

Accessibility of the transport network

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At its meeting on 26 May 2010, the Committee agreed to undertake an investigation into the accessibility of the transport network with the following terms of reference:

1. To examine the extent to which current measures designed to improve the accessibility of TfL's services meet the needs of those with reduced mobility;
2. To assess the scale of the challenge in making the transport system accessible for the projected increasing numbers of people with reduced mobility; and
3. in light of the findings, make recommendations to the Mayor and TfL for further steps to take to improve transport services for people with reduced mobility and meet the challenge of increased demand.

The Committee welcomes feedback on its report. For further information, contact Laura Warren in the Scrutiny Team by: letter c/o of City Hall, More London, SE1 2AA; email laura.warren@london.gov.uk; or telephone: 020 7983 6545. For press enquiries contact Dana Gavin by telephone: 020 7983 4603 or email dana.gavin@london.gov.uk

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Chair's foreword

Many Londoners with reduced mobility encounter barriers when using public transport. People with disabilities, older people, and parents using prams cannot use Tube and rail stations because there are too many steps. They report bus stops blocked by lamp columns and litter bins or bus drivers failing to stop to let them board.



Our investigation has revealed the extent of this problem. It shows there are at least 890,000 Londoners with reduced mobility but major parts of the public transport network are physically inaccessible to them. Less than one-quarter of Tube stations and just one-third of London's rail stations have step-free access. All buses have ramps but only 50 percent of bus stops are fully accessible.

This situation is set to worsen. By 2031, there will be more than one million Londoners with reduced mobility. Many will be living in areas where currently fewer than half of all stations and bus stops are accessible. This will adversely affect people's lives. Many Londoners with reduced mobility have told us about their complicated, lengthy journeys on public transport because accessibility is so limited.

The Mayor and TfL have committed to improving accessibility but their current plans will not meet future demand. By 2018, one in three bus stops may still not be fully accessible. Less than one-third of Tube stations and fewer than half of rail stations will have step-free access. Major infrastructure projects such as Crossrail and Thameslink will deliver some improvements but only some.

In a period of constraints on public finances, it will be difficult to achieve significant improvements to physical infrastructure. But this should not diminish the Mayor and TfL's commitment. They should continue to invest in improving the physical accessibility of Tube, rail and bus services. They should be exploring the potential to realise improvements through a range of different measures.

We have heard, and seen, that some relatively low-cost actions could improve accessibility. Interchange stations could be improved through the provision of better signage. The Tube might be more accessible if the use of manual ramps was permitted. Bus drivers might provide a better service to people with reduced mobility if they received more practical training. If implemented soon these measures could help ensure there is a more accessible transport network when London hosts the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our investigation. This has followed on from our previous work on door-to-door transport services. We continue to urge the Mayor and TfL to provide high quality transport services for all Londoners including those with reduced mobility. We look forward to receiving responses to this report and our recommendations.

Valerie Shawcross AM, Chair, Transport Committee

Executive summary

Demand for accessible transport in London outstrips supply and the situation is set to worsen.

The Transport Committee has found that there are at least 890,000 Londoners with reduced mobility¹ but many parts of the transport network are physically inaccessible to them.

- Only 61 of London's 270 Tube stations have step-free access from street level to platform.² Even fewer - 10 - are fully step-free including from platform to train.³
- Just one-third of London's 300 rail stations have step-free access from street level to platform.⁴
- Whilst all London's buses now have ramps, only half its 17,476 bus stops meet all three of TfL's criteria for full accessibility.⁵

Not only is there too little provision of accessible transport across London but many people with reduced mobility live in areas where there is least provision. In four London Boroughs with the largest number of people with reduced mobility, fewer than 50 per cent of stations have step-free access and fewer than 50 per cent of bus stops are fully accessible.⁶ A number of petitions presented to the London Assembly calling for the introduction of step-free access at certain stations shows the level of demand is particularly high in some areas.⁷

Moreover, the number of Londoners with reduced mobility is set to rise. The Committee has found that by 2018 there could be nearly 40,000 more people with reduced mobility. By 2031, the timescale for delivery of the Mayor's Transport Strategy, there could be a further 150,000. This would bring the total to more than one million Londoners with reduced mobility. The number of London Boroughs with more than 30,000 residents with reduced mobility will rise from 10 in 2010 to 18 by 2031. Many of these residents will be living in areas where the provision of step-free stations and fully accessible bus stops is currently low.

This represents a significant challenge. Whilst TfL has plans for improvements to accessibility, these will not meet this increased demand. By 2018, the proportion of step-free Tube stations is projected to grow to

¹ Appendix 1 of this report provides more details of the data used for this report

² Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 15

³ TfL Travel in London report 2 2010 page 173

⁴ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 15

⁵ London TravelWatch written submission, June 2010

⁶ See Appendix 1. They are the London Boroughs of Barnet, Bromley, Croydon and Enfield. All have more than 30,000 residents with reduced mobility

⁷ For example, in March 2010, the Assembly received a petition with over 1000 signatures calling for the introduction of step-free access at Finsbury Park station.

just 27 per cent, the proportion of step-free rail stations to 47 per cent and the proportion of fully accessible bus stops to 65 per cent.⁸

Despite the constraints on public finances, the Mayor and TfL should continue to invest in improving accessibility. But they need to prioritise this investment wisely. Their decisions on which stations to make step-free and which bus stops to make fully accessible should be informed by the Committee's findings on the current and future numbers and locations of people with reduced mobility. They will need to reflect on decisions already taken about the introduction of step-free access including withdrawing plans for this at six Tube stations. They should take account of the views of people with reduced mobility and their representative organisations about the areas of most need.

In the short-term, the Mayor and TfL also need to consider other, low-cost, measures that might enhance accessibility. The Committee has heard of many relatively simple actions that could be taken to improve the journeys made by people with reduced mobility. These include: allowing the use of manual ramps on the Tube; introducing "accessibility champions" at stations to ensure a co-ordinated high-level service from all staff regardless of mode or transport operator; involving people with reduced mobility in the provision of training to bus drivers; and publishing service standards that people with reduced mobility should expect when travelling on buses.

If implemented in the next six months, such measures might help to ensure that, when London hosts the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, visitors with reduced mobility, as well as residents, can travel more easily around the capital. Such measures could help ensure there are fewer occasions when Londoners with reduced mobility report a poor service on the Tube, overground rail and buses.

⁸ TfL Business Plan 2009/10-2017/18, October 2009, Appendix A

Introduction

The Mayor and Transport for London (TfL) have committed to making public transport accessible for all Londoners.⁹ The Transport Strategy sets out a 'whole journey' approach. The Mayor wants accessibility at all stages of a journey – from when someone plans a trip to the information they receive during the journey to when they switch between different modes such as the Tube, bus and train.¹⁰ TfL has adopted the social model of disability. It accepts that it is society's response to a person's impairment that creates disability. It, therefore, works to identify and remove the obstacles that anyone might face when trying to use its services.¹¹

Nevertheless, Londoners with reduced mobility continue to report barriers when using public transport. People with disabilities, older people, and people with young children using buggies and prams have to make complex, lengthy journeys because few Tube and train stations have step-free access. Worst, some report failed or dangerous journeys: bus drivers refusing to stop to let wheelchair users board or driving off too quickly before people have settled in their seats.

Moreover, such issues are set to worsen. As London's elderly population is forecast to grow, the number of Londoners with reduced mobility will rise. There is likely to be an ever-growing call for TfL's services to be more accessible.

The Transport Committee has, therefore, undertaken an investigation into the accessibility of the transport network. It has taken a 'whole journey' approach but focused primarily on Tube, trains and buses since these are the most popular modes of public transport. It has sought to identify:

1. The extent to which current measures designed to improve the accessibility of TfL's services are meeting the needs of those with reduced mobility; and
2. The scale of the challenge in making the transport system accessible for the projected increasing numbers of people with reduced mobility.

This investigation was conducted from May to November 2010 and involved a number of stages. The Committee held a meeting in June when over forty people and relevant organisations attended to discuss the barriers to public transport and offer ideas for improvements. The Committee held a further meeting in September where it questioned TfL, the Association of Train Operating Companies and Network Rail about accessibility. More details of all the stages are set out in Appendix 2. The

⁹ TfL Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p3

¹⁰ The Mayor of London, *Mayor's Transport Strategy*, May 2010, page 172

¹¹ Transport for London, *Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme 2009-2012*, 2009, page 16

Committee is grateful to everyone who has contributed to this investigation.

The remainder of this report sets out the Committee's findings and recommendations. The first section gives an overview of current and future demand for accessible transport and provision. The subsequent sections highlight some of the main accessibility barriers before, and during, journeys on the Tube, trains and buses. They also offer some possible solutions to help improve the accessibility of London's transport network.

For the purpose of this investigation, the Committee has defined people with reduced mobility as people of all ages who use wheelchairs, have other disabilities or walking-related difficulties or travel with young children using buggies and prams. It can be difficult to determine the exact number of people with reduced mobility. The Committee has made the best estimate possible, in conjunction with the GLA Intelligence Unit, on information available. The GLA Intelligence Unit has applied TfL findings on the percentages of people with a travel-related disability from 5 years old upwards to current and future population estimates to produce the data in this report. This also reflects the numbers of 0-1 year olds to provide for the number of Londoners using buggies and prams. Further details about the data can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

Demand for accessible transport

Does current provision meet the demand for accessible transport?

The Committee has found that there are at least 890,000 Londoners – more than one-tenth of its population - who have reduced mobility. This includes people who use wheelchairs, have disabilities or other walking-related difficulties, and people with young children who may use buggies and prams.¹² Not all of these people will use public transport. Those that do might not always experience difficulties. But some will encounter barriers. All should be able to make the same journeys on public transport as fully mobile people.

However, many parts of the transport network are physically inaccessible to people with reduced mobility. Only 61 of the 270 Tube stations have step-free access from street level to platform.¹³ Even fewer – 10 - are fully step-free including from platform to train.¹⁴ Just one-third of London's 300 rail stations have step-free access from street level to platform.¹⁵ Whilst all London's buses have ramps, only half its 17,476 bus stops meet all three of TfL's criteria for full accessibility.¹⁶

There is a mismatch between where people with reduced mobility live and the provision of accessible stations and bus stops. In four London Boroughs with more than 30,000 residents with reduced mobility, fewer than half the stations have step-free access and fewer than half the bus stops are fully accessible.¹⁷ This means that not only is overall demand for accessible transport not being met but that many people with reduced mobility are living in areas with the least provision.

The number of people with reduced mobility per London Borough is shown in the map below. Appendix 1 sets out the data which underpins this map.

¹² Further details about the data can be found at Appendix 1 of this report

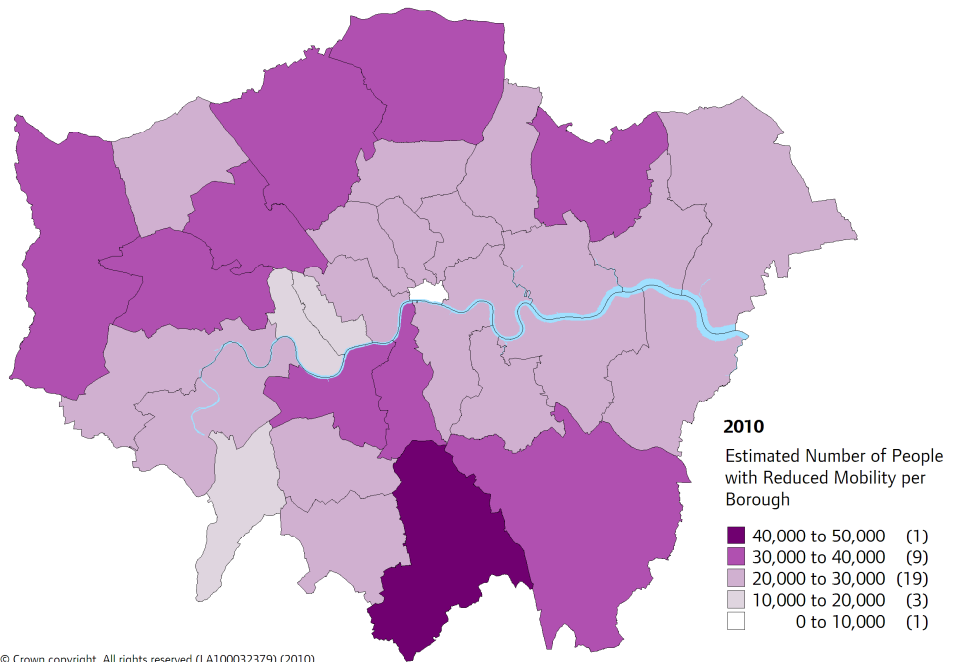
¹³ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 15

¹⁴ TfL Travel in London report 2 2010 page 173

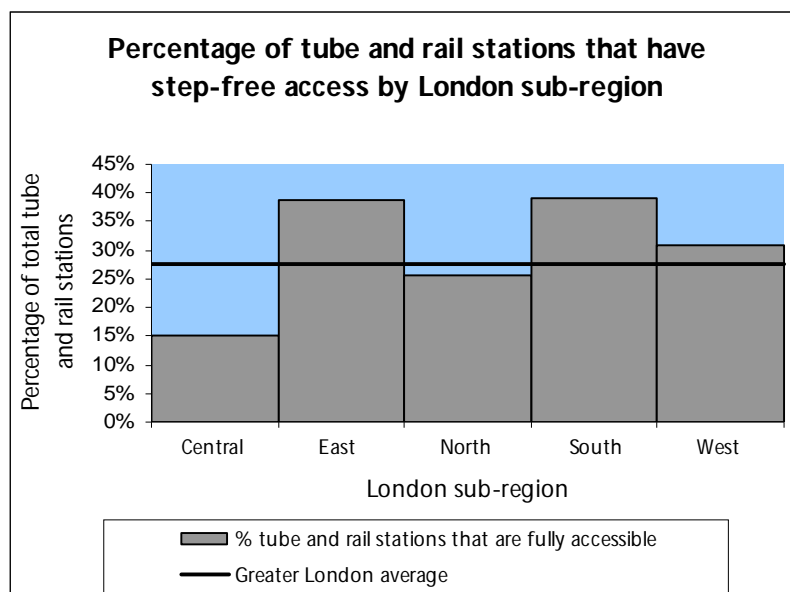
¹⁵ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 15

¹⁶ London TravelWatch written submission, June 2010

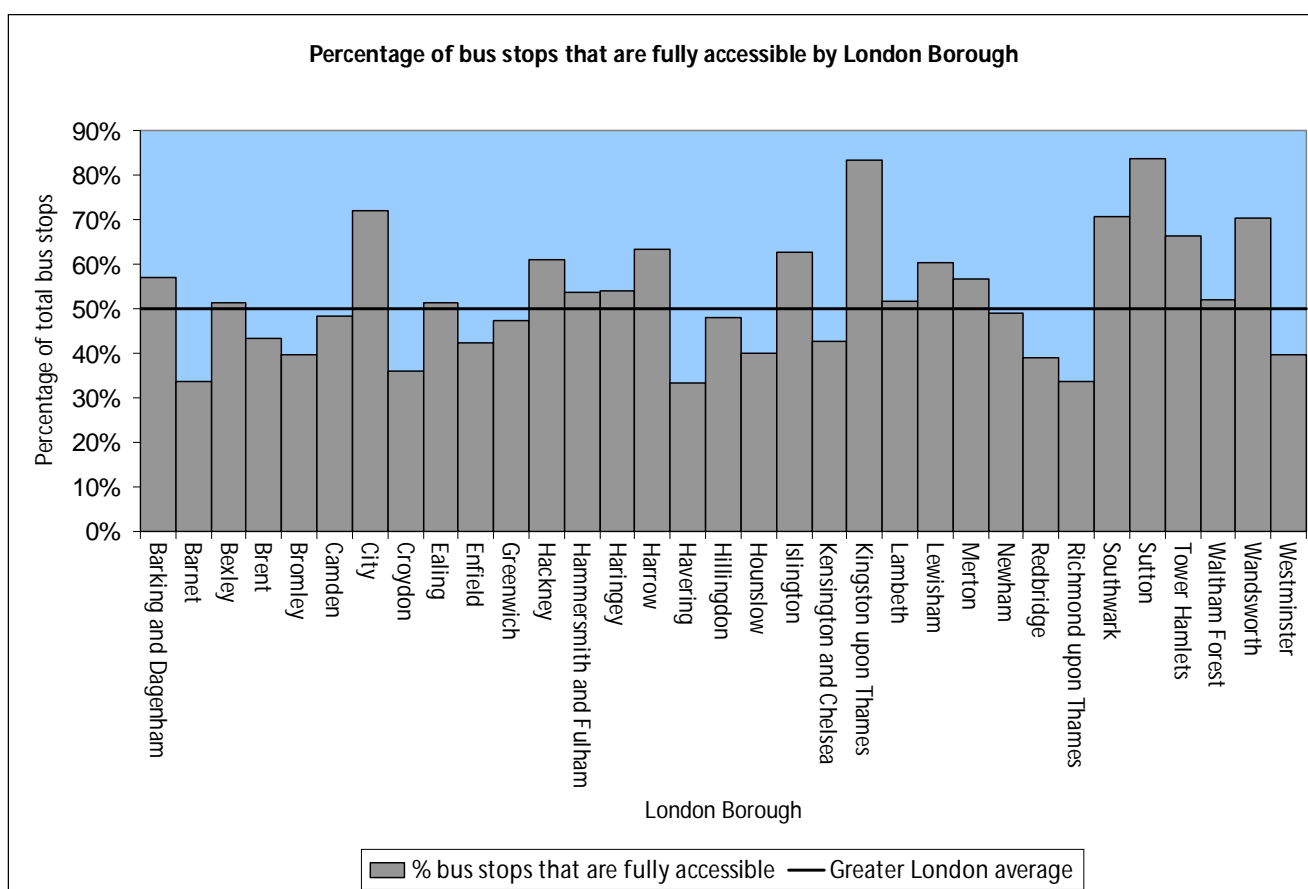
¹⁷ These are the London Boroughs of Barnet, Bromley, Croydon and Enfield. All have more than 30,000 residents with reduced mobility



The proportion of Tube and rail stations with step-free access per sub-region in London is shown in the chart below. The information for stations has been shown sub-regionally because these stations are not the responsibility of London Boroughs and are overseen by TfL, Network Rail and Train Operating Companies. Appendix 1 sets out the data which underpins this chart.



The proportion of fully accessible bus stops per London Borough is shown in the chart below. Appendix 1 sets out the data which underpins this chart.



The Committee has received many written submissions which demonstrate the gap between demand for accessible transport and provision. They reveal how this gap adversely affects people’s choices for making journeys or limits their opportunity to travel altogether. The following comment is typical:

“I have a baby in a buggy and I am pretty much unable to travel on either the Tube or trains. There are virtually no ramps or lifts anywhere. Stations which do have access are few and far between. If your destination is not accessible, you have to get off at a station you didn’t necessarily want to disembark at just because there is a lift. That’s

hardly public transport! Every station should be accessible to every Londoner.”¹⁸

Steve’s travel diary

Steve, a wheelchair user, who regularly travels from Weston Super Mare to Southwark recorded his experiences over 4 days in July 2010.

- On 8, 15 and 22 July, he used overground rail trains to get to Paddington and then taxis. These journeys were fine. Staff at Paddington were understanding, professional and organised. They assisted with ramps to help him get into and out of trains and taxis.
- On 29 July, he thought he would try to complete his journey from Paddington by Tube. He found a lift to the Tube station but when he asked about getting onto the right London Underground line, he was advised that there was no lift to the platform. He was advised to catch a bus instead. However, once on board the bus, he found it would take over an hour to get to Southwark. This was too long. He disembarked at the next stop and caught a taxi instead.

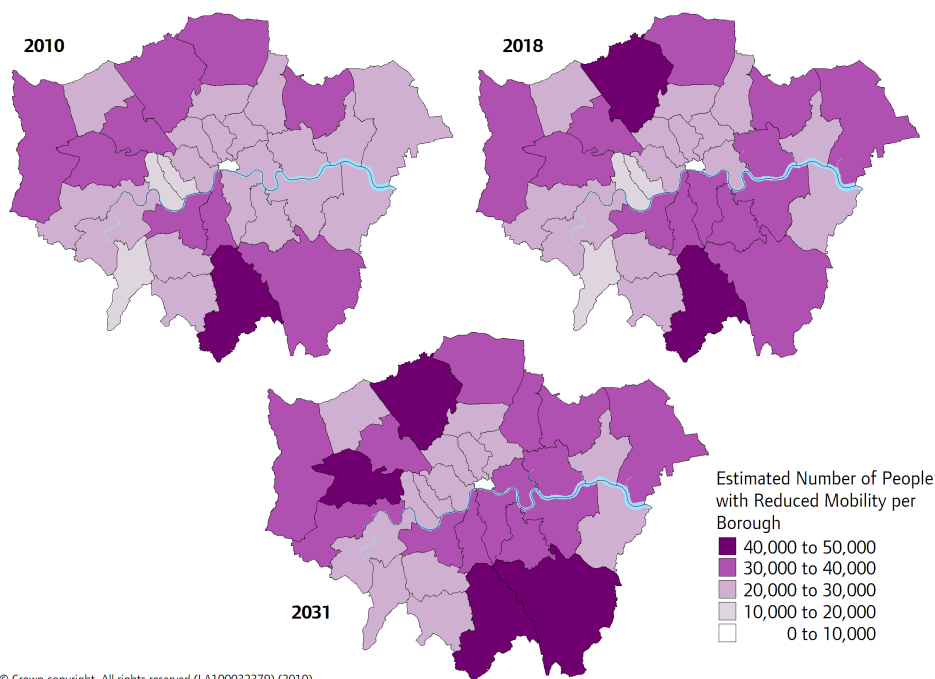
Steve was shocked that Tube services at a major station such as Paddington are inaccessible for a powered wheelchair user. He commented “I do love coming to London and want to visit more but the lack of Tube station access is unacceptable. How will disabled athletes get on in London for the Olympics if they can’t even use a main London station?”

Is the situation going to improve or worsen?

The number of Londoners with reduced mobility is set to increase. By 2018, the end of TfL’s current business plan, there could be nearly 40,000 more people with reduced mobility. By 2031, the timescale for delivery of the Mayor’s Transport Strategy, there could be an additional 150,000. This would bring the total to more than one million Londoners with reduced mobility.

The maps below depict this growth in the numbers of people with reduced mobility geographically. They show that the number of London Boroughs with more than 30,000 residents with reduced mobility will rise from 10 in 2010 to 18 in 2031. Many of these residents will be living in areas where the provision of step-free access and fully accessible bus stops is currently low.

¹⁸ Lindsay Wright written submission via email



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The Mayor and TfL's current published plans for improving accessibility will not meet this increased demand. By 2018, the proportion of step-free Tube stations is projected to grow to just 27 per cent, the proportion of step-free rail stations to 47 per cent and the proportion of fully accessible bus stops to 65 per cent.¹⁹

There could be some improvements through new major infrastructure projects, assuming they are delivered as planned. Of the 37 stations on the Crossrail route, 31 (84 per cent) are due to have step-free access from street level to platform.²⁰ This is welcome. Such projects provide a good opportunity to install step-free access which is often more difficult and expensive to fit retrospectively. It has been estimated that Crossrail and Thameslink may result in a 40 per cent increase in the number of step-free journeys possible.²¹

There is a risk that planned improvements will be scaled back in the current financial climate. TfL has stated that it is committed to removing physical barriers but the rate of improvement will have to reflect its ability to fund these schemes.²² Network Rail reports that, under the Government's Access

¹⁹ TfL Business Plan 2009/10-2017/18, October 2009, Appendix A

²⁰ <http://www.crossrailnews.co.uk/nav/stations.php>

²¹ TfL Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p10

²² TfL Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p24

for All programme, it is planning to deliver step-free access at 40 rail stations in London by 2014 but has no funding for any works thereafter.²³

In light of the growing demand for accessible transport at a time of constraints in public finances, the Mayor and TfL need to commit publicly to ensuring funding is in place to deliver the published targets for step-free stations and fully accessible bus stops by 2018. The Committee also urges them to take every opportunity to identify and secure further funding to provide more step-free access at other stations and more fully accessible bus stops. Without such investment, the gap between the demand for accessible transport and the provision is set to widen.

Planning the provision of accessible transport

TfL's basis for planning improvements to accessibility is the Mayor's Transport Strategy. It sets out a policy framework for realising an accessible transport system by improving physical infrastructure, information provision and staff service. Its specific proposals include increasing physical accessibility by prioritising step-free access at strategic interchanges. More details of how the proposals will be delivered are covered by the accessibility implementation plan. They are also shown in TfL's Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme (DES) 2009-2012. This document is revised each year and progress reported annually.²⁴

TfL has reported on mechanisms in place to ensure its approach to accessibility is integrated. It has an interchange team which is a cross-modal function that prioritises and delivers integrated improvements drawing on interchange best practice guidelines. It also works with Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and London Boroughs where appropriate.²⁵

An integrated approach at interchange stations?

Despite the documents and processes, there has been criticism of a lack of an integrated approach to planning and delivering improvements to accessibility. David Sindall, Head of Disability and Inclusion at ATOC, said there was scope for improvement. He commented that passengers get very frustrated by a lack of co-ordination between different transport modes.

²³ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 32

²⁴ TfL's Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p5

²⁵ TfL's written submission, 11 October 2010

They can have accessible stations and rail services but find they cannot get from their home to the station.²⁶

Case studies – two interchange stations

In July 2010, the Committee visited Liverpool Street and Stratford Regional stations with a representative of London TravelWatch, two people who use wheelchairs and one person who uses a walking stick. It found the accessibility varied and there was scope for improvements.

Liverpool Street station

- There is step-free access from street to the rail station and to the Tube ticket office but you can only get to the east bound Hammersmith and City line and Circle line platform by a ramp. The Central line is inaccessible. The bus station is only accessible by a narrow doorway.
- There is a lack of adequate signage. The lift providing step-free access and the one accessible toilet are not very well sign-posted. The signage for buses on the main station concourse mentions the bus station but gives no details of services available from there nor from Bishopsgate.
- There are no raised kerbs to make it easier for wheelchair users to get into taxis at the taxi rank at rail platform 10. The provision of a raised kerb might be a relatively low-cost measure that could enhance accessibility.

Stratford Regional station

- In advance of the 2012 Games, lifts are being installed to make all rail services step-free from street to platform. There is step-free access to the DLR and the Jubilee line platform.
- Despite improvements, there are still issues. One lift was too small to fit both a wheelchair user and their carer. TfL has reported most lifts have capacity for 12 people but the lifting platform from the Jubilee line to the Western subway has a 400kg maximum weight capacity which equates to 4 people or fewer with equipment.²⁷ There is no step-free access to the Central line platform.
- There is inadequate signage for bus services which are complex to find because of the gyratory system. Some services require people

²⁶ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 13

²⁷ TfL's written submission, 11 October 2010

to travel half a mile through the nearby shopping centre to get to a bus stop. This bus stop is not fully accessible due to a waste bin at the kerb, no clear-way and its location in a lay-by.

Identifying priorities for future improvements to accessibility

TfL is now developing a physical accessibility strategy to identify both rail and Tube stations that should be made step-free after 2018. This seeks to take account of existing proposals for introducing step-free access including the Mayor's priority to improve strategic interchanges. It will then look to prioritise step-free access at stations on radial routes into central London where the proportion of step-free stations will still be low in 2018.²⁸

TfL takes into account a range of factors when determining the stations to improve. Alongside the priority to improve strategic interchanges, it considers: the proximity of existing step-free stations; how many people are using the stations; the areas they serve including amenities such as hospitals and health centres; and the costs of making improvements and their feasibility.²⁹ TfL also takes into account local demographics. It has acknowledged that there will be an increase in older Londoners by 2031 which is likely to mean more disabled people with particular mobility and access needs.³⁰

The Committee suggests that, in developing its physical accessibility strategy, TfL should take into account the information the Committee has identified on the estimated current and future numbers and location of people with reduced mobility. This could help to identify the areas where step-free Tube and train stations and more fully accessible bus stops are most needed.

Consulting on priorities for future improvements

TfL's priorities for future improvements to physical accessibility should also incorporate the views of people with reduced mobility. Transport for All cited the slogan "nothing about us without us." It queried "How can you design a bus or think about a service that will work for disabled people without involving disabled people?"³¹ Trailblazers, an association representing young people with muscular dystrophy, reported that if its

²⁸ TfL written submission, Appendix 4, August 2010

²⁹ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 33

³⁰ TfL's written submission, 11 October 2010

³¹ Faryal Velmi, Transport for All, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 33

members' needs were within the thought processes of those making changes it would make a big difference.³²

TfL has previously involved people with reduced mobility in its work. In 2007, it set up an Independent Disability Advisory Group to enable disabled people to help shape its future strategy and work.³³ In the same year, it published a document on improving accessibility on the Tube. This sought proposals for how to expand the step-free programme after 2013 and which stations to concentrate on.³⁴ In its Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme 2009-12, TfL has committed to putting in place a process to ensure there is consultation on major accessibility schemes and projects at the earliest opportunity.³⁵ TfL has also told the Committee it will consult on its future step-free programme post 2018 to take account of users' needs.³⁶

The Committee welcomes TfL's intention to consult users on plans for future accessibility improvements. It should do so at the earliest opportunity. This is a period of uncertainty. The cuts in public spending raise issues about whether or not planned improvements will happen. The Mayor and TfL should make clear which stations will receive step-free access and which bus stops will be made fully accessible by 2018, and the options for further improvements thereafter. This will provide an opportunity to ensure relevant organisations and individuals with reduced mobility can help inform decisions about the prioritisation of resources for the services they need.

The Government has recently announced that its Disabled People's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) will be abolished. This body provided advice on access for disabled people. The Government is now looking at ways it can gain this advice through a more flexible, accountable structure.³⁷ TfL has previously consulted DPTAC's rail group when planning improvements. In its absence, TfL should ensure that it has processes in place to hear from a wide range of relevant organisations and individuals with reduced mobility.

³² Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 36

³³ TfL Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p35

³⁴ London Underground: Towards an Accessible Tube 2007

³⁵ TfL Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p21 and 40

³⁶ TfL written submission, page 10 August 2010

³⁷ Public bodies reform – proposals for change, 14 October 2010

Recommendation 1

By June 2011, TfL should:

- a) in conjunction with relevant organisations including Network Rail, the train operating companies and London Boroughs, use the Committee's information on the numbers of people with reduced mobility and their location to develop its physical accessibility strategy post 2018;**
- b) Publish its physical accessibility strategy for consultation with people with reduced mobility and relevant organisations. The strategy should set out the plans for improving accessibility until 2018 and the options for providing further step-free stations and fully accessible bus stops thereafter; and**
- c) Publish details of the organisations and individuals it will consult and how in relation to its physical accessibility strategy. This should include clarification on the future of its Independent Disability Advisory Committee.**

Before the journey – improving pre-trip information and support

There is a large amount of information available about the accessibility of TfL services. This can be found online, in publications and via telephone helplines. However, issues have been raised about the quality and quantity of the information. A few relatively small-scale actions might help make it easier for Londoners with reduced mobility to plan their journeys.

TfL's online Journey Planner

Some minor enhancements to TfL's Journey Planner could improve its information about accessibility. Trailblazers would like it to include the height of steps and platforms on the Tube network. Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea suggest it shows details of fully accessible bus stops.³⁸ The NCT would like to see the integration of online national rail service and TfL's travel information to make it easier to plan accessible journeys.³⁹ At present a person could indicate they have a disability when using Journey Planner but it would only give TfL service options. It would not show national rail services which might be more accessible.

TfL is improving Journey Planner. The interactive map now provides detailed information about accessibility features at each station including the availability of lifts and the number of steps between platform and train. TfL is now developing a new option to provide tailored information for disabled users.⁴⁰ It is also working on ways in which the National Rail Enquiries website and Journey Planner could be better linked. TfL told the Committee it would follow-up the suggestions for further improvements.⁴¹

TfL's publications

Some people have highlighted problems with the accessibility information published in TfL's maps and guides, including those on Tubes and buses. Anne Fox of NCT commented "some buses have a very strange little route map that only shows a bus is going to stop in some places. On the Tube, the central London map is not wide enough, so it does not always have the accessible access points printed. [TfL should] think about the fact that some people will plan a journey, and in the middle of the journey, need to change it. It just becomes hellish!"⁴²

³⁸ Written response, August 2010

³⁹ NCT, *Response to London Assembly Transport Committee investigation* June 2010, page 3

⁴⁰ TfL's written submission, 11 October 2010

⁴¹ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 53

⁴² Anne Fox, NCT, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 14

Others have suggested that the information can be misleading or unclear. For example, the wheelchair sign which denotes accessibility at a station does not set out the extent of the access e.g. step-free from street to station from station to platform and/or from platform to train. It also does not make clear if both electric and manual wheelchairs can be accommodated.⁴³

Transport for All has suggested there may be too many TfL publications about accessibility. It also reports that some are too complicated. The map showing gaps between platforms and trains at interchange stations is particularly large and quite difficult to understand. Faryal Velmi, Director of Transport for All, suggested “better maps that are easier to understand and communicated to Tube users would be a great step forward.”⁴⁴

TfL could do more to share its information about accessibility with other organisations to develop more useful publications and travel planning tools. For this investigation, it has provided much information including many spreadsheets detailing the various accessibility features at stations. It has also published this data on the London Datastore. This is welcome. TfL should publish all its accessibility related data on the London Datastore so citizens and organisations may be able to see and use this.

Alongside its online and printed publications about accessibility, TfL should continue to ensure its telephone helplines provide a good service for people with reduced mobility. Some people have commented that the recent introduction of a charge of 15 pence per minute when calling the TfL’s customer service number is unfair. They would like this service to be free for disabled people.⁴⁵

One-to-One travel assistance programmes

TfL’s travel assistance scheme has been commended as a useful service. This scheme helps people with reduced mobility plan a trip they might take regularly. It then provides a mentor for the first few times they make the trip. Transport for All has argued for more funding for the scheme which it describes as a “useful confidence-building service”.⁴⁶ Other organisations have also expressed support. Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea suggests there should be more publicity for this scheme so it might help support more people with reduced mobility.

⁴³ Mark Cowling written submission via email

⁴⁴ Faryal Velmi, Transport for All, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 15

⁴⁵ Written submission from Sandy Marks

⁴⁶ Transport for All, *A response to the GLA Transport Committee’s investigation*. June 2010, page 11

In recent years, TfL has amended the scheme to involve more borough participation. It spent £159,000 on the scheme in 2009/10, providing support for 8,544 journeys, often through third parties. TfL has suggested that there are now many such schemes operating in at least 15 London Boroughs.

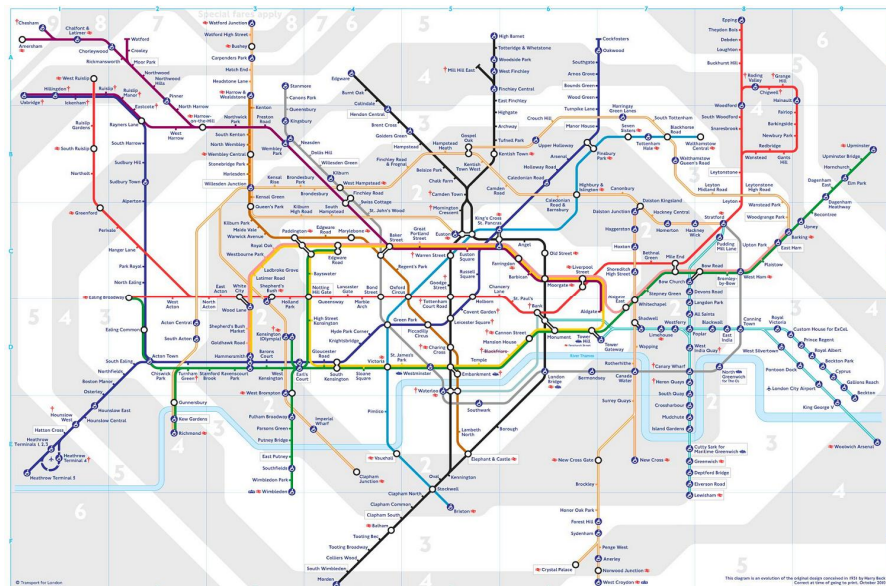
Recommendation 2

By June 2011, TfL should enhance pre-journey information and support for people with reduced mobility by:

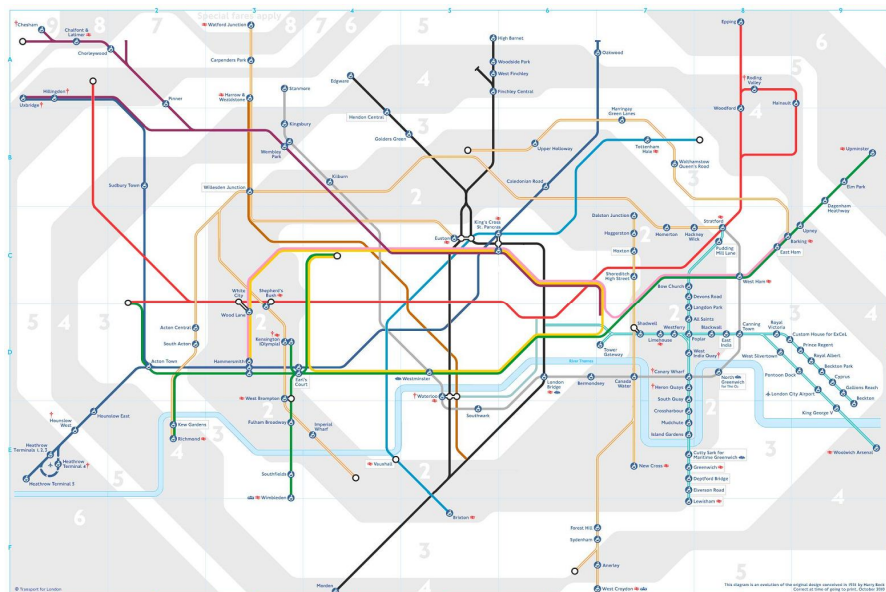
- a) Including details on its online Journey Planner of the heights of steps and platforms at Tube and Overground rails stations, the accessibility of bus stops and possible national rail service options;**
- b) Streamlining, in consultation with relevant groups, the range of publications and maps about accessibility;**
- c) Publishing all its data relating to the accessibility of transport services on the London Datastore; and**
- d) Extending, in collaboration with relevant organisations including London Boroughs as appropriate, its travel assistance scheme so it supports more than 10,000 journeys p.a. by people with reduced mobility in 2011/12 and each year thereafter.**

During the journey – improving accessibility of the Tube and Overground Rail

The TfL service most frequently criticised for its inaccessibility is the Tube. As the world's oldest metropolitan railway system, it is neither easy nor cheap to improve its accessibility. Yet it is an integral part of London's transport system. The map below shows the full extent of Tube, London Overground and DLR stations across London.



By contrast the map below shows how few Tube and Overground stations are accessible to people with reduced mobility. It highlights their limited options for making journeys on the Tube and Overground rail.



Recent developments pose a risk that the Tube's accessibility will actually decline. The Mayor's decision in 2009 to cut plans for step-free access at six Tube stations (Amersham, Greenford, Ladbroke Grove, Newbury Park, Osterley and West Kensington) has been followed in 2010 by proposals to reduce staff at Tube stations. These staff often assist people with reduced mobility. Many organisations have been critical of these proposals. Transport for All commented:

"It is such a complete lack of joined up thinking. We have Government telling disabled people that you need to get to work and do not rely on benefits [but] how disabled people are going to get to work is completely ignored."⁴⁷

In this context, the Mayor will need to ensure other actions are being taken to improve the accessibility of the Tube and rail services.

Step-free Tube and rail services

TfL should consider where it is possible to make relatively small-scale improvements to enhance physical accessibility at Tube and rail stations. Many people have highlighted stations where there is an inconsistency of step-free access that could be addressed through the installation of a ramp or other measures. One person commented:

"I do find it enormously frustrating when I see stations that could easily be made more accessible and are not. For example, Honor Oak Park which could easily have step-free access from station to platforms. Recently the ticket office was refurbished to include a low ticket window for those in wheelchairs .., but there is no way for those individuals to get to the platforms!"⁴⁸

The NCT suggests more markings on platforms to denote the areas where the gaps between platforms and trains are small. It believes this could help a wheelchair user or someone with a buggy find a safe place to board.⁴⁹ Others have suggested more raised slopes or "humps" be fitted on platforms. These have already been installed on some platforms in London's stations such as King's Cross. They also suggest that TfL permit greater use of manual ramps across London Overground and the Tube. Such manual ramps are already provided by train operators on railways

⁴⁷ Faryal Velmi, Transport for All, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 16

⁴⁸ Karen Ledwich written submission via email

⁴⁹ Anne Fox, NCT, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 18

across the UK. This means that London's rail services provide a much greater provision of step-free access from platform to train than the Tube.

Tanvi's travel diary

Tanvi, a wheelchair user who regularly travels on the Tube, detailed her experiences over a week in July 2010.

- On the first day, she tried to travel from Edgware Station to King's Cross on the Northern Line. Despite Edgware Station being marked accessible on the Tube map, she found a large step up from platform to the train which was too great for an electric wheelchair. She gave up and returned home.
- On the second day, she tried the same trip but in a manual wheelchair. There was a problem at King's Cross so she got off at Euston which looks accessible on the Tube map. However, the accessibility symbol was for the Overground line. She pressed the help point for assistance but the staff were rude.
- On the third and fourth days, she undertook her regular trip from Stanmore to Southwark on the Jubilee Line. There is difficulty accessing Stanmore station because of a step down to the platform where she requires assistance. On one day no staff were available and she had to ask passers-by to assist.
- On the fifth day she travelled from London Bridge to Hendon Central on the Northern Line. Despite being marked as accessible on the Tube map, the step down from the carriage at Hendon Central was too large. She had to change her plans and take a taxi instead. This cost £50.

Tanvi was frustrated by her experiences. She suggested the installation of platform "humps" or the opportunity to use manual ramps on the Tube could help ensure stations marked accessible are truly accessible. Portable ramps could cost as little as £60 each.

TfL does not permit manual ramps on the Tube network due to the high frequency of services, the narrowness of platforms, congestion and concerns about safety.⁵⁰ Instead, it is now pioneering platform "humps" and introducing new trains to provide level access on Tube platforms. Yet, as the table⁵¹ below shows, these improvements will not happen for some years. They will also not deliver a consistent pattern of level-access platforms across the Tube network.

⁵⁰ TfL written submission, 11 October 2010

⁵¹ TfL written submission, 11 October 2010

London Underground Line	Number of level access platforms installed	Number of level access platforms yet to be installed
Victoria	11	20
Metropolitan	23	9
Circle, District, Hammersmith & City	N/a – no new trains until 2011/12	90 to be installed from 2010-16 in line with new trains
Piccadilly	2	To be confirmed – linked to train replacement
Northern	2	To be confirmed – linked to train replacement
Jubilee	26	To be confirmed – linked to train replacement
Bakerloo, Central	N/a	To be confirmed – linked to train replacement

In the short-term, TfL should consider where it might be possible to permit the use of ramps at Tube stations. For example, at stations at the end of lines such as Stanmore on the Jubilee line, where there might be less frequent services and lower congestion. TfL has said it will keep the use of ramps under review.⁵² Richard Parry of TfL told the Committee that he would explore the potential for use of ramps at terminating Tube stations.⁵³

Other accessibility features at Tube and rail stations

TfL has taken steps to improve the non-step free accessibility features at Tube and rail stations. Between 2003 and 2009, 124 stations in the Underground network (47 per cent) received some form of enhancement. By 2018, 77 per cent, or 207 stations, should be improved.⁵⁴ The enhancements include: improved handrails to ensure appropriate heights and designs for people with reduced mobility; improved steps and stairs to provide a visual contrast at the leading edge of each riser and tread; installing induction loops; improved signs and way-finding to help people navigate around stations and trains; and installing tactile warning surfaces on every platform and on all staircases.

Yet the range of accessible features can vary from station to station. Whilst one station has good signage, a tactile warning surface and an accessible

⁵² TfL written submission, 11 October 2010

⁵³ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 30

⁵⁴ Transport for London *Business Plan 2009/10 – 2017/18* October 2009, page 98

public toilet, another station may not. TfL does not have a standard definition and set of criteria for accessible stations. It suggests accessible can mean different things to different people. It provides information on all accessibility features so a person can decide for themselves if a station is accessible.⁵⁵

Many organisations want to ensure there is a consistency of accessibility features at stations. Nicholas Russell of Guide Dogs for the Blind commented: "Even if you cannot implement step-free access make sure, for goodness sake, that you at least do key things like installing the tactile platform edge marking. This can improve access but cost a lot less."⁵⁶ The NCT suggested that simply ensuring toilets at stations had baby-changing facilities could help.⁵⁷ It reported it cost as little as £5 or £6 to buy a pull down baby changing table for every toilet.⁵⁸ Few Tube stations have public toilets. In March 2006, the Assembly found there were just 88 Tube stations with public toilets.⁵⁹ Of these, only 16 have baby changing facilities.⁶⁰

Many have argued for improved visual information at stations. Inclusion London, the RNID⁶¹ and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association have emphasised the importance of developing the display information at Tube stations. The London Borough of Barnet Learning Disabilities Partnership Board has suggested replacing the dot matrix signs with higher resolution signs to improve visibility. One person with reduced mobility commented: "I would ask to have more signage to indicate where the lift actually is and where Underground lines are. Pushing a wheelchair up and down the platforms trying to find the right way is not easy!"⁶²

TfL has acknowledged that all the accessibility features at a station are important. Richard Parry told the Committee there was "little point making a big investment [in stations] if you do not get the small things right. We are very committed to doing what we can to get signage and other relatively low cost investments right to make the greatest use of our facilities."⁶³ The Committee's visits to Liverpool Street and Stratford Regional stations highlighted the benefits of undertaking checks or audits at stations, with people of reduced mobility, to assess accessibility and the scope for small-scale measures to realise improvements.

⁵⁵ TfL written submission, page 9 August 2010

⁵⁶ Nicholas Russell, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 34

⁵⁷ NCT, *Response to London Assembly Transport Committee investigation*, June 2010, page 8

⁵⁸ Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 11

⁵⁹ London Assembly report, An urgent need: The state of London's public toilets, March 2006

⁶⁰ <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/toilets-map.pdf>

⁶¹ RNID, *A response to the Transport Strategy Investigation*, June 2010, page 4

⁶² Lynette Sutton's written submission via email

⁶³ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 21

The Committee welcomes TfL's commitment to making sure all non-step free accessibility features at a station are right. There is scope to develop a common set of criteria for such features and for TfL to undertake audits at stations, with relevant organisations, to assess the extent to which stations match these criteria. Where they do not, TfL could work with people of reduced mobility to identify any potential low-cost solutions.

Staff support at Tube and rail stations

Many organisations are concerned TfL's proposed cuts to ticket office staff on the London Underground will adversely affect people with reduced mobility. The changes could see a net reduction of around 700-800 staff at Tube stations and reduced hours for some ticket offices from 2011. Some stations may have just one member of staff.⁶⁴

Transport for All has argued that these "cuts will have a disastrous impact on the freedom and independence of disabled and older Londoners. Oyster machines and CCTV will not replace staff for people with blindness or learning disabilities who cannot use automatic ticket machines and do not feel safe without staff present."⁶⁵ The NCT suggests the proposals would render some currently accessible stations inaccessible. Staff would no longer be available to help parents with buggies up the stairs. The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association commented that, following cuts to the step-free access programme, "staff were going to hopefully paper over the cracks a bit so that some of the access obstacles could be overcome."⁶⁶

In response to the criticisms, TfL has stated its commitment to maintaining fully and safely staffed Tube stations. It has argued that the changes mean staff can be deployed where there is most need.⁶⁷ Richard Parry of TfL told the Committee that the proposed changes reflect a dramatic fall in demand for ticket offices. He said "we know, therefore, that we can reduce the resource that is usually behind glass which is relatively inaccessible to customers, disabled or not, and instead focus our resource on being out in the public space where it can assist customers... Our focus is very much on continuing to provide the same level of customer service and assistance particularly to those who need it most."⁶⁸

⁶⁴ 'London Underground outlines vision for a safe, efficient and transformed Tube', TfL press release, 11 March 2010

⁶⁵ Transport for All letter to The Guardian, 30 August 2010

⁶⁶ Nicholas Russell, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 17

⁶⁷ TfL's letter of 16 August 2010 to London Visual Impairment Forum, Transport for All and Inclusion London's letter

⁶⁸ Transcript of 9 September meeting 2010, p 13

The proposals, though, may put at risk the potential for people with reduced mobility to simply turn up and travel on the Tube. At present, more than one member of staff at Tube stations means people with reduced mobility can expect to receive support without having to notify the station in advance. This opportunity for 'turn up and go' travel is the Tube's one accessibility advantage over rail services. On national rail, an Assisted Passenger Reservation Service (APRS) operates. This offers people with reduced mobility the opportunity to pre-book assistance on journeys to ensure staff are available to meet them at stations. Staff can then guide them to trains and put in place manual ramps. Whilst some argue this ensures people can travel with confidence⁶⁹, others highlight that it can limit spontaneous travel. TfL is now working to extend the APRS to the Tube.⁷⁰

TfL has not set out clearly how it will ensure these staffing proposals do not adversely affect the service for people with reduced mobility. Some organisations have made suggestions. Trailblazers has suggested TfL could provide more on-board mechanisms on Tubes so passengers with reduced mobility can alert drivers of their presence. They could then, in turn, notify any staff at stations that assistance may be required.⁷¹ Others suggest more help points for passengers with reduced mobility.⁷² However, help points are not necessarily the answer if people are not able to press buttons or if they have speech impediments. TfL has highlighted that on Overground rail, CCTV monitors are switched to view help-points whenever these are pressed. Staff can then go to the help-points if necessary. At the least, TfL will need to ensure similar arrangements for the Tube.⁷³

At some stations with different transport services there may be scope for existing staff to provide more assistance. Staff from Network Rail, train operating companies, bus companies and London Underground should be familiar with the accessibility features for all the modes at the stations where they work. They could then assist people with reduced mobility wherever necessary. This could help to ensure a more co-ordinated, joined up approach to accessibility at interchange stations. TfL could take a lead amongst transport operators to ensure this happens by appointing existing staff to act as "accessibility champions." They could help ensure a more co-ordinated, joined up approach to accessibility at interchange stations.

⁶⁹ London TravelWatch, *Response to London Assembly Transport Committee*, June 2010, page 5

⁷⁰ TfL written submission June 2010

⁷¹ Tanvi Vyas, Trailblazers, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 18

⁷² London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea written submission, August 2010 and Trailblazers at June meeting

⁷³ TfL written submission, 11 October 2010

Recommendation 3

By June 2011, TfL should enhance the accessibility of Tube and Overground rail for people with reduced mobility by:

- a) Providing alternatives to step-free access including allowing people to use manual ramps wherever possible on the Tube and Overground rail networks. For example, at terminating stations;**
- b) Introducing a minimum set of criteria for the accessibility features at a Tube station and an Overground rail station;**
- c) Working in partnership with disability groups to put in place a programme of accessibility audits for all stations. These should assess how far stations meet the minimum set of criteria and where they do not identify any low cost solutions. TfL should publish the findings from these audits;**
- d) Publishing its assessment of the impact on people with reduced mobility of proposals to reduce staff at Tube stations and the measures it intends to put in place to mitigate the impact; and**
- e) Appointing an existing member of staff to act as an “accessibility champion” at each interchange station to ensure a co-ordinated approach to accessibility across different transport modes and operators. These “accessibility champions” should organise training for all staff at each station which ensures they are familiar with the accessibility of all modes and can assist people with reduced mobility in relation to any service.**

During the journey – improving accessibility of the buses

The bus should be TfL's accessibility success story. Since 2005, all of London's buses have been step-free due to the installation of ramps. Since 2009, all buses have had on-board audio visual information (the IBus system).⁷⁴

However, despite the physical improvements, there remain considerable issues for people with reduced mobility using buses. There are problems arising from an inconsistent service from bus drivers. There are still many inaccessible bus stops. Many passengers with reduced mobility are being let down by buses which are often cited as the most accessible form of transport.

For the foreseeable future, the bus will remain the only physically accessible London-wide transport mode operating around the clock. TfL needs to do all it can to ensure it delivers the best service possible for people with reduced mobility.

Bus driver service

The Committee has received many submissions about poor bus driving from people with reduced mobility. These include reports of bus drivers failing to give people enough time to settle into the accessibility bays or seats or not allowing people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters to board. They also include examples of bus drivers: not parking close enough to the kerb to allow the bus ramp to operate; turning off the IBus system; and not communicating changes to the route or a sudden cessation of service. The Committee has also received complaints about bus ramps not working despite TfL's processes to check their reliability.⁷⁵ In the first ten months of 2009/10, TfL received 4,217 complaints about bus driver behaviour related to disabled people.⁷⁶

Some of the reports suggest bus drivers do not appreciate the needs of people with reduced mobility. Henrietta Doyle of London Visual Impairment Forum gave an example of a blind woman who used a white cane. This woman came to the front of a bus to be let off but the driver refused to stop three times because she was at the front of the bus and he did not understand the significance of the white cane.⁷⁷ Geraldine O'Halloran of Inclusion London, who is deaf, reported an occasion when the bus driver did not appreciate she was deaf, shouted after her as she

⁷⁴ TfL Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p13

⁷⁵ TfL reported to the Committee that it undertook independent ramp inspections with all contracted bus operators on a monthly basis. From June 2009 to June 2010 it inspected a total of 2,246 bus ramps and found five buses had defective ramps. TfL's written submission, June 2010

⁷⁶ Caroline Pidgeon AM MOT

⁷⁷ Henrietta Doyle, London Visual Impairment Forum, Transcript of 23 June meeting, p 20

went upstairs about checking her ticket and then stopped the bus until she came back down. She found it embarrassing. She said “in situations like these there needs to be more understanding from bus drivers.”⁷⁸

Bus driver training

Some people have argued for improvements to training for bus drivers so they provide a better service to people with reduced mobility. Transport for All suggests ensuring practical real life experience is communicated to drivers from a very early stage. Faryal Velmi commented “It is all right [bus drivers] having a lesson about the social model of disability but they need to be shown how to apply it in an everyday situation.” She suggested this could be achieved by bus garages linking up with local groups of disabled people.⁷⁹

Case study – bus driver training on disability awareness

Members attended three TfL disability and diversity awareness training sessions for bus drivers at Camberwell, Cricklewood and Stanmore bus garages between September and November.

This one day training course, designed by the disability charity SCOPE in conjunction with TfL, seeks to assess and increase all bus drivers’ awareness and understanding of disability and diversity issues. Upon completion, bus drivers gain Unit 3 of the BTEC qualification in Professional London Bus Service Delivery. The course comprises nine modules delivered in a training room using paper-based tests, presentations and group discussions.

The Committee found the quality of this training varied.

- The course was theory-based with little practical guidance. Only one of the nine modules covers possible scenarios. There are no “real-life” examples e.g. videos of people with reduced mobility sharing their experiences.
- Such theory-based training requires highly skilled trainers. On some, but not all, occasions trainers were able to engage bus drivers to explore the practical application of the training.
- On one occasion the training materials were of poor quality. They contained spelling errors and potentially misleading facts.
- On one occasion the training session took place in an inaccessible room at the top of a building.
- The scope of the training was broad. It covers the whole range of

⁷⁸ Geraldine O’Halloran, Inclusion London, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 6

⁷⁹ Faryal Velmi, Transport for All, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 6

TfL equality target groups without adequately addressing the differences in the requirements of different groups.

TfL has stated that it wants to “evolve the bus driver training”. It acknowledges the quality of trainers is vital and has recently agreed with the bus operators that staff delivering the training need to be qualified. They will, as a minimum, have ‘Preparing to Teach in the Life-long Sector’ (PTLLS) level 3 qualification. TfL also pointed out that training is only part of the story. It uses other tools such as the Big Red Book which provides guidance to bus drivers to get key messages across.⁸⁰

There may be scope for TfL to make other improvements to enhance bus drivers’ performance. Its guidance, the Big Red Book, could be improved to set out clearly what is expected of drivers e.g. in relation to permitting mobility scooters on buses. Transport for All has highlighted that some drivers are allowing these scooters on buses whereas others are not.⁸¹ TfL’s recent edition of the Big Red Book is vague in its guidance on scooters. It contains a simplistic image of what is permitted. It states “as a general rule, if you think it will fit safely into the wheelchair space, it is OK to allow it but large motorised vehicles cannot travel on buses.” More specific guidance might ensure a better consistency of service.

TfL could publish the service standards for buses so people with reduced mobility know what they should expect. This would build on the Mayor’s pledge prior to his election to ensure no bus would be allowed to leave the garage if the disabled ramp was not working.⁸² The service standards could include that the lbus system should be turned on at all times and that drivers should wait for people to get seated. TfL has reported that bus timetables can provide for drivers to be considerate. Drivers should give passengers, including wheelchair users, time to settle in their positions before driving off.⁸³

Some organisations have suggested introducing performance targets for drivers relating to the service provided to people with reduced mobility. For example, Age Concern would like disability and age awareness to be part of assessing drivers’ performance.⁸⁴ Others suggested bus drivers’ ID is displayed to make it easier to compliment good performance and report any problems. One person commented:

⁸⁰ TfL’s written submission, 11 October 2010

⁸¹ Faryal Velmi, Transport for All, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 10

⁸² Boris Johnson’s Transport Manifesto, 2008, p7

⁸³ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 45

⁸⁴ Age Concern London, *Response to the Mayor’s Draft Transport Strategy*, January 2010, page 2

"Why do the drivers not have their personal number on display? It used to happen on London buses. It happens with taxi drivers. I would suggest that there might be a lot less aggravation from drivers if they were clearly and easily identifiable."⁸⁵

Priority use of the accessibility bays in buses

A frequent issue raised about bus drivers is their role in enforcing wheelchair users' right to use the accessibility bays. Transport for All reported that almost on a weekly basis it received calls from wheelchair users waiting 30-45 minutes for a bus since many buses arrive with the accessibility bays already occupied by people with buggies, prams and luggage. Whereas, a couple of years ago, the main issue was bus ramps not working, the main problem now was a lack of space for wheelchair users.⁸⁶ It wants to see bus drivers doing more to ameliorate the situation. They should play the pre-recorded message which asks non-wheelchair users to vacate the accessibility bays.⁸⁷

People with disabilities and parents using prams and buggies should be able to use a bus at the same time. Whilst the size of some prams and buggies has grown in recent years, it is not always feasible for parents to use smaller models. Anne Fox of the NCT told the Committee that "buggies are not luxury items". They were necessary to transport babies and young children safely. Parents often favoured bigger models as they had more than one young child and also needed to carry shopping.⁸⁸

Some organisations have suggested more awareness-raising publicity about the accessibility bays. The NCT reported parents might not know that wheelchair users have a right to the space. The London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea has suggested providing publicity via the on-board IBus system and posters.⁸⁹ TrailBlazers supports more posters too. It suggests these should get passengers thinking about the issues as well as advertising who has the right to space.⁹⁰ One person suggested the publicity highlight to parents and users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters the size of the accessibility bays and what could be accommodated. She also suggested that manufacturers be encouraged to label their prams and buggies to show if they would fit on buses so people could take this into account when deciding which models to purchase.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Max Reid, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 26

⁸⁶ Anne Fox, NCT, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 9

⁸⁷ Faryal Velmi, Transport for All, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 4

⁸⁸ Anne Fox, NCT, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 34

⁸⁹ Written submission, August 2010

⁹⁰ Tanvi Vyas, Trailblazers, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 7

⁹¹ Belinda Price, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, p24

TfL has told the Committee that the conflicts over the use of accessibility bays are an important issue. It is now looking at how it can get passengers and bus drivers to work together to improve the situation.⁹²

The design of buses

The high demand for accessibility bays shows the importance of providing buses in future which can accommodate more people with reduced mobility. Whilst the Mayor has pledged to ensure the renewed Routemaster is fully accessible,⁹³ he has not undertaken consultation on the early designs for this new bus to ensure this is the case.

Many, including Transport for All and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, are concerned at the lack of consultation. Transport for All is disappointed that the new bus for London will not have space for both prams and wheelchairs. Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea has urged the Mayor to engage with local groups on this vehicle which it thinks may necessitate further changes to bus stops.⁹⁴ TfL will share mock-up designs of the new bus with stakeholders. However, such engagement will take place at a late stage in the design process and may limit the scope for any changes.

In the future, the Mayor and TfL will need to consider designing and commissioning buses which accommodate more people with reduced mobility. Trailblazers has highlighted that in Nottingham the bus operators have looked at buses with more flip-up seats. This type of design can accommodate more people with prams, wheelchair users and scooters and also increase the standing-room capacity on the bus during rush hour.⁹⁵ TfL reported that it has in the past avoided buses with more flip up seats because passengers can feel insecure when using them.⁹⁶ However, as demand for more accessible transport grows, it may need to revisit this position.

Bus stop accessibility

Beyond the bus itself, the Committee urges the Mayor, TfL and London Boroughs to do more to ensure more bus stops are fully accessible. Anne Fox of NCT highlighted the problems when bus stops are blocked by street

⁹² Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 45

⁹³ Boris Johnson Transport Manifesto 2008, p7

⁹⁴ Written submission, August 2010

⁹⁵ Tanvi Vyas, Trailblazers, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 9

⁹⁶ Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 22

furniture. She said “often the back door will open straight onto a bin or straight onto a lamp post and you cannot get off. If you cannot get off through the back door and have to navigate back through the bus with possibly a young baby and a pram that can be a major challenge.”⁹⁷

This investigation highlights that in 15, or nearly half of all, London Boroughs, the proportion of fully accessible bus stops is less than 50 per cent. London TravelWatch has argued that the rate of progress on increasing bus stop accessibility is too slow.⁹⁸ In many instances, the inaccessible bus stops are located on roads controlled by London Boroughs. However, there are also inaccessible bus stops on the roads controlled by TfL. The proportion of fully accessible bus stops on roads controlled by London Boroughs is 48 per cent. The proportion of fully accessible bus stops on roads controlled by TfL is 61 per cent.⁹⁹

TfL has committed to working with London Boroughs to ensure all bus stops are accessible as soon as practicable.¹⁰⁰ However, this may prove challenging. TfL’s budgets, including its funding for local transport improvements such as making bus stops accessible, are being cut. It has reported that the money London Boroughs receive through the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) process is being reduced in line with its general grant from Government.¹⁰¹

Some organisations such as the Visually Impaired Society of Richmond have argued for the introduction of audio announcements at bus stops. This could help visually impaired people locate where they are and ensure they board the right bus.¹⁰² The London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea has also highlighted the ‘bus card system’ in Manchester. This provides for visually impaired passengers to hold up colour cards to help them flag down the right bus.¹⁰³ This is another example of a relatively low-cost measure which enhances accessibility.

TfL has reported that audio announcements at bus stops might not be possible because of the cost and potential for noise disturbance. Instead, it is looking at providing personalised information through the IBus system.¹⁰⁴ From 2011, all bus users should be able to access real time bus arrival information via the internet, mobile phones and 2,500 key bus stops.¹⁰⁵ TfL

⁹⁷ Anne Fox, National Childbirth Trust (NCT), Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, p3

⁹⁸ London TravelWatch, *Response to London Assembly Transport Committee*, June 2010, page 7

⁹⁹ London Travel Watch submission

¹⁰⁰ Transcript of 9 September meeting 2010

¹⁰¹ Potholes will get bigger as Boris Johnson slashes repair budget, *The Evening Standard*, 12 November 2010

¹⁰² Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 21

¹⁰³ Written submission, August 2010

¹⁰⁴ Transcript of 9 September 2010 meeting, page 48

¹⁰⁵ TfL Disability and Deaf Equality Scheme, 2009-2012, p22

will work with others to develop this information for text-to-speech enabled handsets used by the visually impaired.¹⁰⁶

Recommendation 4

By June 2011, TfL should enhance the accessibility of buses for people with reduced mobility by:

- a) Redeveloping the disability awareness training provided to bus drivers, and to trainers providing this training, so it is more practical than theory-based. It should involve people with reduced mobility sharing their experiences directly or through videos;**
- b) Improving guidance for bus drivers including the information in the Big Red Book about the service standards for people with reduced mobility including which specific scooters are permitted;**
- c) Introducing specific performance targets for bus drivers on the service to be provided to people with reduced mobility;**
- d) Displaying individual bus drivers' ID so it is easier for people with reduced mobility to report any issues;**
- e) Introducing more publicity on buses about who is entitled to use the accessibility bay and the bus service standards. This should include the services relating to the lbus system and bus drivers allowing people to settle in their seats; and**
- f) Exploring the scope to include in the new bus for London and future buses more flip-up seats or other provision for more people with reduced mobility.**

¹⁰⁶ Written response from TfL, page 8, August 2010

Conclusion

“I would like to see more political commitment from the Mayor and TfL about accessibility. I want to see it as a priority. It may not be as sexy as cycle hire but we need to get it right.”¹⁰⁷

The Committee has found that demand for accessible transport in London outweighs supply and the situation is set to worsen. The number of Londoners with reduced mobility is likely to increase, from around 890,000 in 2010 to more than one million in 2031.

The Mayor and TfL’s current proposals for improving the accessibility of Tube, bus and trains are too modest. By 2018, less than one-third of Tube stations and fewer than half of train stations may have some form of step-free access. One in three bus stops will still not be fully accessible.

The Mayor and TfL need to rise to the challenge and increase accessibility. They need to build on the notable successes of the last ten years such as London’s entire bus fleet being fitted with ramps. The current constraints on public finances will make it difficult to deliver significant physical improvements. However, it should not diminish the commitment. The Mayor and TfL should work closely with people with reduced mobility and relevant organisations to shape long-term plans and priorities for accessibility. This could help to ensure any investment is targeted wisely.

In the short-term, there is scope for other, relatively low-cost measures to improve accessibility. These range from TfL allowing ramps to be used on certain parts of the Tube network to involving people with reduced mobility in the provision of training to bus drivers.

The Committee will revisit its findings and recommendations in 2011. It will seek a response from the Mayor and TfL to this report by February 2011 which it will report to a future meeting. It welcomes receiving responses from other organisations and individuals by 1 February 2011 including any further suggestions for measures that the Mayor and TfL could take to improve the accessibility of London’s transport network.

¹⁰⁷ Faryal Velmi, Transport for All, Transcript of 23 June 2010 meeting, page 34

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

By June 2011, TfL should:

- a) in conjunction with relevant organisations including Network Rail, the train operating companies and London Boroughs, use the Committee's information on the numbers of people with reduced mobility and their location to develop its physical accessibility strategy post 2018;
- b) Publish its physical accessibility strategy for consultation with people with reduced mobility and relevant organisations. The strategy should set out the plans for improving accessibility until 2018 and the options for providing further step-free stations and fully accessible bus stops thereafter; and
- c) Publish details of the organisations and individuals it will consult and how in relation to its physical accessibility strategy. This should include clarification on the future of its Independent Disability Advisory Committee.

Recommendation 2

By June 2011, TfL should enhance pre-journey information and support for people with reduced mobility by:

- a) Including details on its online Journey Planner of the heights of steps and platforms at Tube and Overground rails stations, the accessibility of bus stops and possible national rail service options;
- b) Streamlining, in consultation with relevant groups, the range of publications and maps about accessibility;
- c) Publishing all its data relating to the accessibility of transport services on the London Datastore; and
- d) Extending, in collaboration with relevant organisations including London Boroughs as appropriate, its travel assistance scheme so it supports more than 10,000 journeys p.a. by people with reduced mobility in 2011/12 and each year thereafter.

Recommendation 3

By June 2011, TfL should enhance the accessibility of Tube and Overground rail for people with reduced mobility by:

- a) Providing alternatives to step-free access including allowing people to use manual ramps wherever possible on the Tube and Overground rail networks. For example, at terminating stations;
- b) Introducing a minimum set of criteria for the accessibility features at a Tube station and an Overground rail station;
- c) Working in partnership with disability groups to put in place a programme of accessibility audits for all stations. These should assess how far stations meet the minimum set of criteria and where they do not

identify any low cost solutions. TfL should publish the findings from these audits;

d) Publishing its assessment of the impact on people with reduced mobility of proposals to reduce staff at Tube stations and the measures it intends to put in place to mitigate the impact; and

e) Appointing an existing member of staff to act as an “accessibility champion” at each interchange station to ensure a co-ordinated approach to accessibility across different transport modes and operators. These “accessibility champions” should organise training for all staff at each station which ensures they are familiar with the accessibility of all modes and can assist people with reduced mobility in relation to any service.

Recommendation 4

By June 2011, TfL should enhance the accessibility of buses for people with reduced mobility by:

a) Redeveloping the disability awareness training provided to bus drivers, and to trainers providing this training, so it is more practical than theory-based. It should involve people with reduced mobility sharing their experiences directly or through videos;

b) Improving guidance for bus drivers including the information in the Big Red Book about the service standards for people with reduced mobility including which specific scooters are permitted;

c) Introducing specific performance targets for bus drivers on the service to be provided to people with reduced mobility;

d) Displaying individual bus drivers’ ID so it is easier for people with reduced mobility to report any issues;

e) Introducing more publicity on buses about who is entitled to use the accessibility bay and the bus service standards. This should include the services relating to the lbus system and bus drivers allowing people to settle in their seats; and

f) Exploring the scope to include in the new bus for London and future buses more flip-up seats or other provision for more people with reduced mobility.

Appendix 1 – The number of people with reduced mobility

The table below sets out the numbers of people with reduced mobility and provision of accessible transport which have been used to inform this report.

London Borough	2010								2018		2031	
	Estimated total number of people with reduced mobility	Estimated total population	Number of fully accessible bus stops	Total number of bus stops	% of fully accessible bus stops	Number of Tube and rail stations with step-free access	Total number of Tube and rail stations	% of Tube and rail stations with step-free access	Estimated total number of people with reduced mobility	Estimated total population	Estimated total number of people with reduced mobility	Estimated total population
Barking and Dagenham	22383	175581	212	372	57	5	7	71	23999	198251	28675	229676
Barnet	39467	329399	274	816	34	7	19	37	42290	358590	49961	404217
Bexley	27321	217819	297	578	51	5	11	45	27341	218727	28859	224856
Brent	33225	278623	254	584	43	6	27	22	34635	290064	38937	307656
Bromley	38299	301718	412	1,040	40	9	26	35	38577	305967	41239	317013
Camden	21632	209496	218	452	48	3	29	10	22925	218444	25971	236113
City	1007	9502	101	140	72	4	16	25	1152	10927	1433	12931
Croydon	41165	340902	352	982	36	8	17	47	42864	354066	47796	377080
Ealing	37708	318215	359	701	51	5	25	20	39134	330805	43273	347942
Enfield	35937	293240	236	556	42	5	22	23	36374	300607	39264	312381
Greenwich	28542	235235	330	699	47	10	13	77	31810	267141	39815	313769
Hackney	24638	229036	256	420	61	2	11	18	26020	244130	29532	265718
Hammersmith and Fulham	18577	179424	145	270	54	6	16	38	19006	187344	20796	197073
Haringey	25277	236248	213	394	54	3	17	18	26070	247237	28676	265194
Harrow	26620	219847	252	398	63	4	14	29	26878	223113	28447	227758
Havering	29261	231049	219	659	33	5	10	50	30627	246246	34679	272381

Hillingdon	31326	258392	354	740	48	7	21	33	32223	270033	35163	284573
Hounslow	27547	234222	262	657	40	7	16	44	28456	243701	30895	253783
Islington	20751	205544	219	350	63	2	18	11	22022	221301	25359	242373
Kensington and Chelsea	18766	168623	112	262	43	2	13	15	19573	176051	21709	185622
Kingston upon Thames	17835	154712	322	387	83	3	10	30	18449	160397	20217	169563
Lambeth	30367	296466	296	574	52	4	22	18	32100	314081	36325	336881
Lewisham	29712	270548	360	598	60	6	20	30	31040	288069	34785	316617
Merton	23473	198091	245	432	57	5	16	31	23800	201388	25611	207460
Newham	29007	265688	256	522	49	4	14	29	31319	299940	37007	353589
Redbridge	30481	256030	196	504	39	3	15	20	31596	267587	34633	283695
Richmond upon Thames	22183	185469	158	470	34	7	15	47	22448	189410	23647	193910
Southwark	29830	281493	438	620	71	5	18	28	32503	310457	38415	353584
Sutton	22233	185441	289	346	78	4	9	44	22414	186999	23855	191819
Tower Hamlets	24376	242128	285	429	62	1	12	8	27633	280084	35015	332670
Waltham Forest	27664	228293	261	501	52	3	12	25	28463	236298	31770	248236
Wandsworth	30990	293896	353	502	70	0	14	0	31959	311565	35981	331622
Westminster	22966	215134	207	521	40	5	36	14	23924	223265	26670	231060
Greater London	890,569	7745503	8,743	17,476	50	155	561	38	929625	8182285	1044410	8828813

Notes on the data

The numbers of people with reduced mobility per London Borough for 2010, 2018 and 2031 have been calculated using TfL's findings from its London Transport Demand Survey 2008/09. This survey identified the percentage of people with a travel-related disability by age group. This included wheelchair users, people with other disabilities and people with walking difficulties. It covered people in all age ranges apart from 0-5 year olds.

The GLA Intelligence Unit has applied TfL's percentages to its current and future population estimates for each age group per London Borough to generate total numbers of people with reduced mobility. It has also added to these figures the number of 0-1 year olds to ensure the totals reflect people using buggies and prams. A more detailed breakdown of the data is being published with this report.

This report includes a chart which shows the proportion of Tube and rail stations with step-free access on a sub-regional basis. The composition of each sub-region is as follows: Central - Camden, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark, City, Wandsworth and Westminster (8); North - Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest (4); South - Bromley, Croydon, Sutton, Merton, Kingston and Richmond (6); East - Lewisham, Bexley, Greenwich, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Redbridge, Barking and Havering (9); and West - Hillingdon, Harrow, Brent, Ealing, Hounslow and Hammersmith & Fulham (6).

Sources of the data

Demographic information has been provided by the GLA Intelligence Unit.

Details of accessible bus stops are drawn from a London TravelWatch survey.

Details of Tube and rail stations with step-free access have been provided by the GLA Intelligence Unit.

Appendix 2 – Stages in this investigation

The Committee held two public meetings for this investigation:

1. On 23 June 2010 it heard from members of public and the following guests: Tanvi Vyas, Trailblazers, Muscular Dystrophy UK; Pamela Moffat, Age Concern London; Anne Fox, National Childbirth Trust; Geraldine O'Halloran, Inclusion London; Nicholas Russell, Guide Dogs Association; and Faryal Velmi, Transport for All.

2. On 9 September 2010 it heard from the following guests: Richard Parry; London Underground Strategy and Commercial Director, TfL; Mike Weston, Operations Director for Surface Transport, TfL; Geoff Hobbs, Head of Planning, London Rail, TfL; Gary Tordoff, Route Enhancement Manager and Access for All Programme sponsor, Network Rail; and David Sindall, Head of Disability & Inclusion, Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC).

The Committee undertook the following site visits for this investigation:

- On 26 July 2010, it visited Liverpool Street station and Stratford regional station with Vincent Stops of London TravelWatch, Peter Lainson of London Access Forum and Iman Saab and Patrick McSweeney on behalf of Transport for All.

- On 3 September, 22 September and 1 November 2010 it visited bus driver disability and diversity awareness training at Camberwell, Cricklewood and Stanmore bus garages.

The Committee received written views and information from over fifty organisations and individuals about the accessibility of the transport network. It also received a number of travel diaries from individuals with reduced mobility. The organisations which contributed written views and information included: TfL, ATOC, Transport for All, Campaign for Accessible and Reliable Transport (Max Reid), RNIB, Age Concern Redbridge, The Advocacy Project, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea, London Borough of Barnet Learning Disabilities Partnership Board, London Visual Impairment Forum, The National Childbirth Trust (NCT), Inclusion London, Trailblazers, Muscular Dystrophy UK, Age Concern London, London TravelWatch, RNID, National Federation of the Blind and Wandsworth Older People's Forum.

Appendix 3 - Orders and translations

How to order

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Chinese

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Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

Greek

Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.

Turkish

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Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Arabic

الحرص على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغة،
فراجع الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على
العنوان البريدي العادي أو عنوان البريد
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઇ-મેઇલ સરનામા પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

Appendix 4 - principles of scrutiny page

An aim for action

An Assembly scrutiny is not an end in itself. It aims for action to achieve improvement.

Independence

An Assembly scrutiny is conducted with objectivity; nothing should be done that could impair the independence of the process.

Holding the Mayor to account

The Assembly rigorously examines all aspects of the Mayor's strategies.

Inclusiveness

An Assembly scrutiny consults widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost.

Constructiveness

The Assembly conducts its scrutinies and investigations in a positive manner, recognising the need to work with stakeholders and the Mayor to achieve improvement.

Value for money

When conducting a scrutiny the Assembly is conscious of the need to spend public money effectively.

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