

Transport strategy

2019-41



Foreword

Welcome to the Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy 2019 – 2041.

Tower Hamlets is a great place to live and work. It has good public transport links and is home to key economic and cultural locations from Canary Wharf and the City Fringe, to Brick Lane and the Tower of London. However, the borough's population will continue to grow significantly over the coming years which will put more pressure on our roads and public transport. We also have very busy, major roads running through our borough.

Many of our roads are severely congested and vehicle emissions are the largest source of air pollution which damages health. With 40% of our residents living in areas with unacceptable air quality, we have to encourage people to choose lower pollution alternatives to cars where possible. But, buses and trains serving the borough are often overcrowded and some people have concerns about safety and accessibility when getting around by foot or on a bike.

This Transport Strategy sets out an ambitious set of proposals which will tackle these challenges.

We are committed to making Tower Hamlets one of the best places to walk or cycle in London. To achieve this we will promote clean, sustainable forms of transport with a focus on improving safety and accessibility. We also want to ensure these are affordable to residents and businesses.

We engaged with 2,800 residents and organisations who participated in our consultation on the draft of this strategy. An overwhelming majority of the respondents agreed with the outcomes set out in the strategy.

We look forward to working with you to make transport in Tower Hamlets fit for the future.



John Biggs
Mayor of Tower Hamlets



Cllr David Edgar
Cabinet Member for Environment

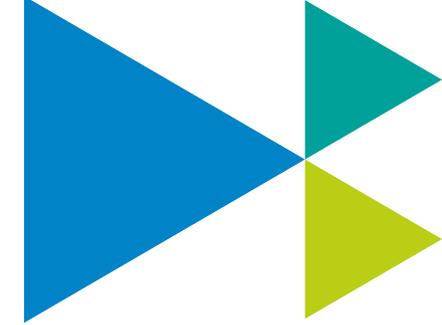


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Why do we need this strategy?



Tower Hamlets has seen some of the most rapid population and employment growth in recent decades. It is a fairly compact, densely populated borough with the fourth largest population in Inner London and is forecast to have the largest increase in population in the UK by 2026.

Whilst the increase in transport demand generated by this growth has largely been accommodated by sustainable transport to give the current rate of 80% of all trips made (the fifth highest in London), with 40% of trips made by walking and only 37% of households owning a car; further mode shift away from car travel has been harder to achieve in the last decade and has left the borough facing major transport challenges that require urgent action.

In March 2019, Tower Hamlets declared a Climate Emergency, recognising the urgent need to address the borough's contribution to global warming and that the air in the borough is toxic and damaging to health.

As a result of poor air quality, our residents have lower average healthy life expectancy, high levels of asthma and reduced lung capacity amongst children. 77% of the population and 80% of schools are based in areas that exceed recommended limits for air pollution and transport is the main source responsible for nearly

40% of carbon dioxide and almost half the nitrogen oxides emitted in the borough.

Physical inactivity is a major cause of disease and increased likelihood of obesity. Nearly a quarter of residents do not take the recommended minimum levels of activity and 40% of year six children living in the borough are overweight.

The risk to life and health in the course of travel in Tower Hamlets is unacceptable, with more than 100 people being killed or seriously injured on our roads every year for a decade with children and older people the most vulnerable.

Work to address these challenges has already begun and the London Mayor has set a target for 90% of all trips made by residents to be by sustainable forms of travel - walking, cycling and public transport. The Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan¹ further commits to making the borough 'one of the best places in London to walk or cycle in'.

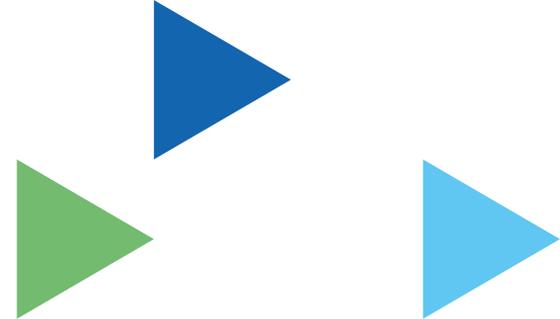
Many of these issues result from motor vehicle use and Tower Hamlets has the highest levels of traffic flow in the UK. The majority of this is traffic going through the borough which has a significant impact on residents' health and the safety of our streets.

However, we also recognise that many local people have legitimate reasons to rely on their car to get around the borough.

We believe there is huge potential to facilitate this change with Tower Hamlets having the right characteristics for sustainable travel: it is compact with schools, services and amenities in close proximity to homes and workplaces; it enjoys an extensive public transport system, and is flat making it ideal for trips on foot or bicycle. The population is relatively young and able to adopt active travel for part or all of their trips.

Realising these ambitious goals requires a collaborative approach across government, business, and our residents and that's where this strategy comes in. We look forward to working with and lobbying others, to create an environment in Tower Hamlets that widens travel choices and enables and encourages more people to walk, cycle and take public transport.

¹https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_plan/strategic_plan.aspx



What this strategy does

This strategy sets out our vision and priorities for travel in Tower Hamlets from 2020 – 2041 and draws upon and supports a range of borough and London plans and strategies including:

- > **London Plan (adopted and draft)**
- > **Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Area Planning Framework**
- > **London Mayor's Transport Strategy**
- > **Tower Hamlets Local Plan**
- > **Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan**
- > **Tower Hamlets Air Quality Area Action Plan**
- > **Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy.**

The desired outcomes for each priority will be achieved through the delivery of targeted interventions set out in a range of delivery plans which will be prepared or updated following adoption of the Transport Strategy.

2,800 residents and businesses took part in the survey

How this strategy was developed

This Council is committed to producing this Strategy with partners to ensure the views of our community and stakeholders are reflected. To inform the development of this Strategy we have carried out extensive engagement as part of the Strategy development followed by a consultation on the draft Strategy. Activities included;

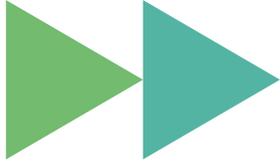
- > **January 2019: internal stakeholder workshop;**
- > **March 2019: focus group discussions with residents, school travel event, meetings with Health and Wellbeing Board and Growth and Economic Development Board featuring external stakeholders;**
- > **April 2019: summit attended by external stakeholders, partners, councillors and residents to seek feedback on the draft aims and priorities for the strategy. REAL Networking Event for older and disabled service users in April and a workshop in May to seek views on transport issues for older and disabled residents;**
- > **May 2019: A workshop at Toynbee Hall and one-to-one meetings with business stakeholders;**

- > **July – September 2019: public consultation on the draft Strategy generating more than 2,800 responses through an online survey, residents telephone survey, business telephone survey and engagement stalls at high footfall locations.**

Development of the Strategy has also been informed by review and analysis of transport and related data. A summary of this is provided in the accompanying document, 'Travel in Tower Hamlets'.



Vision and Approach to the strategy



Vision: Tower Hamlets has a healthy, safe and environmentally friendly transport system that is accessible and affordable for all who live, work, study and do business in the borough.

We will create an environment in Tower Hamlets that enables more people to walk, cycle and take public transport. People in the borough will feel safe to travel and enjoy our streets and public spaces.

Our strategy is aligned with the London Mayor's 'Healthy Streets' (figure 1) approach to address the transport challenges faced by London now and in the future and in turn, relieve road congestion and overcrowding on public transport, improve air quality and increase physical activity, by prioritising human health in the design of our streets so that streets are more people centric.

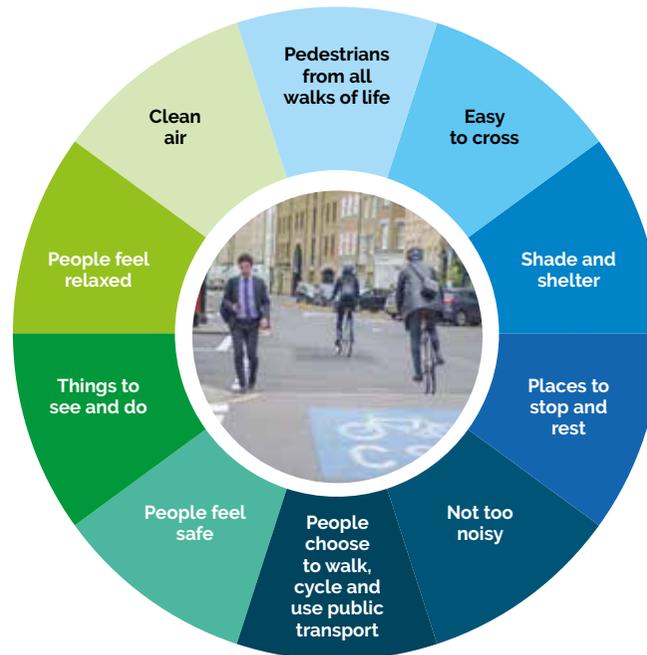


Figure 1: Healthy Streets Wheel

This strategy has also been developed with the Council's proposed new road user hierarchy. This has been informed by the definition of sustainable modes of travel stated in the Mayor's [of London] Transport Strategy and is shown below.

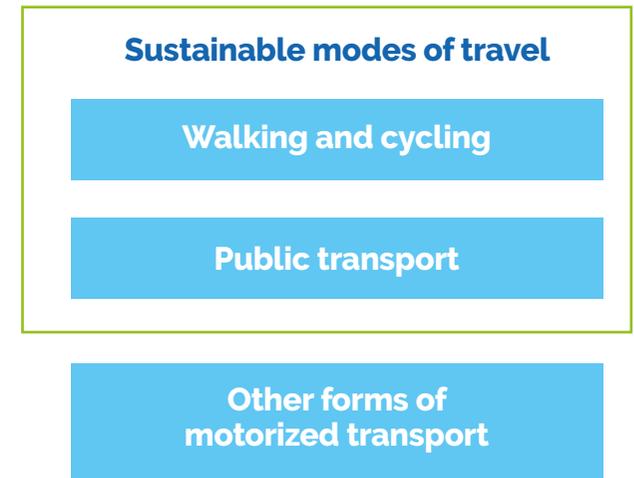


Figure 2: Proposed Tower Hamlets' Road User Hierarchy

Outcome 1: Tower Hamlets is one of the best places to walk and cycle in London

Why this is important

Enabling more journeys to be walked and cycled is at the heart of this Strategy. This will help draw people away from congested roads and overcrowded buses and trains and help to make for more comfortable journeys. Walking and cycling are by far the lowest-impact modes in terms of emissions and therefore an important component of our plans to reduce the impact transport has on air quality and global warming.

Walking, cycling and use of public transport can increase physical activity levels and improve physical and mental wellbeing. Physical inactivity is a global health problem associated with a host of health problems, poor quality of life and is responsible for 1 in 6 deaths in the UK. 23% of adults aged 19 and above in Tower Hamlets are classified as physically inactive (less than 30 moderate intensity equivalent minutes per week) and obesity levels amongst children are high. One of the easiest ways to increase physical activity is to build it into our everyday lives, such as through our daily journey to work or school.

Tower Hamlets has made progress in encouraging walking and cycling with 40% of all trips in the borough walked and the number of journeys cycled trebling in the past ten years. Despite this, Tower Hamlets is only the 5th most sustainable borough in London and given our geography and density, there is potential for more. The borough is estimated to have fulfilled just 8% of its cycling potential with an additional 200,000 daily trips that could be made by residents on bikes switching from alternative modes.

A well designed, attractive and accessible street network can create a place where it is easy and enjoyable for people to walk and cycle. Such a network can also promote social interaction and inclusion and a space that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy and value, as advocated in the Healthy Streets Approach and to be implemented in our Liveable Streets programme.

The quality of our streets is variable and feedback shows that the quality of pavements and the surrounding environment influences many residents' willingness to walk, particularly after dark. Issues such as lack of safe crossings, narrow footways and close proximity to traffic, street clutter, lack of natural surveillance and way finding can make walking unappealing and unsafe.

200,000 additional journeys in Tower Hamlets could be made by bicycle





We know that where great cycling infrastructure is provided, people cycle but current facilities serving the borough are limited and the growth in people cycling has stalled. Cycling is not widely taken up in many areas of Tower Hamlets and given the diversity of our residents, it is important to take action to encourage uptake.

Our residents have told us that cycle parking is scarce and often expensive in the borough and more needs to be done to address this. While many large employers in Tower Hamlets make provision for employees who want to cycle, demand often outstrips supply and many smaller organisations find it difficult to provide any cycle parking.

What is already being done

- > **We have already begun the process to transform how our streets are used with the first phase of our Liveable Streets programme which aims to improve the look and feel of public spaces in neighbourhoods across the borough and make it easier, safer, and more convenient to get around by foot, bike and public transport while reducing 'rat runs' and shortcuts through residential streets.**
- > **We are working with Transport for London (TfL) to develop 5 high quality cycle routes on the strategic cycle network.**

- > **We are increasing secure cycle parking across the borough and developing plans for a new cycle hub at Whitechapel station.**
- > **We have been delivering free Bikeability cycle training to residents, employees and students. Training has been delivered by accredited instructors, with a range of courses for all ages and abilities.**
- > **Canary Wharf Group is working to improve cycling access and infrastructure.**

What we intend to do

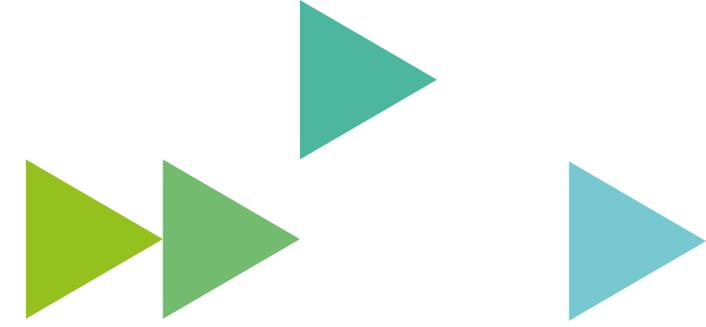
- 1. We will implement the Liveable Streets programme across the borough (page 12).**
- 2. We will implement an on-going borough wide programme to deliver re-designed streets and junctions that provide the highest quality environment for walking and cycling reallocating space for motor vehicles where ever necessary. All improvements will be in line with the Liveable Streets Design Guide to be published in 2020.**

- 3. We will deliver pedestrian enhancements on designated routes such as the Green Grid and use our powers to set up a Walkway Authority to make sure public access to the Thames Path is maintained in accordance with agreements. Details will be set out in a Walking Plan to be published in 2021.**
- 4. Working with TfL we will deliver a borough wide network of high quality cycle routes that is safe, accessible, and permeable. To enable cycle take up by the widest range of people, we will deliver these routes, where necessary, by providing separated cycle paths, restricting traffic and freeing up kerbside space. We will set out our detailed plans for this network in a refreshed Cycling Plan to be published in 2020.**
- 5. We will make a major investment in roads that only allow through-access for cycling to extend the network of informal cycling routes through quieter streets and parks.**
- 6. We will substantially increase cycle parking to ensure residents at safe, secure and convenient locations. We will work with businesses, schools and other partners to ensure access to secure; cycle parking at transport interchanges and high footfall locations.**

7. We will work with partners to ensure that more people participate in cycling for their daily commute to work, educational establishment and for leisure by increasing availability of cycling facilities and services.

How will we know if it's working?

- > Cycling and walking will be a normal part of everyday life.
- > The proportion of residents that walk or cycle for 20 minutes every day will increase.
- > People will have convenient access to high quality cycle routes throughout the borough.
- > A diverse range of people of all abilities will take up cycling and walking.
- > There will be cost-effective secure cycle parking and storage in public spaces.



Outcome 2: Car use is reduced in favour of active, efficient and sustainable transport

Why this is important

Addressing many of the transport challenges we face requires a reduction in car use and with so much traffic coming from outside the borough we will need to work with and lobby authorities across London and the wider region to help us reduce the amount of traffic at source.

Tower Hamlets' location and high density of strategic roads designed to carry high volumes of traffic has had severe implications on air quality, traffic congestion and road danger for people in the borough.

Overall traffic volumes have begun to rise following a general period of decline between 2001 and 2015. Tower Hamlets has the highest average daily traffic flow in the UK with a substantial proportion of motor vehicles passing through the borough.

This through-traffic should by and large stick to the main roads but many of our residential neighbourhoods have suffered huge increases in rat-running traffic, making them more dangerous, noisy and polluted.

We recognise that many residents need and have come to rely on their cars and that changing travel behaviour can be challenging. We also recognise overall levels of car use in Tower Hamlets are not sustainable despite the low proportion of private car trips made by residents. Too many of our streets are dominated by cars and other motor vehicles with an area half the size of Victoria Park providing storage for 25,000 cars. We have issued more than 29,000 on-street parking permits to residents resulting in high levels of on-street parking stress and generating additional traffic, illegal and dangerous parking. Some of our parking rules enable short car trips to be made at all times of the day.

29,000 parking permits are issued for 25,000 on-street spaces





What is already being done

- > We are reducing the number of estate parking permits given to people who do not live in the borough.
- > We are developing plans for an initial 20 School Streets and supporting Play Streets across the borough.
- > We work with developers to facilitate car free homes with no access to parking.
- > We host 119 Santander Cycle stations providing affordable access to alternatives to car use.



What we intend to do

1. We will review Tower Hamlets' road network and remove through traffic from any street, or section of a street, that falls within a Liveable Streets area. We will publish details of streets this will apply to in and Motor Traffic Reduction Plan.
2. We will seek to reduce demand for on street car parking and the amount of car trips in the borough by reviewing our current parking policies, operations and charges. Details will be set out in a new Strategic Parking and Mobility Plan and may consider:
 - > The existing Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) boundaries and hours of operations;
 - > Pricing structures for on-street parking (including permits) to reflect the environmental and road danger attributes of vehicles.
4. We will work with housing providers and residents to develop schemes to support increase in the number of homes not eligible for on-street parking permits.
5. We will deliver a programme of timed and permanent traffic restrictions to support implementation of at least 50 School Streets and facilitate Play Streets on residential roads.

50 School Streets to make journeys safer and greener

6. We will explore the potential to introduce new travel demand management measures to reduce motorised through-traffic in the borough. We will:
 - > Work with TfL and neighbouring boroughs to develop proposals for the next generation of road user charging;
 - > Use our membership of Silvertown Tunnel Implementation Group to press TfL to make sure charging of Blackwall and Silvertown tunnels is set to reduce the environmental impact and the volume of traffic travelling through the borough;
 - > Explore the introduction of a workplace parking levy in Tower Hamlets by conducting a feasibility study.

How will we know if it's working?

- > Car traffic will be reduced.
- > The number of cars owned in the borough will reduce.
- > The number of cars parked on street will reduce.

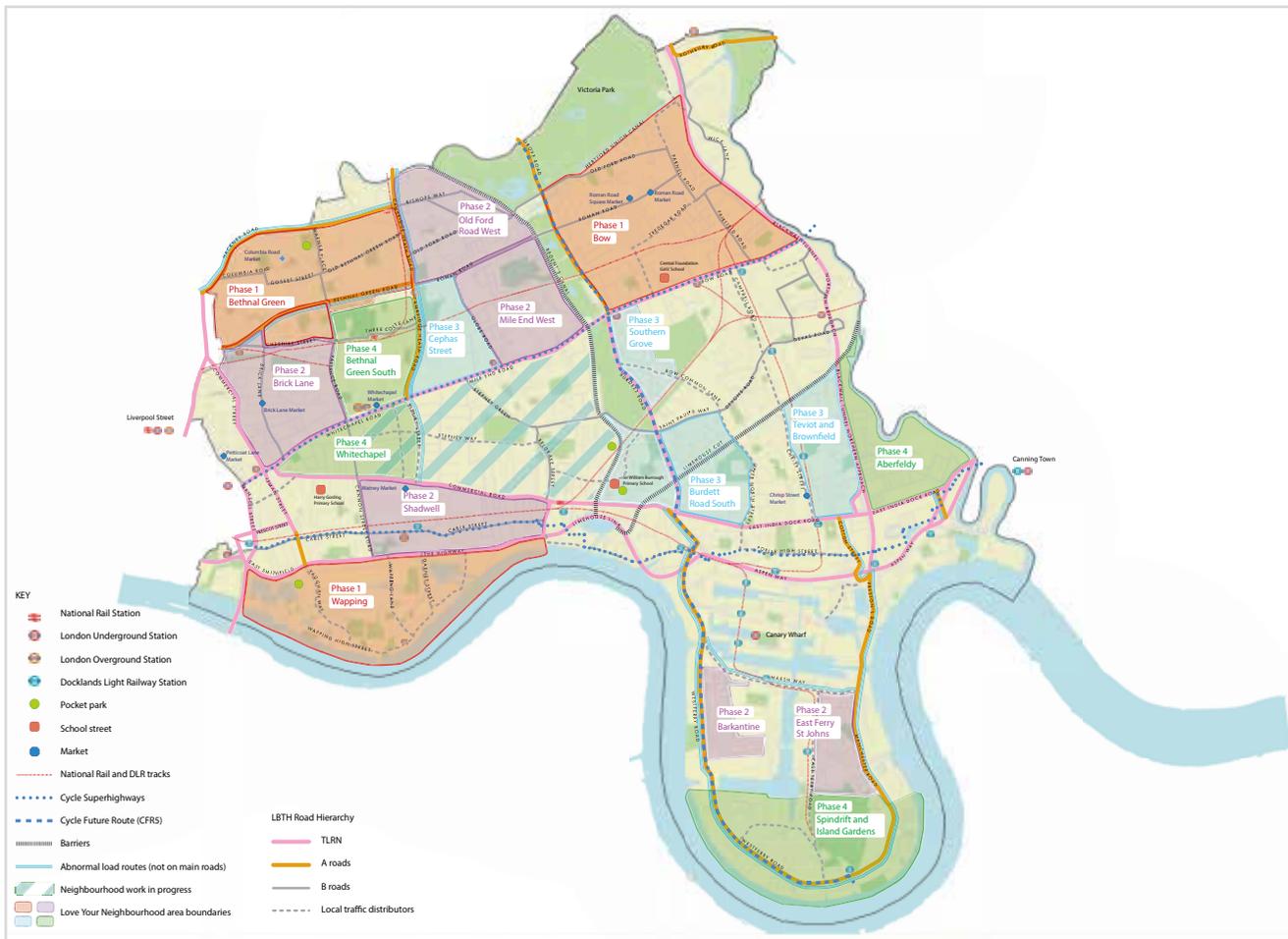


Figure 3: Liveable Streets Areas

17 neighbourhoods to get Liveable Streets

An area half the size of Victoria Park is allocated to parking

Tower Hamlets has the lowest car ownership of any London borough

1 in 3 car trips are less than 1.2 miles

Car drivers and passengers are exposed to higher levels of air pollution

Outcome 3: Transport services meet the needs of residents, visitors, businesses and supports growth and the economy

Why this is important

Public Transport

It is vital that transport services continue to attract current and future populations and entice people away from using motor vehicles.

Tower Hamlets is served by an extensive public transport network of 31 stations across 9 rail lines, river buses and around 30 bus routes providing a wide range of sustainable connections across the borough to the rest of London and beyond. Residents make more than 200,000 trips a day on these services and from any part of the borough and 39% of residents travel to work using public transport. It is vital that these services continue to attract current and future populations and entice people away from using motor vehicles to travel.

The borough has benefitted from an increase in public transport capacity in the preceding decades including the Jubilee Line extension, Overground and DLR 3-car upgrade. This has allowed the growth in demand for travel driven by London's population and employment boom over the same period to be predominantly absorbed by public transport.

But despite this, crowding is frequently experienced

on public transport services and is particularly severe on the Central and Jubilee lines in peak periods. In addition, bus reliability has also begun to suffer as a result of increasing traffic congestion with passengers waiting 21% longer than expected for high frequency services.

New Services

While the opening of the Elizabeth Line, new DLR fleet and new signalling on the District and Hammersmith Lines will increase rail capacity in the borough, there are still services expected to experience crowding, and further investment in infrastructure will be required to support the level of growth which is anticipated in the borough and to accommodate trips switching from private vehicle use.

At same time, new technology has facilitated an increase in the range and use of 'on-demand' transport services such as car sharing, ride hailing and bike sharing available to people. While such services can provide people with a greater selection of transport choices they can also present challenges to achieving sustainable transport objectives; app based minicab services have driven an increase in car use in Tower Hamlets and also may reduce the viability and use of sustainable transport services that some people, including those on lower incomes, rely on.

Business needs

This Council seeks to support the needs of business to align with our aims for transport so to not adversely impact customers being able to visit local shops and markets and that businesses and employees should be able to access employment, education and general business operations.

Investment in roads and public spaces can have a positive impact of walking and cycling on high streets, town centres and other shopping areas, with evidence indicating shoppers who walk to the high street spend up to 40% more than those who drive.





What is already being done

- > We are working with Crossrail to deliver complementary public realm works around Whitechapel station.
- > We are extending the Zero Emissions Network to cover businesses and residents in Canary Wharf.
- > Plans are advancing to improve the reliability of bus services including introducing a bus gateway in Wapping and implementing a bus and cycle street on Fish Island.
- > We are working on delivery of a new pedestrian bridge in South Dock to relieve existing infrastructure and reduce crowding on the DLR.



What we intend to do

1. We will work with TfL to ensure bus services meet our needs and support new and enhanced bus services (including new services using the Silvertown Tunnel), protect operational space, monitor bus performance to identify locations for bus performance enhancements including where necessary removal of parking and timed or general traffic restrictions.
2. We will work with TfL and rail operators in the borough to ensure rail services meet our needs

and support all proposals that enhance capacity and reduce crowding on services and at stations to acceptable levels including (but not limited to): introduction of 3-car trains on the DLR between Bow Church and Stratford, increased use of Poplar for access to Canary Wharf, new DLR and Underground rolling stock and increased services to Canary Wharf and Whitechapel on the Elizabeth line.

3. We will continue to work with TfL to develop, enhance and promote the Santander Cycle network, exploring the potential to trial different types of cycles on the system including e-bikes and cargo bikes that could be used by local businesses to transport and deliver goods.
4. We will work with other bike sharing operators where we are satisfied their offer will complement Santander Cycles and are sufficiently operationally responsible.
5. We will seek to maximise use of the river for business cargo and freight delivery and passenger services and investigate new locations for passenger and freight piers and new services.

6. We will support on-demand forms of motorised travel, such as on-demand bus services or car clubs, where there is clear evidence to show they do not undermine proven sustainable transport services and contribute to achieving our Transport Strategy vision and priorities.

7. We will continue to promote and support the Zero Emissions Network with a view to extending the scheme over the lifetime of this Strategy.

8. We will work with and support market traders and businesses to consolidate motor vehicle movement in relation to the provision of goods, facilities and services and develop schemes to increase the use of cargo bikes available to small businesses in the borough to transport goods.

9. We will ensure that new developments are car free or car-lite – aside from Blue Badge and operational needs – and cycle parking is of the highest quality and we will seek to secure developer contributions to ensure new development is supported by high quality, sustainable travel connectivity and services.

10. The Council will set up a dedicated team to work with developers and contractors to minimise the

impact of construction on residents, businesses and those travelling in the borough.

11. We will seek to secure developer contributions to ensure new developments are supported by high quality, sustainable travel connectivity and services.

How will we know if it's working?

- > More journeys will be made by public transport.
- > People will experience more reliable and more efficient journeys by Underground, DLR, rail and Overground.
- > Bus speeds and reliability will improve.
- > Crowding on services will reduce and people will be able to board on first services.

39% of Tower Hamlets workers commute using public transport



Outcome 4: People feel safe and confident when travelling in the borough

Why this is important

Our lives and health should not be compromised by our need to travel. No level of death or serious injury is acceptable on our streets, and we all – particularly those driving vehicles which potentially pose harm – have a responsibility to ensure we don't threaten or harm others. This is reflected in the Vision Zero approach to road danger adopted by the Mayor of London and endorsed by the Council.

Accidents and Collisions

Tower Hamlets has the highest daily traffic flow in the UK and volume has a direct impact on the safety of our roads. Between 2012 and 2016, 5,915 people were injured and 30 people were killed on roads in Tower Hamlets, largely on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) as opposed to local roads, which have the highest volumes of traffic.

Vulnerable road users are most at risk from road danger with the age at which residents are most likely to be injured as pedestrians in the borough are 10-15 years and 80-84 years.

Fear of road danger is a key barrier for many parents in allowing their children to walk unaccompanied in the borough and poor road quality and infrastructure

were reported as issues for our older and disabled residents and those with mobility issues. Road safety is also linked to deprivation with low-income residents, disabled people and children suffering disproportionately when it comes to injuries caused by road accidents.

Cycle Safety

One of the main reasons people do not take up cycling is the perception that it is not safe. Heavy traffic, hostility from motorists towards cyclists and a lack of space for cycling put many residents off cycling. Some of the issues are more perceived safety fears while others are real with cyclists over-represented in borough casualty statistics.

To overcome people's concerns, cycling facilities must be inviting, pleasant and safe as advocated in the Healthy Streets approach and based on Healthy Streets and Cycling Level of Service assessments, where the borough tends to score poorly

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

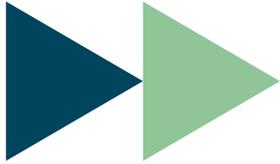
Although walking rates are high at 40% of all trips made in the borough, the rates have been falling in recent years. Higher levels of crime deprivation in some parts of the borough and the borough's long-standing problems with drug dealing and drug

use have been cited by residents and stakeholders as some of the issues that discourage people from walking due to fear of crime and ASB, particularly at night. Poorly maintained public spaces, particularly those where litter and graffiti are an issue, can cause residents to feel unsafe.

Crime is also the number one concern raised by residents in our 2019 Annual Residents Survey with 48% of those surveyed stating crime is their biggest personal concern in the borough, up by 18% compared to 2017.

Bike theft and bike crime are further concerns, with many reporting the lack of secure bike storage and parking facilities as being part of the problem.





What is already being done

- > Targeting road danger at source by introducing our Liveable Streets Design Guide (see Priority 1) to reduce the level of rat running traffic on residential streets and prioritise walking and cycling.
- > We have implemented a number of measures which support TfL's Vision Zero including 20mph speed limits on all roads maintained by the Council and delivering road safety education programmes in schools and at older people's groups.
- > The Neighbourhood Management Pilot and Safer Neighbourhood Team are employing a targeted approach to tackling crime and ASB in Tower Hamlets. The multi-agency Operation Continuum has had success in detecting and preventing drug-related crime and disorder. The council funds 39 extra police officers and an extensive CCTV network.
- > Bicycle registration with the Metropolitan Police to help police and retailers identify and verify the legitimate owner of bikes that have been stolen or are being resold.
- > Dedicated officer to ensure application of Healthy Streets approach (page 6).

What we intend to do

1. We will support and adopt TfL's Vision Zero aim to eliminate occurrences of people being killed or seriously injured on our streets by 2040. We will continue to create a safe environment for road users and promote safety by implementing and extending measures to help meet Vision Zero.
2. We intend to take forward targeted infrastructure improvements aimed at significantly reducing the rates of those killed and seriously injured at dangerous locations on our roads and improving compliance with 20mph speed limits. We will publish our plans to achieve this in more detail in a Road Danger Reduction Plan in 2020.
3. We will lobby and support TfL to introduce 20mph speed limits on roads they maintain in the borough and to deliver substantial road safety improvement schemes on TfL roads with a high rate of vulnerable road user casualties.

5,915 people were killed or seriously injured on roads in Tower Hamlets (2012-16)





4. We will deliver targeted campaigns and training to change the behaviour of motorcycle and moped users to reduce not only the injury to themselves, but also to other road users. We will also take forward measures to promote alternative types of sustainable transport.
5. We will continue to work with schools and school children to support safe journeys by providing crossing patrols, delivering 50 school streets, cycle training and bikes in schools, road safety education and programmes to increase awareness of vulnerable road users.
6. Work with our own fleet, providers and contractors, as well as those secured through Tower Hamlets' procurement and planning process (such as construction for developments), to minimise road danger associated with vehicles being driven for work purposes.
7. We will support police and community safety initiatives to tackle bike theft, crime and anti-social behaviour.

8. We will use our powers to close off roads that are redundant and are known hotspots for anti-social behaviour and introduce measures to prevent anti-social driving.
9. We will use parking enforcement powers to help make roads and pavements as safe as possible for all road users.
10. Our Winter Service Plan will set out how we reduce disruption to transport during cold weather.

How will we know if it's working?

- > The rates of those killed or seriously injured on our roads will be reduced.
- > A safer environment at night will be created for those who wish to walk or cycle in the borough.
- > People of all cycling and walking abilities will experience safe and pleasant journeys.
- > People will feel safer travelling in and through the borough.
- > There will be zero tolerance of transport related crime, anti-social behaviour and all types of road traffic violations.



Outcome 5: Air quality is improved and our surroundings are quieter and more appealing

Why this is important

Global warming

The Council has declared a climate emergency and set a goal for Tower Hamlets to work towards being a carbon neutral council by 2025. Global warming is associated with increasing extreme weather resulting in additional stress on road surfaces and increased flood risk. Transport is a large contributor to carbon dioxide emissions in the borough, accounting for a quarter of the annual output.

Air Quality

Air pollution is a global problem associated with poor health and quality of life. Transport is the main source of air pollution in the borough and the best way to address this is to reduce the number of motorised vehicles on our roads and parking spaces and encourage healthier travel habits.

Tower Hamlets is an Air Quality Management Area due to exceeding concentrations of dangerous pollutants with nearly 50 schools and 77% of populations located in areas that exceed recommended limits. Transport is the largest source of air pollution in the borough with congested areas identified as hotspots for emissions that require targeted action. The Council has a statutory

obligation to produce an Air Quality Action Plan every five years, setting out its plans to improve the quality of our air.

Health Impacts and Inequalities in Health

Poor air quality has a significant impact on health and quality of life ranging from worsening respiratory symptoms to premature deaths from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Poor air quality is also linked to the widening of health inequalities with vulnerable and disadvantaged people more likely to live in heavily trafficked communities thereby increasing their exposure. Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest healthy life expectancies in the country and the rates of asthma and poor lung capacity amongst children are high due to exposure to pollution.

In our latest Annual Residents Survey (2019), air pollution was cited as the 7th highest (16%) concern for residents in the borough. Our residents and stakeholders have told us that concerns about air pollution can discourage people from walking, particularly those who live close to a main road and families who have concerns about their children walking to school. Engagement with school children indicates that young people are very aware of air pollution in the borough and the damaging impact it has on their health.

Electric Cars

Evidence suggests that exposure to air pollution is higher in motorised vehicles than outside and that why this council wants to promote alternative transport options, but we recognise that motorised transport has a role in supporting the economy.

In some cases motor vehicles are relied on by people who live and travel in Tower Hamlets for purposes including: personal and care giving needs, taxis, private hire vehicles, essential services and community services. Where this occurs, and no alternative sustainable mode of transport can be used, we want to encourage businesses and individuals to switch to the most environmentally friendly vehicles, including electric vehicles. Electric vehicle ownership for residents is currently low and the barriers to take up include the high purchase cost of vehicles and low availability of charge points.

Local Environment

The issue of litter and waste on our streets was the third most common concern of residents in our most recent Survey and the quality of the environment has a direct impact on the choosing to walk or cycle.



What is already being done

- > We produced an Air Quality Action Plan in 2017, setting out the actions we will take to improve air quality within the borough². Initiatives such as the Zero Emissions Network and the Barts Health Cleaner Air for East London Project have been introduced through the Plan.
- > The Tower Hamlets Mayor set up a £200,000 fund for air quality projects to raise awareness around air pollution and reduce the impact. Schools, community groups, housing associations and charities have received grants including two projects recognised at the 2019 Sustrans Awards.
- > We launched the Breathe Clean campaign in 2018 to raise awareness about air quality, including working with partners to help stop idling outside schools.
- > The London Mayor's Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) introduced in April 2019 has been extended to include Tower Hamlets streets in the City Fringe. This scheme encourages use of low emission transport by placing a daily charge on higher polluting vehicles entering the area.

- > To encourage the uptake of electric vehicles, we have launched the Electric Vehicle Charging Point Delivery Plan setting out our aims to deliver 300 electric vehicle charge point infrastructure throughout the borough by 2025.
- > In partnership with TfL, we have provided information on the Diesel Scrappage Scheme to market traders in the borough to raise awareness and encourage take-up.
- > We opposed plans to increase flights at London City Airport to reduce noise and air pollution from its operations.

300 electric vehicle charging points by 2025

What we intend to do

1. We will continue to monitor the borough's compliance with National Air Quality Objectives by reporting progress annually on commitments in the Air Quality Action Plan.

2. We will keep ULEZ under review to ensure it continues to contribute to improved air quality in the borough and we will continue our work with Zero Emissions Network and expand the programme where localised issues are identified.
3. We will lobby TfL to accelerate plans to introduce electric and other zero tailpipe emission buses on all current and future routes serving Tower Hamlets.
4. We will actively manage drainage assets and promote urban greening to help mitigate the local impacts of global warming.
5. We will work with partners to identify funding opportunities to help deliver local schemes to improve air quality, such as through the London Mayor's Air Quality Fund.
6. We will work with TfL to promote diesel scrappage schemes to local businesses and residents who own high polluting vehicles and provide information on the expansion of ULEZ planned for October 2021.

²https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Environmentalprotection/LBTH_Air_Quality_Action_Plan.pdf

7. We will roll out electric vehicle charge points with full coverage across the borough including rapid charging and Source London points.

8. We will transition fleet and business travel to zero emission vehicles to tackle the climate emergency in line with the recommendations in the Net Zero Carbon Plan. Electrification of the Council's transport will only bring significant carbon savings and reduce air pollution, noise and our contribution to the urban heat island.

9. In line with the Tower Hamlets Waste Strategy, the Council will reduce street clutter and waste on our streets and open spaces to create an inviting environment for walkers and cyclists. The council is planning to bring waste collection and street cleaning services in-house in April 2020.

10. Based on the council's graffiti and street art policy, the Council will introduce measures to discourage and clean up unwarranted graffiti.

11. We will replace all diesel vehicles in the Council's fleet with electric, hybrid and cleaner vehicles in their place.

12. We are encouraging van fleet operators and individual van owners to join us in signing up to the Clean Van Commitment – a public pledge to move to zero emission vans in cities by 2028.

13. We will explore use of new noise reducing road surfacing materials.

How will we know if it's working?

- > Carbon emissions and air pollution from transport will be reduced.
- > More people will take up active travel and will become healthier physically and mentally.
- > The environment will be more inviting and people will feel comfortable spending time in our surroundings.
- > The noise impact from road traffic will be reduced.

70% of carbon dioxide emissions come from private motor vehicles



Outcome 6: Travel in Tower Hamlets is accessible and affordable for all

Why this is important

Despite our relatively young population, as with the rest of the country the borough's population is expected to age soon. Over the next decade, the number of residents aged 65+ is projected to grow by 39% compared with a 17% increase in working age residents and a 7% increase in school age children.

Tower Hamlets is committed to seeing an accessible transport network delivered for all; to enable people from all walks of life to have the freedom to travel, reduce the isolation experienced by many older and disabled people and make it easier for people to access employment and education opportunities.

Providing residents with sustainable transport choices forms part of the Mayor of Tower Hamlets' pledge to support and lobby for accessible transport. The Council also recognises the need for a comprehensive, integrated accessible network to help realise the full benefits of improvements such as step-free rail stations.

Public Transport & Street Networks

Although Tower Hamlets is well served by public transport, public transport accessibility levels (PTAL) are not uniform. Areas such as the City Fringe and

Whitechapel have superb access whilst accessibility in the east and north of the borough is more limited.

Barriers to passengers with disabilities and/or mobility issues include a lack of step-free access in stations, lack of space around bus stops, narrow pavements and lack of step free road crossings are barriers to those with mobility issues.

In a borough with many residents with relatively low disposable incomes, the cost of travel is a significant determinant in how, when and whether people travel. Whilst walking and cycling are the cheapest travel options available, monthly fares on public transport in London are said to be the highest in any global city and fares in the borough increased at a greater rate than average earnings between 2008 and 2015 increasing the cost of travel burden for people on low incomes.

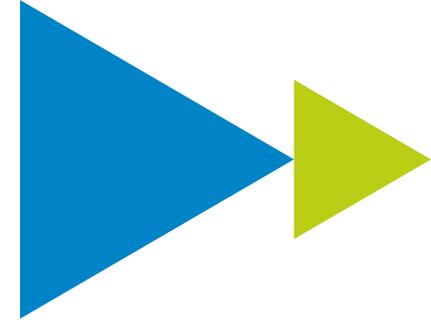
What is already being done

> Working with local groups and organisations, including children, the elderly and those with mobility issues in the development of schemes to improve streets and connections to public transport.

- > Providing independent travel and supporting the DLR Ambassadors to offer training for any resident who needs extra support to access and use public transport safely and with confidence.
- > Implementing the bus stop improvement programme to make all bus stops in the borough meet TfL's bus stop accessibility standards.
- > Distributing bikes to schools so every child who wishes to take part in cycle training can do so.

What we intend to do

1. We will work with TfL to deliver a borough wide, integrated, accessible sustainable transport network. This will comprise:
 - > A fully step free pedestrian network 'from door to destination' with an increase in the number of step free crossings on streets, crossing points that give legal priority to pedestrians and an on-going programme to remove street clutter. We will ensure that there will be sufficient resting places, such as benches and will explore adapting cobbled streets and increasing crossing times at signalised crossings;



- > A cycle network that enables a wide range of cycles including recumbent and cargo bikes. We will lobby the Department of Transport to allow mobility scooters to use cycle paths;
 - > A step free rail network from street to train. We will lobby TfL to prioritise delivering step free access at Mile End, Bow Road and Stepney Green stations;
 - > All bus stops in the borough will be accessible to those in wheelchairs, with buggies and with shopping trolleys with sufficient waiting space for those with mobility aids. We will support early delivery of TfL's plans to procure new buses with increased spaces for wheelchairs and buggies.
2. We will lobby TfL and other transport operators serving the borough to make the case that fares should be affordable and concessions continue to be provided to enable people to access the jobs, services and opportunities they need.
3. All road users, including essential services and vulnerable road users, will have sufficient access to our streets through the Blue Badge scheme, parking for carers and travel training for those with learning disabilities.
4. Through our School Streets and School Travel Plans we will support schools so children, parents and teachers can enjoy safe, healthy travel to school.
5. We will work with Tower Hamlets Community Transport and the Council's own transport service to develop ways of using volunteers to increase the utilisation of community transport capacity by making it accessible to communities at times when it would otherwise not be in use.
6. We will work with partners to develop schemes that increase access to cycles and mobility aids as well as increase availability and access to repair and maintenance services.
7. We will continue to provide support for journeys between home and educational facilities for adults and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities who live in the borough.

How will we know if it's working?

- > People with mobility impediments will have full access to the borough's transport networks.
- > People with buggies, prams and trolleys will find it easier to travel by sustainable transport in Tower Hamlets.
- > People will have increased awareness of a range of cost-appropriate sustainable travel options that are available to them for journey making.
- > Transport affordability will not be an impediment to accessing opportunities, services and social life.
- > People with a wide range of incomes will have access to cycles.



Delivery, Monitoring and Review

The six priorities proposed in this document guide a series of policies and targets to help us achieve a healthier, safer and more environmentally friendly transport system in Tower Hamlets that is accessible and affordable for all who live, work, study and do business in the borough. The desired outcomes for each priority will be achieved through the delivery of targeted interventions set out in a range of plans.

Policies will be implemented through action plans which will help us achieve our transport outcomes. Feedback systems for monitoring, evaluation and review will be put in place to safeguard the integrity of the strategy over its lifespan. A summary of the process is shown in Figure 4.

We are committed to working with partners, stakeholders and others to deliver the aims and outcomes in this Strategy.

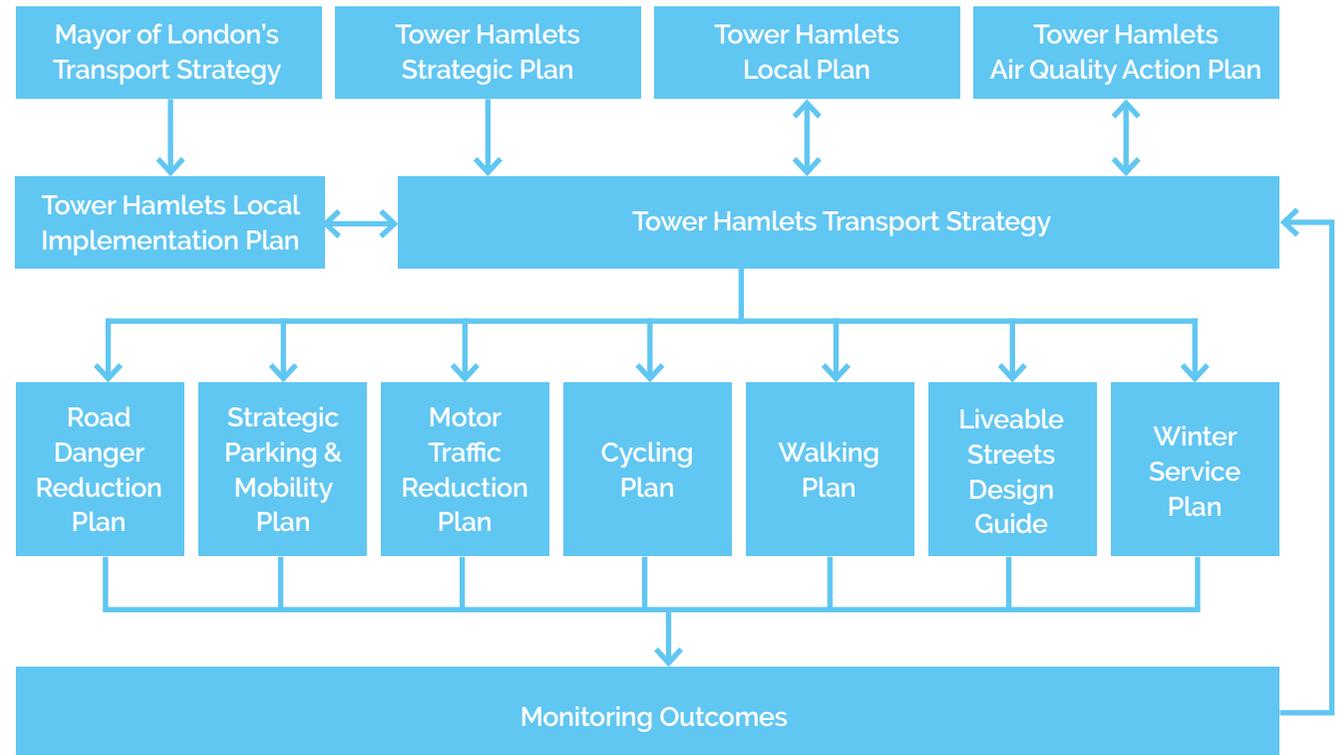


Figure 4: Transport Strategy Delivery Process



Delivery of the Transport Strategy will be funded from a range of sources including Transport for London, Tower Hamlets Council and developer contributions. We also seek opportunities to increase funding through potential additional revenue streams and additional funding pots allocated through a competitive bidding process.

As part of the monitoring arrangements to oversee the strategy once it is adopted, we will also form a 'consultative group' made up of external partners and residents, to act as a sounding board for delivering actions arising from the strategy and to help develop future strategies and delivery plans on transport.

The actions in this strategy will be monitored, reviewed and refreshed every four years to ensure progress towards our overarching vision. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by which progress will be measured and evaluated, are included at the end of this document.

