

RHA

Supplying London

The road freight and coach industry manifesto for London



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Keeping London open for business

The economy and road freight industry are inextricably linked. As the first grows or contracts, so does the other. The Mayor of London and Greater London Assembly (GLA) have significant powers and a vital convening role to ensure more efficient freight movements across the city. This manifesto outlines actions for the next London Mayor to take forward to ensure London's economy remains vibrant and healthy, with households and businesses receiving the goods they all rely on.

The Importance of Haulage and Coaches to Economic Growth

Logistics is one of the highest single contributors to the UK economy, making up approximately 10% of the UK non-financial business economy. In 2021, it generated £163 billion gross value added (GVA) and accounted for 5.6% of the UK's total GDP.

Moreover, the 200,000 logistics enterprises play an *enabling* role in the UK economy. Internationally, the logistics sector was responsible for facilitating UK international trade (which makes up 65% of UK GDP), reaching £414 billion (exports) and £644 billion (imports) in 2022. Domestically, *for every £1 generated by the logistics industry, £3 is generated elsewhere in the UK economy.*

Road freight makes up the majority of the UK logistics sector, moving around 80% of goods and 98% of agricultural and food products in 2022. Overall, UK HGVs moved 1,603 million tonnes worth of goods over 19,086 million kms of UK roads at the end of 2023.

Delivering Together

A reset in the relationship London has with road freight is needed. In a recent joint industry survey, 95% of operators said their drivers did not enjoy driving in London. It is only natural that drivers would not wish to subject themselves to an environment where they do not feel valued when they are simply doing their jobs.

Perceptions need to change, with road freight and those who work within it recognised for the vital role they play. Logistics is an essential economic enabler, yet the way operations have evolved to provide Londoners with the exceptional and cost-effective levels of service they expect is not reflected in policies and attitudes.

Increasingly, haulier needs are overlooked or ignored from the policy making process, which has led to:

- A London Lorry Control Scheme that increases traffic volumes and pollution during the working day, but does not take into account the evolution of lorries that are now significantly quieter;
- A Direct Vision Standard that is creating confusion on how HGV operators can comply, when other measures to improve road safety can be applied;
- A ULEZ expansion that hits those least able to adapt by driving up the prices of the limited supply of compliant vehicles.

This must change. On the issues that matter most to Londoners – road safety, cleaner air, congestion – the interests of Londoners and the road haulage industry are aligned.

Road freight is a highly-regulated industry and is used to adapting to new technologies and circumstances. By sharing knowledge and having a better understanding of each other's objectives, London government and the road haulage industry can deliver on the priorities of Londoners.

Coaches: The Forgotten Public Transport Option

Coaches bring millions of visitors both to and across London from the UK and overseas. No other mode of public transport can move large numbers of people point to point, and coaches are already one of the greenest ways to travel around the country, with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions per passenger than any other mode of transport.

But it is getting harder and harder for coaches to do their job for London. Coach parking bays are disappearing, leading to vehicles driving further to find a place to stop, or even just circling near their drop off/pickup locations, increasing traffic and reducing air quality. As more and more people turn to coach travel, industry and government need to work together to ensure the option remains open for those who need it.

1 The Road Haulage Industry calls on the next Mayor of London to champion and support the road freight and coach sectors through the following measures:

1 / Appoint a Freight Commissioner

Given the importance of logistics to the London economy and the dispersed regulation in the capital, the sector needs a voice in London Government.

Such an official could coordinate logistics related policy across the gamut of devolved government, from transport to business support to skills to net zero. They can also liaise between the various London bodies with an interest in freight, including TfL, London Councils and Freight Quality Partnerships to ensure that the needs of the freight industry are considered and embedded in the policy making process and in the London Plan.

2 / Establish A London Freight Council

To provide a permanent presence for industry in the policy making process and a forum where issues can be brought to light and solutions found, the new Freight Commissioner should chair a new **London Freight Council**. Bringing together industry representatives and government officials from across Greater London will ensure better understanding and focus on delivering for Londoners.

3 / Ensure Road Freight Regulation is backed by Industry

With a voice for road freight and logistics established in London Government, we can work together to ensure any policy or regulations relevant to those delivering for London is supported by the industry and will achieve desired outcomes. A few examples include:

- An updated Freight and Servicing Action Plan with a realistic assessment of the potential for modal shift based on economic and technological realities.
- Ensuring road safety is everybody's responsibility with a Direct Vision Standard that is clearly understood and does not risk London supply chains by demanding too much of the market.
- A reformed London Lorry Control Scheme that does not increase journey times and air pollution through unreasonable diversions.
- Working with TfL and London Boroughs to ensure an optimal environment for HGVs, avoiding regulations that unnecessarily restrict HGV movements.
- Increased investment in public awareness campaigns for vulnerable road users on best practice.
- Ensuring a coherent plan is in place to decarbonise lorries and coaches fairly, with actions in place to address the structural barriers (cost, energy infrastructure, vehicle availability, skills) preventing the speedy introduction of zero emission commercial vehicles.

4 / Maintain access for lorries where they are needed

The road haulage industry has always been inventive and responsive to technological and regulatory change. Operating at 2% margins also means efficiencies are pursued vigorously, and generally using the smallest vehicle possible for the job is part of that aim. Sitting alongside the current London transport policy to reduce HGV movements in the capital must be an acceptance that in some circumstances a HGV is the best possible vehicle for a job.

Reduced road capacity and increased congestion have made deliveries in London unpredictable and stressful for professional drivers.

We seek a commitment from the Mayor of London and TfL to identify and maintain key freight routes in the capital. Ensuring timely and efficient travel on these routes will reduce congestion and improve air quality.

The Mayor should also consider traffic prioritisation on these routes including allowing bus lanes to be used by HGVs to reduce congestion.

Major infrastructure projects and new developments must ensure adequate loading bays and kerbside access are provided to HGVs to ensure efficient deliveries.

5 / Create A London Coach Strategy

The needs of coaches are too often equated with buses, but they perform distinct roles and have distinct policy requirements. London serves as both the UK's major travel destination and largest interchange for coach travel, and more needs to be done to support their continued use than a single policy proposal in the Mayor's wider transport strategy.

The RHA would support the creation of a distinct London Coach Strategy, focused on improving coordination between TfL and the Boroughs on the infrastructure coaches need and measures to discourage idle running and unnecessary circulation.

6 / Addressing skills gaps

The next Mayor should ensure the industry has access to the local skills it needs via the London Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), the devolved Adult Education Budget, and Skills Bootcamps.

The Adult Education Budget must meet the requirements of the freight and coach industries so that learners can secure employment in our sector.



1 / Closing comment

We are committed to working with the next Mayor of London to ensure more efficient freight and coach journeys. Our members based in the capital stand ready to work with the next Mayor to take forward the priorities within this manifesto and ensure London's freight sector has the support it needs to supply the city's households and businesses.

For further information contact: policy@rha.uk.net

! The RHA is the leading trade association representing over 8,500 road haulage, coach and van companies across the UK, 85% of whom are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Our members are operators of vehicles who, between them, operate around 250,000 HGVs (half of the UK fleet) out of 10,000 operating centres and range from a single-truck company to those with thousands of vehicles.

! For more information, please connect with us:



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