

Sounder City

A leaflet about the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy



March 2004



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Noise - the forgotten pollutant

All of us have been affected at some time, in some way, by noise. We may have had to shout over the roar of traffic at the roadside. Or we may have been kept awake at night by a busy restaurant or bar.

Most of us probably blot noise out, most of the time. But it may disrupt conversation or other activity, increase stress or disturb our concentration, rest or sleep. Noise has been called the 'forgotten pollutant', but many see it as a key quality of life issue. Our 'soundscape' needs as much care as the townscape or landscape.

Whose responsibility is noise?

All of us make noise. But we may not always realise when we are causing others distress. Noise makers do not always realise their music systems or other equipment can be confiscated if they repeatedly cause real nuisance. Who is responsible for dealing with noise when it becomes a problem depends on the type of noise:



- **Ambient noise or 'environmental noise'**, this is long-term noise from transport and industry. Many different organisations can influence it. Following public consultation, the Mayor has published an Ambient Noise Strategy. He will also take action through his Transport Strategy and the London Plan, and work with borough councils and others. Action includes better **management of transport systems**, better **town planning** and better **design of buildings**.



- **Neighbour noise** Your local borough council environmental health officer can often help in dealing with noisy neighbours, noise from roadworks or construction sites, pubs, bars, and similar problems. Many have 24 hour helplines.
- **Workplace noise** Protecting people's hearing in noisy workplaces is dealt with primarily by the Health and Safety Executive.



What do Londoners think about noise?

46% of Londoners polled in late 2003 considered noise a problem (13% a major problem, 33% a lower level of problem). 24% included noise as one of their top priorities for improving the quality of the environment in London. When the 2002 GLA London Household Survey asked people which noises were a 'serious problem' for them where they lived, thirteen per cent said road traffic; six per cent said aircraft; four per cent said noisy neighbours; four per cent said roadworks, construction or demolition; two per cent said trains or tubes; two per cent said pubs, clubs or entertainment; and two per cent said industrial or commercial premises. Larger percentages reported a 'problem, but not serious'.

Practical action on noise

The aim of the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy is a practical one - **to minimise the adverse impacts of noise on people living and working in, and visiting London using the best available practices and technology within a sustainable development framework.**



Quieter roads

Road traffic noise concerns more Londoners than other types of noise. Some vehicles are quieter than they used to be, but traffic as a whole can seem just as noisy. Bumps, potholes and other faults in the road can create needless noise. Noise will be lower if we:

- Use quieter vehicles - e.g. electric, hybrid, fuel cell and some alternative fuels
- Keep streets in better repair - many are dug up too often
- Use low-noise road surfaces - Transport for London will use new quieter road surfaces wherever possible on the five per cent of roads for which it is responsible, and boroughs should do the same on other roads.



Smoothing traffic

Congested, stop-start traffic can make noise worse. Hard acceleration and heavy braking is noisier than smooth driving. Noise will be lower if we:

- Improve traffic management
- Use alternatives to 'road humps' in traffic calming wherever possible
- Drive more smoothly and quietly.

Streets and places for people

The Mayor will promote 'Streets for People' and Public Space improvements:

- Making suitable local streets more attractive in ways that enhance community
- Increasing priority for public transport, cycling and walking





- Promoting Home Zones - residential streets in which space is shared, e.g. including places where residents can sit outside.

Opportunities on London's railways

Poor track condition can increase noise. The Mayor and Transport for London will work with the government and the rail industry to upgrade London's railways. New investment gives opportunities to:

- Bring in new, quieter trains
- Improve railway track quality and maintenance
- Control noise and vibration as part of day-to-day railway management.



Better design of trackside development can screen noise. So can 'solar barriers' which also generate electricity, and special designs of safety and security fencing.



Aircraft noise

Aircraft are a major noise issue for many Londoners. Aircraft noise standards are agreed at international level. The UK Government is responsible for the key controls at Heathrow Airport. The Mayor:

- Supports the view that night flights should be banned
- Believes that aviation should pay its environmental costs, like other industries
- Wants to see more financial incentives used to get noisier aircraft replaced by quieter ones.





The Government has proposed new runways, at Stansted and later Heathrow, to cater for growing demand. The Mayor believes it essential that no extra Heathrow runway should be built unless all the environmental problems can be overcome. He would also be very concerned if the respite provided by alternating the use of the two existing main runways at Heathrow were lost.

Planning and building design

We need to give higher priority to sound quality in planning and design. The London Plan, setting out policies for buildings and land use, and the Ambient Noise Strategy, will together promote exemplary standards. Soundscapes can be improved with measures such as:

- Designing buildings to screen housing and other uses from noise, and create new quiet outdoor spaces
- Combining photovoltaic cells, which convert sunlight into electricity, with noise screening
- Building over some noise sources, protecting local areas while providing new spaces for local needs
- Guiding late-night activities to suitable areas, where better planning, policing, transport and street management can be focused.





Tranquil spaces for London

Places where natural or interesting sounds can be easily heard above traffic or other activity are rare in cities. London is no exception. Yet some green open spaces, rivers, canals, urban squares and rear courtyards can still feel quiet compared with the rest of the city. We need to:

- Promote exemplary projects to improve soundscapes in parks, courtyards, watersides and other more tranquil places.

Big cities have buzz, but people also need a chance to rest and recover. Balancing London's vitality with improving our quality of life is a challenge for all of us.

For further information

If you would like to read more about the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy, pick up a copy of the Highlights document. To do this:

- Visit our website www.london.gov.uk
- Call 020 7983 4100
- Minicom 020 7893 4458
- Or visit City Hall and ask at the Visitor Centre on the Lower Ground Floor.



Other formats and languages

For a large print, Braille, disc, sign language video or audio-tape version of this document, please contact us at the address below:

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Chinese

中文
如果需要此文檔的您的母語拷貝，
請致電以下號碼或和下列地址聯係

Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn bản sao của tài liệu này bằng ngôn ngữ của bạn, hãy gọi điện theo số hoặc liên lạc với địa chỉ dưới đây.

Greek

Αν θα θέλατε ένα αντίγραφο του παρόντος εγγράφου στη γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ να τηλεφωνήσετε στον αριθμό ή να επικοινωνήσετε στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bize telefon ederek ya da yukarıdaki adrese başvurarak bu belgenin Türkçe'sini isteyebilirsiniz.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਅਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਖਾਵਾ ਕਰੋ।

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Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नम्बर पर फोन करें अथवा विये गये पता पर सम्पर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি (কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دیئے گئے نمبر پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتہ پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، الرجاء الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الكتابة الى العنوان

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર 'ਤੇ ફોન કરી અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.