



Coronavirus
and Transport:

A Change In Direction



Coronavirus and Transport.

by Grace Packard

In the last week, transport announcements have been released at quite a pace across the UK. These announcements indicate the changes that will be taking place within the industry, though whilst many of which are welcomed, they also raise questions and concerns for industry professionals, landowners, developers, council workers and members of the public. In these uncertain times, clarity is hard to come by which is why Momentum has summarised the key changes and worked to understand how these plans impact you.

The UK Transport Secretary announced on the 9th May 2020 a series of new plans to boost active and sustainable travel across the UK.

Notably, a £2 billion cycle and walking package to reduce the number of people using public transport when they return to work was outlined with the first stage being a £250 million package of swift emergency interventions to make cycling and walking safer. Following a surge in the levels of walking and cycling across the UK during the coronavirus pandemic, plans for pop-up bike lanes, protected space for cycling, wider pavements, safer junctions and cycle and bus-only corridors will be created. The government has published statutory guidance requiring councils in England to cater for the increase in cycling and walking as part of social distancing measures.

The Government understands this period as the generation opportunity to secure major increases in walking and cycling. With over 40% of urban journeys in 2017-18 less than 2 miles in length, active travel is recognised as key to enabling travel with social distancing, improving people's health and sustainability. The Government's guidance, via additional statutory guidance to the Traffic Management Act, encourages highway authorities to act as swiftly as possible to reallocate road space so that more space can be provided for pedestrians and cyclists, at the expense of road space for vehicles. As well as road space reallocation, councils are encouraged to provide additional cycle parking facilities at key locations, reduce speed limits to 20mph, and limit access to vehicles on 'school streets' and in high streets and town centres.

Local authorities may use permanent, experimental, or temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) as the legal mechanism to enact these measures, and the Government has published amended guidance on the publication of and consultation for these TROs. Local authorities remain bound by the public sector equality duty, meaning groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) must be considered in the design and implementation of these schemes, even if temporary.

Further plans to boost active and sustainable travel include bringing forward E-scooter trials from 2021 to June 2020. Originally set to take place in four Future Transport Zones, the trials of rental e-scooters will now be offered to all local areas across the country with an aim to help bring more flexibility, choice and greener travel solutions at a time when we face both a climate emergency and travel restrictions.

An extra £10 million has also been committed to the on-street residential chargepoint scheme allowing local authorities to install up to 7,200 devices making it more convenient to charge and own an electric vehicle. Collaborations with the tech sector will enable commuters to stagger their journeys and advise on alternative mode of travel.

London Streetspace Programme

On the 6th May 2020, the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, unveiled the 'London Streetspace' programme.

This programme aims to rapidly transform London's streets to accommodate the expected increases in cycling and walking when lockdown restrictions are eased. TfL recognises the need to rapidly repurpose London's streets in order to serve the anticipated unprecedented demand for walking and cycling. This is vital – if only a fraction of these journeys are switched to cars, London risks grinding to a halt, worsening air quality and increasing road danger.

Three areas of focus were set out:

- The rapid construction of a strategic cycling network – the use of temporary materials and new routes will aim to reduce crowding on Underground and train lines and on busy bus corridors.
- Local town centre transformation – enabling safe walking and cycling journeys where possible, increasing the width of footways on high streets to facilitate the local economy, allowing space for people to queue for shops and space for others to walk past at a distance.
- Low-traffic neighbourhoods – reducing traffic on residential streets enabling more walking and cycling as part of daily routines.

Further improvements to support the above include:

- New cycling and walking routes
- Cycleway scheme accelerated
- Removing space for vehicles for use by cyclists and pedestrians
- Pavement widening to allow easier access to shops and services
- Reducing motor volumes and speeds to make walking and cycling easier

**NEW ROAD
LAYOUT
FOR SOCIAL
DISTANCING**

TfL Initial Support Plans

As the government begins to encourage those who cannot work from home to return to work, the emphasis now lies on providing the infrastructure and space for us to travel safely through active modes. In London, TfL have now set out their plans to support safe and sustainable travel but this will require significant changes. Whilst services on the TfL public transport network are gradually increased, demand will have to be reduced by more than 85% compared to normal to enable social distancing to be maintained wherever possible.

Key advice for Londoners include:

- If you can work from home, continue to do so and avoid public transport
- Reimagine how you travel if you need to – walk and cycle where possible
- If you need to use public transport, try and travel outside of peak times and wear a facial covering
- Respect each others space and try to maintain social distancing where possible
- If you have to drive, avoid peak times and obey speed limits and traffic laws at all times

