

PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON FORUM

12 March 2024

Questions

TfL

1. A number of cameras designed to enforce ULEZ have recently been destroyed on TFL roads within the borough (and beyond). What is TFL doing to protect these cameras? How quickly are they being replaced? And have any enforcement measures been taken against any perpetrators?- Councillor Royston

Vandalism is unacceptable and all incidents on our network are reported to the police for investigation and we support them with their enquiries. Criminal damage to ULEZ cameras or vehicles puts the perpetrators at risk of prosecution and injury, while simultaneously risking the safety of the public.

We have an extensive camera network, which is sufficient to support the effective operation of the scheme and the latest data shows that 95 per cent of vehicles seen driving in the zone on an average day are already compliant.

2. Within the borough, there remain a number of now out of date signs indicating the old borders of the ULEZ zone. When will these be removed? – Councillor Royston

The ULEZ Project Team is arranging for the removal of any outdated signs. If you have any specific locations we would be able to share the programme for their removal.

3. Is TfL still aware of Lewisham council's ambition to make the A21 an active travel corridor from Deptford to Downham, especially relating to the recently opened Cycleway 4 and the current plans for protected cycle lanes along Deptford Church Street, along with LIP funding allocated by TfL for Cycleway 18 along A21 Molesworth Street? – Alex Raha, Lewisham Cyclists

Yes. TfL Cycleways Network Development (CND) team and Lewisham closely work to deliver improvements to cycling infrastructures across the borough. This includes fortnightly meeting between the TfL CND team and Lewisham Strategic Transport and Highways.

An initial funding allocation of £774,000 has been granted to Lewisham for the Cycleways Network in 2024/2025. Funding allocations prioritised schemes that can move to construction in 2024/25 or 2025/26, as well as high priority ambitious projects to be developed for future implementation. TfL and the borough agreed that cycling infrastructure improvements along Molesworth Street should be put on hold until the end of the temporary bus

diversion from High St through Molesworth Street. In the meantime, the work on a local Cycleway 18 extension will focus on a route from High Street to Lee Station.

Work along the A21 is currently focused on making permanent the temporary changes implemented in recent years. TfL remains available to discuss potential improvements with Lewisham.

The prioritisation of Cycleways schemes will be informed by the upcoming Lewisham Integrated Active Travel Strategy. Lewisham regularly consults TfL as part of the development of this document.

We are also aware of the need to consider possible future developments in the Molesworth Street area, including any future Bakerloo Line Extension, upgrade to Lewisham Station, or redevelopment of the Shopping Centre.

4. Can TfL confirm they will give Lewisham Council sight of the Outcome Definition Report jointly commissioned by the Council and TfL in 2019 which we understand is in draft form but should provide the Council officers with a valid insight into how best to develop the potential of this route? N.B This is bearing in mind the Levelling Up fund for Lewisham Town Centre and TfL work in and around Catford Town Centre, along with TfL's own Strategic cycling analysis and Cycle counts from the A21 Streetspace scheme highlighting this section of the corridor (Lewisham to Catford) as an area with high potential for more cycling? – Alex Raha, Lewisham Cyclists

The draft of the A21 Outcome Definition plan has been shared with Lewisham officers. As work was not concluded on this project, the incomplete A21 Outcome Definition remains in draft.

5. How can the Island opposite the Horniman Museum on the South Circular Road be made safer and practical for the pedestrians? – Councillor Aliya Sheikh

We would like to understand these pedestrian safety concerns better. As background: in 2014 the junction between A205 London Road and Sydenham Rise was changed to make the stagger clearer and give more space to people waiting to cross the road. Recently we have reviewed signal timings to ensure pedestrians are not waiting too long to cross the road.

6. The change in traffic priorities at the junction of Gilmore and Bonfield Road is deemed less safe from Motorists continuing Bonfield Road perspective, due to lack of signage and new design. This has become a potential blind spot. Equally the pedestrians find it confusing. So can this be re-evaluated? – Councillor Aliyah Sheikh

Could we please arrange a site visit to discuss the matter in more detail and better understand the concerns? Please can this include officers from Lewisham as these roads are controlled by the borough.

7. The traffic light junction of Lewisham High Street and Ladywell Road used to have a cycle lane which has been tarmacked and is not in use which seems to compromise the safety of bikers. Can the cycle lane be reinstated? This question has been raised previously as well. – Councillor Aliya Sheikh.

Prior to the A21 Lewisham to Catford scheme, the northbound approach consisted of a nearside left turn only lane, an ahead bus lane and an ahead general traffic lane. A potential conflict was identified between left turning vehicles and cycles travelling ahead, with cyclists being directed into a vulnerable position whilst accessing the central bus lane. The new scheme addressed this conflict by adjusting the approach to two traffic lanes, ahead cycles and left turn traffic being placed within the nearside lane. The tarmacking was installed to narrow the carriageway and enable the creation of two 3.2m wide traffic lanes. This width enables cyclists to take the primary position through the junction, increasing their visibility, deterring unsafe vehicle passes and reducing the likelihood of left turn conflicts.

Thameslink

8. Southeastern recently took the sensible step of declassifying its first class carriages, freeing up much needed capacity on major routes through the borough. When will Thameslink do the same? – Councillor Royston

As on Southeastern, first class does not operate on Southern or Thameslink London metro services, although there is some cross-over with longer distance services at major stations, e.g. a Brighton to Bedford service calling at East Croydon.

As you are likely aware, all London-area rail operators are loss making. Any potential benefit of removing first class would therefore need to be set against the potential implications of reduced income, and unless offset by additional public subsidy to maintain a neutral position, reduced funding availability for train services. It is something we are constantly evaluating, however as the network contains services which are potentially very well suited to a first class offer such as London King's Cross to King's Lynn in Norfolk, it requires careful consideration.

Network Rail

9. The light on the stairwell running down from the south-west side of Catford Bridge to the underpass by the Halfords car park has been faulty for many months – leading to an unpleasant and dangerous dark and slippery area, which could lead to falls or facilitate attacks. This was raised some time ago by residents. Can Network Rail please fix this as a matter of priority, and advise the Committee and our residents to whom they should report such issues in future, to ensure a swift resolution? - Councillor Royston

The stairwell running down from the south-west side of Catford Bridge to the underpass by the Halfords car park is not the responsibility of Network Rail. The stairwell along with the subway passing under the bridge was constructed by Lewisham Council pursuant to an agreement dated 17/08/1967 with British Rail, who at the time owned the bridge. This agreement specifies that the maintenance of the new stairwell and subway, including the maintenance of lighting, would be the responsibility of Lewisham Borough Council.

As a more general point, Network Rail has no regulatory or contractual obligation to light the public highway. Generally (though this is not always the case) where lighting is provided on railway structures such as footbridges this is arranged via agreement with the local highways authority (or local authority) exercising their discretionary powers under Section 97 of the Highways Act (1980).

In the event of a lighting fault occurring within a station, in the first instance this should be reported to the train operating company – either to a member of staff if present, or else via the train company’s website.

In the event that faulty lighting is observed on a railway structure, I would recommend that members of the public contact the Network Rail community contact team to report this. We can then confirm where maintenance responsibility lies. We have a 24-hour telephone helpline on 03457 11 41 41. We also have an online contact form and a live-chat option via our website – <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/contact-us>.

TfL and Stagecoach

10. The 124 bus route uses one of the smallest bus models seen in Lewisham. As a result, buses are often full to capacity and passengers are left stranded and unable to board, particularly at busy hours. This is a particular problem at the Plassy Road stop, though is an issue at many points along the route. Can TfL/Stagecoach please consider using bigger buses, or increasing the frequency of this service? And is this route being considered for the introduction of electric vehicles, given the number of schools along the route? – Councillor Royston

Answer from Stagecoach: We operate route 124 under contract for TfL with the current contract due to run until mid-2026. The vehicles used on the route are of the length specified by TfL with the shorter buses required as there are sections of the route which are not navigable with larger vehicles and as such, we are not able to utilise larger vehicles to ease any capacity issues there may be. The frequency of the service is also specified by TfL and they utilise the passenger boarding data along with passenger and stakeholder feedback in order to gauge the level of service that is required. We will pass on your feedback to TfL for their information. Regarding the vehicles that are used on the route, TfL is aiming to convert all bus routes in London to zero emissions and this typically happens as

part of a new contract being awarded to operate a route, as has recently happened with route 199.

TfL and Go Ahead

11. Has there been feedback from users of the 185 new buses relating to the limited number of accessible seats? Many of the seats require access via a high step and the seats towards the back of the lower deck have very restricted leg room/oddly shaped floor area. – Councillor Paschoud

Answer from TfL: We are committed to providing an accessible transport network and all our buses comply with the appropriate legislation. There is some variation in seating layouts across the network, as there are different makes and models of bus in use. However, all buses have two rows of priority seats for passengers who need them, including those who have greater accessibility needs such as older people and others less able to stand. These are normally located between the front and middle doors for convenience.

We encourage operators to have as many seats as possible in the low floor area of the vehicle, as we understand this is the most accessible part of the bus and makes boarding and alighting easier. We also encourage higher numbers of seats with reasonable legroom on the lower and upper decks - which is important for passengers who cannot stand for part or their entire journey. These seats are located further back, sometimes in raised areas over the engine or over the rear wheel arches. The height of the seat base from the floor is determined by legislation to make them more useable by our customers.

We recognise that compromises need to be made. Large areas accommodate wheelchairs or several buggies and other items; and, when needed by a wheelchair user, can be shared by a wheelchair user and one or more buggy owners. On the new buses operated on the 185 route this is 2 metres long. Other customers need seats in the low floor area, but we also need two doors sets of doors to enable easy and quick access and egress.

We are also accommodating a transition from diesel to zero-emission bus fleet. On electric buses more space is required to accommodate the batteries so some internal spaces will get slightly smaller. Due to the weight and balance requirements of the bus, the batteries can only be positioned in certain places around the bus – and can make higher steps when positioned by the wheel arches. In the longer term, further battery development reduce the amount of space used by batteries.

We are also considering ways to encourage those who can move upstairs on double decker buses to do so, thereby freeing up space on the lower deck for those that need it.

TfL and Bus companies

12. What data is held regarding the number of passengers per bus route per bus stop and how is this data broken down (by hour, day, week etc.)?

Could this data be supplied for all bus stops/routes in the Bell Green Area.
– Deon Costley

Answer from TfL: We collect lots of data about our services. It would be useful to have a conversation so we can understand what is being requested and whether we can provide it.

Lots of this data is already published. A useful starting point would be <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/buses-performance-data>

All

13. What formal travel training is available specifically designed for and delivered to people with learning disabilities in Lewisham? How many Lewisham residents with learning disabilities have completed this in the last year? – Nick O’Shea, Lewisham Mencap