

# OSC Spotlight

# Transport Strategy refresh

September 2024



# Policy context



2019-2041 Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy sets out long term vision for dealing with numerous transport and related public health challenges which face the borough, including:

- Rapidly growing population.
- Poor air quality
- High childhood obesity alongside low active travel participation levels.
- Congestion
- High road casualty rates, particularly amongst children and older residents.

## Strategic context

The Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy aligns with the 2018-2041 Mayor of London's Transport Strategy, along with the following local policies and strategies:

- Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2022-2026
- Tower Hamlets Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027
- Tower Hamlets Local Plan (currently being updated) .

Since publication of the Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy in 2019, there have been a number of changes both locally and more widely impacting upon travel patterns, the travel network and policy direction which will need to be acknowledged and addressed in the transport strategy review.



# Background (1) – Covid 19 pandemic



- **Financial impact** of lockdowns and other restrictions on public transport ridership levels – directly affecting TfL with knock-on effects on funding for London boroughs. TfL finances improved though funding gap between TfL income and capital investment required and borough funding allocations still impacted.
- **Recovery from pandemic** – ridership steadily building since 2021-22. Off-peak passenger volumes now exceed pre-pandemic figures although overall figures across London remain at 89% of pre-pandemic levels.
- **Weekday commuting** – shift towards work from home impacting on weekday commuting levels.



# Background (2) – other factors



- **Policy - national:** July 2024 general election – change in government. DfT developing policy objectives and priorities for funding.
- **Policy – regional:** Re-election of Sadiq Khan as London mayor in May 2024. Commitment to ULEZ and delivery of objectives in 2018-2041 London Transport Strategy.
- **Policy – local:** Change in political control following May 2022 local council and mayoral elections. New targets on EV charge point delivery, tree planting and increasing on-street parking provision. Street Design Guide 2024. Parking Enforcement Plan (PEP) out for consultation.
- **Liveable Streets – Bethnal Green LTN:** Future of this scheme subject to forthcoming judicial review in November 2024.
- **Micro-mobility:** London e-scooter rental trial in place since 2021. Growth of unregulated dockless cycle hire sector.
- **Electric vehicle charge points:** Funding opportunities: central government (e.g. LEVI fund) and private operator funding streams.
- **Infrastructure:** Elizabeth Line opened in May 2022, boosting capacity and reducing journey times on public transport network. Silvertown Tunnel due to open in 2025 – reducing congestion, improving air quality and delivering new cross-river bus routes (e.g. SL4 Canary Wharf – Grove Park superloop route).



# Transport Strategy – progress to date

## (1)



- **Outcome 1: Tower Hamlets is one of best places to walk and cycle in London:** Delivery of new segregated cycling infrastructure at Burdett Rd and Mansell Street (TfL). Cycleway 3 upgraded at Cable Street/Sutton Street with improved pedestrian and cycling crossings, pedestrian crossing improvement schemes in Bow and Wapping. Over 200 secure cycle parking spaces delivered. 27% of residents cycle, up from 17% in 2019 (source: annual residents' survey).
- **Outcome 2: Car use reduced in favour of active, efficient and sustainable transport:** 33 school streets delivered. Parking enforcement plan consultation underway. No. cars per 100 households reduced from 35 in 2019 to 31 in 2024 (source: Healthy Streets Scorecard, 2024). **Outcome 3: Transport services meet the needs of residents, visitors, businesses and supports growth and the economy:** New transport infrastructure delivered – Elizabeth Line, Whitechapel station redevelopment, DLR rolling stock, CIL and S106 secured. Growth of Santander Cycle Hire Scheme and dockless schemes, BLEN and ZEN schemes delivering emissions savings from workplaces in borough. Silvertown Tunnel opening in 2025.



# Transport Strategy – progress to date

## (2)



- **Outcome 4: People feel safe and confident when travelling in the borough:** 15% overall casualty reduction between 2017 and 2023 (20% reduction of child casualties). 33 School Streets and 21 School Crossing Patrols in operation. Increased 20mph speed limit coverage on TfL road network.
- **Outcome 5: Air quality is improved and our surroundings are quieter and more appealing:** ULEZ scheme expanded in 2021 to cover entire borough. 21 x EV chargers installed across 4 council sites, and 9 electric vehicles in council fleet (including 2 dustcarts). 23 on street fast chargers and 327 slow chargers installed by June 2023. Programme to deliver additional 35 rapid chargers, 200 fast chargers and 2000 slow chargers underway.
- **Outcome 6: Travel in Tower Hamlets is accessible and affordable for all:** Whitechapel step-free access delivered, Elizabeth Line fully accessible. TfL fare freeze currently in operation. Accessible crossings and dropped kerb improvements delivered. Ongoing delivery of All Ability Cycling Club.



# Key changes



- Emphasis on delivering EV charging programme and Mayoral vision for increased parking, tree planting, SUDs and accessible network
- Ensuring that all users are considered and that accessibility improvements are delivered for key groups
- Aligning strategy with funding opportunities
- Developing an evidence-led approach to implementing schemes
- Annual update reports



# Aligning with priorities



- How does the strategy align with TH strategic plan?
  - Create 1,000 parking spaces over four years
  - Increase the number of charging points for electric vehicles in the borough
  - Work with the Mayor of London to tackle air pollution in Tower Hamlets through the AQAP and Transport Strategy
  - Work with Transport for London to improve public transport
  - Avoid penalising those in our community who drive, who in many cases are not responsible for the bulk of air pollution
  - Support schemes to reach cycling and bike proficiency and safety
  - Monitor the effectiveness and safety of cycle lanes such as those on Bow Road
  - Re open our roads, and consult on abolishing the Liveable Streets scheme
  - Only introduce traffic reduction measures through consultation with and by the consent of people in the borough
  - Identify and prioritise capital schemes through an evidence-led approach
- How does the strategy seek to make transport through and around TH more accessible, easier, cheaper and less carbon-intensive?





# Transport Strategy refresh and publication of supporting documents



- **Scope:** Light touch 5 year refresh of Transport Strategy, including review of objectives and addressing policy, infrastructure and technological changes, together with publication of supporting documents for road danger reduction, walking and cycling, and the forthcoming 3 year Local Implementation Plan (LIP) submitted to TfL setting out further detail on delivery.

**Updated Transport Strategy**

**Strategic Plan**

**Street Scene Guide**

**Freight Study (LP team)**

**Parking Enforcement Plan**

**EV fleet upgrades and EV charging**

**Road danger reduction plan**

**2025-2028 Local Implementation Plan**

**Local Plan (growth)**

**AQAP**

**Transport Infrastructure IDP**

**EV charging programme**

**ZEN programme and dedicated officer**

**Walking & Cycling plan**



# Benchmarking



- Southwark published their transport strategy (strategy itself not a review) last year: [Appendix 1 Streets for People Strategy 2023-2030.pdf \(southwark.gov.uk\)](#)
- Westminster will be publishing their Transport Strategy in November this year.
- The City Of London Transport Strategy review has now been signed off this summer: see [City of London Transport Strategy to ensure reduction in motor traffic and safer cycling infrastructure](#)
- Camden reviewed their Transport Strategy 3 years into the strategy back in 2022 focusing heavily on progress to date and also setting priorities for next 3 years - [Transport strategies and plans - Camden Council](#).
- Other London Boroughs have progressed annual update reports on their Transport Strategy. This is something for LBTH to consider.



# Funding and timescales



- Budget in place for Transport Strategy refresh, Walking & Cycling Plan and Road Safety plan (**July**)
- Resource in place for Strategy refresh (**Aug**)
- Resource procurement progress for W&C and RS plans (**Sept**)
- Internal officer engagement workshops – Transport & Highways, Planning, Public Health: **September-October 2024**
- Local political engagement – **October-November 2024**
- Online public consultation – **November-December 2024**
- Publication of updated transport strategy and supporting documents: **February-March 2025**

