

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON IMPROVING THE URBAN REALM ON THE TRANSPORT FOR LONDON ROAD NETWORK

DATE: 11 MAY 2011

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Panel on the actions being taken to deliver urban realm improvements on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) in response to the Mayor’s ambitions to revitalise public spaces and improve Londoners’ quality of life. It follows on from a comprehensive paper presented to the Surface Transport Panel on 30 June 2010.
- 1.2 The Panel is asked to note the paper.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In his manifesto ‘London’s Great Outdoors’ and his Transport Strategy, the Mayor sets out his ambition to revitalise London’s public spaces to enhance quality of life; improve journey experiences; and enhance the built and natural environment for the benefit of all those living in, working in, and visiting London.
- 2.2 Surface Transport’s Better Routes and Places (BR&P) and Roads Directorates are jointly responsible for delivering the Mayor’s vision for urban realm improvements on the TLRN. These are being achieved through a combination of major new schemes, the planning and design of improvement schemes and the effective tidying and de-cluttering of the network under planned maintenance and renewal programmes. The new approach is being underpinned by a change in the skills, culture and management processes of TfL staff and the delivery supply chain.
- 2.3 A complementary document to ‘London’s Great Outdoors’ is ‘Better Streets’, a practical guide that both establishes the Mayor’s vision for an improved public streetscape and sets out some simple steps for achieving this. The ‘Better Streets’ document sets out five different levels of intervention that can be applied in a staged approach to improve the street scene. These range from quick wins achieved by tidying and de-cluttering to introducing large scale change by completely re-thinking the street to better reflect its purpose and function. These interventions have been categorised as follows:

1. Tidy Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get rid of unnecessary road markings and street furniture • Remove or repair damaged street furniture • Keep free of litter, graffiti, ponding, etc
2. De-Clutter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalise and remove unnecessary signs, posts, bollards, guardrail, road markings etc
3. Relocate/Merge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make remaining street furniture/features work better together –

Functions	attach multiple signs to a single pole; attach lighting to buildings or structures; ensure street furniture is not 'scattered'
4. Re-think Traffic Management Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how pedestrians, cars and cyclists use the area and rebalance priorities to improve the way the link/place functions
5. Recreate the Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger scale schemes to create a very different place; for example to create a shared space environment

3 IMPROVING THE URBAN REALM ON THE TLRN

3.1 The Roads Directorate is responsible for maintaining and improving the condition of the TLRN, including structures, bridges, tunnels and public spaces. Through its planned maintenance and renewal programmes the Directorate manages delivery of levels 1, 2 and 3 of the interventions identified in 'Better Streets' and is responsible for the physical delivery of interventions 4 and 5.

Tidying, De-cluttering and Relocating/Merging Functions

3.2 Using existing maintenance resources, TfL has set about delivering significant urban realm improvements. Targets set included raising the proportion of the network in a 'tidy' condition and more than doubling the length to be de-cluttered by 2012 (from a 2010 base). The table below summarises progress made since last year and proposed targets over the forthcoming year:

Better Streets Status	Aspirational Target (Percentage of 580km network)	Status in 2010 (Percentage)	Cumulative Achievement 2010/11 (Percentage)	Anticipated cumulative Achievement 2011/12 (Percentage)
1. Tidy up	100	46	65	81
2. De-cluttered	55	16	25	39
3. Relocated/ Merged Functions	22	5	7	15

3.3 There are a number of initiatives that will help deliver tidy and de-cluttered streets, including the removal and rationalisation of street furniture, such as unnecessary pedestrian guardrail, signs, posts and bollards.

Pedestrian Guardrail Removal

3.4 The Guardrail Risk Assessment Framework (GRAF) process was developed by TfL in 2007 and provides a practical and consistent way of assessing the redundancy of Pedestrian Guardrail (PGR). It was piloted during 2008/09 when 8.7 kilometres of PGR was removed. Following the successful pilot study in 2008/09, a dedicated TfL project team was set up in April 2009 to manage the assessment and removal of guardrail across the entire TLRN.

3.5 Since April 2009, all 204 kilometres of PGR on the TLRN has been assessed using TfL's GRAF process. By the end of June 2010, a total of 63.39km had been removed (31per cent of the total pedestrian guardrail on the TLRN). The last phase removed 30km of PGR in central London which represented approximately 40 per cent of the total. An initial estimate from site visits indicates that in the new financial year (2011/12) it is anticipated that a further

10km can be removed.

Redundant Signs, Bollards, and Posts

- 3.6 In addition to the overall street condition indicator and the ongoing guardrail work outlined above, TfL is looking to set specific targets to reduce the overall number of posts, bollards and signs on the TLRN. In the financial year 2010/11, TfL's target to remove 2,000 unnecessary bollards on the TLRN was exceeded with 2,494 removed. Other assets targeted for removal were 350 traffic signs (786 achieved) and 400 posts (633 achieved).
- 3.7 TfL has continued to review all street furniture on the TLRN and has been removing items that no longer serve any useful purpose as part of planned maintenance and renewal programmes. Any remaining 'No Stopping at Any Time Except for Buses' signs are being relocated from separate posts onto existing bus flags. In addition, older style signage is being replaced with smaller signs wherever appropriate. These signs are around 50 per cent smaller and far less intrusive.
- 3.8 There are areas where the ability to de-clutter the network is hampered by standards and guidance, for example red route signing requirements. There are over 5,500 'No Stopping at Any Time' (DR7) signs which accompany the double red lines on the TLRN. TfL believes that the vast majority of drivers in London understand the meaning of a double red line (as they do the double yellow line) and the accompanying signage is unnecessary. However, the DfT's approval was required to dispense with these.
- 3.9 An opportunity presented itself with the national Traffic Sign Policy Review to gain support for relaxations such as this and support has been forthcoming from others feeding into the review. DfT has required TfL to carry out site trials, and these have revealed little overall variation in the number of offences occurring at sites with or without supplementary sign plates. During the trial for a period of eight weeks, two sites (each one km in length) were monitored for driver compliance with the red route controls – compliance was measured by the recording of the number of 'virtual' Penalty Charge Notices issued.
- 3.10 DfT's research into driver comprehension reveals that the vast majority of motorists understand that stopping is not allowed on a double red line. The final report is currently being appraised and the official DfT recommendation is expected in the summer. If the DR7 sign regulations are relaxed, the 'No Stopping at Any Time' signs would become optional in the future.
- 3.11 Greater focus is also being placed upon the reinstatement of utility company excavations to ensure that appropriate materials are employed and workmanship is sound. This is helping to ensure that deterioration in the appearance of the street is minimised.

Removing Traffic Signals

- 3.12 TfL has identified a number of traffic signals across London that may no longer be useful in traffic, pedestrian or safety terms. Of the signals investigated for removal, an initial 24 sets were on the TLRN. While signal removal is being undertaken to help meet the Mayor's smoothing traffic flow objectives, it can also have a significant effect on removing street clutter and enhancing the pedestrian environment. The target is for zero net growth of new traffic signal

4 RETHINKING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND RE-DESIGNING THE STREET

- 4.1 TfL's BR&P Directorate acts as 'intelligent client' for the highway schemes on the TLRN, where the aim is to achieve a significant transformation in character of the street environment for the benefit of those using the street as a route (for example as drivers or bus passengers) or as a place (for example, as visitors to a town centre). BR&P has been establishing new and improved processes to ensure that good urban design practices are embedded throughout the scheme design process such that it becomes a compulsory and fundamental requirement in a similar way to safety considerations.
- 4.2 The capabilities within BR&P have recently been enhanced by the arrival of the Urban Design London Team (UDL) who have transferred to TfL from their former placement within the London Development Agency.

Major Interventions

- 4.3 The TLRN schemes in 'Better Streets' categories four and five ('re-think traffic management options' and 'recreate the street') tend to affect more targeted areas than maintenance regimes applied to categories one to three. This means a linear measure of network condition (that is kilometres of TLRN meeting a certain standard) is less useful.
- 4.4 During 2010/11 the following schemes have been progressed:
- (a) Goswell Road Triangle in Islington completed April 2010;
 - (b) Gants Hill completed September 2010;
 - (c) Windrush Square, Brixton completed October 2010;
 - (d) Kender Street Triangle, Lewisham to be completed November 2011;
 - (e) Angel Town Centre Islington - main section complete - works to Angel junction completion target August 2011;
 - (f) Elephant and Castle southern roundabout complete April 2011;
 - (g) Canning Town A13 improvements to be completed November 2011;
 - (h) High Street 2012 programme to be completed February 2012;
 - (i) Kingsland High Street to be completed March 2012;
 - (j) Britannia Junction, Camden to be completed April 2012;
 - (k) Euston Circus Camden to be completed December 2013;
 - (l) Highbury Corner, Islington to be completed end 2013; and
 - (m) Camberwell Town Centre target completion mid 2013.

Design Review and Surgeries

- 4.5 TfL Surface Transport established a Design Review Panel in September 2010 to ensure all TfL and Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funded borough schemes over £2m in value meet the Mayor's aspirations for 'Better Streets'. The panel is made up of internal specialists, together with a call-off contract for external experts as required for specific projects (for example landscape architects to

- 4.6 The panel meetings are held monthly and since September 2010 a wide range of projects have been considered, ranging from central London schemes such as Euston Circus, St Thomas's Street, Oxford Street East and Jubilee Gardens, to projects in inner and outer London such as Clapham Old Town, Leytonstone High Road and West Drayton. For schemes below £2m in value UDL offer Design Surgeries, where TfL or borough officers can bring along proposals that are in development for review and advice on design matters. These surgeries operate on a similar basis to the design reviews, but are voluntary and informal, with scheme promoters determining how far they wish to go in amending proposals to address the points made at the meeting.
- 4.7 A peer review process is also being introduced for TLRN schemes. Individuals with urban realm design experience within the BR&P client function are being identified as specialist advisors and will be required to consider and advise on small scheme designs that have a significant impact on the urban realm.
- 4.8 TfL's Streetscape Guidance proposes a palette of materials and furniture for the TLRN to ensure a consistent approach to quality and design. The Guidance acknowledges that there will be instances where variation is necessary to respect the local character of a particular area. The footway, carriageway and lighting schemes in TfL's capital renewal programme are planned and delivered to ensure these assets are maintained in a state of good repair. The materials used for each renewal scheme are carefully considered with stakeholders, to take account of the individual characteristics and function of the particular section of the network. A consultation exercise on elements of the Streetscape Guidance is about to commence in order to maintain the document as relevant and up to date for the aspirations of the Capital.

Training Support

- 4.9 The quality of any proposed scheme is dependent upon the relevant expertise, skills and knowledge of staff involved in the identification, development, design and delivery. It is therefore essential that TfL and borough officers have the right support and training to ensure they are equipped to drive forward and deliver the 'Better Streets' agenda.
- 4.10 The transfer of UDL has provided the organisation with a much enhanced capability to support the development of its own staff and those of the London boroughs, in order to ensure excellent design is central to all highway activities. Approximately 350 places at UDL courses in the 2010/11 financial year were taken up by staff working on TfL schemes. A comprehensive programme of training, involving about 65 events in total, has been developed by Surface Transport with UDL for 2011/12.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Panel is asked to NOTE the contents of this paper, in particular the actions being taken by TfL to deliver urban realm improvements on the TLRN.

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