

In This Issue

- *Inaugural Meeting of London Members*
- *Croydon Tramlink Extension*
- *More Red Lights and Slower Traffic Speeds*
- *Cray Avenue, Orpington Bus Lane Cameras*
- *Dartford Crossing Toll Changes*
- *Richmond Permit Parking Scheme*
- *New London Traffic Web Site*
- *LEZ Consultation*
- *The Latest Attack on Car Owners*
- *Figures Demonstrate Road Safety Policy is Wrong*
- *The Eddington Report*
- *Conservative's "Getting Around"*
- *Transport 2025 for London*
- *Greenwich the Next Area for Congestion Tax in London?*
- *Sign a Petition Against Road Tolls*
- *News Snapshots*
- *A.B.D. Information and Contacts*

Editorial

This is the first of an occasional newsletter for London ABD members. It is being sent to all members in the London area via either post or email, but it is important to note that in future it will only be sent to those members for whom I have an email address – this is simply on the grounds of cost as it is too expensive to print and post to other members (the ABD membership subscription would not cover it). So if you have not notified me of your email address then please do so.

If you have any comments on the format, content or style of this newsletter then please let me have them.

I hope that I will not have to write all of it in future so I would also welcome contributed articles or simple letters on any transport issue in London.



For those of you who didn't attend our inaugural meeting of London members (see report below), I have included a photograph of myself so you know who is expressing any

outrageous opinions with which you disagree in this publication. Yes it will contain some editorial comment occasionally and my views may sometimes differ slightly from those of the ABD nationally so as the saying goes – anything contained herein is solely the views of the writer and does not necessarily represent the official views of the ABD.

Note that many of the articles are duplicates of what have already been published in a newsletter I produce for the residents of Bromley, so you may see rather more coverage of my remote London borough than you would expect. I would really like to get more coverage of local issues in other London areas.

Regardless I hope you find this an interesting read and best wishes for Xmas and the New Year to all our members.

Roger Lawson, Editor

Inaugural Meeting of London Members

Some 30 London based members of the ABD met in London for the first time on Saturday the 11th November. This followed an initiative by recently appointed London Region Co-ordinator, Roger Lawson, to get more activity in opposing the anti-car policies promoted by Ken Livingstone. London members also have to suffer the policies promoted by Transport for London (TfL) and similar attacks on the rights of road users in local boroughs (the latest example of which is the proposed hike in Permit Parking Charges in Richmond based on CO2 emissions).

Roger outlined at the meeting how he thought the ABD should tackle the issue of gaining more influence on transport decisions in London. In essence he suggested that less moaning and more action was needed by ABD members, and that such action needed to be addressed both at a strategic level, and at the grassroots level. In the latter area, he explained what he had done in the London Borough of Bromley in the last few years, with the result that road safety policies were more rational, but more effective. Bromley does not install speed humps any more, and also rejects speed cameras, plus there is a greater emphasis on full public consultation, and proper democratic decision making than in many London boroughs.

Members discussed what their main concerns were, and the results of the survey of London members, and it was clear that the main focus of the ABD in London should be on speed humps, congestion charging and speed cameras. We should also tackle "opportunistic" or "topical" issues such as the Richmond Permit Parking proposals. Several people agreed to help on a simple leaflet campaign on the latter issue, which might help to recruit more members – recruiting more members is obviously important if we are to have more influence.

It was also agreed to form an executive committee which several people volunteered for to try and progress other activities.

Future meetings were also supported on a quarterly basis, and the central London venue (St Columba's Church) and location was seen as ideal as it was readily accessible from most parts of London both by public transport and car.

A number of new "borough representatives" were also identified, and it was agreed that it would be a good idea to produce a London focussed newsletter. Possibly a web site and discussion form could be developed also in due course.

Brian Mooney also gave a presentation on Congestion Charging at this meeting, and it is planned to invite guest speakers to future meetings. Copies of the powerpoint presentations given at this meeting are available to members if they contact Roger Lawson.

All in all, members who attended seemed to welcome the new enthusiasm for action in the region, and are keen to have future such meetings.

Croydon Tramlink Extension



The extension of the Croydon Tramlink system to Crystal Palace has been in prospect for some time, along with other possible extensions. Transport for London (TfL) have now issued a consultation document on this proposal – see the following web address:
www.tfl.gov.uk/trams/initiatives/tep/consultation.shtml

The consultation only refers to the choice of possible routes, not to the overall viability or wisdom of the scheme. It seems that Transport for London and the Mayor have taken a new approach to consultation on trams following failure to get any public agreement to the West London tram – namely that they will not be consulting us at all as we don't give the right answers.

Of the three route options, we support only Option 2 which minimises the impact on road traffic by avoiding Anerley Road, although we opposed the whole scheme on principle.

Why the Elderly Prefer Trams

The reason why many elderly people like trams became apparent at a recent U3A meeting that your editor attended. It seems that elderly and disabled people have problems with the abrupt starting, stopping and change of direction of buses – quite a number of elderly people are injured by being thrown about inside buses.

They also have more space inside and are easier to get off and on than buses. Arguments about the cost of tram schemes also tend to have little impact on the elderly as they typically do not pay the full economic costs of the schemes at present – for example the Tramlink scheme was heavily subsidised in regard to construction costs out of central Government funds and operating costs are also subsidised by TfL. In fact of course the elderly pay nothing for most of their public transport journeys in London now by using their “Freedom Passes” which means that they have no interest in the economics of different transport modes whatsoever (one of the distortions that happens if you give something to people for free). Whether they would continue to hold this opinion if they had to pay economic tram fares (which would be several times the cost of a bus fare for the same trip) remains to be seen.

More Red Lights and Slower Traffic Speeds



The number of traffic lights in London has been growing rapidly. According to a press release from the Conservative GLA group, not only have they risen by 1,000 since Ken Livingstone took over, but there are plans for another 1,719 in the Transport for

London works programme. That's on top of the existing 5,827 already present.

Roger Evans, Conservative GLA spokesman on Transport said *"These new figures reveal the true extent of the Mayor's road blocking plans. He has presided over a gridlock London, making the lives of millions of commuters a misery through ill-thought out plans, and a constant anti-car agenda."*

Traffic is slowing down in London

One can see the impact on traffic speeds in London of the various measures that Livingstone has promoted by looking at the trends within the congestion charge zone. Average traffic speed increased from 14.6 to 16.7 km/hr when the charge was introduced but has declined ever since. On current trends traffic speed will be

back to where it was before the introduction of the congestion tax by 2009.

What has caused this? Increases in traffic signals is one cause, but measures that reduce road space such as bus lanes, cycle lanes, bus stop build-outs and general road narrowing are some others. In addition the increased number of buses, particularly “bendy-buses” that obstruct traffic is another problem. Traffic lights have also been rephased to give more time to pedestrians and there have been innumerable road closures – a typical example of damage to road traffic routes was the redevelopment of Trafalgar Square and the wholesale closure of roads in Bloomsbury.

Cray Avenue, Orpington Bus Lane Cameras



The camera enforcement of the Bus Lane on Cray Avenue has been a big controversy in Bromley in the last few months. People issued with penalty notices when they turned through the bus lane into Station Approach are still complaining. One PATAS appeal case was won by local resident Roy Swift, although a second appeal case was heard by PATAS and rejected. The complaints are not dying down with more than one sufferer threatening to apply for a judicial review.

Cray Avenue in the top ten for fines

The Daily Telegraph recently reported on the roads in Britain that generated the most revenue in parking fines and bus lane offences in 2005-6 (figures originally obtained by Channel 4 News).

Almost all of them are in London, and the top ten in London are as follows:

Location	Revenue £
Lordship Lane, Haringey	3.2 million
Vine St, Hillingdon	1.9 million
King St, Hammersmith & Fulham	1.1 million
Newington Green Rd, Camden	1.0 million
Kentish Town Road, Camden	825,000
Cray Avenue, Orpington	753,000
Green Street, Newham	587,000
Hoe Street, Waltham Forest	426,000
High Street, Ealing	386,000
Green Lane, Enfield	364,000

Yes Cray Avenue is 6th, and just shows how vicious the enforcement on this road is as almost all that revenue will have come from the single original camera (nobody is likely to have been penalised for parking on this road). The above revenue figure is the value of the penalty notices issued, so the actual amount paid will be less in most cases, assuming people paid promptly.

Senior Council Officer Intervenes

The desperation of council staff to maximise revenue from the bus lane cameras is possibly reflected in the comments of Gordon Hayward in response to my letter in the Newsshopper (my letter is given below). Mr Hayward is the Director of Environment and Leisure Services for the London Borough of Bromley, and he wrote at the start of his letter: "*It is unusual in any newspaper to read of an exhortation motorists should break the law, but this is what Mr Lawson advocated.*". As you can see below, this statement is completely unjustified and my letter actually warned people against running down the bus lane.

Of course exhorting people to break the law is itself a criminal offence so why did he not simply report me to the police instead of making such patently misleading statements? Perhaps because encouraging people to seek justice is a somewhat different matter.

The rest of his letter exhorted motorists to obey the rules. Why should Mr Hayward be so aggressive on this matter? No doubt readers can guess why, but it shows the general attitude of council staff to any public criticism of their actions. And there is no way that this unjust and unfair automated fine collection system can be justified.

To remind you, at least 30% of the fines were issued to people turning left off the road and who were not impeding buses in any way whatsoever. And in addition the legal position is unclear as different PATAS adjudications have given conflicting decisions, and there are clearly good legal grounds for disputing any penalty fines issued in such cases.

Drivers must argue fines, published 25/9/2006

Bromley Council is still incorrectly issuing penalty notices for infringement of the Cray Avenue Bus Lane. Council staff do not seem to want to admit defeat when they are clearly in the wrong. I would encourage anyone who is the victim of this "fund raising" activity to go to appeal. All they have to do is say that the Traffic Management Order that created the bus lane clearly says that one of the permitted exemptions for crossing a bus lane is "in order to get to or from any road adjacent to the bus lane or any vehicular access to premises adjacent to the bus lane". Council staff simply do not have a leg to stand on, even though they seem to be persisting in saying black is white.

That does not mean to say that you can drive down the whole length of the bus lane on the pretence you are turning off at some point, but you can certainly act in a reasonable manner to do so, even if it means one infringes the solid white line. That is clearly the interpretation that was put on the case taken to appeal by Roy Swift, and where the adjudicator correctly ruled in his favour. So all those people who have accidentally infringed the bus lane demarcation should take it to appeal, and those people who have previously paid such a fine should ask the council to refund the fine.

Roger Lawson

Dartford Crossing Toll Changes



The Department for Transport (DfT) are proposing to change the tolls on the Dartford Crossing from January 2008 (picture above).

The standard toll for cars will rise from £1 to £1.50 but users of Dart-Tag will only pay £1 (they presently pay 93p). Dart-Tag is an electronic tag that is purchased in advance – it expedites travel through all the toll barriers, and there is sometimes a reserved lane for tag users although that now seems to be generally kept open for all users.

They are also examining the possibility of making the toll free from 10 pm to 6 am so as to encourage lorries to use it at quieter times – these typically congest the area leading up to the toll booths as they can't use the automatic toll booths.

Dartford MP Howard Stoate says the increase should be scrapped, and in fact he wants the tolls scrapped altogether. They clearly cause needless congestion on this stretch of motorway, and readers are reminded that the Government promised to remove the tolls once the bridge had been paid for, which it was by 2003. It also appears to contravene European law in that the tolls are higher than they need to be to cover the operating costs.

A consultation document has been published on the internet at: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/page/dft_roads_613833.hcsp. Readers who use this crossing should make sure they respond.

(Editor's Comments: making it free at certain times to reduce congestion is certainly a step forward. And encouraging Dart-Tag use is also a good idea as vehicles using them pass through much more quickly – the previous price differentiation was not enough to encourage take-up. But the increase in the basic charge is too much, and I think the Government should still stick to its original promise and remove the tolls altogether).

Richmond Permit Parking Scheme



The London Borough of Richmond have recently announced major increases in parking charges (they expect to collect at least £1million more). One additional element in their proposals is to charge permit parking scheme users based on the CO2 emissions of their vehicles. This could result in some residents paying as much as £300 per year, instead of £100.

The press release issued by the Association of British Drivers said the following:

"Richmond's New Parking Charges Miss the Point, says drivers' group

Richmond council has hit the headlines today by announcing they will charge residents more to park outside their homes if they own 'gas guzzling' cars. The new tax is an attempt to reduce CO2 emissions.

The Association of British Drivers (ABD) suggests that Richmond Council has missed the point. "We believe that charging people for the privilege of parking outside their houses is wrong in any case. To charge them more simply for owning a larger car is doubly so," says Mark McArthur-Christie, the ABD's Director of Policy. The ABD goes on to explain that the most energy is used when a car is manufactured and when it is scrapped, not when it is driven or parked. If Richmond's proposal is implemented, people are more likely to get rid of larger, older cars with many years life left – causing more pollution than if the cars had simply been driven.

In any case, targeting a small minority of car users will not make any significant impact on CO2 emissions. One of the most interesting recent statements from Transport for London in their submissions on the Thames Gateway Bridge inquiry was the following statement: "Private cars constitute only 10% of total UK CO2 emissions, and the position appears to be both under control and improving, largely due to technology". If you assume only 10% of cars are "gas guzzlers" and their owners all moved to smaller cars (with about half the CO2 emissions), then the net impact will be 0.5% of CO2 emitted in Richmond. But of course most of them will not, and many cars are parked off the street so the net impact will clearly be imperceptible.

These charges are obviously not about improving emissions, but simply about raising more money for hard pressed council budgets from local residents."

More details of this proposal and the council's consultation document (which provides little information on the likely impact of these proposals which in reality are likely to reduce CO2 emissions by less than 0.25%), can be seen at: www.richmond.gov.uk . A copy of the full response by the ABD to this consultation can be seen in the News section of the BBRAG web site at: www.bromleytransport.org.uk/News.htm

ABD Campaign in Progress

The ABD London Region has mounted a campaign to defeat these proposals and we have circulated over 7,000 leaflets to residents in permit parking zones within the borough of Richmond. There have been several hundred responses although they are still coming in at the time of writing. Several new ABD members have also joined us as a result. Liberal Democrat councillors who thought up this idea are going to get a lot more objections than they expected.

Press coverage has also been strongly in opposition and it is astonishing to see the numbers and type of people who have supported our stance – even people who don't own cars! There is a general consensus that the proposals are "gesture politics" of the worst kind and "green policies" are being used to extract more money from impoverished motorists.

It is a bit early to say what the final result of this campaign will be (these matters can drag on for

months), but I would certainly encourage other members to commence similar campaigns on local issues in other boroughs. Only by stimulating public debate and interest (and unfortunately most people are pretty apathetic as regards local politics) can one really have an impact on such lunatic policies.

Also of course, it promotes the ABD and helps to recruit new members if we get involved in such local bun fights. We may not win them all but the publicity will certainly help anyway.

Needless possibly to point out that if Richmond succeed with this proposal then other London boroughs are likely to adopt similar plans – for example it has already been discussed in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea.

New London Traffic Web Site

Transport for London (TfL) have launched a new web site which attempts to show real time details of traffic conditions in London. The web site is: www.tfl.gov.uk/trafficnews . It specifically attempts to show road works, public events, accidents and other things that may affect traffic flows and is based on a feed from the London Traffic Control Centre run by TfL.

It seems this may be the first of other similar services to help improve traffic flows in London.

(Editor's Comments: there was hardly anything on the map for my local area when I looked at it, but the service is experimental I gather. But at least it shows that TfL is making some efforts to help drivers).

LEZ Consultation



Transport for London (TfL) published the results of its consultation on a Low Emission Zone (LEZ). This would primarily impact LGV and HGV vehicles entering the zone within the M25, and is aimed to reduce

air pollution to bring it down to within national and EU standards.

The general public, who get most of the benefit but don't suffer the cost, were 89% in favour of the proposals. Business respondents were evenly split (41% for, 41% against).

There were a number of comments submitted by your editor included in the report, such as:

"In other words, this enormously expensive project will only expedite improved air quality by about 5 years, because it would improve anyway as older vehicles are replaced. New vehicles must conform to much tighter emission standard so the problem will be much reduced over time."

And: "In summary, there are several much cheaper ways of achieving the intended objectives, if the benefits are justifiable at all for the relatively short period of time for which they will apply."

And: "the cost of the scheme, which all Londoners will have to pay for, is simply excessive when Londoners are fed up with above-inflation increases in their council taxes."

Congratulations to TfL for publishing these remarks. I would have given a web site reference to the whole report but it seems to have disappeared already (I trust there is no suspicious coincidence there) so if anyone is desperate to read it please telephone me for a paper copy or contact TfL.

The Latest Attack on Car Owners



Mayor Ken Livingstone recently announced his latest attack on car owners. The man who has allegedly said "I hate cars" demonstrated exactly how

he plans to impose his views on the rest of us by announcing that the London Congestion Tax will soon be £25 for many car owners.

All vehicles that emit more than 225g of CO₂ per km (ie. those in band G for vehicle licensing purposes) will have to pay that amount to enter the Congestion Charge zone from 2009/10.

But these are not just "gas-guzzling" 4x4s that will be affected. Almost all luxury cars will be, and even such mundane vehicles as the Fiat

Croma 2.2, Ford Mondeo 2.0i/2.5, Ford Galaxy, Mazda 6 2.3, Renault Espace and Seat Alhambra models will incur such charges.

The claim is that "these new proposals will tackle pollution from private vehicles, and ensure that London is leading the way in the fight against catastrophic climate change", but the Association of British Drivers (ABD) says this is nonsense.

As with the Richmond proposals, the impact on CO₂ levels is likely to be imperceptible. So there is very little merit in these proposals. CO₂ and other pollution levels is best tackled by national policies not by local initiatives.

The most energy is used when a car is manufactured and when it is scrapped, not when it is driven or parked. If this proposal is implemented, people are more likely to get rid of larger, older cars with many years life left – causing more pollution than if the cars had simply been driven.

These charges are obviously not about improving emissions, but simply about raising more money for the bureaucracy spawned by Ken Livingstone. The ABD supports measures to reduce air pollution in London, but this proposal will not achieve it, and air pollution is not just about reducing CO₂ emissions. In fact CO₂ is one of the more benign gases and this measure might simply encourage more use of vehicles with higher emissions of known carcinogens, such as diesel powered cars. In any case there are strong tax incentives already from fuel tax and vehicle excise duty for car owners to buy lower fuel consumption vehicles, so this measure is totally unnecessary. And why should someone who owns a vehicle that generates 226g CO₂ pay more than three times that of the owner of a vehicle that generates 225g CO₂ per kilometer? It's simply irrational.

Many people justified the introduction of the London Congestion Tax partly on the basis that it would reduce pollution, but in reality air pollution in the zone has gone up – this was the basis of a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority by ABD member Roger Lawson which is still being investigated (ask for a copy of the full submission if you want one).

Note: we call the Congestion Charge a tax because we agree with the US Embassy that this is simply what it is – an excuse to raise revenue for other purposes.

For further information, see the Mayor of London's Press Release at:
www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=9871

There will be a public consultation on this proposal and ABD members are encouraged to respond to it.

Figures Demonstrate Road Safety Policy is Wrong



What do you do when the statistics undermine your rhetoric? Well ignore them of course. This is what Mayor Ken Livingstone did recently when "announcing" the latest London road casualty figures.

His press release talked about the positive trends in child and cyclist "KSIs" in the last few years, when in fact the latest six monthly figures show that overall fatalities rose by 17% and serious injuries by 23%. Even though slight injuries fell, this is a pretty horrific outcome, particularly as it is known that the "slight" figures are particularly prone to under-reporting.

Although these figures were so unexpected (at least to the Mayor) that an investigation of the statistics is underway, the Association of British Drivers says that it is simply a reversion to the mean after a couple of statistically "lucky" years. In reality fatalities are not falling much at all, despite improved in-car safety and better medical treatment.

But the over-emphasis on speed cameras, speed humps and other such measures didn't stop Jenny Jones, the Mayor's Road Safety Ambassador and member of the Green Party, from proclaiming that "There are hundreds of Londoners alive today because of the extra investment in road safety". That simply is not true if you examine the data - the figure for the last 12 months is about 20 deaths per year less than in the period 1994-1998.

In other words an enormous amount of money has been spent (£42 million in the last year) to only achieve a reduction of a very small percentage each year over the period since 1998. This is probably all down to the reasons mentioned above, and has nothing at all to do with what Transport for London has been spending our money on. Meanwhile, boroughs such as Bromley and Barnet, where speed humps and speed cameras are abhorred, produce better figures than other boroughs.

The Association of British Drivers called once again for a total rethink of road safety policy based on this data.

The Mayor's press release which includes the quote from Jenny Jones can be seen at:
www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/press-centre/press-releases/press-releases-content.asp?prID=932

The Eddington Report

The "Eddington Transport Study" is yet another report on the transport problems of the UK – there have been a number in the last ten years with a strategic plan which has now quietly been forgotten about (the FT even suggested it was the eighth major report in nine years). One could say that many of the UK's transport problems are down to too many plans and not enough action, particularly in respect of road transport.

The Eddington report was nominally prepared by Sir Rod Eddington, a former chief executive of British Airways but it clearly looks like it has been written by the usual civil servants. The full report (or a 62 page "summary") can be seen on the internet at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/eddingon_transport_study/eddingon_index.cfm

What are the key points it makes after you have waded through all the verbiage? These are:

1. There is not a lot wrong with the UK transport network except that there is congestion at certain points at certain times. For example he estimates congestion on the road network currently costs us about £8 billion per year. This congestion could best be tackled by point solutions where the benefits can far exceed the cost.
2. The above applies just as much to roads as other forms of transport, so there is a preference for smaller scale projects rather than grandiose new road or rail routes.
3. Decisions on transport investment should be made on the basis of costs versus benefits and be blind to the form of transport. (*Editor: this might be a final stake in the heart of those evil tram schemes where the economics are so poor*).
4. Pricing of transport should reflect congestion and environmental costs – so yes he is in favour of road usage charging, although he does not suggest that it would cure congestion altogether of course
5. Planning systems should be changed so that big transport projects can be reviewed and approved more quickly.

The “cost” of congestion charging

It is interesting to note as regards congestion charging that he quotes Transport for London on this point – he says that TfL estimate that the London congestion tax reduced car travel by 15% within the charging zone, and that between 50% and 60% of traffic was displaced to public transport. However, there is no explanation of what happened to the rest – did they stop travelling, change to walking or cycling or what? Or more likely they simply gave up travelling into London – so much for the wonders of the congestion tax.

Why road usage charging won't cure congestion

Following the publication of the Eddington report there was a very interesting letter published in the Financial Times from a Mr

Lennard of Chislehurst (*Editor: who he I wonder?*). The writer argued that as wasted time is already valuable to road users, they already have a strong incentive to avoid it. But as they don't then clearly they value the ability to drive at congested times very highly. This implies that the total return from building new roads would be very high. The more roads we build, the more people can make journeys they value highly. But he did describe this view as “unfashionable”.

Conservative's “Getting Around”

No doubt partly in response to the Eddington report, although it actually came out before that, is a Conservative view on Britain's transport problems entitled “Getting Around – Britain's Greatest Frustration”. It can be seen at: www.conservatives.com/pdf/gettingaround.pdf

They firstly give a quick review of the number of Labour “plans” and reviews that have taken place, and of course point out that little action has resulted. They criticise the lack of progress on “light rail” schemes (ie. trams) and such projects as Crossrail and actually suggest they should be implemented. But of course the reason why many tram schemes have been dropped is the realisation of how dreadful the economics of such schemes are after the experience of such projects as the Croydon Tramlink – this document even seems to claim that as one of the successes of previous Tory rule. But they are certainly right in saying that everyone knows where the bottlenecks are on the UK transport system and more action is needed, less talk.

The document points out that although rail subsidies have increased from a billion pounds in 2001 to more than five billion today, there has been little work done to tackle capacity problems – in other words new investment is simply not taking place. So they would like to backtrack on the separation of the track and train operating companies which seems a good idea.

As regards road usage pricing, they are still sitting on the fence to some extent. They do not think that “predict and provide” will work regarding the road transport network to prevent congestion worsening.

But they do believe in some new road construction and are opposed to nationwide road usage charging. However they are not opposed to "local road pricing schemes in cities as long as they are wanted by local communities and not imposed by central Government" and are happy with new roads being paid for by tolls (as per the M6).

As regards the school run problem, they support the encouragement of cycling and walking (who doesn't?) but they are also keen on school buses.

On CO2 emissions and air pollution they take a very aggressive stance by suggesting that cars should be forced to be more efficient. Their target is to see average CO2 gm/km reduce from 170 at present to 100 by 2022. They favour strong incentives to motor manufacturers to produce lower emission vehicles and stronger incentives for people to scrap older cars and buy new lower-emission ones.

The report finishes on the typical travel problems of four families which is somewhat superfluous, and it's a pity the report seems to suffer from sloppy proof reading, but otherwise it's worth perusing. *(Editor: it's certainly preferable to the current stance of the Government on many issues in my personal opinion – but if you have any well reasoned comments on it please send them in for publication in a future edition of this newsletter).*

Transport 2025 for London



Transport for London have recently published a report entitled "Transport 2025". This seems to be more a PR document for Ken Livingstone's Transport Strategy than anything else. But it attempts to discuss the policy options facing London's transport network in the long term.

It can be read on the internet at:
www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/downloads/pdf/T2025.pdf

As with the Eddington report, although it's somewhat more readable, it talks about "managing demand" and there is also talk of "new capacity" - unfortunately this is only in regard to buses, trams and railways with plugs for such economically unjustifiable projects as Crossrail. And of course there is the obligatory encouragement of walking and cycling as in the Eddington report to prevent all those short car trips.

There is the usual nod towards the need to control CO2 levels and other air pollutants, but as CO2 emissions are directly related to the number of people and the level of business activity, it is surprising that there is no criticism of the Mayor's plans to increase both population and employment in London substantially in the next 20 years. *(Editor's Comments: nobody seems to want to link CO2 emissions to population levels and then come to the obvious conclusion – if you really want to reduce CO2 levels the simplest and most direct approach is to reduce the population by discouraging procreation and immigration. This would no doubt be almost as unpopular as solving it the other way by building nuclear power stations, but I think a combination of both would be the best answer and a lot more effective than politicians making marginal gestures as is happening in Richmond).*

The report says "recent trends indicate that the rate of car ownership in London is not increasing. But with a rising population, even if the current level of car ownership remained constant, there would be an additional 400,000 cars in London by 2025". *(Editor: Again an obvious conclusion there perhaps).* It seems TfL have been studying the current performance of the road network, and their work is "showing that traffic levels overall have been stable on the strategic network over the last five years. At the same time, recent evidence suggests congestion levels have been increasing..."

(Editor's Comments: Well it's good for them to admit this. And what are the reasons given for the increased congestion? Restriction of the "capacity available for motor vehicles" by road safety measures, traffic calming, bus lanes, etc. Plus there has been a four fold increase in street works from 1993 to 2002.).

The report ends by discussing “Soft Travel Demand Management (TDM)” versus “Hard”. Soft TDM is stuff such as personal travel plans, car clubs, car sharing and encouraging teleworking. Hard TDM is based on pricing, regulation and physical restraints. Needless to say the report supports road usage charging, but the next time you feel that someone is telling you how to live your life, or taxing you unreasonably, you will know you have just been bitten by the latest euphemism for unpopular policies – “Hard TDM”.

Greenwich the Next Area for Congestion Tax in London?

In late November I was telephoned by someone from Mori on behalf of Transport for London doing a telephone survey on a proposed congestion charging scheme for Greenwich. Why they would call anyone who lives in Bromley is not clear, except that I may be on some TfL contact lists.

More information on this survey is given in the following local press article:
www.newsshopper.co.uk/display.var.1007510.0.0.php

Of course Greenwich has been congested for many years, and the problem arises from the high volumes of traffic on basically only two narrow roads – the A206 Trafalgar Road next to the river, and the A2 across Blackheath. Traffic tends to clog up in the Greenwich one way system resulting in very bad air pollution. The difficulty in constructing new roads through the royal park makes it very difficult to solve the problem, although I believe a tunnel under Blackheath was proposed some years ago.

But of course taxing people will not reduce the congestion as most of the traffic is locally generated and even the A2 is avoided by most long distance traffic.

Sign a Petition Against Road Tolls



One of the ways you can oppose road usage charging is to sign an on-line petition that has been set up by the Prime Minister – go to <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/traveltax/>. When last reviewed this was the most popular of all the petitions that have been created in this new experimental system of electronic petitions to Number 10.

This has already been circulated to many ABD members but if you have not already signed it, please do so.

News Snapshots

Sundry news in the last few weeks that is worth a mention is as follows:

+ London Mayor Livingstone has announced plans for a fleet of hybrid buses – these use a combination of diesel and electric power. Six single-decker hybrid buses are already operating on the 360 route, and the world’s first double-decker has just been revealed which will go into service on the 141 route. Emissions will be cut by up to 40% it is claimed. *(Editor’s Comments: I fully support these proposals, although it would have been nice to see some figures on the costs of these buses in comparison with conventional diesel ones in the press release).*

+ Meanwhile emission control equipment which was designed to reduce emissions from older taxis has again failed in tests. In fact the test vehicles emitted so much smoke that the Millbrook testing facility refused to test all the vehicles fully as they thought it would damage their equipment.

+ Fares for surface trains in London are to be based on a “zonal” structure similar to the underground from January 2007. It seems that this will involve substantial rises, particularly for occasional users rather than season ticket holders. For example it has been alleged that fares from Hayes to London might rise by 74%.

Bearing in mind that a lot of the fares are actually paid for by local Councils (and hence come from your council taxes) because of subsidies for "Freedom" passes, this could have a potentially devastating impact on London borough budgets. If anyone has more information on these proposals then perhaps they could let the editor know.

+ The US Embassy now owes more than £1 million in unpaid Congestion Charge fines – that's 10,486 unpaid fines to be exact. They continue to refuse to pay it as they consider it a tax from which they are exempt. *(Editor: I support their stance as it is clearly a tax used to raise revenue for the Mayor's grandiose plans).*

Contact Information

This Newsletter is published by the London Region of the Association of British Drivers (A.B.D.), PO Box 62, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5YB. All material contained herein is Copyright of the A.B.D. or of the authors and may only be reproduced with permission. Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author of the article or that of the Editor which do not necessarily represent the official policies of the A.B.D.

A.B.D. London Region Co-ordinator and Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8467-2686, fax: 020-8295-0378, Email: roger.lawson@btclick.com). Contact the above for information on the aims and objectives of the A.B.D. or for membership information (membership costs £20.00 per annum for individuals, or £17.00 if paid by standing order. The A.B.D. would be happy to advise or assist anyone who is concerned about any traffic, transport or road safety issues in London. Complimentary subscriptions to this newsletter are available on request to elected politicians or those with a professional interest in transport matters.

Our internet web address is: www.abd.org.uk . This newsletter is supplied in electronic form which can be displayed and printed via the free Adobe Acrobat reader. The Adobe Acrobat reader can be downloaded from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat>

About The Association of British Drivers (ABD)

The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Association is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web site at www.abd.org.uk