision-making in Hong Kong. One of the reasons why they decided not to go down that route was because of the political sensitivity around that.

**Caroline Russell AM:** One other question on road pricing for TfL: if there was road pricing - or perhaps from the ULEZ charging - presumably there is a potential for people driving to contribute to the overall pot of money that TfL has. Have you calculated what you might have to spend? Would that be used on things to help people travel differently?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** There is no active work on a road pricing scheme for all of London and so we have not calculated any income.

In terms of the ULEZ expansion, we have been looking at the finances. I mentioned this at the Environment Committee I was at recently. If you look over a five or ten-year cycle, that scheme is highly likely to lose money. That is principally because we are seeking compliance and a change in behaviour. At the start we will probably be getting a net income because vehicles are not as clean as we want them to be. However, the objective of the scheme is not to make money. It is to get people to change their behaviour to use cleaner vehicles and not pay the charge so that we get cleaner air. There is some financial modelling underway for the ULEZ expansion. It is very difficult to predict the level of behaviour change and the pace of behaviour change given that we are going to very different parts of the capital than we have previously dealt with before.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you.

**Tom Copley AM:** This goes back to the point about the ULEZ. If that is expanded out to the North and South Circulars, as has been proposed, surely there will be technology installed there in order to detect vehicles that are not compliant. In the future, if this Mayor or a future Mayor decided to expand road pricing, would that technology be able to be updated to implement a road pricing system beyond something that is simply about cars with very bad emissions?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Potentially. We are not at that level of detail at this stage. The Mayor announced the consultation yesterday and so we are some way off from determining the details about how that will function.

One of the issues we need to consider is the density and level of enforcement that you will adopt with any ULEZ expansion. At the moment you have the Congestion Charge scheme that, basically, gets everyone. If you move in that zone, a camera will pick you up. If you think about a Low Emission Zone scheme for all of London, it is only looking at camera enforcement on the strategic road network and so it is a very light touch. We are undertaking an analysis about the level of enforcement we would have for a North and South Circular scheme. It is just a cordon scheme? If you have that, there will be a lot of movement within the zone that may not be picked up.

Then it is an issue about the density cameras to go with that. It also picks up the “Big Brother” concerns people will have if it is too dense. It is one of those interesting debates we will have to look at about what is an acceptable form of enforcement regime for this particular initiative. Then does it also enable future opportunities if there are different administrations or a different political will on road pricing.

The other issue with that, of course, is affordability. The key objective of the scheme is not to raise money but to get behaviour change. We do not want to spend huge sums of money for a scheme that will deliver a behavioural change in a few years and then we are left with a very costly set of infrastructure in the longer term.

**Tom Copley AM:** It is about whether you could tie the environmental concerns and air quality concerns with something on congestion as well and whether there could be some synergy between those two things.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Potentially. You are dead right that is an issue we need to look at. However, there are a lot of variables to consider in terms of the type of enforcement regime to go with any expansion.

**Tom Copley AM:** Finally, the technology for the current Congestion Charge is about 15 years old now. How adaptable is that? What is its lifespan and at what point would you be looking to replace that system anyway?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I am not sure when we are looking to do that and so it is probably best if I get back to you on that. Technology has moved on a lot since then. We should be looking at different forms of enforcement for any ULEZ expansion scheme and it is something we are actively looking at.

**Tom Copley AM:** Thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Very helpful, thank you.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** I have a couple of questions. You made a point about the proposed expanded ULEZ and that it is not intended to make money over a period of time because you want to ensure compliance. On paper I would agree with that. That is, of course, exactly the same argument that was made about the Congestion Charge when it was first introduced. What is the current level of income from the Congestion Charge?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I do not have that at the moment. I can certainly get that to you.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Is it fair to say that it is not breakeven?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** No, it makes a surplus. What is interesting is that it is our only source of income for the road network. One of the debates we are having with the Government is about the Vehicle Excise Duty and whether money generated in London should be allocated to London to help us manage the road network.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** I am sure the income is used appropriately. The point I was trying to make is that the assumptions behind the Congestion Charge when it was first rolled out 15 years ago that it would cause behavioural change and would not really be an income generator for TfL have been proven to be misplaced, have they not?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** The Congestion Charge scheme has reduced traffic levels. Traffic levels are 25% lower now than they were pre-Congestion Charge days. If you monitor congestion, it has crept up within the zone. That is partly because of what we have done as a whole series of public bodies and developers in the zone by reallocating road space away from the car to pedestrians, cyclists and public realm improvements as well. There have been a lot of changes in the zone over the last 13 years.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Looking at the proposed expansion of the ULEZ, Councillor Demirci made a very interesting point earlier on about the impact of the existing Congestion Charge on the roads in her borough. It perversely increases congestion there because it is just on the outskirts of the zone. What anticipation have you made about the impact of the North and South Circulars boundary on both congestion and air quality if that were to be implemented?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** We need to model the impacts of the ULEZ scheme in central and inner London. That work is underway. We do not have the detailed result of that at this stage. The original Congestion Charge scheme was assuming the Inner Ring Road would take an extra 10% of traffic. With the North and South Circulars there may well be some increases there but we have not done the modelling of that yet.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** The nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) map that was used by TfL as part of the original ULEZ consultation back in 2014 is quite helpful. It is colour-coded and you can see very clearly where the air quality problems in London are. The boundary of the North and South Circulars is not particularly an air quality problem, generally speaking. It is way below the legal limit and is quite good.

Would it be a bit of an 'own goal' if you were to push congestion into areas where there is no congestion at the moment? I am making the link between congestion and air quality, which tends to be the link that most people make. I appreciate that they are not necessarily the same thing. However, if you were to push vehicles to places where they are not now, it would be reasonable to assume that air quality would deteriorate, would it not?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** That is the modelling work we need to do to understand potential displacement activity. We have not done that work yet. It is underway and we will probably have that in the New Year. That will be used to inform the Mayor when they make a decision. This is a consultation on the principle of the ULEZ scheme. It is a very big and complicated scheme and a lot more work has to be done on that. I do not have the detailed answers in terms of the percentage of traffic change

on the North and South Circulars with and without the scheme. That is something we know we have to do when it gets to a variation in order to implement any scheme.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** I could spend a long time talking to you about the ULEZ. I will not because I appreciate that it is not the purpose of this meeting. However, I have one final question around what is proposed in terms of exemptions for residents who live in this massively expanded ULEZ.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** That will be part of the consultation.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** If you are going to have a consultation, you have to consult on some proposals, do you not?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** At the moment the consultation looks at a £12.50-a-day charge for vehicles that do not comply or lower. We have not gone on to the next stage, but we will have to do a subsequent consultation about an appropriate level of charge for inner London. Is it the same as central London or is it lower? We need to also look at the issue of residents' exemptions or discounts rather than exemptions.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** There are no thoughts around that at the moment?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Not in terms of detailed proposals. It is about the principle of an extension.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** One final thing I would say is an observation. If you have a series of consultations on principles without any details, you can get a head of steam up and get some unstoppable momentum with some unintended consequences at the end. I would urge TfL to start doing some thinking about this before you go out to public consultation on things as you could walk into some major problems. I have deep concerns about the economic impact of this. I have problems with pushing air quality issues out into places where they are not a problem at the moment.

While I support exemptions for residents, perversely, that could increase your problem. People driving in areas where there are no air quality problems at the moment who tend to travel around inner London will suddenly find themselves caught up in this. If your intention is to improve air quality and you offer them an exemption for three years or whatever, you may actually be making no benefit at all to your declared aim. I am not saying do not give them exemptions. I am just saying these are issues that probably ought to be thought through before TfL goes out to consultation.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** At the next consultation I am fairly sure there will be more detail on that issue.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Is this the consultation the Mayor announced yesterday?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** No, further ones where there are more details on--

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You have had one. This is the second one. There will be another one.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** There will be a third one when there is a more defined scheme to consult on.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Let us move back to the Congestion Charge and a workplace parking levy.

**Caroline Russell AM:** What impact could a workplace parking levy have on congestion in London? It is worth telling you that Stephen Joseph from the Campaign for Better Transport at our last meeting proposed a pilot scheme in somewhere like Hounslow. It has a lot of business parks that offer staff parking and has a need for investment in public transport in that area. Given that is what we heard at our last meeting, what impact could a workplace parking levy have on congestion in London?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** In central London, it would not make a great deal of difference. You have a huge reliance on public transport to get to central London and so very few people are driving there to park. In outer London, it is a different story.

I am looking at the issue of Hounslow. We will be very keen to talk to them about the details of that. They are looking at significant growth, particularly around the Golden Mile area. They are seeking investment in public transport infrastructure to unlock that growth and they are seeing this as a means of helping fund that. This is a project that has come from them, not from us. We will be happy to have a dialogue with them to understand what they are trying to achieve and whether it could work. Personally, I am not sure doing it in an outer London pilot area would necessarily work. However, Hounslow is leading on it and we would be more than happy to have a conversation to better understand what it is proposing to do.

**Caroline Russell AM:** When you say you do not think it will work in one outer London borough, do you think it might work in several together?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** That is one of the things you would have to look at. If you were going to do it around the Golden Mile where there is a substantial amount of growth, what does that mean for the immediate hinterland of that? As has just been alluded to with ULEZ, there are always boundary issues. You might get those kinds of issues. Is it something that the rest of west London would be interested in? I do not know. All I know is that Hounslow has come up with the idea. I have sent an email this morning saying, "We would like to have a discussion with you about this scheme". It is not ours. It is their scheme, but we will have a dialogue about it.

**Caroline Russell AM:** That is great. Does anyone else want to say anything on workplace parking?

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** I checked what it is available on the Nottingham scheme. There is very limited evidence so far, if you look at what has been published. It is mainly just people's views and opinions. I separately looked at the same city-wide congestion figures that I gave you earlier on for London. There is no perceptible effect. Nottingham has followed the national trend in terms of changes in congestion. As with several of the other things I have said, there may well be good reasons for considering such a measure but I would not expect it to make any significant difference to congestion. It might help in terms of modal shift. It certainly might help in terms of better land use which may be becoming a more important thing in the future.

Nottingham is different from some of the cities that have tried this internationally - like Perth - in targeting just the idea of a workplace. A good question you might want to think about is why workplaces should be targeted rather than other forms of non-residential parking. The Perth scheme is much wider. Particularly within London, I would not see any strong reason for that.

Although there is no evidence in Nottingham that it has made much difference to congestion, nor is there any evidence that it has caused any big displacement. There was a lot of fear that employers were going to pull out and move to neighbouring towns and cities. That has not happened, either.

**Caroline Russell AM:** It did raise enough money to pay for the new tram system, did it not?

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** It made a modest contribution to it.

**Caroline Russell AM:** OK, thank you.

**Tom Copley AM:** Just on that, I wonder if TfL has done any modelling of how much money workplace parking might raise in different scenarios.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** No.

**Tom Copley AM:** Do you intend to? I do not see anything wrong with using these kinds of things to raise money to invest in transport.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** We have not done any work on it. Hounslow has come forward with a proposition. It is more about raising money for investment in infrastructure than it is about congestion. We have made contact and have said, "We will be keen to discuss it with you". We would be keen to understand the level of investment that this could generate. That seems to be the primary motive.

**Tom Copley AM:** It would be interesting to know if you are going to do any work on it.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Hounslow is leading but we have made contact and we will meet with them to talk about it.

**Tom Copley AM:** OK, thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** The next session is on active traffic management.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** I have a number of TfL specific questions and so I will direct them to you Mr Williams and Mr Bristow, although the rest of the panel might wish to come in later.

You have a new team of road and transport enforcement officers. Could you give us some more information about how they work, how many officers, the technology they use and how effective they have been so far in tackling congestion?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The original size of the force back in August 2015 was 40 officers. That has recently been up-scaled to 80.

They are a very effective operational capability in that they can be tasked directly from our control room to attend incidents on the street. I would say their effect is mostly in enabling us to put a presence on the ground to make sure that what is happening down there is controlled safely. They can also stop individuals - they have those powers - from being in the wrong place, parking in the wrong place and that sort of thing. They have a local effect on what might cause congestion in an area.

In terms of the overall effect on London's global congestion, it is probably not huge. However, that local operational ability and the ability to deploy them quite flexibly means that they can have very good local effect. We used them when we had the Finchley Road fire. They went down and were able to control the pedestrian crossings to make sure people could cross safely while that was going on. There was a temporary ban on parking and loading bays and they were able to enforce that to make sure people were complying to enable that operation to run smoothly. We had a similar example with the Stoke Newington roadworks. Just by being there, they reduced contraventions from 134 on day 1 to 12 on day 5. Their presence stopped people contravening what they were being asked to do while that was going on.

In terms of their effectiveness, they are a very capable operational tool for us to use at localised events to make sure we have compliance and safety. They have been a success story.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** Very capable and very effective, as you said. Are there any plans to expand the team?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** Not at the moment, no. Eighty is it for the moment.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** I have no further questions. Thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Let us move on to bus services.

**Tom Copley AM:** I wanted to ask how the design of the bus network could help to reduce congestion. Could I start with TfL?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** As the Deputy Mayor for Transport already informed this Committee back in July, we are reviewing the whole of the bus network. This is to improve reliability and ensure it is responsive to demand across wider London and takes into account what is happening with the improvements in the Tube and other services. There is a widespread review going on of bus services. Within that will be the design of the routes that support that. We are developing proposals for consultations on sets of bus routes starting from later this year. We will consult with this Committee and other stakeholders as we step through that. That is work in progress at the moment.

The bus routes themselves are in the mix in the general traffic. They themselves do not necessarily reduce congestion. The key is to try to enable the buses to move as effectively through the network as is possible. It is also to see how we can use the bus network to support healthcare, education and other sectors as well as supporting future schemes and changes in use in places like Vauxhall Nine Elms and things like that. The routes have to be able to support the economy and be able to enable the large movement of people through the road network in the most efficient way possible.

**Tom Copley AM:** We hear complaints from people anecdotally about seeing empty buses and things like that. We all know, of course, it is much more complicated than there happening to be an empty bus at that point on the journey. Of course, there may be routes that could be modified or changed.

To what extent do you think the Hopper ticket, which will allow you to split routes, will have an impact on congestion now that people can change for free?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** There may well be an element of that in there. That is too early to see. The key thing about the Hopper is that it will, hopefully, be a catalyst for increasing the demand for people using buses because it provides flexibility and we have seen a dropping off in bus patronage. The holding of fares and the bus Hopper are all measures designed to encourage people to start using the buses in greater numbers again. Of course, if people are using buses, hopefully, they are not using cars and therefore it will have that effect on congestion.

**Tom Copley AM:** Absolutely. Do you think there will be much scope for changing the design of routes themselves?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The routes themselves will have to take into account new developments and will be shaped and redesigned on the basis of where we think the capability is required. That will all come out in the consultations and the work that is being done on quite a number of routes. We are about to see quite a significant change in the bus network.

**Tom Copley AM:** What impact would more bus priority measures have? Would that increase or decrease congestion or does it depend on the nature of the measure that you are implementing?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** The point about the bus priority measures is that they will be designed to increase the ability of buses to get through the network. By providing them with priority, you are enabling them in mass transport mode to have priority over other traffic.

**Tom Copley AM:** You are not thinking in terms of the impact on congestion so much as making sure that the bus can get through?

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** One of the key things about ridership is the reliability of the bus being able to transit along the route and also the speed with which it can do it. We have a number of measures at the moment. The bus priority programme is one. We have increased the number of timing reviews that we do at key locations specifically aimed at improving bus transit through the area. Also, in future schemes it is to make sure we try to mitigate the bus effects as we are doing the scheme, not afterwards. That is one of the lessons we learned.

The purpose is to get the bus network to operate as effectively as possible, to serve people as well as possible, to get the numbers of people using the bus network up again and to get that mode shift that is a priority. The mode shift may well mean there is less traffic. Whether that means - my learned friend's point - that there is less congestion is another question.

**Tom Copley AM:** What prospects are there for enhancing bus services in outer London? Obviously that is a place where people tend to drive more.

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** It is one of the key tenets of looking at what is going on to examine what is the scale of provision for outer London and what needs to be done to improve it. All of that is wrapped up in this review of the way the bus network functions for London.

**Tom Copley AM:** I am conscious of time but do any Members want to come in on any of those points?

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** I would like to add to this. The role the bus network is going to provide for London, the role the network is providing locally

and the link to congestion is absolutely the key for us in the City. The ability to work with TfL is very important as buses do not run on many of its streets. The bus network that TfL is responsible for predominately runs on borough and City of London streets. To make it effective we have to know where the buses are going. Within the City there are some fantastic places where we can provide good corridors for bus movement but there are very few buses on there. All of the buses go down the narrow streets and get in the way of each other.

It is absolutely fundamental that we can work together because it takes a long while to provide a good track for buses to run down. It is a five- to ten-year horizon for a local authority to get all the bits and pieces in place to make bus priority effective and to make the transit of buses effective. Therefore, a 'heads up' and participative role in working out where the buses are is ideal. There are now very strong moves coming out of TfL that it will be much more participative but it has not been in my professional career to date. I am looking with expectation. It will genuinely help with this whole congestion movement issue as well as the broader social agenda.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Regarding the buses, Alan, one of the things that was highlighted to us as the Transport Committee when we went to visit the Go-Ahead bus centre in Stockwell was the sheer frustration of some of the different bus operators in terms of where there is congestion, delays and missing stops. They wanted a bit more autonomy from TfL regarding directing their drivers on that. You need to ensure you are going to be having discussions with the various operators early on when it comes to redesigning the routes so that they get that right.

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** Both of those points are valid. It is absolutely vital for this process that the boroughs with the routes concerned are involved and also that the bus operators are involved in the discussions and the way we take this forward. Not to include those two key stakeholders would be to miss a fairly significant trick. I am sure my bus colleagues are taking that point forward.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Great. I am going to move swiftly into modal shift; no pun intended. Essentially, we are seeing a number of different changes. We are really welcoming the fact that people are using less cars and more public transport because we are seeing massive improvements. There are still some big opportunities to get more people onto public transport.

In terms of tackling congestion, where do you think there may be additional opportunities in London?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** The first thing about the modal shift is you are probably aware that the Deputy Mayor for Transport is passionate about this issue and believes we have had a great record thus far but we need to do a lot more. I am probably not giving away too many secrets but I am fairly sure that in the next Mayor's Transport Strategy modal shift will feature significantly.

In terms of where we need to do more, I repeat some of the comments I made earlier. The foundation for mode shift is good quality affordable public transport. The fare freeze and the Hopper ticket are key parts of that. Investment in new infrastructure, Crossrail 2, the Bakerloo line extension and the review of the bus network are all part of that.

There also has to be a series of initiatives to look at how we manage the road network to make it attractive to walk and cycle and to make it attractive to use a bus through a reliable bus network as we have just mentioned. It is also how you manage and supply a space for the private car in an appropriate way. A lot of that is through the land use planning process where you put the large density developments near the areas of

greatest public transport accessibility. You try to get that extra growth and development that London is going to see over the next ten years in areas that are well served by public transport so that people are choosing to use public transport and sustainable modes rather than being forced to use other means.

There are a lot of opportunities there. It will be a major feature of the Mayor's Transport Strategy and we are working on that actively now.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** I am sure we could talk all afternoon about this. I will be as selective as possible. The first point is that - to put it bluntly - carrots do not work without the sticks, whether the sticks are put in deliberately or whether they already exist because there is limited road capacity. To some extent there is always going to be a stick in London because of the fact that you cannot solve congestion. Therefore, bear that in mind in everything that you do.

If you are not going to down the route of selective congestion charging - there is not going to be that push factor - you need to think about the other factors that are pushing people to get out of cars. One that is critically important is car ownership. I understand that not many elected people want to talk about reducing car ownership. However, in practice that is what is happening in a lot of London boroughs.

I particularly urge you to look at some of the best examples of car-free development around Europe. London has quite a lot and also a growing amount of what are called car-free housing, which is an entirely different concept. Basically, that just means ordinary housing where you do not get a parking space. If you live there, you do not get any benefit from that. There are some fantastic examples around Europe where places have been built for people to live without cars where they get a great benefit in terms of a better place to live. I would urge you to look at those sorts of things.

If you do some international comparisons you will find London has done very well on modal shift in recent years. However, it is strangely imbalanced compared to almost all the other cities that have been on that journey because it has been almost entirely about increasing public transport, which is very expensive. If you look at other cities that have managed to reduce the amount of car driving, there is always a much bigger element of cycling in particular.

The argument is sometimes advanced, "They are all smaller cities", as if there is a causal link between the two. I would argue that that is just a geographical accident. It just so happens that those countries that have the best facilities for cycling and the best cycling cultures do not have any big cities. Tokyo has something like a 14% modal shift to cycling, over three times that of London.

The likes of the Cycle Superhighways are a very good first step in the right direction. There is plenty of capacity on them. You need to be thinking big about how to increase the cycling of volume for the future.

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** Steve, you do not have to go to Europe to look at good examples. In Hackney we already have plenty of car-capped developments and car-free developments.

I want to echo what Steve said around using both carrot and stick. It is not always about car-capped and car-free developments. It is also about making the alternatives more attractive for people to use. It is making it easier for people to hire a Santander bike or to use a Car Club car. It is about having a selection of options for people if they do give up their car. It is also about keeping up the momentum around the delivery of our

Cycle Superhighways and provision for both cycling and walking within London. While it is reducing the attractiveness of driving, it is increasing the attractiveness of sustainable modes of transport.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** One final point on that. I have attended two separate discussions on transport with two separate sets of residents. One was a group of pensioners and another group was a range of different people. The key thing that came through from both discussions was that they want to see a lot more focus on walking. A number of them felt that the roads are not safe enough for them as pedestrians.

What more do you think we could do to motivate individuals to look at leaving the car at home and using other modes, apart from having car-free developments?

**Cllr Feryal Demirci (Vice Chair, Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils):** One of the initiatives in Hackney we have introduced to make our pavements safer and clearer for pedestrians to walk on has been to ban street clutter; tables, advertising boards and non-essential street clutter. We trialled it for a year and it has been in place for three years. TfL has now adopted it and is going to be trialling it on some of its roads. It opens up our pavements to the elderly and to residents who are partially sighted.

It is also looking at the junctions in the cross sense for residents and ensuring their crossings are not staggered. You have a straight crossing for pedestrians so that they are not waiting for ages at crossings. It is also having signs as we do with routes for cycling - for example, we have Quietways that are all signposted - and ensuring that is legible low down so that there are directions to quieter, nicer and more attractive routes for residents to walk through.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** It is the same principle that was used with the Mini-Hollands. In some ways, it was unfortunate that they were badged as being cycling schemes. The principle of filtered permeability - where you filter out the traffic and give an advantage to the other modes - applies just as well to walking. It would be interesting to see monitoring in terms of walking levels there.

I would just say to beware the doctrine of shared space. That has done enormous harm to the cause of modal shift and to the urban environment. It is falsely masquerading as some sort of environmental sustainability movement, which it is not.

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** Could I just follow that up? Within London, traffic signals were all run by TfL. There are about 6,000. Something Feryal [Demirci] mentioned is absolutely key to central London and key to places like the City. There has been a strong focus on congestion. That is the topic you have us in front of you on. The drive has been to make sure motor vehicles - whatever type they are, buses or anything else - get delayed less. That has been exclusively to the detriment of people on foot. Certainly within central London the system does not work. When 80 to 90% of people do not wait for that green man to cross, you know there is a system failure. There is an absolutely fundamental system failure. It is a really big disincentive to people walking. It places them as third- or fourth-class citizens. If the focus is congestion, then that is the right thing to do. If it is about having fewer vehicles - a completely different way of measuring what you are doing - then it is entirely appropriate to make sure that those signals work for people on foot because they are the vast majority of people there at many of these locations.

**Alan Bristow (Director, Road Space Management, TfL):** I will have to disagree with you there, Iain. We did a study some time ago. Across London the behaviour of individuals is that within about 15 seconds of

arriving, 85% of the people will cross whatever the state of the lights. That is a legislative thing for us. It is not illegal to cross the road when the signals are red.

The green person is widely held to be the time that you have to cross the road. It is not. It is just an invitation to cross the road. The amount of time you to cross the road is laid down as 1.2 metres per second. There are debates as to whether that is enough time now given the aging population and that sort of thing. However, that is laid down as a statutory minimum and those are applied by TfL. You will get the statutory amount of time to cross the road. It is that awful period - the blackout period - when you have to cross the road. We have introduced a countdown to give people the information as to how much time they have left in that blackout period to cross the road. The green person is not the time you have to cross the road. That is a widely-held misconception.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Again, I am conscious of time but I will - if you permit me, Chair - say that I think Iain was reading my mind. That was another key chunk of the meeting in terms of the changes to the traffic signals. I would disagree with Alan. I will mention the dreaded Elephant and Castle where people still feel the time being allowed is very dangerous for pedestrians. They felt they were not included in the remodelling but that is for another day and for another email that I am going to send.

One final point I wanted to add on modal shift is to you, Alex. How better could we look at transport planning in terms of integrating the use of land to promote other forms of public transport?

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** There is a lot that we have done in that regard. We work very closely with the GLA's Planning team here on all of the major developments across the capital. It is also how we work with them on the formulation of the London Plan and how the Mayor's Transport Strategy should relate to that. That is about making sure the areas of highest density and greatest demand are in the areas of good public transport accessibility. It is about constraining parking supply either with car-free, car-capped or being reduced down through the London Plan. It is about making sure that those developments fully mitigate their impacts through negotiations to either fund new public transport infrastructure or fund enhancements to walking and cycling routes. There is a good track record of integrating land use and transport planning. If we want to do more on this and get more mode shift, that is something we will have to look at with the next Strategy is well.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I am going to move very quickly into the final area, which has come up a few times, about road infrastructure.

Should TfL be considering building new roads to tackle congestion or does it just encourage more people to drive? We talked a bit earlier about funding and tolling and so I am not going to do that now. Thoughts on building new roads? Perhaps when I come to you, TfL, you can update me on where you are with your tunnel proposals. I am going to start with Steve.

**Steve Melia (Senior Lecturer, Transport and Planning, UWE):** I would suggest that this is probably the most important point we are going to talk about in this session. Everyone agrees that creating additional road capacity does not solve congestion and can, in certain circumstances, make it worse. Yet people really still want to spend shed-loads of money on building stuff. I do not get it.

The original question we were all invited to respond in writing to asked: how can the risk of new roads encouraging more people to drive be avoided? There are several ways you can do that. You can have some sort of pricing mechanism. You can build roads and have a mechanism to stop people driving on them. More

usually, it is about building roads that will increase capacity and then having to constrain somewhere else in order to avoid the increased traffic. Why would you want to do that?

Let us take the example of building a new bridge. You build a bridge between two areas. Both sides of the river already have congestion. What will happen is the increased capacity will create lots of new journeys with people crossing the bridge. That will worsen congestion on both sides. You can then take other measures to try to constrain the traffic on both sides. Effectively, what you have then done is given some people an easier journey. You may enable them to live one side of the river and work the other and those sorts of changes. Then you have had to constrain or prevent a load of other people from travelling in order to allow that to happen.

The only reason I can see why anybody would want to do that is from a political point of view you can get the kudos because the person who is driving across the bridge can see that their journey has improved, whereas the person whose journey you have stopped will not necessarily realise and will not necessarily blame you for having stopped his or her journey. Is that the logic?

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Fantastic. Iain, do you have anything to say on building roads?

**Iain Simmons (Assistant Director, City Transportation, City of London Corporation):** Yes, not from a City of London perspective but I was part of the previous administration for Roads Task Force. It is a good piece of work and actually very useful. It is supported greatly by TfL with lots of modelling and lots of information.

One of the key things that came out there was basically things like tunnels and additional capacity were to enable much greater environmental gain and much more active travel somewhere else and, therefore, you had to play it off. Without that, all of the modelling runs, documentation and everything else set out that the choices become much harder for people. It is very much about getting out of the car in a much bigger way if you do not build this alternative capacity somewhere else. That was really it, but the cost of doing so is absolutely immense. I always suspected, being part of that, if whoever got into City Hall would go, "That is a silly idea", and kick it out. It was there as a sort of useful device.

If that is the case and there is not going to be any additional capacity, then what we all have to know and understand - and again what drops out from the Mayor's Transport Strategy - is that there is a very clear game plan that we can all subscribe to and work towards rather than all trying to do different things and finding out it is a bit of a muddle. That is the key challenge and opportunity for the next Transport Strategy and use a group of people keeping it all very honest: that we do all have a game plan at the local level, boroughs and the City, as well as at the strategic London-wide level.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** Under the previous administration, Iain is right. Through the Roads Task Force, we did look at the potential for a new road capacity through strategic tunnels east/west across London and that was mainly to respond to a growing London of potentially 10 million or 11 million people. Iain summarised the conversation with the new administration quite succinctly and accurately. That work, which was just an initial assessment with some of the options, is no longer continuing. The new administration made it clear that it is not interested in strategic tunnels. It is interested in some of the more localised projects like the A30 in turn, which is not about extra capacity but is about putting the

existing road underground and maybe what you can do with the space above it. We are continuing to look at that.

The only other piece of new road infrastructure we are looking at is the Silvertown Tunnel. If we were delivering that extra capacity on its own, it would generate extra traffic. However, we are looking at tolling of the Blackwall Tunnel and the Silvertown Tunnel to manage those issues more effectively.

The other set of road crossings we are looking at later on, which is the Gallions Crossing and the Belvedere Crossing, and the Mayor has made an announcement on river crossings recently. The focus for the immediate term is on the public transport connections at those locations rather than new road crossings. That is another issue we will look at through the next Mayor's Transport Strategy.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Just to be clear, do you have a view on how fair it is to be charging for some river crossings, as you have already outlined, tolling them and not others? There is east/west London.

**Alex Williams (Managing Director, Planning, TfL):** I know there is an east/west dynamic in there. If you look historically, new road crossings have been charged; they always have. Going back to the century before last, they were charged. That is what happens with new infrastructure. There is no other kind of credible way of getting across it. I accept that there is an east/west challenge for that for Blackwall and Silvertown but the rest of the crossings are not to be charged.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Thank you all very much indeed. I am going to finish there. Can I just thank you? Your contributions have been really helpful this afternoon. If there are things that you think afterwards you wish you had mentioned, could you please send them in to us as we develop our report on this investigation?