

MAYOR OF LONDON

Husain Akhtar
Coordinator
Harrow Monitoring Group

Our ref: MGLA150925-4150

Date: 27 January 2026

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Dear Mr Akhtar,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 September 2025 regarding the safety concerns posed by quiet electric vehicles for blind and partially sighted Londoners. I appreciate the Harrow Monitoring Group's continued advocacy for inclusive and accessible urban environments. The Greater London Authority (GLA) recognises the importance of Audible Vehicle Alerting Systems (AVAS) in mitigating the risks associated with quieter vehicles.

I thank you for your suggestions and would like to address the key points raised in your letter:

1. Licensing and Contracting Requirements

We continually review our procurement and licensing frameworks to ensure that all GLA-owned and contracted vehicles – including buses, taxis and private hire vehicles – comply with regulations. Safety is of utmost importance to the GLA and where possible, we work to further strengthen and expedite regulation through our contractual requirements. An example of this is the Bus Safety Standard that Transport for London (TfL) has implemented.

Specifically, in 2019, ahead of the regulatory requirement, we introduced Acoustic Vehicle Alerting System (AVAS) on all new quiet-running London Buses. We worked with experts to develop a unique 'Urban Bus Sound' to ensure it is distinguishable over typical city background noise.

Since 2023, responsive AVAS has been required on new buses. This adjusts the sound levels according to the background environment, increasing the volume in busy areas and lowering it in quiet areas. Muting of AVAS at any time on a London Bus is strictly prohibited. AVAS continues to be rolled out on new buses entering service in London and we have invested in retrofitting older buses. We now have over 2,100 buses fitted.

2. Enforcement and Police Checks

UK regulation mandates (by the European Union (EU) Regulation 2014/540) that all new electric and hybrid vehicles are fitted with AVAS. We continue to work closely with the Metropolitan Police Service and relevant enforcement bodies such as the DVSA to ensure such regulations are enforced on London's roads. Ensuring that AVAS systems are functioning as intended is critical to pedestrian safety and particularly those that are visually impaired.

3. Planning Guidance and Accessible Street Design

The GLA is committed to inclusive design principles. Our Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Accessible London: Achieving an Inclusive Environment' provides advice on implementing inclusive design principles effectively.

This is a time of considerable change within the planning environment. Firstly, the government are currently consulting on a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which including a greater role for national policies and guidance as well as changes to the role of Supplementary Planning Documents, and have committed to publish an updated Manual for Streets. At the same time, the GLA are developing a new London Plan, which will offer an opportunity to hone how

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inclusive design is embedded in policy within London. We encourage you to engage in both the NPPF consultation and, once it opens, the forthcoming London Plan consultation.

TfL, driven by the Mayor's Inclusive London Strategy, is fully committed to inclusive street design, incorporating features like tactile paving, audible traffic signals, and accessible street furniture at pedestrian crossings to aid navigation and safety.

We also agree that collaboration across London's boroughs and transport partners is essential. We will continue to promote best practices and share guidance to ensure consistent standards across the Capital.

We recognise the need to balance environmental progress with inclusive safety measures. As London continues its transition to cleaner transport, we must ensure that no resident is left behind.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seb Dance". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Seb Dance

Deputy Mayor for Transport