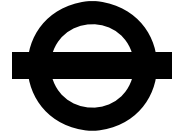


Transport for London



The Politics of Mobility - Understanding Cities Lecture Series

London School of Economics

Tuesday 18 November 2008

Thank you for that kind introduction Tony (Tony Travers). It is good to be here and to repay a debt of sorts from a reconnaissance mission I was privileged to undertake to the Urban Age Conference in Berlin a couple of years ago. The conference was very stimulating and enjoyable so it's nice to be able to put a bit back into the process. One of the difficulties of a job like this is that you would like to go around the world and learn and advise people, but there's quite enough to do here, so people don't let you!

The story of the city of London since the 1830s is the product of successive transport revolutions. That London was able to grow at all was the product of the railway boom, then the tramway system and the Underground. Buses enabled low density suburbs to spread out from all stations. All of this made possible the growth and dominance of London as an economic machine.

Tonight, I will talk you through some history, about transport policy since the creation of the Mayoralty, the impact of the new Mayor and then the key transport challenges facing us now and how we are managing them.

But first, some lip service, at least, to the title (The Politics of Mobility). Transport in a world city is political because mobility defines the growth and nature of city life. The structures by which transport has been provided for London have been defined by politics since the start of the railway age: the Parliamentary process that decided which lines would get built; legislation requiring cheap trains; political arguments on tramway development; the cheap fares policies of the municipal tramways; political action to stop unrestrained bus competition in the 1920s; the formation of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933; transformation to a nationalised industry in 1948; the

MAYOR OF LONDON

politics of urban motorways in the 1960s and 1970s; municipalisation and nationalisation in 1970 and 1984; and the more recent creation of a Mayor, and TfL, under the 1999 Greater London Authority Act. All of these have been essentially political moves.

What has worked in London?

a) An integrated transport authority

I now want to talk about what has worked in London. I would start by saying that the creation of the Mayoralty in 1999, a unique political position in UK politics of immense personal power, has created a new era and, I'd say, so far a successful one, for transport in London.

I run an integrated transport authority which is not merely the old London Transport – the Tube and buses – but a whole range of stuff including: the major strategic road network; responsibility for walking and cycling; elements of national rail; licensing taxis and private hire vehicles; travel information; ticketing and strategic transport planning. TfL is actually one of the most comprehensive transport authorities in the world, far more so than either of the arrangements in Paris and New York, neither of which is really under the control of the Mayor and both of which omit to connect roads with the provision of public transport.

The Mayor appoints the Board of TfL, according to the Act, and rightly, in my view, both Mayors have chosen to chair TfL. The Mayor is required to publish a Transport Strategy, alongside the London Plan and other statutory plans, and basically it works that the Mayor decides transport policy – including fares policy - and we deliver. Aside from fares and the policy of charging, the rest of our funding comes from national government and this is a great weakness of the UK government in general and to that extent, transport is not devolved.

Transport is, in essence, regional. Greater London is a region and actually, it is a really good place to decide what to do about transport and transport provision. At a borough level, routes, roads and lines all cross political boundaries. There is not a bus route in London that only operates in one borough; they all cover two and sometimes three or four. It is a similar case with the strategic route network and, of course, with the railways. At a national level, London is a problem – its financial demands are great, but influence in terms of MPs is limited. That has been the history of it. Every time we have been a nationalised industry, a strong debate about the future of rural railways would result in about a third of the House of Commons turning up. If every London MP turned up to look at our budget, we would quite easily be out voted by the rest of Britain.

b) Making the case for investment in London

One of the most obvious outcomes of the influence of a Mayor for London has been a successful policy to promote, and invest in, public transport. Transport is the Mayor's biggest responsibility in financial terms, and the biggest levy in these circumstances for economic and social improvements in the London region.

As a result, Ken was a high-profile Mayor, just as Boris is now, supporting and supported by London business. We got a ground breaking five-year financial settlement from Government in 2005. It was the largest ever settlement, both in time and money, because even the new works programme of 1935 to 1940 was curtailed by the Second World War. Allowing for the unlikelihood of another world war, by 2010, we will have completed a five-year investment programme, the first one in the history of London's transport. And now we have got a financial settlement which is worth £39 billion of grant and borrowing from Government for the period 2010 to 2017, with an overall budget of some £80 billion for huge projects, some of which I will talk about tonight. It is actually still not enough but it is far more than anybody has ever seen in my working life and living memory, primarily because the Mayor is powerful, he represents a

powerful region and can make arguments about the impact of the region on the national economy.

Tony talked about *Way to Go!* It is a good read. It is written by the Mayor; not his staff or advisors or Transport for London. You will notice lots of references to it in the rest of my speech because I've read it carefully, as you would expect me too.

c) Improvements to buses

If you read the forward to *Way to Go!* it is actually very complimentary about the previous Mayor's transport policies and achievements. Boris starts by saying "get on a London bus and look around. Your bus will probably be clean, it will be new or newish, it will have disabled access and it will have CCTV."

And indeed, not only is that very generous praise from some other part of the political spectrum from where Ken came from, but it is actually very generous praise for at least some elements of a coherent transport policy. We reversed the decline in ridership on the bus network in London – it is now the highest ridership for nearly 50 years. It works better than it has ever done since I've been around and actually, it is a good short-term way of coping with London's phenomenal growth. It is quite expensive and the only mitigation I'd say is that it is as much, or more, due to the previous Mayor's fares policies as it is due to the higher costs, of which there are clearly some.

d) More integrated travel

If you travel on a bus you will probably have boarded using your Oyster card - nearly everybody does - which has been a major technological success story and an 'integrated' story. When people talk about integrated transport, one of the things they mean is one way to pay for your journey, however you take it and that has been a success in London.

You might have used an integrated Journey Planner on the TfL website and we hope that's a success too.

e) London Overground

You might also have travelled on the Overground.

Given the strident and continuous opposition of the previous Mayor, and indeed my predecessor, to the PPP for London Underground, it is slightly surprising that TfL was given control by Government for what was the North London Line. This was partially because it was a wreck but actually, probably more sensibly, because it appealed to Government as part of a joined-up strategy and we had proved by then that we could, even in difficult circumstances, deliver things. If you have time, go and look at those grim old stations on the North London Line and see what we have done - they're bright, they've got signs, they've got staff there from the time they open to the time they close and the trains are heaving as a consequence. It is a remarkable success.

f) Modal shift

All these measures, plus the congestion charge and the promotion of cycling which has gone up 91% on TfL roads since 2000, have added up to a coherent attempt to get people out of their cars and on to public transport and to walk and cycle.

Since 2000, London has achieved a 5% modal shift from car to public transport, walking and cycling. The scale of this shift has not been matched by any other city in the world. Boris has been generous in his praise to the previous policies and indeed, has said that he would like to achieve more.

Challenges Facing London

a) Population and employment growth

If we start to look forward then the principle challenge facing us in London, unlike my first 20 years of working in the transport industry, is that London is growing

London's population is projected to increase. It is going up by 70,000 to 80,000 per year and it shows no signs of stopping. If it continues to grow at that rate to 2025, we will add a city the size of Amsterdam onto London.

Despite recent economic turbulence, job numbers are also expected to grow. The new Mayor's strategy is more about developing suburban centres in London. Whilst we will of course take account of that new strategy, employment growth is likely to be concentrated in central London, the Isle of Dogs and the Thames Gateway, whereas population and housing growth will be more evenly distributed across the whole of Greater London. This is sound evidence for suggesting that there will be a significant increase in the demand for travel – our view is by nearly four million journeys a day – and an increase in demand for every sort of transport be it public transport or car use. Hopefully, we can mitigate some of this through walking and cycling which I will talk about later.

Our view is that if we don't do something about all of this then the city's economic growth will be stunted. The worst of all worlds is that the people still come but you can't move them anywhere and you can't find them work. That would turn out to be a social crisis of considerable proportions.

b) Land-use considerations

There are, of course, real land use considerations because we are not starting with something like Canberra or Brasilia; this city is several centuries old. We

start from where we are. Having told you that the development of the city is inextricably bound up with the transport network, indeed the development of these networks have influenced where people live and where people work. Once you know the Northern Line will take you from Finchley to the City of London, it becomes apparent that people move to Finchley because they can work in the City of London and so forth.

Clearly, the best option is to reduce the distance between where people live, work and take their leisure. However, in a city this size, and with the sort of densities you see in outer London and with the specialist clusters of activities like finance and business services in the City and Canary Wharf, this is not always possible.

So London's transport infrastructure has to take account of the urban landscape. We must also take account of developing policy so if the Mayor wants to develop some suburban centres, we have got to find a way of moving people between suburban centres move easily. The new Mayor is determined to do more in orbital travel and we will have to reflect that.

All of this is done best if we think about land use alongside transport. It is quite hard to say which came first. I'll talk to you about a very exciting development about the way in which we go forward with the London Plan and the Mayor's Transport Strategy. The last time around, the Mayor's Transport Strategy was written long before the London Plan and that may not be the right way around.

c) Ensuring continued economic success

At the heart of a thriving city is its economic success.

London is the powerhouse of the national economy, with productivity more than 20 per cent higher than the rest of the country. It is the place where people put international headquarters, they don't choose between London and North Hampton, they choose between London, Paris and New York, and we

have the headquarters of more than one fifth of Europe's 500 largest companies.

Transport has been a central factor in London's economic success story, because you can facilitate agglomeration by effective mass transport.

The Mayor, in this recession, is supported strongly by business and apparently by politicians of every political colour. It is clear that although money is tight and we may be in a recession or heading towards one, continued investment in transport to enable the city to grow is absolutely essential.

The defining work on that is the work that Eddington did nearly two years ago, both for the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Transport, in defining where best to put your money to facilitate economic growth in Britain. What he in essence said was that London is a good place to put money because the marginal benefit is far greater than anywhere else.

The Isle of Dogs is a really good example of that. Would the Isle of Dogs have developed at all without mass transit? The answer is no. It got the DLR and ever since it has been continuously rebuilt and expanded – it needed a DLR and then a Jubilee line extension and now Crossrail.

You can make that case pretty easily and I don't suppose anybody would really argue about it. The only problem with agglomeration is that you get greater economic growth but the congestion that can go along with it can equally cripple it.

We must remember that it isn't just about big business because on the back of big business there are thousands and thousands of small businesses. One of the reasons for keeping big business going in London is to keep the money going so that small business can thrive as well.

d) Equal life chances for all

The different side of this is about social inclusion and the development of the community. I feel quite confident in talking about this because Boris has been as keen on continuing some of these moves as the previous Mayor.

This city has some shockingly deprived areas. I think people outside London sometimes assume it is full of wealth, but London has some of the worst deprivation in the UK. Transport is one of the ways to break the spiral of deprivation, by providing access to education, health and employment. We know transport helps because every time we put on an orbital night bus route, we get a trickle of letters from people saying 'I can get a job as a cleaner at the airport now and I couldn't before.' It does actually make a difference and one of the things you do with planning transport as part of a coherent city strategy is to enhance social inclusion as much as possible.

e) Environmental concerns

No presentation of this sort, certainly not dealing with my subject, would be complete without reflecting on CO2. Relatively, London is quite carbon efficient – it is better than Rome and New York and that's quite a surprise given it has relatively low density.

The new Mayor's reaffirmation of the old Mayor's commitment to a 60% reduction in London's total CO2 emissions (from 1990 levels) by 2025 means we have to move a lot harder and further than we have so far. The other thing we have got to do is contemplate the impacts of climate change on our daily work. Thirty years ago nobody built a bus carriage in London without putting a bus under cover because it snowed. Now we worry about blocked drains on the strategic road network because every time it rains hard, it floods.

Successfully managing the challenges

So let's move on and talk about where the new Mayor and the new Mayor's strategy might take us.

We have to address all the challenges I've talked about as well as running the system on a daily basis. I won't say much about that but it is both a delight and a constant concern and a very clear reminder that people expect us not only to contribute to long term policy, but also to get them all home. You have come here tonight because you are interested in policy, a bit of history and a bit of politics but if I don't take you home afterwards, you will be livid! It is quite interesting to reflect on this because I could equally have spoken for 45 minutes about the challenges of operating the transport network. It is not what people want to hear about and it is not glamorous, but just bear in mind as you ask why we are not pursuing some things with more effort, that a huge amount of effort goes into just turning the handle on a system that is very old. If the Hammersmith and City Line between Baker Street and Farringdon were on the surface, the whole thing would be a grade one listed building because it was built in 1863, rather badly. Because it is under ground, it is a maintenance nightmare. It is important to remember that.

I'll deal with all of that. The only thing I want to say now, lest anybody forgets, is that we also have the value for money issue. One of the things Boris was elected on was tax payer value. As well as delivering on key priorities and operating the system on a daily basis, I am charged with making significant economies, bearing down on costs and actually changing the organisation philosophically from one that spent eight years consistently growing. I do lie awake at night thinking about this because it is quite a challenge. I think it is right to challenge public organisations with budgets of £7 billion but it is not easy and I don't want that forgotten in the rest of what I have got to say.

a) Connecting transport and planning

The first thing, which I've talked about a bit already, is connecting transport and planning – not merely strategic planning across London but also more local planning. We have to work in partnership, particularly with the 33 boroughs that determine what goes on in detail in London, including the City of London. The boroughs control 95% of London's road network and they control planning applications below quite a high threshold beyond which the Mayor decides. The boroughs are essential partners, both in terms of them understanding what transport we are going to supply and us understanding what development is occurring in individual boroughs.

I think we are set for a better relationship with London's local authorities in the future than we have had in the past. Tony (Tony Travers) himself is doing some work on the City Charter and this Mayor is perhaps more inclined to have a two-way relationship with the boroughs than the last one was. There are some other areas where we need to make progress, like health and education, because the story there is much less happy and indeed, quite a lot of health and education policy might have been good for the health service and the education system, but it has been catastrophic for transport demand. Health sites have been moved to places which are inaccessible and difficult to serve. Education has created vast movements of kids every September that we couldn't predict. These occurrences are actually very expensive.

We are working on all of this. We are working on partnerships with health and education. We are working on the relationship with the boroughs and the Planning for a Better London document will inevitably lead to a revision of the London Plan. The great news, as far as I'm concerned, is that we have got a timetable which will enable the London Plan and the new Mayor's Transport Strategy to be developed together. If we do the job properly, we will have cracked something that is quite good for this city - a spatial plan built on foundations of a transport network and the behaviour of it is modelled London-

wide and sub regionally, and a transport strategy that reflects the spatial plan. Achieving this in this Mayoral term will alone be a considerable improvement.

b) Making more efficient use of our transport network

There are several things occurring to make more efficient use of the existing transport network.

Leading a revolution in cycling and walking

This Mayor is determined to achieve a complete revolution in cycling. We have done fairly well to double cycling over the last eight years but Boris wants much more so that is what we are going to deliver. This morning (18 November 2008), we have launched the OJEU notice for the bike hire scheme in central London. We believe the scheme can be as successful as Paris. Boris is determined not only to have it in central London, but in suburban London as well in due course. We are set to deliver the scheme by May 2010.

Boris also wants us to look at better ways to get people radially into town. We were out together on our bikes last Friday morning on the A24 coming in from Clapham and we developed on the way some ideas about what we can do to build on the critical mass of cycling in London. Apart from anything else, cycling is good for you.

Boris also wants to do more for cycling in outer London, and bearing in mind that so many journeys are short in outer London, why wouldn't people bike as a means of travel?

We are equally keen on walking – it is good for people and it is free. If we can promote it through sign posting and improvements to the urban realm then clearly we ought to do so. If you go to Bond Street, you will see the new Legible London signs to help people walk around the crowded city.

Smoothing traffic flows on the road network

Boris wants us to do something much better to smooth traffic flows so we have been racking our brains, and there are some things we can do. We do have a Traffic Control Centre. We also have police and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) on the street and we can deploy them better. We are looking at traffic signals to see what else we can get out of them. It is hard to do but we can get some more out of cycle times and we are going to experiment with some new ideas like counting down the pedestrian phases as occurs in New York and Dublin.

Boris is determined, and so are we, to manage street works better. An unprecedented amount of gas and water main renewals are bringing the city to a grinding halt at the moment. Our roads don't wear out; they are destroyed by people digging them up and they are digging them up in London in huge quantities for all sorts of reasons. As we speak, somebody will be starting works. They may not have told us about it. It may not be urgent even if they claim it is and, almost certainly, the workers will have 'knocked off' by the time I've finished this lecture and they may leave a great big hole in the road until tomorrow morning. If we don't act with alacrity, the hole may be there for several days. It is a disgrace. Boris now knows what the legislation allows us to do. We can make it work better but there is a weakness - if we fine Thames Water £80, the foreman can pay it, and Thames Water doesn't need to bother. There is no penalty, in financial terms, which hurts utility companies and until there is, we will never be able to do what we should with planning and identifying works. What we need is a penalty big enough to make it worth the utility companies' while to dig like fury, fix it, fill the hole in and go away. And actually if there is one message I'd like to leave you with tonight, it is that one.

Bus Improvements

We still need to do more with the bus network. Boris has got some ideas about Routemasters and taking 'bendy buses' off the road and I'm happy to

implement them. There is a bigger question with the bus network which is that its cost is very high and indeed if you read the TfL Business Plan, published last week, you will see that we have committed ourselves to a further review of the bus network. This is because the subsidies are now at levels much higher than they have been for some time and we have to try and do something about that.

c) Increasing capacity

As well as making the most of the existing transport network, we must expand capacity and the financial investment I talked about earlier is producing an enormous programme of works which will transform London's transport system.

Tube upgrades

As I said earlier, the Tube system is very old – that is one fact you need to know. The other fact you need to know is that it carries more people now than ever before, and we are rebuilding it at the same time. Tim O'Toole, who manages the Underground, likens it to doing knee surgery on a tennis player while they are playing a championship game. It is a bit like that because we are trying to upgrade the system during the night when it would really be sensible to close the system down for two years at a time and fix it together. What we are fixing is not just what has worn out over the last five years. Rather, we are fixing what has worn out over the last thirty years. Nobody sitting in my position, much before the later years of Bob Kiley, sat there and watched the Tube be renewed at the rate it should have been renewed since the 1960s. As a result, we have an enormous backlog that we need to fix. But as ever, challenges are opportunities so not only have we got the backlog to fix, but we are doing something quite dramatic to improve the Tube's capacity. The Victoria and Jubilee lines are now in progress and work will start on the sub-surface lines and the Northern line shortly. Whatever you think about the PPP, and I'm quite happy to talk about it if someone wants to ask a question

afterwards, at the end of the decade leading to 2020, we will get a Tube with significantly more capacity. This is important because while Crossrail will deliver an enormous amount of additional capacity – 10% of the total rail-based public transport capacity – we won't receive this until the day it opens and our passenger numbers are still going up. Today, London's public transport system has daily numbers of a level my predecessor would never have imagined. If you told Ralph Bennett who I worked for 30 years ago we would have 4 million people on the Tube on a normal weekday, he would have laughed. We are trying to cope with that and do the system up at the same time, because we can't wait for projects like Crossrail to deliver the capacity.

Crossrail

When we get there, of course, Crossrail will be a great thing and it is absolutely the right thing for London. It is a great tribute to Government that it has finally found the will to do it. It is a great tribute to the new Mayor that he has embraced it as willingly as the old Mayor did, and we are getting on with Crossrail despite a lot of miserable articles constantly predicting that it won't happen. I think it will and it will result in a huge increase in capacity and, surprisingly for a project first hatched in the 1940s, it is actually more appropriate now than when it was first thought out because of Canary Wharf.

Unfunded projects

There is a down side. If you look at the TfL Business Plan, some projects are not going ahead. All but one of the projects had no funding to begin with and I would argue, rather prejudiciously against my former boss, that the projects never had much chance of funding; certainly not in the current economic climate. I stoutly defend Boris deciding to not go any further with the Cross River Tram; not because it might not be a good scheme to do, but because a) we have got our hands full and b) you would really have to be an optimist to think we will get any more investment money when we are trying to deliver this lot as well. But I'm happy to be argued with on this point, as ever!

d) Protecting the environment

I have talked about the necessity of considering the environment. We have done a lot of work around smarter travel – not to force people to change transport modes but to talk to them, and persuade them, to change modes where it is easy to do. Just telling people how to walk places encourages them. There are over 100 pairs of Tube stations in London where it is quicker to walk between them than take the Tube. I always feel slightly sorry for tourists that go down at Leicester Square and take the Tube to Covent Garden because it looks like quite a long way on the map, but it is actually quicker to walk.

We have also got a Climate Change Fund to do some of the investment ourselves in projects that wouldn't otherwise have a business case. We are taking the Mayor's lead in trying to encourage electric cars and hybrid electric cars. We have the Low Emission Zone which aims to reduce vehicle emissions from large vehicles and that seems to have been very successful.

We are also doing what we can with the vehicle fleets we own and influence, for example, introducing hybrid buses. Hybrid buses are no longer a technical step into the unknown - they are quite practical and I predict by 2010, everything our contractors buy will be hybrid and that hybrid will be a perfectly normal method of propulsion. We are looking at taxis too. We are also looking at energy savings on the Tube because we are going back to regenerative braking in order to save the additional power we are going to need to power the extra trains as a result of the line upgrades.

e) Improving further the safety and security of the travelling public

Boris came to power on a manifesto about safety. He didn't say that people are unsafe on London's transport network because actually, they are not. What Boris was talking about was the fear of crime and that is a concern to us because if people feel unsafe, they are less likely to use the network. That is why I specifically referred to the Overground where some of the North London

Line stations, particularly the Gospel Oak to Barking line stations, are now staffed throughout the hours of operation for the first time in nearly 50 years. As a result, patronage and revenue has shot up a mile because more people travel when they think that their fellow travellers are not likely to be committing grievous bodily harm.

We have now got more than 2500 uniformed officers on the transport network - more than ever before. But we have to do more because people demand the right not only to travel safely, but to feel safe when travelling. That is the reasoning behind Boris' alcohol ban which we have instituted and behind the increased police presence which we are delivering.

f) Making transport accessible to all Londoners

Accessibility is one of those words like integration – it means a lot of things to different people. Information is a key factor – if people don't know what they can do, they are not likely to do it. This relates to public transport information, information on the road network, information about how you can do things like bike hire when we get there, information on car sharing and car clubs and so on. We have moved somewhat in that direction and our Journey Planner is pretty good, although it could be better and we are constantly thinking of improvements. What is in our mind now is the development of PDAs (personal digital assistants) - the fact that I have got my email inbox in my pocket means information about every sort of journey in London ought to be just as accessible. This is a challenge because people need real-time information in different ways and in different places. If I were going straight home tonight, I would like to know whether the 8.45pm was running from Paddington. You don't need to know whether the number 11 bus outside is running up to the timetable because we don't tell you what the timetable is. You need to know that they are reasonably reliable. We still have quite a lot of work to do in presenting all of this in the right way to different people, in different places, at different times. I would like to think we are on to it but I think we can do better.

The other sort of accessibility is for disability and people with kids, buggies and luggage. We have done well on buses – the fleet is wholly accessible. That is why I was not worried about getting rid of the old Routemasters because they were not, and couldn't be, accessible. The bigger conundrum is the Tube where accessibility is really expensive. Individual station schemes can cost up to £100 or £150 million so while Boris and I would like to make all stations accessible, the money is simply not there to achieve it in the short-term and we have to be realistic about what we promise. One of the lessons of the first eight years is that an aspiration to do 33% on the Underground is fine but if you can't see where the money comes from, you better be pretty careful about how strongly you talk about aspiration as against talking about delivery.

g) London 2012 Games

Preparations for the London 2012 Games are a key example of how London and its transport must be planned together and how it can deliver long-lasting benefits to areas such as east London.

The transport elements of the Games have great virtues. Nothing we are going to do on transport for the Games will be wasted - it will all be useful for the subsequent development of the Games area. The other great virtue is that the work is on time and will be delivered. Neither of these stories will be picked up by the newspapers but both are true as is all the other stuff I could reel off about the DLR, capacity enhancements on the North London Line, legacy around traffic operations, the Transport Coordination Centre and the aim to achieve 100% attendance by public transport, walking and cycling. With Boris as Mayor, you will see a huge push towards cycling infrastructure because how better to travel to see Chris Hoy win another clutch of gold medals at the velodrome? Oddly enough, I don't stay up at night worrying about the Olympic deliverables because I know they will come right.

Conclusion

My brief look at ancient and recent history has been followed by some detail of where the new Mayor's policies are likely to take transport in London in the future.

You now, of course, have the chance to influence transport strategy. *Way to Go!* is not just a personal statement by the Mayor; it is a consultation paper that invites people to write back and say what they do and don't like. I recommend you read it and feed in your views as this will help inform the development of the Mayor's Transport Strategy next year which will also be consulted over, as will alterations to the London Plan.

I hope you have noted that running through this presentation is, implicitly, the political reality – transport matters for London and its future, and for Londoners. The Mayoralty is a focus, rightly, for both policy aspirations and delivery - and the Mayor is a politician. I am paid to implement policy. I do give advice, not all of it was listened to by the last Mayor and I don't expect all of it to be listened to by this one! Transport is an important subject in this city and I think it is absolutely right to have an elected Mayor who has direct control of a large, integrated transport organisation. You elect the Mayor on a manifesto and judge on political promises and results. Is it a perfect system? No. But it is better than being relegated to the "too difficult, too expensive" box by National Government. Does it depend on having a Mayor with vision and with leadership and a strategy? Unquestionably – the electorate needs to choose wisely and it has three times, so far.

The Mayor's decision to chair the TfL Board was absolutely right and demonstrated more clearly than any other action that he understands the position of transport in both what he has to deliver and what he is responsible for politically. And then lastly, does that make mine an easy job? The answer is no. I'm supposed to just focus on delivery but if you sit where I do, you get politicised. I have to put up with this because transport is a major issue for this

city and it is right that it is a central part of the political consideration of a Mayor.

Is this the best structure, arguably and politically, we have had yet? I would say “yes” – it is the best structure in my working life of 33 years. We need to make it work as well as we can, and we should try and get the Mayor more power because if the position had more power, for example, over the national rail network, we could deliver what we have done on the Overground elsewhere. I think a lot of people living in south London would be pleased with that.

The results I have described tonight, very briefly, demonstrate that this is a powerful structure and it is the right one for London.

Thank you

Peter Hendy
Commissioner of Transport