



The Barnet Society

Campaigning for a better Barnet

The Mayor of London

1 October 2017

Dear Mayor,

COMMENTS ON MAYOR'S DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2017

The Barnet Society is a non-political organisation and seeks to influence government on aspects of planning and the environment pertaining to the town of Barnet and the surrounding areas. The views outlined here give an Outer London perspective on the Mayor's proposals, with particular emphasis on the constituency of Chipping Barnet.

Two features unique to this area are that (1) it is hilly, and (2) it abuts Hertfordshire, where the Mayor's proposals will not apply. These two features have implications for the points regarding increased walking and cycling, healthy exercise and reduction in car usage (the 'healthy streets' plan). It will be much harder to implement plans to encourage these objectives in Barnet than in central London boroughs. Bus patronage is lower, rail services are less frequent and the anomaly of travelling outside the TfL area where Oyster cards do not work are all factors militating against increased usage of public transport. Furthermore, Barnet's connections with Potters Bar, Borehamwood, St Albans and other parts of Hertfordshire where the Mayor's proposals do not apply, will continue, and residents will take no notice of these boundaries when planning how to make the journey. Some of these areas offer street free parking for half an hour, an incentive to many motorists to visit those High Streets in preference to Barnet.

In essence the Society supports the broad outline of the Mayor's proposals and is in sympathy with his objectives. However, we feel that the expectations and targets are somewhat optimistic, to say the least. The calculations are predicated on a proportionately larger population growth in *Outer* London, yet makes no allowance for the increase in house prices and rentals in these areas and those of adjacent 'Home Counties' areas. In addition to this, Barnet is a centre of educational excellence and many pupils from a large surrounding area travel to schools in Barnet. This is reflected in the variety of schools: faith-based, selective and private, reflecting parental choices. This produces a large amount of traffic, which the Mayor's proposals do not appear to have taken into consideration.

We would like to add some suggestions specific to our locality.

Under 'healthy Streets and healthy people', we would welcome more use of green spaces – which are a major feature of Chipping Barnet – for pedestrian and cycle travel between neighbourhoods.

Under 'a good public transport experience', we have several points to make.

We appreciate the difficulties of improving road capacity in our area, and generally support restraint of vehicle use – but only if commensurate improvements are made to public transport. It is disappointing to note, therefore, that although TfL recently reported a reduction of bus use in

Founded in 1945, The Barnet Society campaigns for improvements to the environment of Chipping Barnet and surrounding areas and for protection of the Green Belt

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Central London and an intention to divert resources to Outer London, frequencies on some of our routes have actually been reduced.

Chipping Barnet's bus connections, though good to and from the south, need improvement to the east, west and north into Hertfordshire, particularly to and from larger shopping centres, stations and our local hospitals. Our significant and growing population of students and elderly residents are particularly dependent on them, but they have not benefitted from the same investment as Central London.

The Mayor should consider more orbital links between Barnet borough and adjoining authorities – preferably tram or light rail – including across the Green Belt where necessary, to link new destinations on either side of the borough. We welcome the positive findings of the recent feasibility study of a potential West London Orbital Railway, and would like the study extended to include Brent Cross, Mill Hill East, Finchley Central, Finsbury Park and a possible link with the Gospel Oak-Barking line. As well as being a local asset, this would help relieve endemic congestion on the North Circular Road and benefit much of North London.

Finally, we welcome the recent call by Hertfordshire County Council for a capital-region transport body to co-ordinate planning and delivery – with full Oyster compatibility – of public transport across the GLA boundary.

In summary, the plans outlined in the Mayor's proposals are both bold and imaginative, yet there is a feeling of 'one size fits all' in the language used. London is often described as 'a collection of villages' and in some ways it really is. These 'villages', of which Barnet is but one, all have unique needs and requirements and the Mayor would do well to remember this when the plans are rolled out.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Bishop', written in a cursive style.

ROBIN BISHOP

Chair, The Barnet Society