

Easing road congestion

Road congestion stems from three main causes. In some cases it is a simple lack of capacity for ever growing traffic volumes. Governments accepting large numbers of new people to the country every year need to upgrade road space as well as adding extra NHS and schools capacity.

In some cases it is the deliberate mismanagement of traffic on the existing roads. There is the endless substitution of traffic lights for roundabouts to delay vehicles, allied to poor timing of traffic light phases. There is the failure to provide left hand turning lanes and filters, or to segregate right hand turning traffic which may not be able to turn when the light first changes to green. There is the deliberate reduction of lanes on busy roads causing delays in traffic merging. There is a failure to supply alternative cycle lanes to prevent friction between bicycles and motor vehicles.

In other cases it is temporary disruption. It may be caused by Highways works with missing lanes and temporary lights. It may be the joint decision of utility companies and Highway authorities to place most cables and pipes under main roads and to insist on digging up the roads every time they need access to their systems instead of placing utilities in locked conduits with easy access. In some cases it is the decision of taxis or delivery vehicles to double park to offload, blocking the highway. In some cases it is not allowing pull ins for bus stops.

I am going to produce few blogs examining how some of these problems can be reduced, and set out how a Highways authority that did want to cut congestion could make a difference.