

Quality streets: improving London's pavements

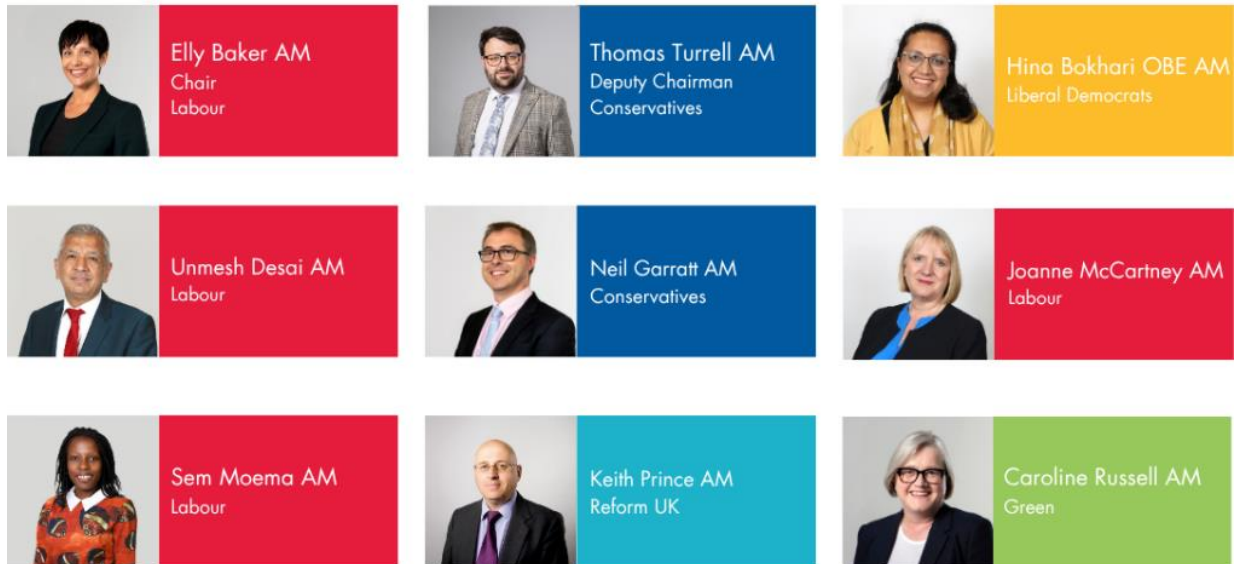
Transport Committee

December 2025



LONDONASSEMBLY

Transport Committee



The Transport Committee examines all aspects of the capital's transport system, to press for improvements for Londoners. The Committee pays particular attention to how the Mayor's Transport Strategy is being implemented and looks closely at the work of Transport for London and other transport operators. For more information, [please visit our website](#).

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Foreword



Elly Baker AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

So many of us take walking for granted, unless and until it becomes a challenge. For many it is free, doesn't require expense or equipment, and so is the foundation of how we get around our city – whether a walk or wheel to the local high street or connecting with other forms of transport for longer journeys.

Yet in London we are in danger of failing to adequately support this most fundamental aspect of our city, one that affects all of us but impacts those with the fewest transport options most. We found a wealth of focused research into aspects of making our walking and wheeling environment more pleasant and easier to navigate, but limited wider research into why walking trips were no longer rising, despite Transport for London's Walking Action Plan's commitment to drive an increase.

We are acutely aware of the many demands on Transport for London and Local Authority budgets and the massive task that keeping London's pavements in a decent state is. However, there must be something wrong when potholes receive so much more political attention than broken paving slabs, despite the personal damage a trip on a pavement can do, and when new cycling infrastructure is given far, far more attention than improvements to pavements. This report is a call to consider what we prioritise and the messages we send to Londoners about who and what is important.

We chose to focus on how welcoming and accessible our pavements are – considering aspects of design, upkeep and clutter – as we believe this is an important but underexamined aspect affecting Londoners deciding whether to walk or not. By choosing to focus on this there was a huge amount we could not address, many deserving of investigations of their own – most crucially pedestrian crossings and wider safety matters, including interactions between pedestrians and other forms of transport, such as cars and bikes. This should not be mistaken as a lack of interest or awareness on the committee's part.

We hope this short report can make a difference to how London considers what is important in transport, and how we can work together to make London's pavements a good place for us all to be.

Executive Summary

Transport for London (TfL) set out its plan to make London the “world’s most walkable city” when it published its Walking Action Plan in 2018. The plan also set a target to increase the number of daily walking trips to 7.5 million by 2024. Yet, there has been little to no progress in achieving this target since, with the number of walking trips in London having plateaued for the last seven years.

Given the limited progress in meeting this target, and the near total absence of wheeling (the use of wheeled mobility aids such as wheelchairs) in the Walking Action Plan, the Committee launched this investigation to understand whether the right actions are being taken to make walking and wheeling attractive and accessible.

What we have heard is that cluttered and damaged pavements are making walking and wheeling stressful, inconvenient and in some cases, unsafe. Street clutter such as advertising-boards (A-boards), bins, disused phone boxes, electric vehicle charge points, e-bikes and e-scooters can take up valuable pavement space and cause trip hazards. Even when pavements are free from clutter, broken paving slabs and raised or cracked paving also cause trip hazards. All these issues disproportionately affect older and Disabled people, who are also more likely to need places to stop, rest and shelter when walking and wheeling.

TfL is directly responsible for just five per cent of the 30,000 km of pavements in London and London’s Boroughs are responsible for the rest. But TfL does possess a range of tools needed to help make walking and wheeling a pleasant, safer and more accessible experience for everyone across the whole network, which are currently being overlooked and underutilised. For example:

- There are apps and webpages for Londoners to report when their streets are damaged or cluttered, but too few people know they exist.
- TfL has the right guidance for street design, but it is not enforceable.
- TfL has inclusive design principles, but we are yet to see them applied to its streets guidance.

It is time for TfL to be bolder and push further with these tools to de-clutter and repair London’s streets, alongside prioritising inclusive street designs.

The number of daily walking trips taken in London has not increased in the last seven years. Unless TfL takes urgent action now to make walking and wheeling a nicer, safer experience for everyone, we fear these figures won’t increase; and we won’t realise the benefits of being the world’s most walkable city.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

TfL should commission and publish research on the reasons behind the plateau in walking trips, as well as the barriers to wheeling, and use this as the basis for a new Walking and Wheeling Action Plan, to be published in 2026.

Recommendation 2

TfL should include estimated daily wheeling trips as part of its annual 'Travel in London' reports.

Recommendation 3

During 2026-2027, TfL should launch an awareness campaign for FixMyStreet and Streetcare, which encourages the public to use these tools to report instances of street clutter or damaged pavements and where these issues have caused them to be injured.

Recommendation 4

TfL should use the increase in data received through promoting FixMyStreet and Streetcare to map the scale of pavement maintenance required in London and use this to lobby government to provide ringfenced funding for pavements.

Recommendation 5

TfL should consult with boroughs on an agreed approach to street clutter, which includes e-bikes, e-scooters, A-boards, rubbish bags, phone boxes, electric vehicle chargepoints and cables. This agreed approach should include assessing whether TfL's Operation Clearway can be deployed to *all* pavements in London and the cost of doing so. If agreed and funded, TfL should then consult with government on devolving the necessary powers to make this possible.

Recommendation 6

As part of TfL's review of its design guidance and principles, it should ensure that future iterations of any street-related guidance and toolkits should:

- ensure those responsible for designing streets prioritise the provision of accessible and inclusive facilities such as seating; shelter, including greening; and public toilets
 - outline how co-design principles should be embedded into the design of streets.
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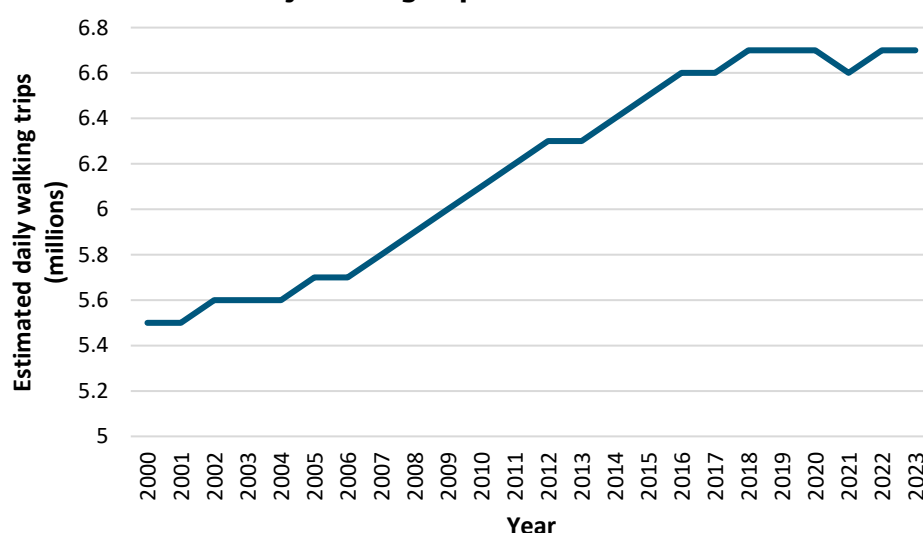
Why aren't more people walking and wheeling in London?

There are 30,000 km of pavements in London for people to use.¹ Some people walk and some people wheel² by using wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

Walking and wheeling have the potential to be the most beneficial ways of travelling in London, for individuals and wider society. They are healthy, active forms of transport; they are emission-free; there are no upfront costs; and they do not contribute to congestion.

In 2018, Transport for London (TfL) published its *Walking Action Plan*.³ The plan acknowledged many of the benefits of walking and set out to make London the “world’s most walkable city”⁴ – although it made no mention of wheeling. The plan also set a target to increase the number of daily walking trips to 7.5 million by 2024.⁵ Yet, there has been little to no progress in achieving this target, with the number of walking trips in London having plateaued for the last seven years (Figure 1).⁶

Figure 1: TfL's estimated daily walking trips in London⁷



Given the limited progress in meeting this target, and the lack of wheeling mentioned in the *Walking Action Plan*, the Committee launched an investigation to understand whether the right actions are being taken to make walking and wheeling attractive and accessible.

¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, p.4

² In this report, the term wheel/wheeling is used to describe an equivalent alternative to foot-based mobility that uses wheeled mobility aids. Definition derived from: Wheels for Wellbeing, [Active Travel Definitions: Walking/Wheeling, and Cycling](#) and Transport for All, [Walking/wheeling](#), [Accessed October 2025]

³ TfL, [Walking Action Plan](#), July 2018

⁴ TfL, [Walking Action Plan](#), July 2018, p.6

⁵ TfL, [Walking Action Plan](#), July 2018, p.18

⁶ TfL, [Travel in London 2024 Annual Overview](#), December 2024, p.10

⁷ TfL, [Travel in London 2024 Annual Overview](#), December 2024, p.10

Evidence gathered through this investigation suggests there are several factors that are potentially affecting the nature of journeys Londoners are taking, as well as their safety, comfort and willingness to walk and wheel. This includes:

- crowded, cluttered, and uneven pavements
- lack of facilities, such as seating and public toilets
- high traffic volumes or fast-moving vehicles
- the increase in popularity of alternatives – e-bikes and e-scooters.^{8 9}

When we asked a panel of experts from Arup, a global consultancy firm; think-tanks Create Streets and Centre for London; and the University of Westminster why walking trips have stalled (Figure 1) they agreed they did not want to “rush to any one interpretation of stagnation”.¹⁰ Instead, they stated that more research is needed into the many possible reasons why more people are not making more journeys by walking.¹¹

“Other things have to be allowed for, such as ongoing changes in the land use planning of London, the nature of the trips that people need to make, the constraints upon those trips, which make walking or wheeling either feasible or not feasible. We would need to do quite a bit of research to be able to answer the question definitively, but yes, I am more than ready to believe that walkability is one of the explanations.”¹²

**Dr Tom Cohen, Reader in Transport Policy
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This differed from the answer given by Dr Will Norman, Walking and Cycling Commissioner, who stated that walking decreased during the pandemic and has been slow to recover, noting it is part of a “wider societal piece” and that the “stalling is a change in the way that people move around the city.”¹³ Dr Will Norman went on to list hybrid working and the cost of living as potential reasons why travel patterns have changed.

The Committee is not convinced that a post-pandemic change in travel patterns is the only reason why walking trips in London have stalled. No concrete evidence was given as to why hybrid working should automatically reduce walking, and the Committee questions whether it could even offer more opportunities for walking, with the flexibility to move around locally.

⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), London TravelWatch, CleanCities, PJA and Living Streets, September 2025

⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, pp.1-2

¹⁰ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, pp.1-2

¹¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, pp.1-2

¹² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, p.1

¹³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, p.2

And, whilst it is true that fewer Londoners spend five days in the office since the pandemic,¹⁴ it is clear that the plateau in walking trips started in 2018, well before the big shift to hybrid working occurred.

The Committee does not believe that TfL will ever meet its walking target without undertaking an assessment of the fundamental reasons why more people aren't choosing to walk and wheel to enable the right policy measures to be taken.

Published in 2018, the *Walking Action Plan* is also one of the oldest plans TfL has in current use, and Dr Will Norman has previously acknowledged it needs to be refreshed.¹⁵ Following the Committee's meeting on this topic in September, TfL has also shared with the Committee that it plans to update the action plan in 2026.

By updating the current action plan, TfL has the opportunity to acknowledge a wider range of Londoners who want to use London's pavements. We heard from the charity, Wheels for Wellbeing, that all discussions on pedestrian facilities need to explicitly acknowledge people who use wheeled mobility aides by changing the term "walking" for "walking/wheeling" and replacing "comfort" with "accessibility".¹⁶ There is also a chance for TfL to acknowledge those who wheel in its data collection, as this mode of transport is currently not reported on in its annual reports.¹⁷

The Committee agrees with the Walking and Cycling Commissioner that it is time for TfL to update its current Walking Action Plan. It needs to be fit for the next 10 years; 2025 already feels very different to 2018 and 2035 will feel even further removed from 2018 by the time we get there. A key first step we want to see TfL commit to is expanding its plans to incorporate both walking *and wheeling* in London in a new Walking and Wheeling Action Plan.

Recommendation 1

TfL should commission and publish research on the reasons behind the plateau in walking trips, as well as the barriers to wheeling, and use this as the basis for a new Walking and Wheeling Action Plan, to be published in 2026.

Recommendation 2

TfL should include estimated daily wheeling trips as part of its annual 'Travel in London' reports.

¹⁴ Centre for Cities, [Return to the office: How London compares to other global cities, and why this matters](#), 3 September 2024

¹⁵ London Walking Forum, [Minutes - Monday 9 September 2024](#), p.2

¹⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Wheels for Wellbeing, September 2025, p.94

¹⁷ TfL, [Travel in London 2024 Annual Overview](#), December 2024

Cluttered and damaged streets

During this investigation, we have heard that the quality of pavements could have a significant effect on Londoners' willingness to walk and wheel.

Recent research from London TravelWatch highlighted that 30 per cent of survey respondents were dissatisfied with pavement quality in London.¹⁸ It found that the top three reasons that prevent Londoners from walking and wheeling were: crowded pavements; cluttered streets; and obstacles on the pavement.¹⁹

Street clutter is defined as "poorly placed or redundant objects on pavements that negatively affect pedestrians or other pavement users".²⁰ This includes everything from A-boards blocking footways to unsightly rubbish bags left outside commercial premises; disused phone boxes; dockless e-bikes and scooters; and electric vehicle chargepoints and cables.²¹

There are cases where these objects will not count as 'clutter', and if pavements are wide enough, some can be beneficial to the public. We also heard from BusinessLDN, a membership body representing businesses, that "small businesses rely on A-boards, planters and outdoor displays for visibility and footfall."²²

However, when objects significantly reduce pavement width, are poorly placed, or grouped together, it can cause problems for those who walk and wheel. At best, this results in inconvenience and people having to change their routes to avoid street clutter. At worst, it involves serious safety issues including trip hazards and narrowed pavements which force people to step into the road.²³

Even when pavements are free from clutter, Londoners still face injury risks due to damaged and uneven surfaces. This is commonly caused by cracked or dislodged paving slabs forming trip hazards; tree roots pushing up pavements which are particularly difficult to navigate if you are wheeling; and slippery surfaces caused by leaves or ice.²⁴

¹⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), London TravelWatch, September 2025, p.71

¹⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), London TravelWatch, September 2025, p.70

²⁰ Centre for London, [Reducing Street Clutter in Central London](#), October 2023

²¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Age UK London, Living Streets, Clean Cities, Wheels for Wellbeing, September 2025

²² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), BusinessLDN, September 2025, p.18

²³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Age UK London, Arup, London TravelWatch, September 2025

²⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Age UK London, Arup, Centre for London, Living Streets, London TravelWatch, September 2025, pp.3-72

These common obstacles can have serious consequences for some Londoners:

*"Most distressingly, countless people explained the injuries they had sustained when navigating London's pavements, including heavy bruising, broken bones and teeth, and even internal bleeding, from tripping over uneven paving or falling over when dodging discarded rubbish and e-bikes."*²⁵

Age UK London

The Committee heard that street clutter and damaged pavements disproportionately affect those who are older or Disabled. London TravelWatch highlighted an incident where a woman was nearly tipped out of her wheelchair due to poor quality pavements.²⁶ Living Streets also told us that 31 per cent of older adults are put off walking locally because of cracked and uneven pavements.²⁷ A 2015 survey from the Royal National Institute of Blind People also found that 95 per cent of blind and partially sighted people had collided with an obstacle in their local neighbourhood over a 3-month period, of which 1 in 3 were injured.²⁸

Dr Will Norman told the Committee that the types of injuries that can be sustained on London's pavements are "extremely serious" and that TfL "want everybody to be feeling safe to move around their neighbourhoods".²⁹ Whilst the Committee believes TfL and Dr Will Norman are genuine in their concern for Londoners, more must be done to reduce the risk of injury occurring through poor quality streets, as this can discourage some from walking and wheeling.



²⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Age UK London, September 2025, p.4

²⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), London TravelWatch, September 2025, p.72

²⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Living Streets, September 2025, p.45

²⁸ RNIB, [Seeing streets differently](#), 2021, p.27

²⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, p.4

You measure what you care about

Local authorities are responsible for the majority of London's pavements and responsible for repairing them when damaged.³⁰ Increasing financial pressure on local authorities means this is not happening at the scale it needs to. It was recently reported that one London borough responsible for 529 miles of pavements only had the budget to repair the equivalent of 19 miles every year.³¹

Cllr Rezina Chowdhury, Vice Chair of the London Councils Transport and Environment Committee, told the Committee that central government's proposed formula for highways maintenance includes criteria which are "likely focusing on car traffic" and omit critical factors such as pedestrian flow.³² Cllr Chowdhury also stated that limited budgets force councils to prioritise where they can make repairs, and that they take "a data-led approach to where there is most damage and where we need to deliver the most attention."³³

It was therefore frustrating to hear that comparatively little data is collected on the state of pavements compared with other forms of transport infrastructure, and that consequently, there is less funding or urgency to repair pavements.³⁴ Rob Goodall, Associate Director at Arup, told us that potholes on roads are "patched up pretty quickly" but broken paving slabs might not be fixed for a year because pavements are not included in maintenance schedules the same way roads are.³⁵

*"What gets measured gets managed, is the cliché. We do a better job of measuring the state of our carriageways [roads] than we do the state of our pavements"*³⁶

**Dr Tom Cohen, Reader in Transport Policy
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There is also little to no data collected on the safety of pavements, such as where slips/trips/falls are occurring, which was highlighted to us by Wheels for Wellbeing and Living

³⁰ Highways Act 1980, [Section 130](#)

³¹ BBC, [Unsafe pavements 'riddled' with cracks and holes](#), January 2025

³² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Written correspondence - Cllr Rezina Chowdhury](#), 15 October 2025

³³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, p.10

³⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, pp.20-22

³⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, pp.20-21

³⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, p.21

Streets. They told us this “obscures the true scale of risk on London’s streets” and makes it difficult to “identify which accessibility measures have been effective or ineffective.”³⁷

TfL reports on slips, trips and falls occurred by Londoners, however, it only does so for the train and bus networks.³⁸ When talking about pedestrian safety, TfL appears to put the majority of its focus on injuries sustained by collisions with vehicles.³⁹ These are important issues, but by omitting the injuries people are sustaining by simply walking and wheeling on London’s pavements, TfL is only telling part the story.

Dr Will Norman expressed concerns that TfL does not have sufficient resources to assess all of London’s pavements.⁴⁰ Instead, he pointed to reporting apps/websites [FixMyStreet](#), owned by MySociety; and [Streetcare](#), owned by TfL; as ways to understand the condition of London’s pavements.⁴¹ These tools allow the public to report, view and discuss problems they find on their streets.⁴² Helen Cansick, Head of Healthy Streets Investment Planning at TfL, added that these platforms have recently been updated to include direct reporting of abandoned e-bikes and e-scooters, which are sent directly to providers to resolve.⁴³

The majority of London boroughs also have online forms on their websites, through which residents can report problems in their local area.⁴⁴ Some borough websites also use [FixMyStreet](#) for residents to report issues,⁴⁵ and some boroughs direct residents to report problems through the [Love Clean Streets](#) app,⁴⁶ managed by Blackburn IT Services.⁴⁷ The Committee believes greater data sharing between TfL and boroughs of the data gathered through these reporting tools would help establish a detailed understanding of London’s pavements and the scale of pavement maintenance required.

Involving members of the public in the monitoring of pavements was highlighted to us by Arup, who drew particular attention to an app developed in Oslo that encouraged children to locate and report pavement hazards. Arup stated this “fostered a culture of community involvement and data-driven decision-making”.⁴⁸

³⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Living Streets, Wheels for Wellbeing, September 2025, p.45 and p.96

³⁸ TfL, [Safety, health and environment annual report 2024/25](#), July 2025

³⁹ TfL, [Vision Zero action plan](#), July 2018

⁴⁰ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London’s Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, pp.20-21

⁴¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London’s Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, pp.6-7

⁴² [FixMyStreet](#) and [Streetcare](#), [Accessed October 2025]

⁴³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London’s Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, p.12

⁴⁴ Examples of forms on borough websites include: [Harrow](#), [Kingston upon Thames](#), [Lambeth](#), and [Wandsworth](#), [Accessed December 2025]

⁴⁵ Examples of boroughs that use FixMyStreet include: [Bexley](#), [Bromley](#), [Merton](#) and [Southwark](#), [Accessed December 2025]

⁴⁶ Love Clean Streets, [How it works](#), [Accessed December 2025]

⁴⁷ Examples of boroughs that use Love Clean Streets include: [Hammersmith and Fulham](#), [Haringey](#), [Islington](#) and [Redbridge](#), [Accessed December 2025]

⁴⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Arup, September 2025, p.15

However, the Committee doubts whether [FixMyStreet](#) and [Streetcare](#) are well known to the public. Indeed, Dr Will Norman said he could not remember the names of these portals in our meeting with him and stated this likely meant “most people out there do not know that that tool exists.”⁴⁹

The Committee believes that through [FixMyStreet](#) and [Streetcare](#), TfL already has the tools needed to better understand the condition of London's pavements, but these tools are not being well utilised as most people do not know they exist.

Recommendation 3

During 2026-2027, TfL should launch an awareness campaign for FixMyStreet and Streetcare, which encourages the public to use these tools to report instances of street clutter or damaged pavements and where these issues have caused them to be injured.

Recommendation 4

TfL should use the increase in data received through promoting FixMyStreet and Streetcare to map the scale of pavement maintenance required in London and use this to lobby government to provide ringfenced funding for pavements.

⁴⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, p.7

The power to de-clutter

As with pavement maintenance, it is also the responsibility of local authorities to enforce the removal of street clutter on the roads they manage.⁵⁰ However, the Committee heard that individual borough-led approaches to managing street clutter results in inconsistent policies which have a significant impact on the overall walkability of London.⁵¹

The Committee has seen several reports which highlight the issues associated with street clutter, including:

- **Create Streets' report *Box Blight*** which details that London's pavements are frequently littered with semi-abandoned modern phone boxes which act as magnets for graffiti, littering, fly tipping, drug taking and worse.⁵²
- **Create Streets' report *Rubbish Refuse***, which outlines that unregulated commercial waste management has led to the "never-ending" presence of bin bags on London's high streets, making them unpleasant, dirty and adding to the clutter and chaos for street users.⁵³
- **Centre for London's report *Reducing Street Clutter in Central London*** which found clutter to be a chronic issue, with nearly half of observed items having a moderate or severe impact on walkability.⁵⁴

When it comes to removing street clutter, the Committee heard from Arup that "Responsibility for clutter management is fragmented, with boroughs, businesses, and utilities often unclear on ownership and enforcement."⁵⁵ BusinessLDN also told us that "existing regulations are often enforced irregularly, with limited inspections. This patchy enforcement undermines business confidence, creates perceptions of unfairness, and weakens compliance."⁵⁶

As a way to remove the barriers caused by street clutter, Arup suggested that an *enforceable* design standard for clutter-free pavements is needed in London, which outlines what is required for minimum footway widths, obstruction-free zones and the placement of street clutter.⁵⁷

These types of requirements are already outlined in TfL's Streetscape Guidance.⁵⁸ Here, TfL divides the pavement into four zones including a 'footway clear zone' with a preferred minimum width of 2 metres, and a 'furniture zone' with a range of suggested widths depending on the type of infrastructure needed (Figure 2).⁵⁹

⁵⁰ Highways Act 1980, [Section 130](#)

⁵¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Arup, Business LDN, Centre for London, Forest, PJA, September 2025

⁵² Create Streets, [Box Blight](#), July 2024

⁵³ Create Streets, [Rubbish Refuse](#), March 2025

⁵⁴ Centre for London, [Reducing Street Clutter in Central London](#), October 2023

⁵⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Arup, September 2025, p.12

⁵⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Business LDN, September 2025, p.20

⁵⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Arup, September 2025, p.14

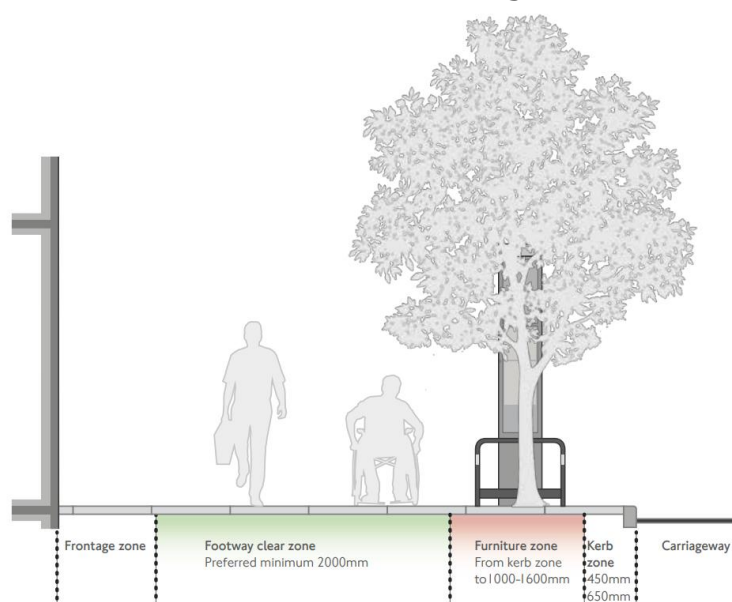
⁵⁸ TfL, [Streetscape Guidance Fourth Edition](#), 2022, pp.209-221

⁵⁹ TfL, [Streetscape Guidance Fourth Edition](#), 2022, pp.211-214

This type of design standard is positive to see, but guidance can only go so far, as much of what TfL outlines in its streets design standards are 'ideal' and 'preferred'.⁶⁰

However, TfL is able to enforce these standards on its own pavements and can fine businesses responsible for street clutter. It does this through its programme called 'Operation Clearway', which it states: "involves officers visiting priority locations engaging with and educating local businesses about their responsibilities for keeping pavements clear."⁶¹ TfL then issues Fixed Penalty Notices to those businesses or organisations persistently blocking pavements.⁶² In the TfL Commissioner's report from June 2025, the Commissioner stated that Operation Clearway has recently been used to address the issue of abandoned e-bikes, with officers stationed at key hotspots to report such cases.⁶³

Figure 2: Example of one of TfL's furniture zone design standards⁶⁴



The Committee questioned whether a London-wide approach to removing street clutter by TfL would be possible. Rob Anderson, Research Director at Centre for London, told us that there is an opportunity for TfL to gain more enforcement powers on street clutter through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill and the upcoming review of the GLA Act.⁶⁵

The Committee put this to Dr Will Norman, Walking and Cycling Commissioner, who told us he is "really delighted" that TfL will be getting the power to regulate micromobility in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.^{66 67} Through this, TfL and boroughs should have

⁶⁰ TfL, [Streetscape Guidance Fourth Edition](#), 2022

⁶¹ TfL, [Keeping London's pavements welcoming and accessible](#), May 2017

⁶² TfL, [Keeping London's pavements welcoming and accessible](#), May 2017

⁶³ TfL, [Commissioner's report](#), June 2025

⁶⁴ TfL, [Streetscape Guidance Fourth Edition](#), 2022, p.194, pp.211-214

⁶⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, p.4

⁶⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel Two](#), 25 September 2025, p.15

⁶⁷ English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, [Schedule 5 Licensing of Providers of Micromobility Vehicles in England](#)

greater control over how e-bikes are used in London, as stated in the *English Devolution White Paper*:

“Local Transport Authorities will be empowered to regulate on-street micromobility schemes (like hire bikes), so local areas can shape these schemes around their needs, connect people to public transport, and tackle the scourge of badly parked cycles and e-cycles.”⁶⁸

The Committee agrees that it is a positive step that TfL will be able to regulate e-bikes in the future. This was something the London Assembly unanimously called for last year.⁶⁹ But this will only address one type of street clutter and does nothing to remove clutter that has existed for years or any new forms of street clutter that could appear in the future.

The Committee believes TfL should have the power to expand Operation Clearway across the whole of London. This would ensure that more of London's pavements are kept clear from clutter where there is not enough space to accommodate such objects and support those local authorities that lack the resources to enforce this themselves.

To do this will require agreement from London's 33 boroughs, and consultation with the government on devolved powers. TfL recently showed it is able to follow this strategy, through its London-wide lane rental scheme.⁷⁰ Here, TfL agreed a standardised approach with boroughs for managing roadworks and consulted with government on proposals to devolve powers it required, which TfL stated would ensure consistency across London.⁷¹ Although this is a different issue to street clutter, this is the type of leadership and convening we want to see TfL apply here.

Recommendation 5

TfL should consult with boroughs on an agreed approach to street clutter, which includes e-bikes, e-scooters, A-boards, rubbish bags, phone boxes, electric vehicle chargepoints and cables. This agreed approach should include assessing whether TfL's Operation Clearway can be deployed to *all* pavements in London and the cost of doing so. If agreed and funded, TfL should then consult with government on devolving the necessary powers to make this possible.



⁶⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, [English Devolution White Paper](#), December 2024, p.50

⁶⁹ London Assembly, [Micromobility Legislation](#), 7 November 2024

⁷⁰ TfL, [London borough lane rental](#), May 2025

⁷¹ TfL, [London borough lane rental](#), May 2025

Creating more inclusive pavements

Repairing and de-cluttering pavements should be the bare minimum for creating better streets in London. Streets need to be more accessible and inclusive which means providing more seating, shelter and increasing access to public toilets.⁷²

The Committee heard from PJA, a transport consultancy, that the absence of city-wide provision of these facilities disincentivises walking for longer or discretionary trips.⁷³ We also heard from Arup that "Their absence or inconsistent use disproportionately affects those with mobility impairments, long-term health conditions, and caregiving responsibilities."⁷⁴ This was supported by London TravelWatch's recent research that found people with a physical condition were twice as likely as those without one to say there are not enough places to stop, rest or shelter when walking or wheeling around the city.⁷⁵

As well as considering the needs of, and providing for, people with physical or long-term health conditions, there are other ways in which streets can be designed to be more welcoming to encourage more walking. In BusinessLDN's written evidence to the Committee, it stated that the Heart of London Business Alliance's Placeshaping Strategy highlights that walking and wheeling routes need targeted improvements, including "Improved wayfinding and signage to key destinations, landmarks and transport hubs" and "public artwork and thematic routes (e.g. outside cultural venues) to create distinctive, engaging streetscapes."⁷⁶

The provision of seating and shelter is already outlined in much of TfL's Healthy Streets Guidance, of which the Committee is in strong support.⁷⁷

However, we also heard from Dr Tom Cohen that he suspects "the typical proposal to put lots of street furniture into a street space would probably not meet a value-for-money test."⁷⁸ He went on to add that "We do find substantial sums to invest in certain things in transport terms. Therefore, we could be asking ourselves whether we are making the best decisions."⁷⁹

London's pavements should be accessible to ensure that any Londoner has the option to walk or wheel. But existing business planning processes might not be factoring this in. This means not everyone who wants to walk and wheel is able to choose this as an option. The Committee therefore wants to see TfL's guidance make clear that inclusive facilities should be prioritised when designing London's streets.

⁷² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), September 2025

⁷³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), PJA, September 2025, p.83

⁷⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), Arup, September 2025, p.14

⁷⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), London TravelWatch, September 2025, pp.72-73

⁷⁶ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), BusinessLDN, September 2025, p.19

⁷⁷ TfL, [Healthy Streets](#), [Accessed October 2025]

⁷⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, pp.11-12

⁷⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, p.16

We also heard that inclusive streets and street furniture should be co-designed with a diverse range of Londoners.⁸⁰ This ensures that any new designs meet the needs of local communities, as well as fostering a sense of buy-in and ownership in these spaces.⁸¹

This year TfL established a Design Centre for Excellence, which TfL has previously told the Committee will “ensure that at the very start of any design and every design process that co-design is embedded to recognise the ways in which people are excluded by design and highlight the opportunities to create solutions to those embedded design barriers”.⁸²

The Committee supports TfL’s creation of the Design Centre for Excellence and its ambitions to foster more inclusive design. All of TfL’s current Healthy Streets guidance and toolkits pre-date the Design Centre for Excellence. After our meeting, Dr Will Norman informed the Committee that TfL is currently “in the process of reviewing their design guidance, establishing priorities for research on street design principles and the development of future streets design guidance.”⁸³ The Committee therefore looks forward to seeing how co-design principles will be incorporated in future iterations of TfL’s guidance on streets.

Recommendation 6

As part of TfL’s review of its design guidance and principles, it should ensure that future iterations of any street-related guidance and toolkits should:

- ensure those responsible for designing streets prioritise the provision of accessible and inclusive facilities such as seating; shelter, including greening; and public toilets
- outline how co-design principles should be embedded into the design of streets



⁸⁰ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability Written Evidence](#), London TravelWatch, September 2025, p.78

⁸¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Walkability of London's Pavements – Panel One](#), 25 September 2025, p.12

⁸² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Accessibility and Inclusion in Transport Planning](#), 10 December 2024, p.25

⁸³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Written correspondence – Will Norman](#), 27 October 2025, p.5

Committee Activity

The Transport Committee held its meeting on the walkability of London's pavements on 25 September 2025 with the following guests:

- **Dr Tom Cohen**, Reader in Transport Policy, University of Westminster
- **Rob Anderson**, Research Director, Centre for London
- **Rob Goodall**, Associate Director - Global Active Travel Lead and Decarbonisation Expert, Arup
- **Tom Noble**, Senior Urban Designer, Create Streets
- **Dr Will Norman**, Walking and Cycling Commissioner, Transport for London
- **Helen Cansick**, Head of Healthy Streets Investment Planning, Transport for London
- **Councillor Rezina Chowdhury**, Vice Chair - Transport and Environment Committee, London Councils

In August and September 2025, the Chair of the Transport Committee wrote to a selection of organisations, asking for written evidence to inform the Committee's meeting on the walkability of London's pavements. The Committee received 14 responses, [published here](#), from the following organisations:

- **Age UK London**
- **Arup**
- **BusinessLDN**
- **Central District Alliance and Hatton Garden Business Improvement Districts**
- **Centre for London**
- **Clean Cities**
- **Create Streets**
- **Forest**
- **Living Streets**
- **London TravelWatch**
- **PJA**
- **The Motability Foundation**
- **UKHospitality**

On 3 October 2025, the Committee also attended a site visit hosted by Living Streets, to see examples of typical London pavements.

Other formats and languages

If you, or someone you know needs this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email assembly.translations@london.gov.uk

Chinese

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Vietnamese

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