

Safety in our sights

Transport for London's video message, delivered to the IRTE Conference by surface transport managing director Leon Daniels, offered carrots and sticks. Brian Weatherley reports

IRTE members whose vehicles regularly work in and around London will doubtless welcome the news from Leon Daniels, surface transport managing director at Transport for London (TfL), that the capital's roads are to be improved.

"The road modernisation plan, the largest investment in our network for a generation, will deliver hundreds of projects and make London's roads more reliable, safer and greener," he told IRTE Conference delegates. No fewer than 17 major road schemes are planned, while 33 of London's busiest junctions are to be overhauled, making them easier and safer for vulnerable road users. "And to help us manage traffic, we'll continue to modernise the capital's traffic signals," he added.

Such improvements are essential. Daniels reminded delegates that, from a transport perspective, London is huge, complex and growing. The capital boasts 8,000 miles of road managed by 36 Highway Authorities together enabling more than 26 million journeys every day. By 2031, London's population will have increased by an estimated 2 million people to 10 million.

"That means an extra 5 million road trips every day," noted Daniels. What's more, hundreds of thousands of them will be made by cyclists using the city's roads during busy rush-hour periods.

"Pedestrians and cyclists share London's road space with around 70,000 HGVs as well as vans, cars, buses and coaches," observed Daniels. "No other city in the UK has these large numbers of

vulnerable road users and heavy vehicles sharing such a complex and constrained network. We're working hard to make all road journeys safer."

Despite TfL's early successes, cyclists and pedestrians continue to be killed and injured. And although HGVs make up only 4% of London's road traffic, Daniels told delegates that between 2008 and 2014 they were involved in more than 50% of cyclist and 12% of pedestrian deaths. "Specifically, over half of cyclist deaths linked to HGVs involved a construction vehicle like a tipper truck. So the



FACT

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Leon Daniels

[DfT] team's focus is now on reducing collisions involving construction HGVs."

Citing the work of CLOCS (Construction Logistics Cyclist Safety) and FORS (Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme) in helping to raise safety standards and increase awareness of vulnerable road users, Daniels described them as "complementary initiatives that fit neatly together".

And following September's introduction of the UK's first Safer Lorry Scheme, Daniels insisted: "This is only the beginning of the chapter... We are

building strong relationships with HGV manufacturers and have stimulated creative and, more importantly, much safer truck designs. By the end of this year, 20 new high-vision HGVs will be in use on London's roads."

Daniels told IRTE delegates that TfL knows it can't achieve change without collaboration. "So we've developed some fantastic relationships with the trade bodies, vehicle manufacturers, fleet operators and the major generators of freight, especially in the construction industry. It's clear

that road safety is an issue that the whole industry is now taking very seriously indeed."

That said, while confirming his belief that the vast majority of vehicle operators in London use best practice to maintain safety, Daniels closed with a note of caution. "A number of operators continue to undercut their competitors by taking illegal safety shortcuts... Unsafe and illegal HGVs and vans are not welcome in London and we are doing everything in our power to ensure that they are safe or compliant ... or put out of business." ■