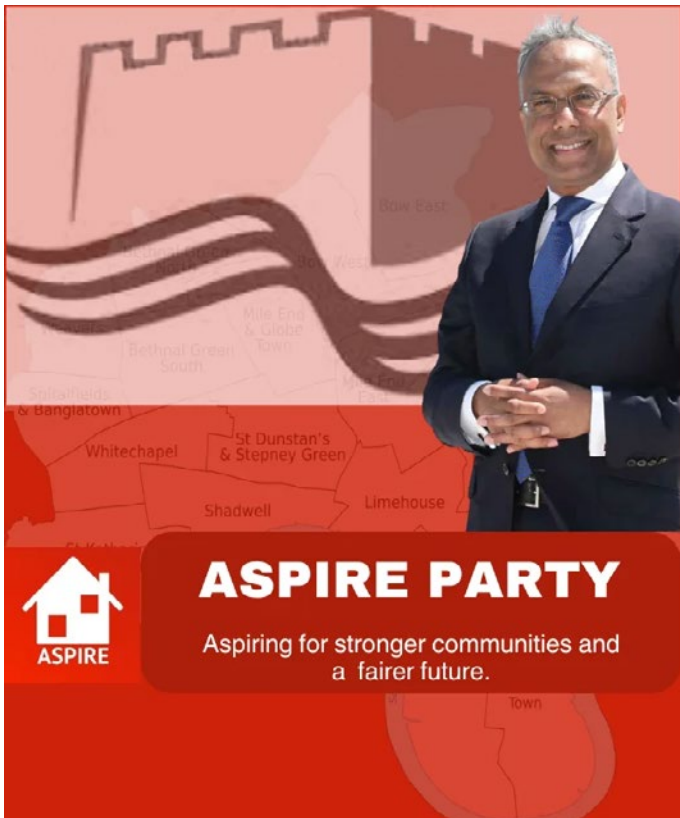


Tower Hamlets: Aspire loses LTN court case



Plans to remove LTNs were a prominent part of Aspire's manifesto at the last local elections, Aspire toppled Labour in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. But the Appeal Court recently ruled its plans to remove LTNs illegal.

The reason given was that borough transport proposals must be consistent with the Mayor of London's Transport Plan. If this judgement stands it will have wide-ranging implications for what transport policies boroughs can adopt and, indeed, for local democracy. Tower Hamlets is considering leave to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The case was brought by a small group of residents who were able to raise £100,000. The fact Tower Hamlets is one of the poorest boroughs in the country suggests these residents were untypical of the borough as a whole. Indeed, we hear there is widespread anger in the borough about the ruling.

Conversation with Mohammad

Mohammad was born and brought up on a council estate in the East London borough of Tower Hamlets. He doesn't drive. He became a vocal opponent of the Labour Council's LTNs.

He saw them as part of the gentrification of the borough. The LTNs had strong backing from the largely white professionals who were moving in. They didn't take account of the needs of the established, predominately ethnic, communities.

Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest car ownership rates in the UK. But Mohammad explained the car is critical to many of its communities. It is shared amongst the extended family to do bulk shopping, to visit aged relatives, to ease isolation.

LTNs made already challenging lives even harder. The rebellion against them was about the way the low traffic neighbourhoods disrupted the daily lives of a largely ethnic, and predominately poor, community. And yet that community was vilified by some environmentalists for daring to suggest low traffic neighbourhoods didn't work for them.

Low-traffic zones increased congestion, TfL admits

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) have increased congestion for cars in parts of the capital, Transport for London (TfL) officials have admitted.

Carl Eddleston, TfL's director of streets and network operations, told the London Assembly last month "In some locations they have added congestion to the local area."

Government official advice on floating bus stops widely criticised

Cycle track with bus boarding island

Graphic 3 – Layout for a cycle track with bus boarding island



The Government's official advice on the design of floating bus stops, has been widely criticised.

One expert called it 'designed for cyclists by cyclists'. One of the recommended designs is shown above. The Government's advisors were Active Travel and Transport for London. The National Federation of the Blind of the UK said, "*Heidi Alexander [the Transport Secretary] has sold blind people down the river when it comes to floating bus stops. These designs are inherently unsafe, inaccessible and dangerous, in anyway shape or form*".

You can read the guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/floating-bus-stops-provision-and-design/floating-bus-stops-provision-and-design>

TfL forced to correct floating bus stops report

Just days before the official guidance came out London Mayor Sadiq Khan was forced for a second time to correct "dodgy" data he used to justify floating bus stops in the capital.

The Mayor of London has been accused of running a "masterclass in deception" after refusing to withdraw a "deeply flawed and whitewashed" safety review that was "riddled with errors".

Transport minister admits cycle lanes slowing down buses



Cycle lanes have slowed some bus journeys in London, admitted Transport Minister Lord Hendo in a recent House of Lords debate. He said,

"Much cycle infrastructure that has been installed has inhibited bus journeys and contributed to deteriorating journey times"

Average bus speeds ranged from 8.1mph in inner London to 10.3mph in outer London. Bus speeds were lower in every borough in 2023/24 compared with 10 years ago, according to the independent London TravelWatch.

In the City financial district, buses travelled at only 6.6mph, and at 7.1mph in Westminster and in Camden. The numbers using buses fell. In earlier research London TravelWatch found a direct link between ridership and bus journey times.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/cyclists-cycle-lanes-bus-slow-journey-london-b1261201.html>

Major London bus company drops key routes due to congestion and tax rises

GoAhead, one of the UK's biggest bus operators, is giving up eight routes in London due to rising costs from national insurance hikes & chronic congestion. Average bus speeds less than 8mph. Bus companies put blame for congestion partly on mushrooming cycle lanes & LTNs.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/rachel-reeves-national-insurance-chancellor-inflation-bus-routes-goahead-b1267855.html>

London buses in crises



London Mayor Sadiq Khan spends £1.2bn a year propping up the capital's buses as passengers desert the network. Numbers are down 20% since pandemic. The level of bus subsidy has doubled in the last decade.

Slow speeds due to gridlocked roads is one of the biggest concerns for bus operators. London remains the most congested city in Europe as LTNs, cycle infrastructure, road works and SUVs have reduced the road space available to vehicles. Some bus lanes have been replaced by cycle lanes.

But it is also well-known that within TfL the bus unit has been downgraded in favour of a focus on cycling (which accounts for only about 4% of all trips made in the capital).

Free the Bus!

You can't imagine London without its buses. They are particularly important to low-income people. Figures from London TravelWatch show a large number of poor people rely almost entirely to get about. The bus is also important to many black and ethnic minority communities and to a lot of disabled people. It is time the Mayor gave the bus the attention it deserves.

Our Newsletter

Please contact us if you would like to become a member.

Email:
sej@socialenvironmentaljustice.co.uk

Consultation whether to continue to allow cabs to use Bank



The City of London Corporation is consulting on a trial that allows licensed black cabs to pass through Bank Junction (between Poultry and Cornhill) from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday. The trial began in July 2025, and this consultation seeks feedback to decide if the access should be made permanent, with a survey open until 31 May 2026.

Our view is this is a no-brainer. Cabs not serving parts of the City of London! One of the wealthiest parts of Europe! It is a nonsense. And it restricts disabled people. All because the cycle lobby raised spurious safety issues. Restrictions went in. Then were taken out.

Have your say to keep it that way:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/streets/all-change-at-bank-project#:~:text=Consultation%20on%20changes%20to%20taxi,City%20Corporation's%20Planning%20&%20Transportation>

Website:

www.socialenvironmentaljustice.co.uk

Twitter (X):

[@SocEnvJustice](https://twitter.com/SocEnvJustice)

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