

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL

SUBJECT: GUARDRAIL REMOVAL PROGRAMME

DATE: 24 FEBRUARY 2009

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

- 1.1 This paper details the status of TfL's guardrail removal programme on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) and proposes an increase in the target for the removal of pedestrian guardrail from 33km by March 2012 to 60km by the end of 2010.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2007, TfL adopted a policy presumption against the use of pedestrian guardrail except where there is a proven safety requirement. To ensure a consistent and robust approach in determining the requirement for, or safe removal of guardrail, TfL developed the Guardrail Risk Assessment Form (GRAF) and this was finalised in October 2007.
- 2.2 There is 198km of guardrail on the TLRN. The original target for removal was 33km by March 2012 but in recognition of the importance placed by the Mayor on guardrail removal, it is proposed that the programme be expedited with a view to remove 60km of guardrail by the end of July 2010.

3 LEGAL POSITION

- 3.1 TfL, as Highway Authority for the TLRN, has powers under the Highways Act 1980 "to install barriers, rails or fences for the purpose of safeguarding persons using the street". There is no specific legal requirement to provide guardrail in any given location, however, highway and traffic design guidance documents, including those produced by DfT, recommend that highway authorities consider its installation. The Act also places a duty of care on highway authorities and a requirement to "carry out accident studies and, in light of those studies, to take such measures as appear appropriate to prevent accidents". This often concludes with the installation of guardrail.
- 3.2 In order to minimise the risk of civil and criminal liabilities Guardrail should only be removed after a risk assessment has been made and any relevant guidelines have been considered.

4 TFL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Evidence to support the safety case for pedestrian guardrail is mixed, although it is clear that in the right location, guardrail can have safety benefits. To safeguard road users and comply with TfL's legal duties while seeking to remove as much unnecessary guardrail from the network as possible, an

assessment framework has been compiled. The TfL Guardrail Risk Assessment Framework (GRAF) considers a range of site specific factors including the accident history of a location in order to give a robust justification for the removal or omission of guardrail. The assessment produces a score for each location which provides a guide as to whether removal is justified.

5 TARGETS

- 5.1 The original target for guardrail removal on the TLRN was to remove 33km of the 198km on the network by the end of 2011/12, a four year programme. TfL is on target to achieve the first year programme of 8.25km.
- 5.2 However, TfL is now seeking to maximise and expedite the amount of guardrail which can be safely removed from the network. TfL now proposes to increase the target to remove a total of 60km of guardrail by the end of July 2010. This is based on experience of the use of the GRAF assessments to date which suggests scope for the removal of approximately 30 per cent of the total 198km stock of guardrail.
- 5.3 The cost of the removal of guardrail is estimated at £2.5m for the additional 52km programmed over the period April 2009 to July 2010. Provision for this was not made in the current business plan. Funding will need to be found from within existing budgets and prioritised ahead of other initiatives but has yet to be prioritised within the small schemes programme. The removal of 30 per cent of the TLRN guardrail stock will provide some small savings in maintenance costs including painting and accident damage repairs.
- 5.4 A number of boroughs have their own guardrail removal initiatives. In addition, TfL's Road Network Management team has promoted the TfL approach to boroughs through the London Technical Advisors Group (LoTAG).

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The Guardrail Risk Assessment Framework allows technical risks associated with the provision of guardrail to be properly considered in context of relevant guidance and the specific characteristics of the location. Specific risk registers will be created and maintained for the implementation stage of guardrail removal. Where pedestrian guardrail is removed, sites will be monitored to check accident levels at intervals after removal for comparison with the 'before' safety records.

7 SUSTAINABILITY

- 7.1 Pedestrian guardrail can also be a barrier to movement which can discourage walking and cycling and its removal can encourage sustainable travel. The materials will be suitable for recycling.

8 EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The removal of pedestrian guardrail is expected to have little impact on equality and diversity, however, guardrail removal can reduce community severance, improve the visual environment and help make the TLRN more accessible to all.

9 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 An assessment framework tool has been created to allow robust and defensible decisions to be made for the provision of pedestrian guardrail and to allow pedestrian guardrail to be removed while maintaining road user safety and complying with legal requirements. Based on the experience of using the assessment framework, a revised target is proposed which increases significantly the total length of guardrail to be removed compared to earlier estimates, while reducing the timeline for programme completion.

10 RECOMMENDATION

10.1 The Panel is asked to:

- (a) NOTE the need for a standard risk assessment when considering the provision and/or removal of pedestrian guardrail, and
- (b) SUPPORT a revised target for guardrail removal from 33 km in four years to 60km by the end of July 2010.

11 CONTACT

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