

INNOVATION BRIEFING 2017

WINTER 2017

WHERE LONDON LEADS – OTHERS WILL FOLLOW

TOPICS COVERED:

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy for London
- Noise abatement
- An electric future?

Following servings in the Midlands and Scotland, Fraikin's third Innovation Breakfast – an initiative designed to bring professionals together to discuss how the industry is innovating – headed to Heathrow for a more London-centric menu.

This time around, the topics for discussion focused on what needs to be done to create a viable, working relationship between the residents of major cities and those tasked with servicing them.

Chairing the session, former Commercial Motor Editor-in-Chief Brian Weatherley, took the view that other large metropolitan authorities will follow London's lead on emissions, safety and noise regulations.

"Why do I say that people will follow what London does? Because it simply doesn't make sense for them to try to do anything different just for the sake of being unique.

"Like it or not, the way London deals with commercial vehicles looks set to be the template for other large cities to follow."

Opening proceedings, Colin Melvin, Sales Director at Fraikin, discussed how the challenges of the urban environment are driving innovation: "Meeting the challenges of inner-city operations has seen a constant stream of innovation within the industry over the years; with new regulations on noise, emissions and safety meaning we've had to evolve and adapt. Meetings like this, where we can share insight and ideas, are extremely beneficial and will hopefully help us at Fraikin to stay ahead of the curve."

Held at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Heathrow, the invited speakers were Tim Ward, Freight and Fleet Communications and Engagement Manager at Transport for London (TfL), Lisa Lavia, Managing Director of the Noise Abatement Society, and Ross Paterson, Head of Product and Marketing at Mercedes-Benz Trucks UK.





DELIVERING LONDON TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Making London a better, cleaner and safer place to live and work is the driving force behind the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) – and for those operating commercial vehicles, this process will revolve around improving how the city does business.

Tim Ward, Freight and Fleet Communications and Engagement Manager at TfL, understands the importance of commercial vehicle operations, particularly how integral goods deliveries are when it comes to keeping the capital functioning.

“Nothing in London can happen unless it arrives in the back of a truck or a van, and more and more these days on the back of a bike,” he says.

“In Central London, a third of all traffic in the morning peak is freight traffic, a number that will only increase as the population of the city rises. However, London simply doesn't operate as a viable economy if we don't have those vehicles moving around.”

While the city grows, the need to change how and when deliveries are made, as well as the vehicles that make them, will become increasingly important – initiatives like the Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) and the Direct Vision Standard are designed to help cut congestion, emissions and noise, as well as to help reduce road danger on the city's streets.

Managing deliveries in the capital

TfL has a number of strategies in place to tackle the complexities of commercial freight operations in London. From finding ways of mitigating the impact of each trip to matching operations to the demands on the network – by moving certain deliveries to quieter periods, for example – TfL is attempting to meet the issues head on.

Its key strategy revolves around minimising the amount of freight traffic on London's roads, whilst still keeping the supply lines open. TfL believes this can be achieved by:

- Using the waterways of London more efficiently
- Making businesses work together to consolidate delivery times

- Changing timing of deliveries
- Sharing information to allow drivers to use less congested routes
- Operating and introducing cleaner and safer vehicles

Ward adds: “Our key thinking is that the safest, cleanest trip is the one that doesn't have to happen in the first place. How can we cut down on these unnecessary journeys without reducing the amount of freight being moved, and without damaging London as a place to work, live and do business?”

“Collaboration across the supply chain is key to achieving this. This is about working on ways to streamline operations, to manage journeys correctly and to work with the operators, their customers and the city residents to make this happen.

“An excellent example of this approach in action is on central London's Bond Street – it previously saw 54 waste collections every day, but through a well-structured consultative process that number has now been reduced to just four.”

Collaboration and improved efficiency will be key to TfL realising its ambition of reducing freight trips in the morning peak by 10 per cent over the next 10 years.

This approach was backed up by Ross Paterson, Head of Product and Marketing at Mercedes-Benz Trucks UK.

“The most efficient freight journey is a freight journey carried out by a truck that is completely full, either through weight or volume. Trucks that are full all the time is the most efficient way to operate.

“When a truck runs out full and comes back empty or partially loaded, that's incredibly inefficient. So, shared services are about operators working together, customers working together, to make sure they are utilising the vehicles as much as possible.”

IMPROVING DELIVERIES – GET ON YOUR BIKE

By 2041, London Mayor Sadiq Khan wants 80% of Londoners' personal trips to be on foot, bike, or public transport.

Described as the most ambitious part of the MTS, it also holds the key to improving the supply lines for London's businesses.

Currently, out of the 26.7 million daily trips in London 36% are made using private cars and taxis.

If the Mayor's plan works, these trips will be cut by 3.2 million a day. This will have a knock-on effect for the freight industry, freeing up road space and making delivery routes quicker, safer and more efficient.

“What it does is it reduces the reliance on private cars and it means that we can use the road space for other means,” says Ward.

“If you've got lots of cars in front of you when you're trying to make a delivery, having less of those cars on the road means more road space is available for essential journeys, which is how the MTS describes freight operations – as essential journeys. The city needs them in order to function,” he concludes.

RE-TIMING IS RIGHT

A series of UK studies have shown that responsibly re-timing deliveries without causing noise disturbance to residents can have numerous long-term benefits.

Lisa Lavia, Managing Director of the Noise Abatement Society (NAS), insists that there should be a way to service the needs of all inner-city businesses, while making cities better places to live.

“We should be able to have it all. We should be able to have 24/7 cities that are peaceful and calm when they should be, and vibrant and exciting at other times – without being chaotic,” she says.

“People want goods and services available to them at any time of day or night – but noise is a barrier that often stands in the way of that. We need to optimise deliveries for the businesses doing the work, which subsequently means it's optimised for the consumers.”

Lavia says the benefits of having a 24/7 window are very apparent to operators; being able to deliver at any time of day or night can help both fuel and staff efficiency.

During the 2012 Olympic Games, many deliveries had to be made at night. “We spoke to a lot of drivers during

that time and they were really excited to be able to do their jobs without dodging pedestrians on street corners,” she explains.

“While they may not have thought about working at night, they really enjoyed the freedom to be able to do their jobs and not be stuck in traffic.

“So, there are lots of benefits to opening a 24/7 window for deliveries – if there is no noise disturbance. But can we actually have a noisy activity happening at an unsociable time, and can it work? The answer: it depends.”

In 2014, NAS co-led a 14-month trial with supermarket operators called the Quiet Deliveries Demonstration Scheme (QDDS). The goal was to demonstrate best practise at a variety of store types and locations in relation to operational noise, developing step-by-step field guides and case studies to illustrate how to keep noise levels at a satisfactory level.

“During the TfL Re-Timing Programme more than 500 sites in London have now successfully had their delivery times changed – helping meet the needs of the businesses involved, whilst also considering the quality of life for the residents. In addition, TfL now offers advice to businesses in the capital which want to reduce noise pollution.”

TRAFFIC NOISE HITS US ALL IN THE POCKET

Most recent figures from the World Health Organisation say that in western Europe more than one million healthy life-years are lost every 12 months due to traffic-related noise – a statistic that clearly illustrates why noise pollution is taken so seriously by environmental health practitioners.

Lisa Lavia, Managing Director of the Noise Abatement Society (NAS), says: “Unwanted, and in many cases unnecessary, noise is a real problem; it is a health issue that we are all paying for.

“The cost to the UK taxpayer of dealing with statutory noise nuisance is between £7 billion and £10 billion per annum – that's second only to the cost for air pollution.

“We're all paying for this problem, whether we feel like we're actively contributing to it or not.”

THE ART OF NOISE

When working to reduce noise pollution, larger retailers and businesses should find it easier to meet any associated costs required to change their business practices.

However, small independent traders may find life a little harder – especially when attempting to re-time deliveries.

“It can be much harder for smaller retailers with far less capacity to change their operations,” Lavia says.

“In that situation, an effective way to solve continuing problems with noise may be with behavioural change, it's about understanding what is causing the disturbance and doing all that can be done to try and rectify it.”

Despite the potential difficulties for smaller businesses, Lavia and the NAS have put forward some tips to help reduce delivery noise:

- Drivers – avoid harsh braking and acceleration
- Do not leave the engine running or radio on a high volume
- If replacing older roller shutters is impossible, pull them down slowly to reduce noise
- Don't throw goods on the floor – place them down quietly
- If available, use quiet modes on refrigeration units
- Be more aware of surroundings, particularly if the delivery is in a residential area





DRIVERS HOLD KEY TO EFFICIENCY

For Mercedes-Benz, efficiency on the road is one of its key marketing strategies. But an element of investment goes to waste if drivers are not maximising its benefits – which is where training comes in.

Ross Paterson, Head of Product and Marketing at Mercedes-Benz Trucks UK, says: “Quite honestly, you can have the most fuel-efficient truck on the road, but if the person behind the steering wheel is not driving it correctly, an element of this investment is wasted.

“Making sure the driver completely understands how they should be driving in order to maximise efficiency is unbelievably important, it’s something that should never be discounted.”

With this in mind, Paterson feels that telematics have a vital role to play.

“Every driver will drive to the best of their ability when they’re being watched, but as soon as they go out of the factory gate it can be a different story. Constant monitoring of driver behaviour is very important, it ensures your vehicles are being operated efficiently,” he says.

Of course, another way of improving efficiency is through automation. Mercedes-Benz already has an operational autonomous truck working in Stuttgart. Its position on the development of such technology is clear: “We know the technology is there, and we are prepared for the future.”

That said, Paterson understands the challenges of ‘connected vehicles’ on UK roads – primarily the roads themselves and the public perception of trucks driving themselves – but Mercedes-Benz has the technology in place for safe, extremely efficient autonomous operations and see it as a viable future.

LONDON TO TRIAL ELECTRIC TRUCKS

There are few better ways to deal with noise and traffic pollution than with all-electric powered vehicles.

Though electric cars are becoming more commonplace on Britain’s roads, you’re just as likely to win the lottery as see a fully-electric truck.

Mercedes-Benz is about to change that fact with the introduction of an electric version of its FUSO eCarter to a number of UK operators.

“In early Q1 2018 we will be getting the first 10 or 11 fully electric 7.5 tonne eCanters into the UK. These will be trialled with certain operators in and around London,” Paterson says.

“Our intention is to go into full production of that vehicle in 2019. It will become serious production, but that lives and breathes today,” he adds.

In 2020 the manufacturer is also planning to start production on its fully electric 26-tonne eTruck – it already has a proof of concept model on trial in Stuttgart.

Paterson says: “There is a very, very strong desire to make this a production vehicle by 2020; we’re really looking forward to it.”

And in answer to those who question if the batteries of an electric truck would impact on its payload, Paterson says: “Electric motors are heavy. But these vehicles do not have huge 10-litre diesel engines, gearboxes or prop shafts. So, there’s a massive amount of weight that comes out of the vehicle.

“With the electrics in, payload wise it’s slightly heavier than the diesel equivalent, but by no means inoperable.”



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