

CHRA Questions, and responses received from TfL

The 86 Bus petition has also been received by TfL and a response is being prepared.

Q1: Cycle Lanes – Unlike those found in other countries, the cycle lanes around London are far too narrow, frequently blocked by parked vehicles, and the surface often has potholes, making them extremely dangerous for cyclists. Does the Mayor of London have any plans to improve on these, especially in light of his efforts to reduce car usage?

Making London a safe place to walk, wheel and cycle is central to the Mayor's Transport Strategy. TfL is investing an average of £150m per year up to 2026 on safe and active travel which includes expanding our cycle network and installing safer junctions.

New cycle lanes installed by TfL must adhere to high quality design standards, as set out in TfL's streets toolkit and London Cycling Design Standards. These design standards help ensure that lanes provide sufficient width for people to cycle comfortably and safely.

We have taken steps to prevent the blocking of lanes by parked vehicles – such as relocating loading and parking bay as part of the installation of new cycle lanes. Where cars are parked illegally, they can be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice. TfL also has created the Streetcare service where road users can report issues and concerns including road defects, such as potholes, and debris on the carriageway.

If the group have concerns regarding a particular cycleway, please can they share evidence of this with TfL or the relevant borough.

Q2: E-Scooters – There seem to be confusing rules around the country, regarding these. While they are supposedly “illegal” on public roads/pavements, some areas allow them to be hired for local use, and they are a serious hazard to pedestrians and road users. Is the Mayor of London considering what action can be taken and, if so, what could we expect to see in future?

Privately owned e-scooters are illegal on public roads yet are widely available to purchase, and there are no standards for vehicle construction or rider requirements meaning their build quality and batter quality can vary significantly. The Mayor and TfL support the police's enforcement activity to prevent illegal private scooters being used in a dangerous manner. Will Norman and the Met Police jointly wrote to retailers in the run up to Christmas for the last three years to ensure they make customers aware of the legal position of these vehicles.

In July 2020, the Government made regulations that allowed e-scooters to be used in Government-approved rental trials in order to support a 'green' restart of travel following the first COVID-19 lockdown and to ascertain the role that these vehicles could play in our cities. The Department for Transport set a number of minimum standards for vehicles and users. Further information can be found on the DfT's website.

London's e-scooter trial began in June 2021, the country's largest, and it is the only legal way to ride an e-scooter on public roads in London. In order to ensure a continuous trial area across London's constituent boroughs, TfL and London Councils coordinated London's trial, which launched in 5 boroughs and has since expanded to 10 boroughs. Since it began, safety has been at the core of London's trial. A number of features of the London trial go further than the minimum standards set out by the Department for Transport for trial vehicles, for example a lower speed limit of 12.5mph, e-scooters with a larger wheel size and lights that are always on, and designated parking bays supported by geo-fence technology. Such features highlight the difference between the robust vehicle specifications of trial e-scooters against privately owned e-scooters standards. TfL regularly monitor and review the trial to make sure it is safe for everyone, and changes will be made to its operation wherever improvements are identified.

London's trial has demonstrated the potential for these vehicles to be used safely, but it is the Government who will make any decisions around their future status. TfL believe that legislative intervention from Government is essential to ensure the safety of all future e-scooters and all road users.

Q3: ULEZ - This is one of the poorest London Boroughs, and many residents have old vehicles which they rely upon for their livelihood (eg builders, decorators, plumbers...) Few can afford to purchase vehicles that will prevent them paying the ULEZ charge, even with the numerous "scrappage" support schemes, as none of these will not cover the full cost of replacement vehicles. While pollution and environmental concerns do need to be addressed, most people feel that, in a time of austerity, now is not the time to put extra financial pressure on London's residents. What led to the Mayor's decision to insist on introducing ULEZ in all boroughs, including the poorest areas, at such a difficult time, and have there been any new thoughts on this?

At present, air pollution hits the poorest communities and Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities the hardest, further exacerbating existing health inequalities. Despite the impact of the Mayor's policies, pollution levels in areas where the most deprived Londoners are more likely to live are still 13 per cent higher than the least deprived areas and up to 27 per cent higher in areas where BAME Londoners are most likely to live compared to white Londoners. The poorest Londoners are least likely to own a car and are most likely to suffer the consequences of poor air quality.

The Mayor is deeply concerned about the impact the soaring cost of living is having on Londoners. This is why he is funding a new £110m scrappage scheme. Londoners on lower incomes, disabled Londoners, charities and businesses with up to 10 employees can apply for funding to scrap, or in some cases retrofit, their older, more polluting vehicles.

The Mayor's policies have already helped reduce the exposure between the most and least deprived areas by up to 50 per cent and the gap between areas where BAME Londoners are most and least likely to live has narrowed by 15-37 per cent. But there is clearly further to go to tackle air pollution and the resulting health inequalities.