

Left-hand-turn ban needs more work, say experts

Industry experts have warned that the Greater London Authority's proposed introduction of a left-hand-turn ban for lorries to improve safety for cyclists could cause congestion and is unlikely to stop cyclists and lorries clashing on London's congested roads, writes Louise Dransfield.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) announced plans last week designed to reduce the risk of cyclists and lorries clashing on London's congested roads.

The proposals include a requirement that lorries minimise left turns they make when driving to

construction sites - proposed because many cyclist fatalities happen when lorries turn left at junctions.

Other plans include compelling lorries to have bigger windows to improve sightlines, and side guards to stop people being dragged under the wheels.

Bob Dempsey, operations manager at construction logistics specialist firm Wilson James, welcomed City Hall's ideas, but warned the left-hand-turn ban could prove "a colossal problem" for site managers planning lorry routes, adding: "If you're not allowed to do

a left-hand turn, you have to do a right-hand turn across traffic, which will cause major congestion."

Dempsey said specially designed "direct vision" lorries - designed with longer cabs and a lower driver position to reduce blind spots - were the way forward for the industry, but these were unlikely to be fully adopted until new emission regulations from the European Union come into force in 2020.

He added the GLA's proposed change would lead to lorries spending longer on the road with longer routes, and would leave no option for sites on one-way streets.

Peter Murray, chairman of New London Architecture and cycle safety campaigner, supported the GLA's initiatives but said he was concerned lorries would have to travel further, and that drivers might become distracted by additional mirrors and warning sirens: "These are complex issues not solved by a single silver bullet."

"What the mayor is doing is fantastic and should be supported, but when you've got six mirrors on a lorry, a video, a beeper going off and all sorts of things happening around you, it's very hard for the driver to know precisely what's happening."

Highways England pays £10bn through project bank accounts

Highways England has awarded and paid subcontractors over £10bn of funding for schemes within 19 days through the use of project bank accounts in the last three years.

According to the Specialist Engineering Contractors' Group, the method of payment has allowed Highways England to ensure that all

supply firms are paid within 19 days.

The body charged with maintaining and improving the UK's strategic road network is halfway towards reaching the target of £20bn to be awarded through PBAs by the end of the decade.

PBAs aim to eliminate late payment by paying all firms down the supply chain from a single pot.

Who is architect of the year?

The BD Architect of the Year Awards has been launched and will move to Ecobuild in March 2016.

Hosted by Building's sister title, BD, the AYAs are unique in rewarding architects for a body of work.

The awards are being moved as the event had outgrown the previous venue in the City of London, and Ecobuild offers architects the opportunity to

network, attend the conference and browse the exhibition.

The awards will be held on the evening of 9 March 2016 and are part of Ecobuild's architecture day. This is a full day of talks and debates by leading architects, clients and critics. The day will be hosted by broadcaster Will Gompertz.

Architects can enter the awards at www.awards.bdonline.co.uk

Walk the line

Architecture practice NBBJ has attracted headlines by coming up with a speculative idea to replace one of London's Underground lines with a giant travelator. The three-speed moving walkway would allow people to travel faster than the existing tubes, said the architects. The Circle Line project, which design director Christian Coop told the Evening Standard was inspired by a challenge for ideas to improve daily life in London, would release passengers from overcrowded carriages. Three parallel travelators would travel through lit tunnels at slow, medium and fast speeds, allowing people to step across until they were travelling at 15mph - faster when added to the average walking pace of 3mph.



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