Twitter Thread by Alex Ingram



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So I bunged out this tweet last night because I had a feeling that the judgement on the Streetspace case brought against the Mayor and TfL would be interesting.

And indeed it is...

> Just like to dedicate this song to everyone commentating on the judicial review of TfL's streetspace plans due to receive judgement tomorrow.https://t.co/Kj7TVIjZ0O
>
> — Alex Ingram (@nuttyxander) January 19, 2021

Transport for London proposed during the first wave of the pandemic to adopt a 'Streetspace Plan' (though a lot of 'people called is Streetscape) and rough theory was "hang on pandemic means fewer people can be on public transport, can't let everyone move to cars, do something"

This was of course at the same time as the government changed the Network Management Duty, which was sold as a major change in guidance that would make a lot happen, very quickly.

As campaigners may well be aware, it didn't quite pan out that way on a national basis and a lot of stuff happened, and then unhappened. Quite a lot of things were done that wasn't that great. Some great stuff happened that got ripped out. And some great suff remains.

A big problem was what to do with Central London. So, the Mayor proposed a series of corridors to be made traffic free. As is usual with a Mayor it was promised to be world leading. https://t.co/vdlrd4xJ4H

In practice change was slow, but eventually a scheme was put forward for Bishopsgate on the A10 through the side of the City of London near Liverpool Street. This used a series of bus gates to create a road for buses and cycles with emergency vehicle access.

This is what the taxi trade wound up objecting to, combined with the Streetspace guidance itself. And there was a hearing last year.

Normally with a Judicial Review you don't get to see the submissions, but because TfL had their's argued against it is available in a separate judgement today along with strikethrough for the inadmissible bits. https://t.co/lwM3fK6cUk

Also published today is the main judgement itself, which lists the details on five grounds. It is lengthy, but as it is a judgement it is well written and relatively self explanatory. https://t.co/2FBv7qxUfd

Is the judgement right? Should TfL Appeal?
I think yes to both, which is contradictory but coherent in my head. Perhaps a bit like TfL's defence...

It is good to see challenges, even to things I support. We've seen back of someone today who was against courts challenging power!

The Mayor and TfL have a lot of contradictory guidance and plans. This is perhaps normal, but the essence of the judgement says to me TfL should:
- have a clear plan in Streetspace for taxis
- use equality impact assessments to help shape decisions
- document decisions better

What surprises me somewhat about this, is that TfL's weaknesses in the case are actually similar to those they had in defending CS11, when they couldn't pinpoint the decisions being made. Did they learn from this case? https://t.co/EmqWHoly2m

Anyway, it is totally coherent for me to want more walking and cycling, want more inclusive streets, and for TfL to work at improving their processes. They are as ever, imperfectly good. Most right ideas, but execution needs improving. Over to you, Mr Mayor...

...because I'm going to slump in front of a film to ignore lockdown three. (apologies for rushed thread, without much to say, the brain is only so good at the moment).