One year on from the publication of our report *Climate Safe Streets: Delivering Zero Carbon Roads in London by 2030*, how has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted London's road system and what does that mean for decarbonisation?

Climate Safe Streets
One year on

LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Contents

Written by Fran Graham with contributions from Ashok Sinha, Simon Munk, Clare Rogers, Tom Bogdanowicz and Naira Antoun.

1 Foreword

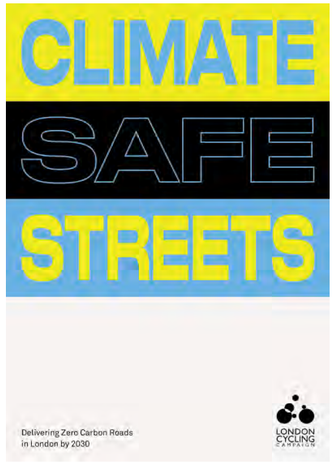
Dr Ashok Sinha
Chief Executive
London Cycling Campaign

The pandemic has reminded us that planetary and human health are intimately linked: the more we despoil nature, the likelier it is that deadly viruses will make the jump from wild animals to people. This reminder should spur far greater and more urgent action to avert the twin existential threats of the climate emergency and ecosystem collapse, which pose a greater danger to civilisation than even Covid-19.

Our extensive ***Climate Safe Streets*** 2020 report argued that decarbonising London's roads by 2030 is essential if our city is to meet its obligations to keep global heating under the Paris Agreement's target of 1.5°C. It also laid out how this can and should be done, with leadership from across London's political class being the central requirement.

One year on, this Climate Safe Streets 2021 update report describes how the shock of Covid-19, despite the tragedies and loss, has opened the door to a transport revolution that few previously thought possible. With travel patterns permanently changed, Transport for London engulfed in a financial crisis, and new technologies (such as micro and shared mobility) disrupting markets, the moment is ripe for radical change. Visionary opportunism – from large scale roadspace reallocation to smart road user charging – can end car over-dependency and help fund a mass expansion of active, public and shared transport. Sometimes it takes a crisis to open the way for a historic transformation.

As well as being green, this revolution in road transport must be fair. Fifteen minute cities may now be the talk of the town, but many wealthy Londoners have long been able to live within easy travel distance of boutique shops, services and employment. It is London's poorer communities that disproportionately suffer from declining high streets and transport over-crowding. LCC's manifesto for Climate Safe Streets is therefore also founded on the social and economic good – creating more affordable and convenient transport for all, as well as a reviving our high streets by removing the blight of congestion.



Climate Safe Streets: Delivering Zero Carbon Roads by 2030 report, published March 2020

Scientific brilliance aside, the UK's response to Covid-19 has been founded on political direction, citizen trust and social capital. We need the same to achieve zero carbon roads by 2030: direction from the next London Mayor, plus those elected to lead the boroughs in 2022, to set the destination; engagement from all sectors to gain the public's trust and enthusiasm for the journey; and investment in communities to help them co-produce the means of arrival. All this – and more – will be needed. But the keystone, as ever, is political will.

The goal is not just to avoid disaster: recovering our streets from car-centricity will create a healthier, happier, greener urban habitat – the only habitat most of us will ever know. In fact, it's already happening in new Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets all over London. Making London a city where everyone, whatever their age and ability, can cycle safely and enjoyably for all their everyday journeys, will therefore result in a city that is better for all. It's high time to make that vision real. It's time for Climate Safe Streets.

2 Introduction

Fran Graham
Senior Campaigns Officer
London Cycling Campaign

In March 2020, the London Cycling Campaign, with the help of Urban Movement, published the ground-breaking ***Climate Safe Streets: Delivering Zero Carbon Roads in London by 2030*** report. In it, we laid out the urgent need to decarbonise London's road system in the next 10 years; why doing so is not only essential to meet our global climate responsibility, but is also crucial to improve the quality of life for Londoners, clean up our air, reduce road danger and strengthen communities, and how we believe London can reach this ambitious goal.

We identified eight key policy areas where action was most needed:

1. Rapid expansion of the **Strategic Cycling Network**, at the highest quality.
2. Coordinated expansion of easy access to **low-carbon shared mobility services**.
3. Development and implementation of a **London-wide Smart Road User Charging system**.
4. Expansion of **Low Traffic Neighbourhood** coverage.
5. Expansion and optimisation of a network of conventional and **demand-responsive zero-emission bus services**.
6. Proactive support of the transition to **low-carbon freight transport**.
7. Enabling of a rapid shift to **low-carbon vehicles**.
8. Framework to enable **car-free planning**.

The report was published at the start of the first UK lock-down in March 2020, marking what would have been the start of LCC's mayoral election campaign, and bolstering the growing and urgent conversation about the climate emergency at the start of 2020. At almost the same time, the mounting pressure had led to a pledge from the current Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, that if re-elected, he would make London carbon neutral by 2030. But the Covid-19 pandemic radically changed the entire political situation, and necessitated a delay to the election until May 2021.

The intervening months since then have seen the city combatting Covid-19 to protect Londoners and their livelihoods, which has resulted in a dramatic shift in the way active travel and other transport schemes are being delivered, and our whole transport networks as a result.

In this update to our Climate Safe Streets report, we set out how the tragic impacts of Covid-19 and society's response over the last 12 months has changed London, what that could mean for the road system over the next decade, and how targeting a Zero Carbon Road System by 2030 will help achieve a green and fair recovery from the pandemic.

3

London one year on since the start of the pandemic

London was already trying to respond to the air pollution crisis, the inactivity crisis and the climate emergency before March 2020. Covid-19 compounded these problems, exposing the fault lines and inequalities in our society to a greater degree than ever before, while rocking the economy and contributing to job losses and economic hardship for many.

The lethally high levels of air pollution across the city were highlighted early on as a contributing factor in increasing the vulnerability of Londoners to the respiratory disease[1]. The inactivity crisis also played a part, with underlying heath conditions again increasing the risk from Covid-19.

For those that were able, working from home has been the norm during 2020, radically changing the daily commute, and with social distancing measures in place, the ridership of London's public transport dropped dramatically. In a bid to avoid public transport, those who had cars started using them more, putting pressure on an already stretched road system, discouraging some from cycling and reducing the transport options of those without cars further.

But, during a year filled with numerous, complex challenges, there were opportunities for active travel that were embraced. The quiet streets created by the first lockdown found many people discovering and re-discovering cycling either as a form of exercise, or to complete their essential journeys, effectively demonstrating the massive unmet demand for cycling in London.

TfL and many councils worked to meet this demand for cycling by delivering safer cycling conditions through the Mayor's Streetspace programme, with infrastructure schemes designed to make it easier and feel safer to cycle during the pandemic. The Government supported this shift, publishing 'Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking'[2], the most ambitious policy in support of active travel in the UK from the Government yet.

Gear Change was accompanied by the publication of the Department of Transport's (DfT) Local Transport Note on cycle scheme design standards (LTN 1/20), baking-into Government guidance a quality standard for cycling infrastructure that LCC has been championing for years, from direct routing to physically protected cycle lanes. Funding to back these, fed from government to TfL (facing a collapse in ridership revenue), led to a true step change in the approach to active travel schemes, particularly visibly in London, with more councils than ever before delivering cycling and walking infrastructure at quality and pace.

The lockdowns also encouraged people to explore their local areas to a greater extent, with green spaces and local high streets playing an important role while restrictions were in place. The Royal Parks responded by banning through-traffic through some of their parks[3] to improve the quality of their green space, and are now investigating banning it permanently from the majority of their parks. Some high streets were also supported with the removal of through-motor traffic and prioritisation of access by people on foot, cycle or public transport.

The disruption and uncertainty has also prompted Londoners to think about the kind of city they want to live in. Green spaces, cleaner air and quieter roads proved invaluable in enabling greater community cohesion, capitalised on by the mutual aid groups that sprang up across London to support friends and neighbours.

The greener, cleaner London embraced by many during the lockdowns is a fragile thing though, of course. And how the city recovers from the pandemic will set the course of not just the immediate recovery, but the next decade.

A car-based recovery would lock London into dirty air, gridlocked roads and the deadly effects of climate chaos, for us and our children. All of the evidence on climate is increasingly clear that the next few years of action will be crucial. We can, and must, ensure we're building the better future Londoners deserve instead of a car-led dystopia – an active and sustainable travel based recovery that sets us on a path towards a zero carbon road system in the next 10 years, leading to a healthier, resilient, people-friendly city.

4 Progress towards a zero carbon road system

In the original Climate Safe Streets report, we outlined eight key areas where action was needed. The last year has seen advances in all areas, be that political, regulatory or in public attitudes, and all changes and action have resulted in steps taken towards a zero carbon road system.

4.1 Rapid expansion of the Strategic Cycling Network, at the highest quality

At the start of the first lockdown in March, the focus was on how we enabled key workers and others to make essential journeys in a social distanced and safe manner. The initial fall in traffic levels of 65%, compared to the previous year[4], meant the roads were quiet enough for many of these people to take to their bikes, with the added benefit of taking the pressure off public transport, which was necessarily running at reduced capacity.

The quieter streets also saw a massive increase in the number of people cycling for leisure, up 200% on certain weekends[5], as people cycled for their daily exercise, keeping physically and mentally healthy during the first lockdown. Bike shops were inundated by orders for new bikes and demand for maintenance to get older bikes roadworthy again.

As London and the rest of the country began to transition out of the first lockdown, issues emerged. Those with cars opted to drive more to avoid public transport, threatening to overwhelm road networks and contribute to the returning damaging levels of air pollution.

As car use went up and the roads got busier, concern about road danger began to suppress the increased cycling numbers seen over the first lockdown, and for those without access to a car, that meant fewer transport options. In London, only 56% of households have access to a car. With many people still understandably feeling that cycling isn't safe enough for them, they were left taking the risk on public transport for their essential journeys.

Crispin Hughes crispinhughes.co.uk

In order to stop the roads grinding to a halt, and to enable people to continue to move about London as lockdown lifted, the Mayor and councils invested in cycling infrastructure. Mayor Sadiq Khan initiated the Streetspace programme, rolling out segregated cycle lanes, footpath widening, extending the operating hours of bus lanes and providing funding for local London councils to follow suit to avoid a 'car-based recovery'. The UK Government added its support, releasing funding and guidance on emergency active travel schemes for councils.

This has led to the roll out of cycling and walking infrastructure at a rate not seen before in London, out of which has emerged the beginning of a high quality cycling network, and a solid step forward to the roads we need in London. It has also demonstrated what an emergency response – such as to the climate emergency – should look like.

Groundwork laid by LCC and other active travel organisations meant that politicians had the answers to hand for how they were going to enable people to make their journeys safely and easily by bike. Through the Streetspace and Emergency Active Travel funding, the Mayor and councils rolled out school streets, 24/7 bus lanes, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and physically protracted cycle lanes at a rate not seen before in London. Between March and December, London delivered:

- 89km of new or upgraded protected cycling
- 86km of bus lanes upgraded to 24/7 lanes
- 88 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
- 322 School Streets[6]

To put this into perspective, between 2016 and the start of 2020, implementing a promise won from him by LCC in the run up to his election, Sadiq Khan had delivered 162km of physically protected cycle track. In the emergency response to Covid-19, they were able to deliver half that in just 9 months. Importantly, there is public support for change, with Londoners increasingly positive on interventions such as reallocating road space for active travel[7], Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs)[8] and road charging[9].

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- **By 2024** Complete at least half of all corridors and routes in TfL's Strategic Cycling Analysis (of existing, top, high and medium potential corridors) to the highest quality.
- **By 2028** Complete remaining routes and corridors to the highest quality.
- **From 2024** Review the network to fill network gaps, adding further capacity in outer London and increasing network density in central and inner London so that most residents are living within 200 metres of a highest quality route by 2030.
- **By 2021/22** Develop a new mechanism for funding major Climate Safe corridors and severance-busting projects (e.g. river and rail bridges) that are beyond the scope of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme but have high potential for mode shift.

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **The next mayor must take action to make as many of the Streetspace schemes as possible permanent, and the rate of delivery needs to be maintained in order to deliver 50% of the Strategic Cycling Network by 2024.**
- **Current temporary schemes, particularly in the transition to permanent, must provide safe and comfortable cycling provision by improving the safety at junctions and bus stops, as well as addressing other gaps.**
- **The whole network must meet both TfL's Cycling Quality Criteria and the DfT's LTN 1/20 criteria.**
- **The next mayor and central government must provide funding to councils so that they are able to develop their staffing, skills and training to deliver the best schemes at pace.**

4.2 Coordinated expansion of easy access to low-carbon shared mobility service

The original Climate Safe Streets report agued the importance of expanding access to shared mobility services such as docked and dockless bikes and e-bikes, electric car clubs and other forms of micro-mobility. While there was concern that progress might slow due to consumer concern about contracting the virus from shared objects, this has not proved to be the case. The attraction of using the Santander cycle scheme as a socially distanced form of transport demonstrates this, with a 157% increase in memberships during 2020[10], and 18,000 people making use of the free trips for NHS staff and key workers since March 2020.

The government also pushed forward with the legislative changes surrounding e-scooters, giving the green light to rental e-scooter trials in England from July 2020, with a view to making e-scooters legal on the road. Encouragingly, the e-scooter trials have been brought forward from the original date of late 2021 to support a green recovery and provide ***"fast, clean and inexpensive travel that can also help ease the burden on transport networks and allow for social distancing"***[11]. Learning from the experience of the dockless bike schemes in London, TfL and London Councils have created an overarching trial framework which covers parking, so there is consistency across the boroughs, as recommended in Climate Safe Streets. However, at the moment, only a third of councils have agreed to participate in the trial which is due to start in the spring, which can cause confusion for users. You can read more about our recommendations for e-scooters and other forms of micromobility in our report: ***Micromobility and Active Travel in the UK.*** [12]

Our original Climate Safe Streets report also called for the creation of mobility hubs in London – centres where there is access to a mix of mobility options like dockless bikes, public transport and electric car clubs, alongside public amenities such as parcel drop-off and pick-up lockers, seating and potentially, recreational areas and work-spaces. CoMoUK has created an accreditation scheme for mobility hubs, setting out a gold, silver and bronze standard for councils and companies to follow [13], and the first one has opened in Greenwich at the O2 arena, run by BP, hosting Brompton Bike Hire, Enterprise Car Club, InPost, a café and BP e-charging points [14] on the same site.

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- **By 2022** TfL and London borough councils, as necessary, to have agreed a common regulatory platform for the full range of existing and likely future shared mobility services. This should be designed to enable service providers to bid for licenses to operate across administrative boundaries, removing the need for separate negotiations with each individual highway authority. Selected successful bidders could be awarded fixed-term licences to operate, subject to re-tendering every four years (say).

- **By 2022** TfL and all London borough councils to have adopted protocols similar to those currently operated by the City of London and Hackney to control where dockless cycles (and, potentially, e-scooters) may be parked.

- **By 2024** TfL and service providers to have agreed and made available a common communications and/or data platform so that anyone can use a single app/ site to find real-time information about all their current travel options, including conventional public transport and shared mobility services.

- **By 2024** Everyone in London should live and work no further than 300m from their nearest car club bay and shared cycle/e-scooter geo-fenced access point (which should ideally be co-located).

- **By 2024** As per the provision of the common regulatory platform, all car clubs in London should operate entirely electric vehicle fleets.

- **By 2024** TfL and London borough councils and service providers to have installed ten pilot larger shared e-mobility hubs in different types of location (e.g. railway station, residential area, employment area) across the capital.

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **To give the upcoming e-scooter trial the greatest chance of success, TfL and London Councils need to encourage as many borough councils as possible to take part.**

- **The approach taken – using a London-wide agreement to run the trial – needs to be extended to other forms of shared mobility, such as dockless (e)bikes, to avoid the piecemeal approach that previously failed with the first generation of dockless cycles.**

4.3 Development and implementation of a London-wide Smart Road User Charging system

The pandemic has led to Transport for London facing the biggest hole in its budget since its creation. Given that TfL no longer receives a grant from central government (worth £700 million[15]) for its operating costs, it generates the largest portion of its revenue – 47%[16] – from fares. With the first lockdown causing a massive drop in public transport ridership, while TfL still needed to maintain levels of service for essential workers, TfL's finances were hit hard. This resulted in fraught negotiations between the Mayor and Government about keeping London's public transport and other infrastructure projects going. The latest financial package has been extended until after the mayoral election, and the Government has tasked TfL to identify ways it can deliver longer term financial stability. Current proposals include enabling London to retain the Vehicle Excess Duty (VED), worth £500 million, raised by London's vehicles, or a boundary charge, with everyone driving into London paying a daily £3.50 charge[17].

Throughout, Smart Road User Charging (SRUC) has been suggested by LCC and other organisations as a solution. Our original Climate Safe Streets report had identified this as one of the central keys to unlocking zero carbon roads by 2030, not only by reducing the demand for the most damaging and polluting trips, but as a result, creating the much needed space in our network for new active travel modes. While a successful SRUC scheme is not a solid basis for long term funding (the goal is modal shift, not revenue raising), it can be utilised for that purpose in the short term.

SRUC has the added benefit of simplifying an increasingly complex charging system in London. Already in the pipeline was the expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) out to the North and South Circular Roads, significantly widening the area covered by road charging by October 2021. If the floated boundary change is also implemented, the next mayor will need to seriously consider how to go further – creating a simpler, fairer, world-leading smart road user charging system, which covers the whole of London, funding active and sustainable travel.

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- **By the end of 2020** Deliver the London-wide LEZ as currently proposed. Develop and implement a London-wide Smart Road User Charging system.
- **By the end of 2021** Deliver the London-wide ULEZ as currently proposed.
- **By the end of 2020** Prepare a strategy to consolidate the existing Congestion Charge Scheme, Ultra/Low Emission Zones, and London Lorry Control Scheme within a single London-wide Smart Road User Charging (SRUC) system.
- **By the spring of 2024** Undertake and complete the research and consultation necessary to underpin specific proposals for implementing the SRUC.
- **By the spring of 2028** Complete implementation of the SRUC.

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **In the absence of satisfactory government funding for transport in London, it is even more urgent and essential to implement SRUC to tackle over reliance on motor vehicles and support the funding of active and sustainable travel. That entails moving forward the target date for implementation of SRUC to 2026, and speeding up the corresponding targets on consultation and research.**

4.4 Expanding the coverage of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) were one of the key interventions funded through the Streetspace programme, which saw planters and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras installed on residential roads to block through routes for motor traffic while allowing access for residents and services.

Removing the through motor traffic from these roads has massive health, environmental and active travel benefits, as outlined in our original Climate Safe Streets report and our Guide to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods[18]. In addition, they can deliver those benefits on an area wide scale, quickly and cheaply compared to high-quality physically protected cycle routes on main roads. It's why they were

popular choices for councils to bid for funding through the Streetspace Programme, resulting in 88 LTNs delivered across London in 8 months. Continuing this delivery will be essential to reach zero carbon roads by 2030, as well as helping the city's recovery from Covid-19.

Lockdown restrictions meant that Londoners were limited to their homes and local areas, with regular travel patterns disrupted. Many of them discovered, to a greater extent than ever before, what was on their doorstep – the local cafés, shops and parks. London is characterised as being a city of villages, with two thirds of its residents living within a 5 minute walk of their local high street[19]. But while those high streets have provided a lifeline over the past year, many are struggling: the switch to online shopping, which has accelerated due to Covid-19, competition from shopping centres likes Westfield, historic underinvestment and now the pandemic have all had a damaging impact.

Work has also changed dramatically for many. Before the pandemic, the average length of the commute for Londoners was over an hour; now, where possible, many are working from home. The British Council of Offices concluded that the daily commute has gone for good – only 30% of office workers they surveyed considered returning to the office 5 days a week[20]. This poses a number of questions for London, about the land use of traditionally office worker districts like City of London and Canary Warf, but also the liveability of London. Without the restriction of the daily commute, there have been many reports of city dwellers moving to the countryside, looking for more space, cleaner air and quieter neighbourhoods. Data suggest that the twin impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit have led to a decline in London's population for the first time since 1988[21].

Creating a '15 minute' city, which many major cities, not just London, have made a key part of their recovery packages, means rebalancing the city – increasing the mix of residential, commercial and office spaces, and consequently planning more vibrant areas all week and year round. And by dispersing offices more evenly over the city, creating more co-working space and mixed-use buildings rather than concentrating them in a few districts, we can breathe new life into our high streets that would benefit from 'passing trade', as well as supporting more people to claim back that commute time for themselves, their families and their communities.

Note on Consultation and Engagement

Bringing Londoners on the journey to Zero Carbon Roads will be vital, and an essential component to the success of many of the actions covered in Climate Safe Streets.

LCC has long recognised the importance of good engagement and consultation, and we produced the **'How to talk to people about the future of their streets'**[23] guide with Urban Movement to share best practice and provide advice to councils.

Given the rapid roll out of the Streetspace programme, councils and TfL must work together to recognise and share the lessons that have been learnt, and ensure that even when working at pace, engagement is vital and prioritised in order to minimise opposition and communicate effectively why schemes are moving forward to residents. Included in this should be a rolling cross-borough programme of professional surveys of resident views, robust evidence-gathering and clarity on why schemes are proposed, with political champions for schemes.

But the benefits of a '15 minute city' are dependent on supporting walking, cycling and public transport. Over half of all car trips in London are for shopping, leisure and personal business, and concern about road safety is still the major barrier to many people cycling, not distance. By continuing to deliver Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, London can support those shorter journeys happening by foot or cycle.

However, the delivery of LTNs will not carry on at the pace managed during the Covid-19 crisis, or could stall completely in some areas, if councils fail to lead on the positive benefits of LTNs and champion them. Despite there being broad political and public support for LTNs, specific schemes have frequently faced high levels of opposition, leading to a few councils removing the schemes before the trial period was over.

If LTNs are to be delivered rapidly, politicians will need to far more clearly set out the reasons behind their LTN policy, the links from policy to action, and to champion such schemes, as well as widening and deepening engagement to reach a better cross-section of communities, and engage with them on the issues (see box).

Consultations can no longer be a referendum on individual schemes, and the mayor and councils need to ensure they are engaging with a diverse and representative cross section of the communities they represent – not just the self-selecting group in their inboxes. One effective method for gauging true local opinion on LTNs that emerged during 2020 was the use of professional, objective surveys, invariably finding in favour of LTNs[22] and helping shore up political will.

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- All London borough councils, with TfL as necessary, to have developed core local journey network plans by spring 2021 covering all non-distributor roads.
- London borough councils to prepare a costed three year improvement programme for these plans in their 2021/22 LIP bids with the aim of improving all non-distributor areas within those three years.
- TfL to prepare a comparable improvement programme for distributor roads including the TLRN in 2021.
- TfL to require School Streets and Low Traffic Neighbourhood programmes within all London borough councils 2021/22 LIP bids to ensure through motor traffic is eliminated in non-distributor areas by 2028.

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **Make all the Streetspace LTNs permanent, amending and adjusting them to provide the greatest benefits for the communities.**
- **Councils must learn lessons from the Streetspace Programme and strongly improve engagement on LTN schemes as per best practice (see box), to enable smoother and more rapid roll-out of such schemes.**

4.5 Expansion and optimisation of a network of conventional and demand-responsive zero-emission bus services

The bus service was impacted hard by Covid-19 restrictions. Bus capacity has been reduced to follow social distancing guidelines and, at its lowest point, demand fell by 86%. However, ridership still recovered better than on other forms of public transport (bus demand was reduced by around 40% of pre-pandemic levels compared to a reduction of around 60% on the tube in October 2020[24]), demonstrating the importance of the bus network to Londoners.

This has been supported by TfL, who through the Streetspace Programme have sought to improve bus priority, and therefore more bus and cycle only lanes, by upgrading 86km of bus lanes to 24/7 lanes. This was a welcome step, one advocated for in the original Climate Safe Streets report, and in LCC's initial response to the first lockdown.

The Climate Safe Streets report also called for demand responsive bus services, to improve access to public transport in areas currently poorly served by fixed routes. While TfL did launch two trials of demand responsive bus services in Sutton and Ealing in May 2019[25], the trials ended early due to the pandemic.

Given the concern many of the public still feel about returning to buses (and public transport generally), added to the change in travel patterns once restrictions have

been lifted, TfL will need to conduct a review of bus routes, and potentially invest more in on-demand bus services to ensure that where changing travel patterns may alter fixed routes, Londoners aren't left without any access to a usable bus service.

The Government has stepped up to provide support to decarbonise the bus industry, pledging to invest £120 million in 4,000 electric or hydrogen buses as part of ***'The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution'***[26]. While these buses may not end up part of London's fleet, this signals their intention to the bus manufacturers, which will make it easier for London to procure the low-emission fleet needed.

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- **By 2021** Develop a comprehensive plan for improving bus priority on existing key routes throughout London, including extending the hours of operation of existing bus lane controls, extending the bus lane network, and improving enforcement; embracing the principle of making high streets and town centres traffic-free where this is necessary to enable priority for walking, cycling and bus travel to be enhanced.

- **By 2024** Complete all planned bus lane improvements that do not require traffic filtering.

- **By 2024** Complete five pilot traffic-free Climate Safe High Street projects (Zero Emission Zones) in selected town centres.

- Bring forward the current Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) target that all buses are zero-emission or hybrid from 2030 to 2028, and for an entirely zero-emission bus fleet by 2032.

- **In 2020** Review the current trial demand-responsive bus services in Sutton and Ealing and report on how such services can be delivered in other areas, including a consideration of the financial implications.

- **In 2021** Publish a plan for increasing the number of new types of service in partnership with relevant service providers.

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **All the bus lanes that have been temporarily upgraded to 24/7 through the Streetspace Programme need to be made permanently 24/7.**

- **TfL must re-start the on-demand bus service trials in 2021 to enable them to gather data and information about how such schemes can run and benefit London.**

4.6 Proactively support the transition to low-carbon freight transport

The pandemic has had an impact on freight, with an overall 15% reduction in freight vehicles in central London. However, this has varied across different types of freight, with the slowing of construction leading to Heavy Good Vehicles (HGV) levels falling. The rise of online shopping and home delivery has offset the reduction in servicing and delivery of hospitality to offices. This shift has also resulted in more LGVs in residential areas.

This rise has prompted action to support last mile delivery by cycle. The City of London is a good example of this, repurposing 39 spaces in an underground car park into an last mile logistics centre[27], which will enable Amazon to make deliveries to the whole of the City of London by bike. The City has also required larger developments to set up out of town consolidation centres where numerous deliveries can be dropped off and then delivered en-masse to the city centre. Our original Climate Safe Streets report argued that these types of consolidation centres and last mile deliveries by bike would be a key part of decarbonising freight.

Road danger and carbon emissions have both been addressed by new vehicle designs. LCC's campaign for safer lorries led to the establishment of a Direct Vision Standard by TfL which aims to reduce danger from vehicles that have extensive blind spots. All lorries over 12 tonnes working in London now have to meet a one star Direct Vision Standard or be fitted with safe system mitigating measures. A small, but growing, number of lorries in London not only have good direct vision but also run on re-chargeable batteries rather than diesel.

We note that *'Guidance on Area Freight and Servicing Management Plans'* has now been published. The *'Delivery and Servicing Plan Guidance: Planning for Safe, Clean, and Efficient Freight in London'*[28] sets out best practice on

Crispin Hughes crispinhughes.co.uk

creating Delivery and Servicing Plans (DSP). While there is merit in the guidance, local authorities must now use the planning system to require such plans for all new developments and incentivise their use in existing developments and businesses. DSPs submitted with planning applications must demonstrate how they will deliver zero emissions by 2030.

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- **By the end of 2020** The mayor and TfL must revise and strengthen the 2019 Freight and Servicing Action Plan so that it is commensurate with the target of London's roads being carbon neutral by 2030.

  Specifically:

  - Publish details and a programme for a bold new scrappage scheme (FSAP Action 6b).
  - Review the adequacy of the London EV Infrastructure Delivery Plan (June 2019) to meet the 2030 zero carbon target.
  - Publish guidance for Area Freight and Servicing Management Plans, and set deadlines for their production (FSAP Action 12c).
  - Expedite changes to the London Lorry Control Scheme, first checking the extent to which the 2017 London Councils review meets the demands of the climate emergency (FSAP Action 15).
  - Publish details of how the GLA/TfL will use its estate to enable the growth of local distribution centres/ collection points (FSAP Action 18a).

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **Given the changes in working and consumption patterns, and resulting rise of LGVs on residential roads all boroughs must, through planning policy and land allocation, provide or facilitate mobility hubs, last-mile logistics hubs and consolidation centres, using successful examples already in operation in places such as in the City of London.**

4.7 Enabling a rapid shift to low-carbon vehicles

The popularity and uptake of electric cars has been boosted over the last year. Despite the overall car market declining, the number of electric cars rose, with demand growing by 185% in 2019[29].

This looks to be due to a number of reasons. Concern about the environment and the suggested links between air pollution and Covid-19 appear to have prompted more people than expected to purchase an electric car. The ULEZ expansion in October 2020 will have also encouraged Londoners to invest in cleaner cars that are ULEZ compliant. This has been assisted by the continued roll out of electric charging points across the city during the last year, bringing the total up to 6,000.

There were also a number of climate related announcements from the Government, ahead of the Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November, which could have nudged people to invest in an electric car. The key one being a commitment to reduce climate emissions by 68% by 2030[30] (compared to 1990). To support that, the Government has also brought forward the ban on the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles to 2030[31].

Despite these positive developments, it is not enough. There has been no reduction in carbon emission from cars, as the reductions made by the increase in electric vehicles use has been cancelled out by the rise in sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and overall car use. The increase in the number of SUVs is concerning due to the higher level of emissions and pollution they emit, as well as the increased danger they present to other road users[32]. However, this concern is not nullified by a switch to electric SUVs, as their size involves higher embodied carbon, higher particulate pollution and means that generally, they still present more risk to other road users in collisions.

And while the sale of electric vehicles (EVs) has increased in the last year, it hasn't grown fast enough to hope to meet the government's 2050 decarbonisation target[33], let alone a (lower) 2030 target.

The mayor and councils must continue to lobby government for the infrastructure and funding mechanisms that support the switch to low carbon vehicles. They must also ensure that the mechanisms they have, such as SRUC and parking fees promote the shift to smaller, lighter, electric vehicles.

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- **By 2024** Clean-fuel/hybrid buses only in central London.
- **By 2028** Clean-fuel/hybrid buses only across London.
- **By 2030** An entirely zero-emission bus fleet in London.
- **By 2024** A ban on internal combustion engine (ICE) taxis and PHVs in central London.
- **By 2021** The mayor to rethink scrappage incentives, to include not just the replacement of ICE cars with clean fuelled alternatives, but also the purchase of e-cycles and credits for the use of public transport and shared mobility services.
- **In time for the 2022/23 Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Programme of Investment** TfL and the London borough councils, together with energy providers, to develop a coherent, costed, London-wide strategy for EV charging, consistent with the need to prioritise walking, cycling and buses.

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **Councils must use all available levers, including emissions-based parking charges, to encourage the shift away from SUVs to safer low carbon vehicles.**

4.8 A framework to enable car-free planning

Planning still remains a stumbling block for active travel. The rapid changes to day-to-day life have not been met with updates to the planning regime. Disappointingly, the Government white paper on "Planning for the Future" in 2020 failed comprehensively to address the link between the built environment and sustainable transport (our full consultation response is here: http://bit.ly/LCCPlanningResponse).

In our original Climate Safe Streets report, we argued that the existing Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALs) were not fit for purpose. Given the focus on creating '15 minute cities' in London's recovery plans, and potential changes to bus ridership, this concern still remains. We still need a planning tool that assesses Climate Safe

Crispin Hughes crispinhughes.co.uk

Modes Accessibility (CSMA). This can be used to identify the gaps of a ’15 minute’ city – is it possible to access services and work in a 15 minute walk or cycle? If not, then there should be a requirement on the developer to either invest in ‘Climate Safe’ transport modes or address the missing services and amenities into the development, creating a mixed use site (e.g. housing and office space).

Targets identified in the 2020 Climate Safe Streets report:

- The next London Plan should embody a new measure – a Climate Safe Modes Accessibility (CSMA) Index – to help.

- This measure should replace the use of Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALs) and be applied so that CSMA targets are, as necessary, achieved by investment in new bus (conventional and demand-responsive) and shared mobility services.

Additional targets needed one year on:

- **Now that the new London Plan has been approved, all additions to the plan should embody a new measure – a Climate Safe Modes Accessibility Index – to facilitate a shift to Climate Safe Streets.**

Alistair Hall alistairhall.co.uk

5 A green and fair recovery

It is clear that London will need a package of support and policies to mitigate the worst impacts of the virus on the economy, and to help the recovery. This is a chance for London to take significant steps towards a zero-carbon road system, investing in a green and fair recovery that helps reduce the inequalities exposed by the pandemic – such as the disproportionate impact of public health problems on poor communities – and one that set us on the path to a sustainable and healthier future.

In June 2020, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), the government's independent advisers on climate change, called on ministers to 'seize the opportunity to turn the COVID-19 crisis into a defining moment in the fight against climate change'[34]. The CCC recommendations include habitat restoration, energy efficiency improvements to homes and other buildings, and investment in 'infrastructure to make it easy for people to walk, cycle, and work remotely'.

It's a call that has proved popular with UK citizen assemblies, with 79% agreeing that any Covid-19 economic recovery measures should help achieve decarbonisation[35]. It also reflects polling by Ipsos in April 2020 that shows that 66% of Britons believe that the climate emergency is just as serious a crisis as Covid-19[36].

Beyond the benefits of a Zero Carbon Road system covered in the Climate Safe Streets report, a green and fair recovery that sets us on the path towards a sustainable, more equitable transport system also builds a more resilient, healthier London, with stronger high streets and communities.

6 The road to zero carbon from here

In our Climate Safe Streets report, we set out our vision for London in 2030. One where children could play in the streets without the threat of road danger, where the roar and noise from motor traffic had given way to conversations and birdsong, and where the majority of Londoners didn't feel the need to own a private car, given the ease of walking and cycling and the access to other mobility options, from public transport and dockless e-bikes to electric car clubs. Crucially, it was a London where significant steps towards meeting our global responsibility to cut carbon emissions, reducing air pollution levels and improving the health of Londoners had happened as a result of us reaching a zero carbon road system.

The intervening months since the publication of our report and the pandemic has not changed this vision. An alternative to our high carbon transport system, and its associated negative impacts on air pollution, congestion and public health, is more essential than ever.

In order to achieve this, the next Mayor will need to build on the positive work of the Streetspace programme, making as many of the emergency schemes permanent, and then continue to rapidly expand the cycle network. The new strategy that is needed must support the emerging low-carbon shared mobility options, like e-scooters, dockless (e)bikes and shared e-cars, and implement the next generation of smart road user charging to create a simpler, fairer, system for making the most polluting journeys pay. This will need to happen alongside transitioning to a clean bus fleet, changes to planning to support walking, cycling and public transport and cleaning up freight.

But doing so will reduce transport inequality by supporting a range of transport options for everyone, and help insulate our ability to travel from future shocks. It will dramatically cut air pollution and improve the health of Londoners, reducing our risk and susceptibility to future pandemics. Most importantly, it means that London can play its part in avoiding the worst impacts of the climate emergency.

Radical action to drive through a shift to walking and cycling and decarbonise road systems will allow London's residents to reap the benefits of this approach. Cycling is often called the 'miracle pill' because of its positive health impacts – that counts for cities as well as individuals. London needs to create Climate Safe Streets to cut air pollution, carbon emission and improve the lives of Londoners, creating a healthier, greener, and happier future.

Endnotes

1 Links between air pollution and COVID-19 in England (2021) Travaglio, M. Yu, Y. et al (back to page↑)

2 Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking (2020) Department of Transport (↑)

3 The Royal Parks creates car-free spaces for visitors (11 August 2020) The Royal Parks (↑)

4 Travel in London Report 13 (2020) Transport for London (↑)

5 Travel in London Report 13 (2020) Transport for London (↑)

6 Travel in London Report 13 (2020) Transport for London (↑)

7 £175 million more for cycling and walking as research shows public support (13 November 2020) Department of Transport (↑)

8 Majority of Londoners Support Pedestrianisation of London, but Find Policies So Far Ineffective (21 October 2020) The Redfield & Wilton Strategies Research Team (↑)

9 Public support charging motorists to use roads, but want it to be done for the right reasons (20 December 2020) Ipsos MORI (↑)

10 Santander Cycles welcomes record new users during its tenth anniversary year (7 January 2021) Transport for London (↑)

11 E-scooter trials: guidance for local areas and rental operators (22 September 2020) Department of Transport (↑)

12 Micromobility and Active Travel in the UK (March 2020) London Cycling Campaign (↑)

13 Mobility Hub Accreditation: setting quality standards (November 2020) CoMoUK (↑)

14 Mobility Hub (accessed March 2021) BP (↑)

15 Government must support London's transport network for good of the UK (21 February 2018) Greater London Authority (↑)

16 How we are funded (accessed March 2021) Transport for London (↑)

17 Ministers must 'play fair' by London to fund capital's transport (11 December 2020) Greater London Authority (↑)

18 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (accessed March 2021) London Cycling Campagin (↑)

19 London's local high streets: The problems, potential and complexities of mixed street corridors (August 2015) Carmona, M. (↑)

20 Majority of workers plan a return to the office, but home working here to stay (5 October 2020) British Council of Offices (↑)

21 2021 UK and Global economic outlook (7 January 2021) pwc (↑)

22 Steady Support for for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in London (15 March 2021) The Redfield & Wilton Strategies Research Team (↑)

23 How to talk to people about the future of their streets (July 2020) London Cycling Campaign (↑)

24 Travel in London Report 13 (2020) Transport for London (↑)

25 Demand Responsive Bus Service (accessed March 2021) Transport for London (↑)

26 The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (November 2020) HM Government (↑)

27 London Wall Car Park – partial repurposing for last mile logistics hub (15 December 2020) City of London (↑)

28 Delivery and Servicing Plan Guidance (December 2020) Transport for London (↑)

29 UK automotive looks to green recovery strategy after -29.4% fall in new car registrations in 2020 (6 January 2021) The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (↑)

30 UK sets ambitious new climate target ahead of UN Summit (3 December 2020) Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (↑)

31 Government takes historic step towards net-zero with end of sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 (18 November 2020) Department of Transport (↑)

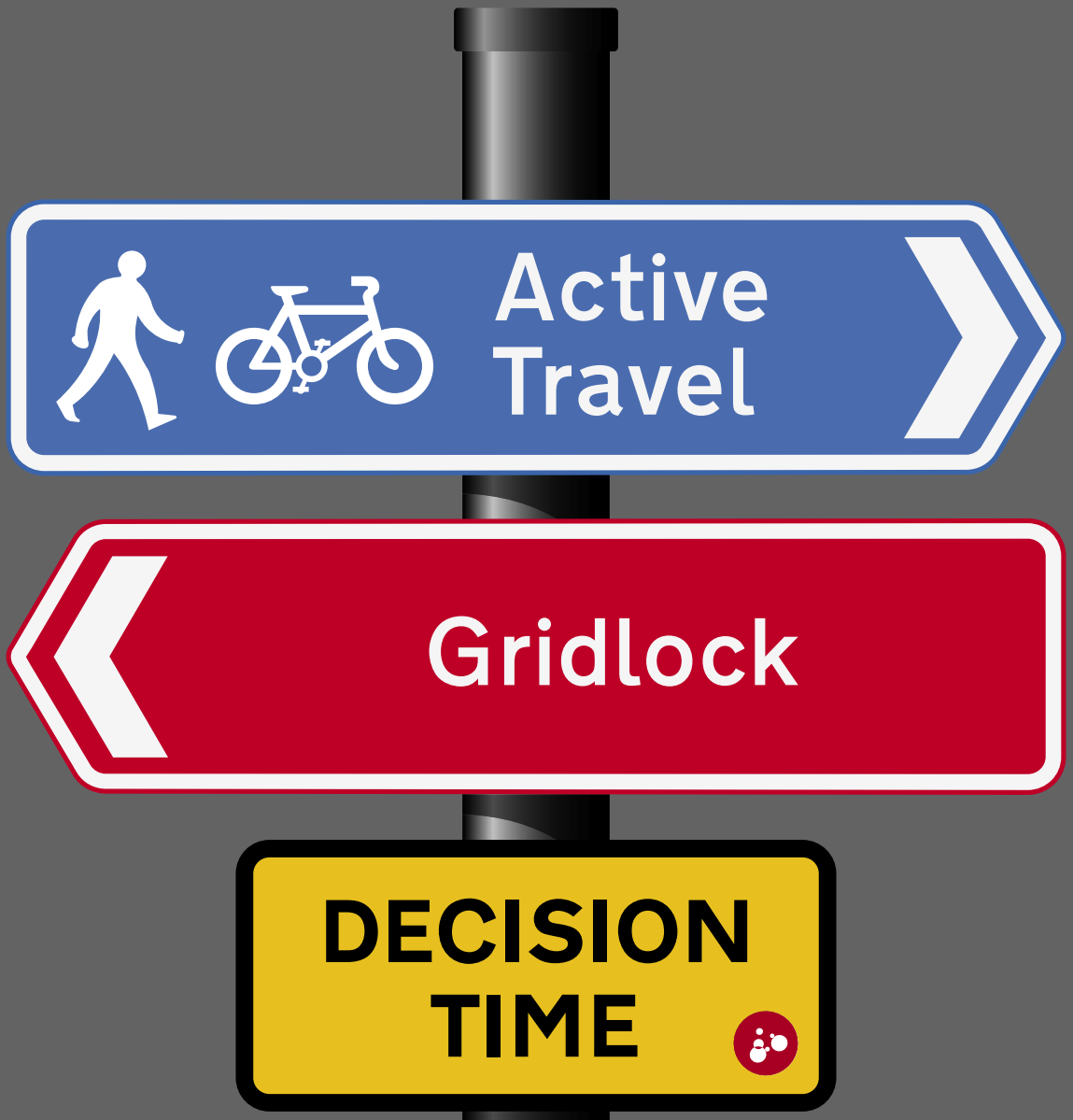
32 Pedestrian injuries from cars and SUVs: Updated crash outcomes from the vulnerable road user injury prevention alliance (VIPA) (4 November 2020) Monfort, S. (↑)

33 Reducing carbon emissions from cars (26 February 2021) Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (↑)

34 COVID-19 can be an historic turning point in tackling the global climate crisis (25 June 2020) Climate Change Committee (↑)

35 UK citizens' assembly shows big support for green covid-19 recovery (23 June 2020) New Scientist (↑)

36 Two thirds of Britons believe Climate Change as serious as Coronavirus and majority want Climate prioritised in economic recovery (22 April 2020) Ipsos MORI (↑)



LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Unit 201
Metropolitan Wharf Building
70 Wapping Wall
London E1W 3SS

info@lcc.org.uk
020 7234 9310
www.lcc.org.uk
@london_cycling

Registered Charity № 1115789