

Investigation into traffic congestion in London

Transport Committee

The London Assembly's Transport Committee has launched an investigation into [traffic congestion in London](#), examining what the Mayor and Transport for London can do to reduce congestion.

This paper invites organisations and individuals to submit views and information to the Committee, giving you the opportunity to influence our recommendations. We pose a number of key questions to be answered.

Traffic congestion in London

Following a long period of relative stability, London's roads have been getting busier and more congested for at least the last two years. Average traffic speed has fallen, as has journey time reliability on London's main roads. Excess waiting times for buses has increased.

High levels of congestion exacerbate a number of serious problems facing London. Longer and more unreliable journey times affect business productivity, harming London's economy. Air pollution from congested roads has a detrimental impact on Londoners' health and quality of life. Road safety is also reduced on congested roads for vulnerable users such as cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists.

The causes of these trends are complex. There have been increases in certain types of vehicle, such as delivery vans and minicabs. Effectively, there are now more vehicles

using London's roads, while some of the available capacity has been reallocated to other Mayoral priorities such as cycling, and construction work has constrained space further across the road network.

Key questions

In this investigation there are a number of specific questions the Committee is seeking to answer, as set out below. Respondents should address any questions where they have relevant views and information to share, and feel free to cover any other issues they would like the Committee to consider.

General questions

- 1. How has traffic congestion changed in London in recent years? Are there differences in the amount, time, type and/or location of congestion?**
- 2. What are the key causes of these changes in congestion?**
- 3. What impact does congestion have on Londoners, the city's economy and its environment?**
- 4. What can London learn from other cities in its effort to reduce congestion?**

In addition to these general issues, the Committee has identified a number of different approaches to tackling congestion, most of which are already being used by TfL to

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some extent. We have posed a number of questions in relation to these different approaches and interventions.

The six approaches outlined below are not necessarily mutually exclusive and could all be used to reduce congestion in London. The Committee will seek to recommend the most effective measures, ensuring an appropriate balance between the competing priorities Londoners have for their road network.

Charging for road usage

TfL already operates the Congestion Charge scheme in central London, and pollution-based charges are in operation or will be introduced.¹ Tolling of specific roads such as river crossings has been proposed. The Mayor also has the power to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy.

5. How effective is the Congestion Charge? How should this scheme be modified?

6. To what extent would a usage-based road pricing regime help reduce congestion?²

7. How might the Ultra Low Emission Zone and Emissions Surcharge affect congestion levels?

¹ TfL operates the Low Emission Zone, with an Ultra Low Emission Zone and Emissions Surcharge also proposed.

² For instance this may entail charging vehicles by distance driven, rather than charging for entry to a specific geographical area.

8. What would be the benefits and drawbacks of these other interventions?

- Tolling for river crossings or other major infrastructure
- Workplace Parking Levy
- Devolving Vehicle Excise Duty to London

Measures to target specific types of vehicle

Heavy road users – like commercial delivery vehicles, minicabs or private cars – could be targeted with specific measures. There could also be efforts to reduce bus traffic.

9. How can the Mayor and TfL reduce the number of delivery vehicles on London's roads, especially in congested areas at peak times?

10. To what extent is an increase in minicabs contributing to traffic congestion, and how could this issue be addressed?

11. What contribution can car clubs make to tackling congestion, and how can the Mayor and TfL encourage these?

12. To what extent could greater efficiency in the provision of bus services help reduce congestion, and how?

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Encouraging modal shift

Greater use of more sustainable transport modes, particularly public transport, walking and cycling, would help address congestion.

13. How can TfL further encourage a shift from private car use to public transport or active travel modes?

Providing new road infrastructure

There are proposals for new road infrastructure in London, including river crossings and tunnels, which TfL has considered or is now actively pursuing. These include, for instance, the Silvertown Tunnel across the Thames in east London, and a tunnel from A40 at Park Royal to the A12 at Hackney Wick.

14. Can new road infrastructure help reduce traffic congestion? What specific new infrastructure is required in London?

15. To what extent is there a risk of new roads encouraging more people to drive? How can this risk be avoided?

16. How should new road infrastructure be funded?

Maximising available road space

Space on London's roads is often restricted by construction work or other roadworks. TfL uses measures such as a lane rental scheme to manage this. In some cases, road space is diverted permanently for other key priorities such as cycling infrastructure or improved pedestrian space.

17. How effective are TfL's measures to limit roadworks, such as the lane rental scheme? How can these measures be made more effective?

18. What effect has the additional space provided for cycling and pedestrian infrastructure had on congestion?

Active traffic management

TfL uses technology to monitor and manage traffic, for instance altering traffic signals to respond to incidents causing congestion. It has also recently introduced a Road and Transport Enforcement team to provide an on-street response.

19. How can the use of technology be enhanced to help TfL manage congestion? For instance, how can the iBus system be used for this purpose?

20. How effective has the Road and Transport Enforcement team been in tackling congestion?

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LONDON ASSEMBLY

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How to contribute to the investigation

We welcome submissions from any organisations and individuals with views and information to share on this topic. Submissions should aim to address any of the questions outlined above, and other issues you think it important for the investigation to cover.

We are keen to hear from road users, organisations delivering services on roads, businesses, London boroughs, campaigners, transport experts and others. To contribute, please send submissions to the Committee by the deadline of **2 September 2016** using the details below.³

Email submissions	georgina.wells@london.gov.uk
Postal submissions	Georgina Wells, London Assembly, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
Further information	020 7983 4510
Media enquiries	020 7983 4228

³ We will publish written submissions online unless they are marked as confidential or there is a legal reason for non-publication. We may be required to release a copy of your submission under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, even if it has been marked as confidential.

About the Committee

The Transport Committee examines all aspects of the capital's transport system in order to press for improvements for Londoners. The Committee monitors how the Mayor's Transport Strategy is being implemented, and scrutinises the work of Transport for London and other transport operators.

Committee Members are:

Caroline Pidgeon, Chair (Liberal Democrat)
Keith Prince, Deputy Chair (Conservative)
Kemi Badenoch (Conservative)
Tom Copley (Labour)
Florence Eshalomi (Labour)
David Kurten (UK Independence Party)
Joanne McCartney (Labour)
Steve O'Connell (Conservative)
Caroline Russell (Green)
Navin Shah (Labour)

You can find out more about the Committee's investigations and read our reports here:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/transport-committee>

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