



# ***CLIMATE SAFE STREETS***

## **ONE YEAR ON, ONE YEAR TO GO**

**Progress on Climate Safe Streets  
by London's Mayor and Boroughs**  
Executive Summary | May 2023

**LONDON  
CYCLING  
CAMPAIGN**





# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6





# INTRODUCTION

**Simon Munk**  
Head of Campaigns  
London Cycling Campaign



There are pressing crises impacting London as a city right now. But none more pressing than the climate emergency – and our response as a city to it – because action, or inaction, on climate also has a direct impact on every other crisis the city faces.

Some London politicians, and some of the public, are right now saying loudly that increasing any charges for car driving should not happen during a ‘cost of living’ crisis. But it is our reliance on petrol and diesel and gas that is driving (pun intended) so much of that crisis. And reducing reliance on oil and gas is core to also tackling the climate crisis. Delaying action on fossil fuels and our consumption of them only prolongs the current cost of living crisis and saves up the certainty of worse impacts on our city, our poorest residents and our financial stability for later.

The same can be said of other crises of pollution, inactivity, road danger, congestion, childhood independence and community severance. As a city, we can either try and tackle these issues in piecemeal fashion, or we can recognise that radically reducing car use (a majority of which in London could be done relatively easily by other modes, says TfL analysis) and enabling alternatives to the car not only reduces climate-changing emissions, which has a huge knock-on impact for London, but it also directly goes to fixing the multiple other crises listed above.

That’s why London Cycling Campaign launched its ‘Climate Safe Streets’ campaign and reports in 2020 and why we continue to talk about climate in relation to cycling around London. Because of course, fully realising the enormous potential for cycling in London is not only a solution to enable people to ditch cars when possible, it’s also just about the only solution to help people ditch cars we have that can be rapidly and cheaply rolled out and scaled up.

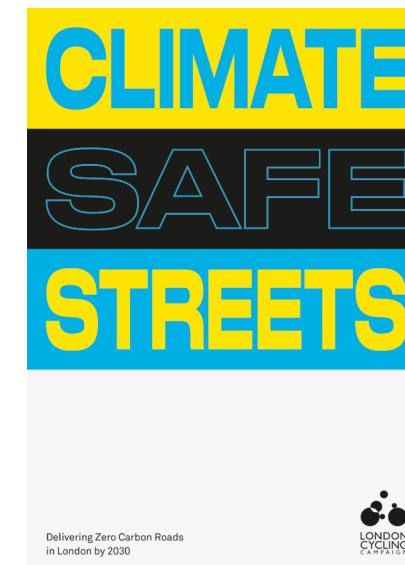
We need far more walking journeys and we need more and better public transport and shared mobility options (and our report and campaigning speaks directly to these issues as well as cycling). But we can’t build new tube lines

in a few months, we can’t roll out loads more buses on roads already at a standstill and we can’t boost walking mode share dramatically – because London already is a city where most people walk (or wheel) lots. We need a lot more cycling and it is relatively easy and cheap to get it. Hence Climate Safe Streets being cycling safe streets and hence our campaigning on this issue.

So, how is London doing on progress on climate action, and specifically on progress around Climate Safe Streets delivery? We asked the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, prior to his re-election in 2021 (delayed from 2020 due to the pandemic) to commit to a series of Climate Safe Streets actions: roll out the ‘Strategic Cycling Network’ as defined by TfL, roll out ‘shared mobility’ so everyone can get around easily (electric car club bays, eBike / eScooter hire, cargo bike loan schemes etc.) and move forward on charging driving in a manner to reduce the most damaging journeys from our roads via a ‘smart and fair road user charging’ scheme. The Mayor has a year to go before he faces London again (in 2024) – so how is he performing on these issues and on climate generally? Below we assess the Mayor’s progress across London on his committed to trajectory to reach ‘net zero’ emissions in London by 2030, and his related progress on rolling out changes to our streets and reducing car use, enabling alternatives.

Similarly, May 2023 marks one year since the 2022 local council elections in London where we asked potential council leadership candidates in every borough to commit to specific Climate Safe Streets asks for their area. These asks were tailored by our local groups to reflect what was most needed most urgently to keep councils delivering on carbon emissions reduction. We also assess below every London council on their actions on climate and Climate Safe Streets, given that these councils are now one year in to their administration’s cycle.

One year to go for the Mayor, one year on from borough elections – how are they doing?



*Climate Safe Streets: Delivering Zero Carbon Roads by 2030 report, published March 2020*



*Climate Safe Streets: One year on report, published April 2021*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For each of London's 32 boroughs (we've left out the City\*), we've tracked progress not only on delivery of schemes and activities over the last year that we asked councils and the Mayor to deliver via our Climate Safe Streets campaigns, we have also tracked each council's progress on reducing the mode share of private motor traffic. In the absence of roads transport emissions data that is coherent across a decade (due to changing emissions methodologies), this will correlate closely with the trajectory for emissions on roads reduction.

Obviously, roads transport and indeed private motor traffic emissions, are not the only way residents of and those passing through boroughs produce climate-changing emissions. But as we and other experts have long argued, road transport is one of the areas where there is most direct power devolved to the Mayor of London and the boroughs – and indeed we can see directly the results comparing those boroughs that have done nothing on restraining car use and enabling alternatives to private motor vehicles to those who have been acting progressively for some time.

The Mayor has one year to go before facing the public – and while he has gone a long way, he has a long way to go to embedding his legacy on climate and road danger. Similarly, we emerge from the Covid pandemic and local council elections of 2022 with a field of boroughs spread wide from front-runners taking rapid action on these issues to those turning and going the wrong way down the field entirely. London is split between Climate Safe Streets haves and have nots – and in the next three years we'll need to see a lot more action from a lot more boroughs if our city and planet is going to go in the right direction.

\* City of London's progress, commitments and indeed results are not really comparable to other London boroughs due to the lack of a significant residential population, with most people in the City area at any point being workers. Results for City were included in the London-wide data used.

### SADIQ: BOLD, BUT NOT BOLD ENOUGH

London's driven vehicle km was going up and up and up (according to the DfT figures) pre-pandemic. Obviously, motor vehicle use dropped dramatically in the capital during the pandemic, but the 2021 figures show it rapidly recovering. However, even overall, the reduction in km driven in 2020 amounts to a less than 20% cut on the year before. The Mayor of London's team suggests that we need to reduce road km driven by 27% by 2030 as well as electrifying a lot of motor vehicles. Or put another way – we need to reduce road km driven more than we saw during the worst year of the pandemic, on a permanent basis, to fulfil our climate obligations.

The same visible slow progress is true looking also at London's mode share of private motor vehicles compared to other modes. Whether outer or inner London, private motor vehicle mode share was dropping just over half a percent a year in the years preceding the pandemic on average. That rate of progress would need to be significantly increased to get the Mayor to his Transport Strategy target of 20 percent of journeys done across London by private motor vehicles by 2041. And that target was set before the Mayor's declaration of a climate crisis and target brought forward of a net zero London by 2030.

This all is to a backdrop of TfL analysis that suggests a majority of motor vehicle journeys done in London could relatively easily be done by other modes. Most motor vehicle journeys are not ferrying tools or heavy goods or parcels from A to B to C to D – they're single start-end A to B journeys, with no passengers, light loads, short distances etc.

The coming ULEZ expansion is likely to reduce motor vehicle journeys significantly in the capital. But it already reaches to the north and south circular, well into outer London. So it is clear that the Mayor, to hit his own targets, will need to do far more to shift journeys away from cars, and to decarbonise roads transport.

The good news is the Mayor's progress towards 'Vision Zero', an end to serious and fatal road collisions is steady, but on track for Sadiq's target of 2041 approximately. There is more that could reasonably be done in this area – most notably on junctions, where most such collisions happen. But the Mayor is broadly to be commended for the work he's doing on this area on the Met's speed enforcement and on 20mph rollout.

So, while it is clear that the Mayor is doing much to move London towards reasonable, realistic and vital targets on decarbonisation and road danger, and while there are structural issues with him achieving them beyond his immediate power, most notably the intransigence of some London boroughs and the lack of funding coming from government (particularly in comparison to other global cities), there is also more the Mayor could do to accelerate progress and make it more coherent.

Our key recommendations for the Mayor are therefore:

- **Get the ULEZ expansion done without delay – it is vital that rollout of road-user charging such as this is not further delayed or weakened in the run-up to the next Mayoral election.**
- **Solve internal incoherence in TfL – TfL as a body is forced to juggle limited roadspace, funding and capacity between multiple surface transport modes. But siloed working is leading to a situation where benefits and schemes for buses are being pitted directly against benefits and schemes for active travel (walking and cycling) while too often private motor traffic is left to the side. This infighting must be resolved – and there are ways forward with innovative scheme types that simply do not seem to be being considered, championed or rolled out as fast as needed which deliver wins for buses and active travel.**

### **BOROUGH: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SO-SO**

There is a clear gulf now in trajectory and action emerging between the boroughs taking action and those not, and broadly, it is more common for inner London boroughs to be taking action than outer – although there are exceptions in both directions.

The only London borough where mode share for private motor vehicles has risen between 2010 and 2020 is Tower Hamlets\*. But inner London boroughs Southwark, Lewisham and Haringey and outer London boroughs Redbridge, Bromley and Croydon are all trailing the average inner and outer London mode shifts, but this, given the pace of change in these boroughs has been slow to non-existent, is not a surprise (Southwark and particularly Haringey shifted gears on delivery post 2020).

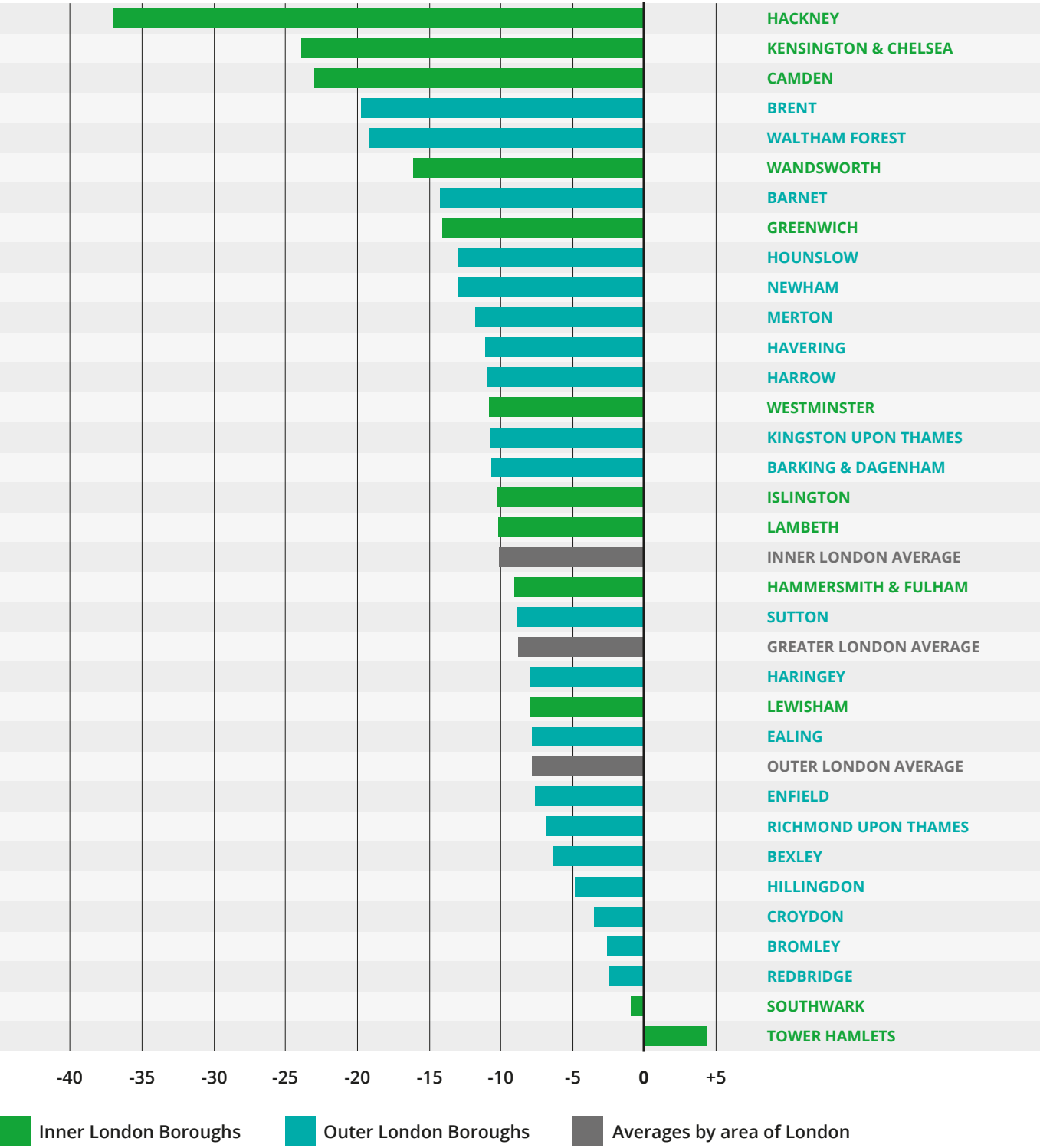
What is more of a surprise is that at the other end of the scale – where boroughs are shifting away from the car faster than average, those known for taking action such as Hackney and Camden in inner London and Waltham Forest and latterly Hounslow in outer London are joined by boroughs whose residents are showing huge appetite to ditch cars, despite the borough's inaction. Step forward Kensington & Chelsea and Wandsworth, Brent, Barnet and Greenwich (the latter of which did start to deliver on schemes post-2020 again). Imagine the mode shift Kensington & Chelsea could achieve if it actually put its mind to it...

In terms of delivery, boroughs like Camden, Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest have surged ahead in delivering on active travel, emissions and road danger reduction – they were moving fast before the pandemic and delivery appears to have if anything accelerated. But these boroughs are too few and far between.

Far more common are boroughs like Brent, Greenwich, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kingston, Lewisham, Newham, Richmond, Southwark and Wandsworth – lots of fine words, patchy delivery and nowhere near enough the pace needed. These boroughs need to accelerate progress rapidly, learn from the top tier and really focus on delivery if their climate emergency declarations are more than hollow words.

\* Mode share data uses a three year rolling average for data. For changes in mode share over time, due to fluctuations in data, we calculated the shift away from private motor vehicles by borough over the period using the highest mode share for private motor vehicles of the two time periods during 2010-2014 and the lowest mode share of the 2016-2020 periods and then calculated the percentage change in mode share.

PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLE MODE % CHANGE FROM 2010-14 TO 2016-2020



There are also a few interesting boroughs that have recently changed party colour. Westminster and Barnet switching from blue to red seems to mean more forward progress, but the same is arguably true for Croydon, now delivering schemes having switched from red to blue.

Below the boroughs delivering middling schemes at a middling pace are far too many boroughs essentially doing little to nothing while the planet burns and the collisions keep mounting up year after year. And below them still, the real villains of this piece.

Kensington & Chelsea has ripped out the only cycle track ever installed in the borough while individual councillors have undermined and attacked TfL junctions schemes designed to save lives. Tower Hamlets has elected a Mayor on a manifesto of opening roads to more motor traffic in a climate crisis. And Ealing and Harrow have both ripped out copious numbers of schemes on flimsy pretexts and then sat back to do next to nothing so far. Harrow have even joined Bexley, Bromley and Hillingdon (and Surrey County Council) in going so far as to sue the Mayor of London over his plans to expand the ULEZ scheme. Unsurprisingly, these four are some of the least active on delivering change on issues around car use, climate and pollution (even to the extent they've rolled out some of the lowest numbers of on-street electric car charging points in London, as charity Possible has pointed out).

This exposes not only a Climate Safe Streets postcode lottery – with the emissions and experience of people walking, cycling and wheeling in Waltham Forest increasingly different from those doing so in Harrow, Tower Hamlets or Ealing, but more, the gaps in the Mayor of London's power – if boroughs like Kensington & Chelsea and Harrow can thumb their nose at Sadiq, what chance his targets on Net Zero and Vision Zero?

Regardless, if any council or Mayoral targets are to become a reality, this report is clear that we need a lot more Hackneys, Camdens and Waltham Forests and that means Brent, Greenwich and Richmond really getting their skates on in the next three years. And it means those boroughs currently proposing to launch expensive legal actions over ULEZ or sitting back and quietly delivering nothing on climate emissions must now move in accord with the Mayor, the evidence and London. We have three years for every London council to really start delivering. The clock is ticking.



# About the London Cycling Campaign

LCC was born out of the environmental movement in 1978. With 20,000 members and supporters we are one of the largest urban cycling campaigns in the world.

We mobilise public pressure for action by politicians to create a greener, healthier, more inclusive and happier capital, by making London's streets safe enough for everyone to cycle for their everyday journeys.

We've been instrumental in changing the policies of past and present London Mayors to adopt a high quality, Dutch style approach to cycling infrastructure and traffic restraint; and our volunteer groups, of which we have one in nearly every borough, have won better provision for cycling by many councils.

Plus, this approach to cycling has now been taken up by central government and is being rolled out across the country.

And as well as campaigning, we run grassroots projects to help people take up cycling (or cycle more), and to diversify those cycling, working collaboratively with councils and businesses and community groups.

Our work, especially over the last decade, has seen a big rise in safer cycling infrastructure. But we need to achieve even greater and faster success, especially as London is rightly aiming to be a net zero carbon city by 2030. We will continue to grow our capabilities and impact until cycling is the natural choice for all Londoners for their everyday journeys.

To find out about how you can work with or support LCC, please email [info@lcc.org.uk](mailto:info@lcc.org.uk).