

Barcelona Conference

Foreword by Jenny Jones

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London has benefited from major changes to its transport system since the creation of Transport for London (TfL) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). The election of a London Mayor in 2000 and his decision to make transport a priority by chairing the Transport for London Board, has given London the chance to innovate and lead the way on sustainable transport in Britain. The result has been a decline in London's traffic during a period when it has increased by 5% in the rest of the country.

Most people are aware of London's pioneering the congestion charge and improving the bus system, but far fewer are aware that London's road casualties are falling faster than the rest of the country, or that London is breaking new ground with double decker hybrid buses. This report is an attempt to communicate both the scale of the changes and the cutting edge nature of much of TfL's work.

As a Green politician I am obviously keen to celebrate the best and this report aims to show that creating a more sustainable transport system is both practical and desirable. However, I do want to show the contrast between the emerging success of London and the appalling failure of the British Government. Despite the rhetoric about traffic reduction and safer roads, this Government has given way to the car lobby on everything from the fuel tax escalator to yellow safety cameras. It has expanded the road building programme, whilst ignoring the needs of cyclists and the environment. That is why the message about what London is doing is so important, as it shows that a green approach is both possible and popular.

Finally, I don't want to let the Mayor of London off the hook entirely. He is still supporting a traffic-generating, major new strategic road in east London called the Thames Gateway Bridge. This blot on his environmental credentials is one of the legacies from his first term, when climate change did not feature as a major priority and the two Green Party member of the London Assembly didn't hold the swing votes over his annual budget. Thank fully, things have improved a lot since 2004, when the Mayor and the Greens started coming to agreements over the budget. I look forward to the coming year and knowing that this is just the start.

London: why sustainable transport is needed in a growing city

In order to support the almost 1 million new jobs and 450,000 new dwellings expected in the next twenty years, the capacity of the public transport networks will need to be increased considerably, or we will be faced with even worse overcrowding and congestion. We welcome the recognition within Transport for London that even with a continuation of the expanded levels of public transport investment London has experienced in recent years, there will still be a large gap between demand and supply. There are essentially two ways of bridging

this gap, we either increase the supply of transport, or we reduce the demand. As a regional transport authority, Transport for London is starting to take the revolutionary step of encouraging people to actually travel less. Reducing demand for travel can be achieved through a combination of transport and planning policies, many of which TfL has already begun to adopt. The TfL approach to Travel Demand Management (TDM) is cost effective, but it has to be done on a large enough scale to make an impact across the whole of London. The full implications of this long term investment need to be spelt out, as it is easily equivalent in scale to the hoped for additional investment in buses, or to that of some rail/tram schemes. For TDM to achieve a long term cultural shift in travel behaviour, it will work best if implemented in conjunction with planning policies which reduce the need to travel and end the built in reliance on the car.

. The best way of achieving an increase in supply/capacity on London's roads is through large scale modal shift away from cars and towards more sustainable forms of transport, especially walking/cycling. Increased investment in public transport is an essential part of this. Achieving the high levels of walking/cycling found in many European cities will also free up capacity on rail/bus/tram.

With climate change becoming a key priority for the Greater London Authority, we must recognise that although public transport is a better solution than car travel, it is not always the best solution. At present, more public transport still means more CO2 emissions. For example, the renewal programme for the London Underground will greatly improve the quality of service and its capacity to carry more passengers. However, the cost could be a 50% increase in energy consumption between now and 2025 unless action is taken to introduce energy conservation at stations, roll out regenerative braking across the system and buy trains that run on less energy. Even when we have upgraded the tube system and it sources all of its energy from local, renewable production, we will still have the problem of over crowding due to population growth. This problem with a congested public transport system isn't just a problem with central London. For example, the Mayor is pushing forward with plans to introduce a tram in West London because of the concerns about future over-crowding on the bus network. That is why we need long term, large scale investment in walking and cycling facilities which will encourage people out of their cars and off the public transport system.

Transport in London is responsible for around 21 per cent of London's carbon dioxide emissions. Road transport accounts for most of this, generating about 80 per cent of that total, of which private vehicles and road freight account for around 50 per cent and 25 per cent of total transport related emissions respectively.

Journeys within London are divided up into the following modal shares:

- Car 42%
- Walking 21%
- Bus 18% Underground 10%
- Rail 5%
- Bike 2%