

Large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London

1. What are the major economic and social challenges facing London and its commuter hinterland over the next two to three decades?

London is likely to continue to face issues associated with accommodating increasing population and in-commuting. Important among these will be the issue of air pollution.

Transport for London has reported that the number of trips made in London in 2013 averaged 26.1 million per day, an increase of 1.2 per cent over the previous year (including residents and non-residents).

Within this, there are a number of important trends. Over the 10-year period from 2003-2013, total trips increased by 11.4 per cent, with rail increasing by 52.3 per cent, Underground /DLR by 32 per cent and cycling by 53.9 per cent. By contrast, car driver trips decreased by 12.7 per cent over the same period. [<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/travel-in-london-report-7.pdf>]

Despite the fall in car numbers, legal compliance with air quality limits remains a very significant problem. The national Air Quality Strategy, published by DEFRA in 2015 [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486636/aq-plan-2015-overview-document.pdf] reports that the Greater London urban area currently has the highest NO₂ exceedance in the UK and that the capital's transport networks and construction activity means the task of reducing NO_x emissions, and NO₂ concentrations, is the most challenging in the country.

The London Mayor is taking forward a package of measures to bring London into compliance with NO₂ limit levels in the shortest possible time. This includes reducing emissions from buses and taxis, and introducing an Ultra Low Emissions Zone from 2020. Despite these initiatives, air quality is not expected to be compliant with legal standards before 2025.

In sum, new transport infrastructure and initiatives will be needed to move increasing numbers of people around greater London while actively reducing air pollution and its impact on human health. Increased demand for rail, Underground and cycling together with a marked fall in car driving all have the potential to help achieve this goal.

2. What are the strategic options for future investment in large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London - on road, rail and underground - including, but not limited to Crossrail 2?

- How should they be prioritised, taking account of their response to London's strategic transport challenges, including their impact on capacity, reliability, journey times and connectivity to jobs?

- What might their potential impact be on employment, productivity and housing supply in London and the southeast?

It is vital that investment priorities are clearly aligned with wider policy objectives and legal requirements. In keeping with our response to Q1, potential schemes should be prioritised with clear regard to legal responsibility concerned air quality and long term trends away from car use and toward public transport. In this regard, we are concerned by plans for further Thames crossing schemes based on road transport which stand to break positive trends away from car reliance and increase local air pollution concerns. More detail is given in our response to the river crossings consultation in 2014

[http://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/CfBT_TfL_River_Crossings_Consultation_Sep2014_FINAL.pdf].

3. What opportunities are there to increase the benefits and reduce the costs of the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme?

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4. What are the options for the funding, financing and delivery of large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London, including Crossrail 2?

- What is an appropriate local and regional contribution - given the potential distribution of benefits to business, residents, transport users and the wider economy - and how could this be achieved?

- What innovative funding mechanisms could be considered to support delivery of key schemes?

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5. How have major metropolitan areas in other countries responded to similar challenges and priorities? Are there any lessons to be learned and applied in London?

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