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Blackfriars Bridge and the 20mph speed limit

Have you now read the Transport for London report recommending that four bridges over the Thames should have a 20mph speed limit?

Jenny Jones

Suggested response

- I am aware of the main findings of the report, which was commissioned some time ago under the previous administration. It included the proposal for a 20mph speed limit to be posted on four bridges over the Thames to be enforced using time-distance cameras. Blackfriars was not one of the Bridges prioritised for this intervention in the report.
- The key issue when addressing road casualties, which was the subject of the report, is to ensure that road safety investment by TfL and the boroughs is directed to those locations and/or road user groups where the available resources will have the greatest impact in casualty reduction terms. This is the approach that has consistently been adopted in London and why we have achieved significant reductions in road casualties in recent years.
- TfL has considered the findings of this report, and others, and taken this and all other relevant information into consideration in finalising the proposals for amendments to the road layout at Blackfriars as a result of the ongoing station redevelopment.
- The scheme will make an enormous improvement to the area and accommodate the huge increase in demand from pedestrians arising from the reopening of Blackfriars station following its £550m upgrade. Pedestrians, who will comprise 58% of all users, will benefit from the reworking of the junction, whilst facilities are also improved for the estimated 6% of people travelling through the junction by bicycle.
- This has been achieved without creating conditions which would severely disbenefit other modes, including bus and taxi passengers, who will account for around one fifth of those using the junction.
- A permanent 20mph speed limit is not appropriate for Blackfriars. A temporary 20mph limit was introduced whilst the new station is being constructed. When completed, the new road layout, and in particular the new pedestrian crossings, mean that speeds during the morning peak are expected to be around 12mph through the junction - significantly slower than at present. For this reason a 20mph limit with additional signage and enforcement measures are not required.

Background

The Bridges Report

Contact Officers: Andrew Miles ([REDACTED])

The report was prepared internally in TfL and was never finalised or formally published. It was commissioned to explore the involvement of vulnerable road users in collisions and to investigate the casualty savings that could be achieved by reducing speeds. It recommended posting 20mph speed limits enforced with (then unapproved) time-distance speed cameras at Putney, Vauxhall, London and Westminster bridges. Vauxhall, London and Westminster bridges are managed by TfL. Putney Bridge is managed by the London Borough of Wandsworth.

A number of groups and individuals, including the London Cycling Campaign and Jenny Jones AM, have argued that there should be a 20mph speed limit on Blackfriars Bridge. Blackfriars station will reopen in December 2011 following a £550 million, three year upgrade project. Over 24,000 pedestrians will enter and exit the station during the morning peak and the junction outside of the station has had to be redesigned to accommodate these hugely increased pedestrian flows. The need for new pedestrian crossings has created an opportunity to reassess the whole junction and deliver a new layout that would mean improvement for as many users as possible.

This new design accommodates the huge increase in demand from pedestrians, who will make up 58% of all users of the junction whilst improving facilities for the estimated 6% of people travelling through by bicycle. This has been achieved without creating conditions which would severely disbenefit other modes, including bus and taxi passengers, who will account for around a fifth of those using the junction.

Follow up questions

Will you post a 20mph limit at all bridges?

All of London's bridges vary widely in terms of configuration and traffic composition and TfL does not manage every river crossing. The responsible borough highway authorities would need to consider whether to amend speed limits on the bridges that they manage.

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