

# Retiming deliveries: a guide for local authorities



It is essential that local businesses are able to receive the goods and services they need to boost the economy and provide consumers with the services they require.

Continued success for towns and cities relies on safe, reliable, sustainable and efficient deliveries and servicing.

Retiming deliveries is about changing the times you make or receive deliveries, collections and servicing.

It's about choosing a less busy time – but one that works for you, your business, your suppliers and your customers.

In most cases, that less busy time is outside the peak periods. It could be early in the morning, between the morning and evening peaks, or later in the evening.

This guide aims to help local authorities make the most of the opportunities that retiming deliveries can offer by outlining the benefits and highlighting what needs to be considered to encourage and support good practices.

---

# Contents

**07**  
Developing a clear vision

---

**08**  
Benefits of retiming

---

**12**  
Getting support

---

**15**  
Setting up a plan

---

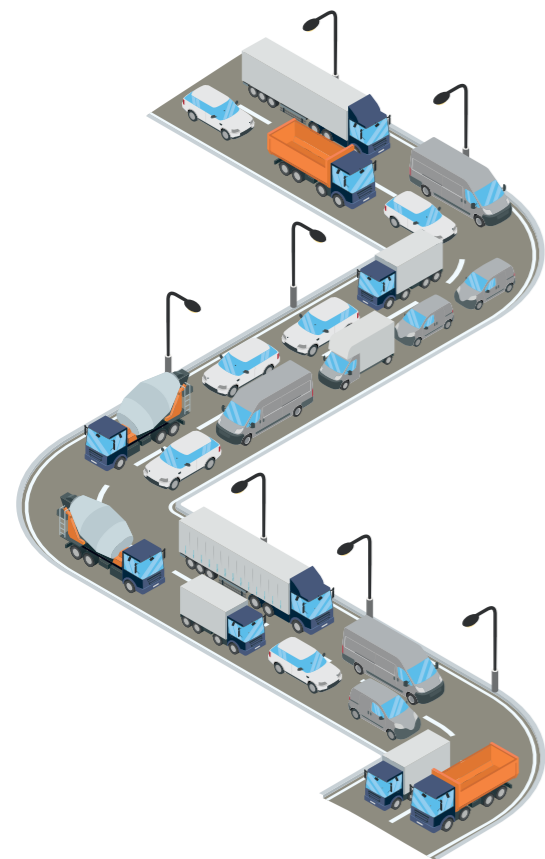
**19**  
Working with businesses  
and stakeholders

---



Deliveries, collections and servicing trips frequently take place when roads are at their busiest. This increases congestion at the times when more people are travelling, reducing safety and causing concentrated pollution in certain areas. Balancing the servicing needs of the local community with the health of the its residents is a concern for both local authorities and businesses.

**Fact**  
Deliveries are predominantly taking place in the mornings, with very few overnight.



Almost

**50%**

of all central London freight trips are between 07:00 and 13:00



Less than

**15%▼**

are made overnight (19:00 to 04:00)



(Source: TfL 2015/16 CCZ camera data)

Retiming deliveries, collections and servicing to avoid the busiest times of the day can bring significant safety, environmental and social benefits to businesses, local authorities and the community. Using a responsible approach, deliveries can be planned with minimal disruption to local residents.

Local authorities play an important role in enabling the successful transition of deliveries away from peak times. Supporting local businesses to achieve an efficient and environmentally-conscious delivery and servicing plan aligns with regional transport strategies and will assist in redefining business-as-usual for all areas.

**We used available air quality funding to develop a strategy and action plan to improve freight issues in our boroughs.**

**Westrans**  
(representing six West London boroughs)

As well as supporting the local economy by helping businesses to operate more efficiently, borough officers are able to ensure that any changes are introduced without adverse effects. Planning and development control, traffic enforcement, and environmental health teams all play an essential part in retiming deliveries, collections and servicing. Working together helps ensure the benefits of retiming are realised, sustained and developed into the future.



This guide aims to help local authorities make the most of the opportunities that retiming deliveries can offer by outlining the benefits and highlighting what needs to be considered to encourage and support good practices.

To enable and drive change, you will need to show the benefits of retiming in the context of your own borough – and across the region in general. It is important to:

1. Have a clear vision of the outcome
2. State the benefits to be gained
3. Ensure leadership support for retiming
4. Outline the changes and set up a plan
5. Work with businesses



# I. Developing a clear vision

All regional and local authorities have key priorities for their area. Three of these priorities are often the same and rarely change – safety, air quality and congestion. As many councils focus on meeting environmental targets for improving health, developing strategies to manage freight and servicing should be seen as an essential element.

In London, the Mayor's Transport Strategy highlighted key points to ensure London remains innovative and proactive for population growth and the expected impact it has on services and the environment. The Healthy Streets Approach, together with the freight and fleet operations within the Capital, form an integral part of the Mayor's Transport Strategy and contains many proposals to help support it. Local Implementation Plan funding and the Mayor's Air Quality funding is available for any borough initiatives or schemes that assist in this and aligns itself with the objectives of the strategy.

The Mayor, through TfL and working with the boroughs, will reduce the number of Londoners exposed to excessive noise and vibration levels from road transport in London by seeking to reduce the noise impacts of servicing and deliveries through appropriate design and management of delivery areas, promoting responsible behaviours, adopting best practice and encouraging the use of quieter vehicles and equipment.

Mayor's Transport Strategy 2018, London

Local authorities can use similar policies. However, a consistent approach is required, as businesses operate across all UK authorities and deliveries do not start and finish in one area. Use colleagues and peers, as well as senior management, to ensure your policies, approach and experience is shared.



## 2. Benefits of retiming

### Future proofing

Cities are growing and changing. Space is limited and the use of the road network needs to be balanced for all users. Having deliveries which are completed quietly, and spreading them more evenly throughout the day, provides many benefits including:

- Safer streets, with less risk of collisions between goods vehicles and vulnerable road users
- Reduced congestion and more efficient use of on-street loading facilities
- Air quality improvements, as traffic moves around the area more easily

Tackling peak time deliveries today means it will be easier to absorb growth in the future and the rise in demand for goods and services it will bring. It will also enable businesses to prepare for any permanent changes to the road infrastructure as part of any future regeneration schemes planned for the area.

Also, by including noise mitigation measures in the designs for all new developments, especially residential schemes, it will ensure that potential noise issues are minimised.

### Fact

As part of a retiming pilot scheme in the Wembley Park area, 14 deliveries were removed completely and another 25 retimed to take place outside the peak times, including five retail and restaurant premises. All pilot locations recorded significantly reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and one site achieved a 43 per cent reduction in NO<sub>x</sub>. The local authority is now considering expanding the scheme.

### Congestion

Reduced congestion on our streets during peak times not only makes streets safer for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, it also contributes to better air quality for residents. By improving the efficiency of deliveries through reducing the number of vehicles on the roads it helps ease congestion. So, too, does matching journeys to the capacity of the network and using sustainable modes. Therefore, a number of measures may be required as a single solution does not fit all.

Many van and lorry trips could be removed if freight and servicing activity was consolidated better, shifting those that needed to be made to different times of the day, (even by an hour or to the shoulders of the day), when the network is less busy, and by using water, rail and safer, quieter, less polluting vehicles.

As local authorities manage area-wide transport systems, the policy and highways teams play a vital part in reducing traffic demand and managing local congestion so it is essential to work closely with them to deliver improvements to the streets.

**As London grows, so does traffic congestion and air pollution. This has a major, damaging impact on public health. Nearly 9,500 people die early each year in London because of poor air quality.**

[LoCity.org.uk](http://LoCity.org.uk)

### Efficiency

Ensuring that a responsible approach is being used and delivery activity takes place at the most convenient times could reduce costs for the authority. Administration and time spent investigating minor issues, the enforcement of traffic or loading and noise regulations could be reduced.

There are clear benefits with having better network flow and using the roads at quieter times. It also means it is easier for other users such as public transport, dial-a-ride, patient transport, breakdowns, utilities, police, fire, emergency and other public services.

### Local economy, public realm and services

Removing non-essential goods and servicing vehicles from peak time traffic creates a more pleasant place for the local area. The public realm is improved by having fewer visible vehicles and less loading activities taking place at the times when more people are around. It also allows businesses, including those which form part of the night time economy, to receive goods and services at times more convenient to their operations.

Less traffic improves the environment for all local businesses, making it a more desirable place for trading, boosting the economy and ensuring that facilities and services for residents remain local. As better services become available, the desire to live in the area also increases which has an impact on council rates and properties.

**In the City colleagues from Environmental Health, Strategic Transport and industry work together to review servicing arrangements and times to achieve the aligned aims of our Noise, Air Quality and Freight Strategies, ensuring businesses can continue to serve the local community.**

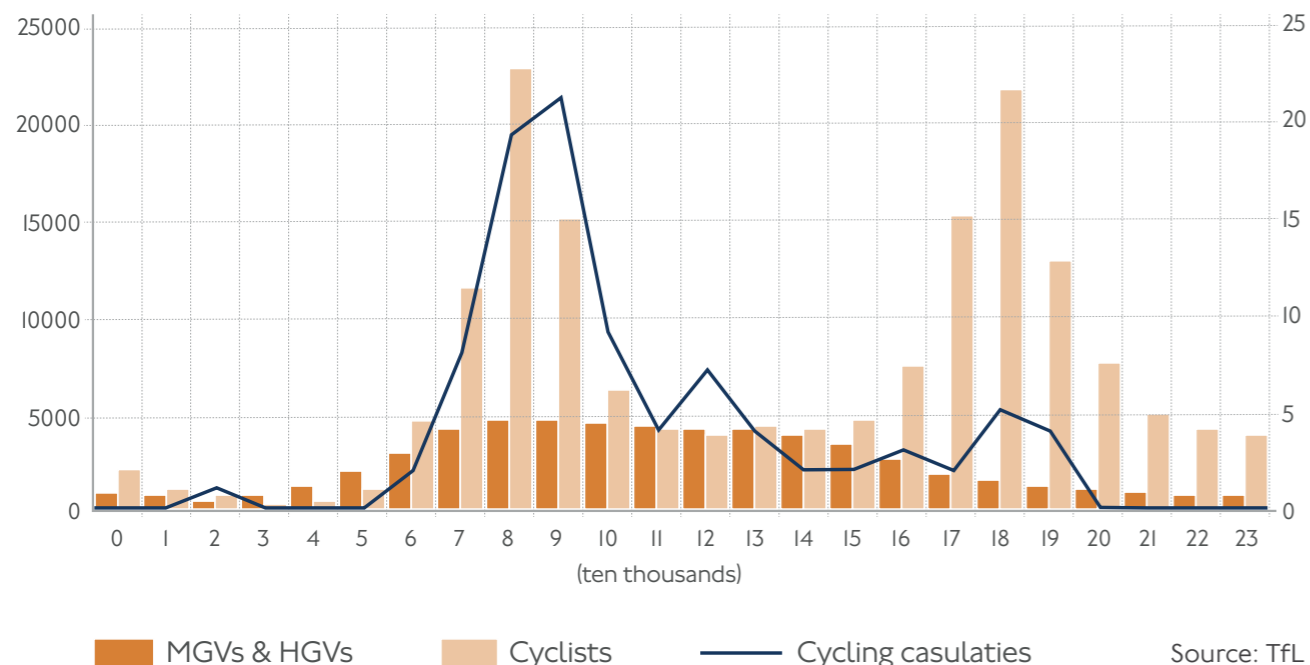
[City of London](http://CityofLondon.org.uk)

### Safety, environment and health

- Delivering when there are fewer vulnerable road users on the road means there is less risk of accidents. Many local authorities already enforce time zones around schools to prevent incidents. Some companies also retime their delivery activities to avoid the school runs and achieve business efficiencies too
- The chart below shows that in central London, cyclist collisions involving HGVs are much greater during the morning peak times



### Cyclist casualty collision involving HGVs in CCZ (2012-2014)



### Emissions (CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>) reduced and noise

- London and the UK Government are currently facing a £300m fine for poor air quality
- HGVs and vans make up around 35% of all road-based NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in Greater London. This is not just a London issue
- Traffic congestion increases vehicle emissions and degrades ambient air quality
- Congestion diminishes the dispersion of vehicle-related pollutants since vehicle-induced turbulence depends on vehicle speed (Source: Benson, 1989). So lower vehicle speeds can increase pollutant concentrations on the roads
- Congestion can also affect driving patterns, resulting in more speedups, slowdowns, stops and starts, which increase emissions
- Retiming to quieter, less busy periods allows better traffic flow at all times and reduces the time spent in congestion for everyone
- It is possible to carry out deliveries at quieter times using a responsible approach which mitigates the key causes of noise disturbance and doesn't increase complaints from residents. Guidance developed collaboratively with local authorities, businesses and the Noise Abatement Society is now available
- Promoting the use of quieter equipment reduces noise generally, at any time of day
- Reducing congestion when more people are around improves air quality and reduces overall traffic noise which leads to a healthier environment



# 3. Getting support

A number of misconceptions exist around the retiming of deliveries which present unnecessary barriers for businesses wanting to retime. Local authorities are able to remove these barriers, and some of the perceptions, particularly in relation to noise and resident impact.

Raise awareness with colleagues, councillors and other representatives about the benefits of retiming and the services provided by the local businesses with the local community, and highlight the responsible approaches used by many of them. This will help manage expectations and build better places that work for everyone.

### Mythbuster

**'Changing delivery times outside of peak times will disturb our residents. No-one likes to be woken up at 4am!'**

Changing delivery times outside of peak times does not mean carrying out all deliveries during the night. The aim of retiming deliveries is to move the delivery out of the peak times, especially in the morning (06:00 – 10:00). Many businesses have proved this can be successfully done without disturbing residents or the local community. Taking a collaborative approach with businesses and residents in the conversation can help dispel misconceptions and manage expectations.

Principally, the council is seeking to improve the health of residents through improvement in local air quality so a scheme that reduces the volume of heavy vehicles on the borough's highway will have benefits in reducing emissions of harmful pollutants. Fewer vehicles will also help to reduce congestion on local roads, particularly at peak hours which inconveniences residents and businesses.

The potential for noise nuisance from off-peak deliveries was a concern for the council. However, the technologies employed ensured that no noise complaints were received and residents living close to delivery areas were not negatively affected.

London Borough of Brent



### Mythbuster

**'There will be a noise abatement notice, planning condition or other reason that restricts us from considering a change to delivery times'**

You may be surprised to know that only a small number of planning conditions or noise abatement notices exist that prohibit retimed deliveries. The TfL Retiming Deliveries Programme worked with businesses and local authorities in London to change delivery times at over 530 premises, moving more than 166,000 deliveries a year out of the peak. Less than five per cent of these had an existing restriction for delivery times. Any existing restrictions can be reviewed and changed following the appropriate application process. Support from local authorities for relevant changes is crucial for success.

### Fact

Freight traffic is more an issue of vans than HGVs.

In 2015

**75%**

of peak freight road trips were by van



and

**25%**

by HGVs



In 2016, records show that vans were being bought at a ratio of 10.5:1 compared to HGVs

(Source: Department of Transport, Vehicle Licencing Statistics)



## 4. Setting up a plan

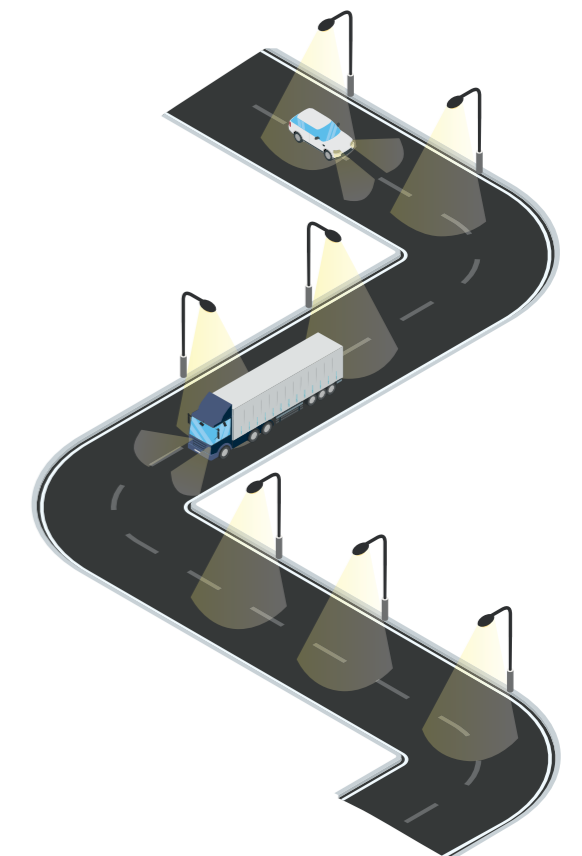
Promoting and enabling more delivery and servicing activity out of the peak times should be a key element of any borough-wide or regional strategy for managing freight. All local authorities can implement a number of short and long term actions to influence change, ensure support and promote businesses wishing to retime and contribute to improving the local area.

These can include considerations at a strategic or departmental level. Some examples are listed below:

### Strategic

- Embed retiming into borough and regional freight strategies along with consolidation, safety and air quality
- Expand the use of localised or borough-based quiet deliveries and retiming schemes to optimise off-peak, evening and, where appropriate, night time deliveries (with separate planning, environmental and highways approvals where these are required)
- Consider funding and resources that would be required. Funding is available for freight projects that support clean air initiatives. In London, this is available through the Mayor's Air Quality Fund and other schemes which provide funding for projects that assist in improving air quality and safety
- Consider joining or establishing wider area-based pilot schemes with other local authorities to reduce congestion and improve air quality

- Encourage local Business Improvement Districts to retime the deliveries within their area and support them where required
- Notify all employees of freight considerations and ensure these are and remain part of business-as-usual
- Raise awareness of quiet deliveries – train own staff and drivers and consider if delivery of services to your own buildings can also be changed
- If in London, work with London Councils to review and update the permitted routes and roads under the London Lorry Control Scheme (LLCS)





## Planning

- Ensure that reducing congestion is embedded within business-as-usual. From the early stages of a planning application, allow for deliveries to take place at all times, manage land for distribution purposes and ensure adequate loading facilities (and size) are provided for both current use and future demand. Ensure retiming is considered for appropriate activity in construction logistics plans (CLP).
- Consider including noise mitigation measures in all applications (residential and commercial) for building design, for deliveries to the building or nearby buildings, and ensure retiming is part of the delivery and servicing plan (DSP)
- Allow a temporary trial or pilot to gauge the success of a retimed delivery and assess any local impacts it may have. Usually, three, six or 12 month pilots often provide a good understanding of the potential or real impacts before planning conditions are changed. Feedback can also be received from local residents to ensure retiming is appropriate for that particular location

- Review all existing applications for delivery time restrictions regularly and with businesses wanting to retime responsibly. Many conditions may no longer be relevant for the premises or the area (even without change of use) and notify the property owners if an opportunity is now possible.
- Use and promote the use of TfL's kerbside loading guidance and the building design guidance for quieter deliveries

**New developments will be expected to be designed to encourage efficient, safe and low-emission delivery and servicing trips. Planning permissions should secure delivery and servicing plans that support off-peak (including night-time) deliveries.**

Mayor's Transport Strategy 2018, London

## Transport

- Discuss all traffic and scheme changes for freight/loading impacts, with architects, designers and the planning teams. Some local authorities have carried out full reviews across the borough to ensure future development and growth can be accommodated
- Ensure adequate loading facilities (and size) are provided for both current use and future demand, and that the times match local requirements. A larger loading area will be able to take a single large lorry or several vans
- Set times to be used for loading to encourage activity out of peak times and set the durations for loading at the best time for the activity required. Larger vehicles require longer but will not have to deliver as frequently and in some areas several smaller vehicles may visit every 10 minutes
- Consider changing traffic orders to enable more retiming for businesses wanting to retime responsibly, and support better use of the road network capacity. Some changes may be needed to roads to allow access from alternative side or rear roads
- Advise local parking and loading enforcement officers of any changes and any voluntary agreements with businesses, especially during any trial periods

## Environment

- Consider and support requests from businesses which are able to retime responsibly – those committed to, and using good practices, and demonstrating use of the TfL Code of Practice for quieter deliveries or, for complex sites, a noise management plan
- Ensure a balanced view is adopted if a complaint or restriction arises, investigate the root cause and, in collaboration with the business/operator, consider the use of 'best practicable means' to achieve a timely and fair outcome for all
- Advise the use of site and noise assessments, and of soundscape principles
- Promote a responsible approach through better equipment and better behaviours (a quieter equipment guide, training pack and other awareness tools are available)
- Agree and set up voluntary agreements or trials with businesses to ensure retiming options can be maximised
- Contact local community groups to advise of the benefits of retiming, both to them and the local area, and alleviate concerns about noise mitigation measures



## 5. Working with businesses and stakeholders

It's important to develop a plan for internal engagement and communications across the local authority, as well as one for external partners, businesses and residents.

### Internal

- Identify the relevant colleagues who could be involved in enabling or encouraging retiming deliveries and ensure retiming is something for them to consider. This could involve environmental, planning, transport or communications teams
- By communicating the benefits of retiming across departments, including any local trial outcomes, it can ensure freight and retiming deliveries can be embedded into business-as-usual
- Answer any questions or concerns from colleagues, management or councillors to ensure everyone understands the benefits, that the authority's strategy is consistent and any resistance or misperceptions are dealt with from a position of knowledge and insight

### External

- Explain what you are doing, why you are doing it and what you need from your suppliers and other stakeholders, including local resident groups if necessary
- Understand what delivery conditions are currently being imposed on businesses within the borough and why. Working with businesses on planning applications to change restrictions, in some cases historical ones which are no longer relevant.
- Consider collaborative approaches with partners, community groups, town centre managers, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Working in partnership with groups can improve awareness and promote the mutual benefits

### Further information

For more information on guidance and tools on retiming deliveries visit [www.tfl.gov.uk/retime](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/retime)

© Transport for London

May 2018

PUB17\_063\_5.1.3