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## Editorial

*The big topic in this edition is the "electrification" of transport in London, and the other elements of Boris Johnson's new Transport Strategy.*

*A related subject we cover is of course the problem of air pollution in the capital, to which electric cars may be a partial solution.*

*Just to remind you, letters for this publication are welcomed, and I'll include anything that is reasonably well argued and supplied in digital form.*

*Accompanying photographs are particularly welcomed as there is nothing better to grab the attention of the reader and liven up the text.*

Roger Lawson  
Editor

## Electric Cars Plugged In London



Yes electric cars will not only be promoted in London, they are going to be plugged in all over the capital.

Boris Johnson has announced plans to provide 25,000 electric charging points and with other initiatives he hopes to have 100,000 electric cars on our streets soon. All new building developments would need to provide electric charging points and 20% of all new car parking spaces may require to have them.

He wants to make London the "electric car capital of Europe", and believes it will "also smooth the way for less polluting transport choices which will improve air quality, reduce traffic noise and contribute significantly to my carbon emissions reduction target".

The cost of all this is about £60 million but the Mayor hopes that he will only have to fund about a third of this, with the rest coming from the Government and the private sector.

If anyone wonders how practical electric cars are, the picture above is of the latest Model S from Tesla Motors – 300 mile range, 0 to 60 in 5.6 seconds, seats 7 people and can be recharged in 45 minutes. Deliveries commence in the USA in 2011. See [www.teslamotors.com](http://www.teslamotors.com). Other mainstream manufacturers are also expected to launch electric cars in the next couple of years.

## Carbon Questions

Do the Mayor's claims for reduced air pollution and lower carbon emissions stand up to scrutiny? Here are some comments from Richard Pike in the Financial Times: "Electric cars are slightly less good at turning fuel from a power station into movement than the average engine is at extracting energy from petrol or diesel". He suggests the latter achieves an average of 34 per cent efficiency. Although power stations are generally more efficient in converting the energy, because of transmission losses and the losses in charging and discharging the batteries of electric vehicles, only 31 per cent is available to drive the vehicle. That comparison stands up so long as the current mix of fuels in power stations applies.

He then looks at the comparable carbon emissions and calculates that if all cars were replaced by electric versions, emissions would fall by a seventh (as cars produce about 12% of total carbon emissions in the UK, this would cause it to fall to about 10%). A cost of £150bn however, which is what the bill would be, does not justify that however because there are lots more cost effective solutions to reducing carbon emissions.

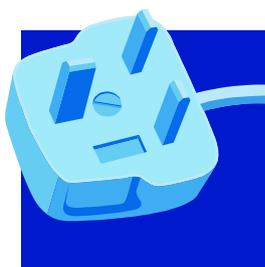
So the logic is defective in terms of the support for widespread Government subsidies for electric cars even if you believe that reducing carbon emissions is a good thing (which not everyone thinks is worthwhile) - at least until the generation of electricity in power stations is much cleaner.

### London Pollution

But there may be a case in London. The capital suffers from major localised air pollution which does need to be tackled (see separate article in this newsletter for more details). Electric vehicles in London would have one major advantage in that any pollution they do generate is where the power stations are located, not within London.

*(Editor's Comments: For that reason, I think this policy in London is not unwise although clearly there must be some concern about the cost to the taxpayer of these programmes).*

## Charging Points

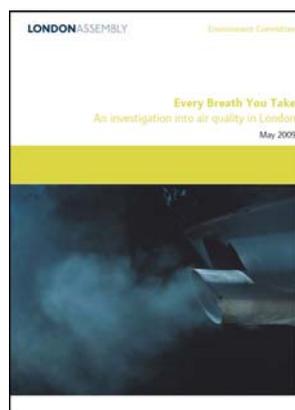


You may be wondering what the technical specification of these proposed charging points will be. In the short term, about 2,000 of them will be "slow" ones providing

13A, 240V and hence will take several hours to recharge a vehicle. There may be about 50 "fast" ones providing 32A, 240V three-phase supply and able to recharge a vehicle in about 30 minutes. But there may later be some "rapid" charge points providing 200A, 500V three-phase and able to charge a Tesla S in five minutes (these are still "under investigation" though).

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## Every Breath You Take



The London Assembly have recently published a report on air quality in London called "Every Breath You Take" – cover left.

The Committee that produced this report was chaired by Green Party Member Darren

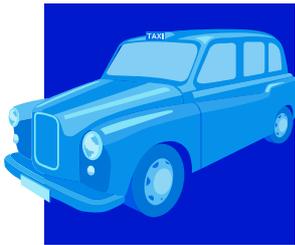
Johnson, so it may not be totally unbiased. Indeed it does tend to hyperbole and exaggeration.

So for example, it refers to possibly 3,000 deaths in London as a result of air pollution. But it fails to mention these are "premature" deaths of people who might simply have died slightly later, and they are based on estimates which are essentially guesswork with little actual factual evidence to sustain them. However, let us not carp excessively over this scaremongering in the report when there is some useful material in it.

London clearly suffers from poor air quality in some areas at some times, particularly in respect of particulates (PM10) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

Indeed it breaches EU air quality targets and infringement action has been launched against the UK government as a result. Action is therefore needed.

The problems are particularly severe around busy roads, and in certain parts of central London. To quote from the report: "It is clear that road transport, and in particular older diesel vehicles, are the main cause of air pollution in London".



But the number of diesel cars in London is increasing, and even modern ones still emit much higher levels of PM10s and NO2 than petrol vehicles.

Diesel buses and taxis contribute substantially to this problem also. Indeed the report concludes that "using diesel for public transport was a very big mistake".

The Mayor, Boris Johnson, is currently updating his Air Quality Strategy but has clearly decided that electric and hybrid vehicles are one solution to the problem.

But there are about 8,000 London buses and only 356 hybrids are planned by 2011 so there will be negligible impact on total emissions as a result.



Congestion charging and the LEZ are mentioned in the report, but the impact of these, particularly the former, is also low. So the report emphasises that the Mayor needs to spell out what targets he aims to achieve and how they are to be achieved, because at present it looks to be a difficult problem to solve.

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## 20 Mph Too Low?



What's a reasonable speed to drive at down the above street? Your editor was prompted to ask this question when he saw the cover of another report from the London Assembly entitled "Braking Point" which is about 20 mph speed limits.

Do you think 30 mph would be reasonable, or is 20 mph too low? Would people adhere to a 20 mph limit if it was imposed? Personally I can see no justification for a lower limit than 30 in this street.

This report was produced by a Committee headed by Jenny Jones of the Green Party, so you would hardly expect it to be an unbiased exposition of the issues. And it certainly isn't. Ms Jones has consistently taken an anti-car stance in recent years and of course is a strong supporter of the London Congestion Charge.

The report refers to the experiment with wide area 20 mph zones in Portsmouth, for which no results are yet available, but that does not stop the committee advocating them. It also refers to a similar scheme in Graz, Austria, but when I looked at the statistics for that city their accident record seemed to be no better than those already achieved in the London suburbs.

Regrettably this report seems yet another exercise by GLA members looking to attack the new Mayor, and using spurious evidence to advocate minority policies.

Note: if you look at the unmodified original of the above image later in this newsletter, this street already has a 20 mph speed limit imposed, plus speed humps.

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## The Causes of Accidents



Some of you may have seen a letter from a Bromley resident concerning my comments on the Crofton Lane speed humps in the Newsshopper paper. It is regrettable that people who know little about road safety matters, but have suffered from some unfortunate personal events as a result of a road traffic accident, launch into print with their views without checking their facts.

For example she said “in most road traffic accidents speed is nearly always a significant part of the equation”. But that is simply not true. There has been a lot of research done on the causes of road traffic accidents. For example, Transport Report Laboratory Report 323 gives “excessive speed” as a factor in only 7.3% of accidents. There are four other factors that are more important such as “inattention” and “failure to judge other persons path or speed”. Similarly the Department for Transport has done similar analyses based on police reports of accidents.

Attacking traffic speed alone is not likely to reduce road traffic accidents and injuries significantly and is a mistaken policy adopted by some ignorant politicians who simply have not researched the facts. Regrettably the Government has also misled the public by publishing false statistics and bowdlerised summaries.

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## Mayor’s Transport Strategy



Boris Johnson has produced a “Statement of Intent” document concerning his transport strategy. It seems to be an attempt to sound out opinion from stakeholders, local politicians and the public before firming it up in a revised Transport Strategy policy document.

As a result it’s somewhat lacking in focus and short on specifics, and tends to talk in generalities that almost everyone can agree with.

But there are some clear hints of likely policies such as “resisting the provision of further capacity at Heathrow” and more emphasis on transport links in outer London boroughs (improving orbital connectivity and a more dispersed growth pattern, for example).

Some policies are simply the old TfL garbage rehased – for example it talks about “removing dysfunctional gyratories, one-way streets and unnecessary street furniture” – the last might be a sound policy but the former two are very damaging to good traffic flows as was seen in the Aldgate development we covered in our last edition. He is also keen on “increasing the permeability of streets” and on shared space schemes.

As mentioned above, electric and hybrid vehicles are going to be encouraged to reduce emissions but he has not excluded road pricing as a way to “balance supply and demand for travel”.

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## Does Policing Reduce Accidents?



The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) recently published a report which is billed as a “Study to establish how methods and levels of police

enforcement in London affect road casualty rates” under the title “Evaluation of Operation Radar – PPR379”. It was paid for by Transport for London (TfL) .

Regrettably it is not as described. There is no attempt to actually measure the impact of policing on accident figures – at least no accident figures are published at all.

The study was undertaken on the A23 in the Croydon area. The police employed two teams of 6 people to create a more visible presence over a period of 4 weeks, by using patrol cars and motorcycles. Each police officer was asked to write a minimum of 10 Fixed Penalty Notices per day, and these mainly related to speeding, seat belt use and mobile phone use. Seventeen arrests were made and 2074 offences recorded.

There was also an extensive publicity campaign supporting the campaign, warning people about the increased police presence.

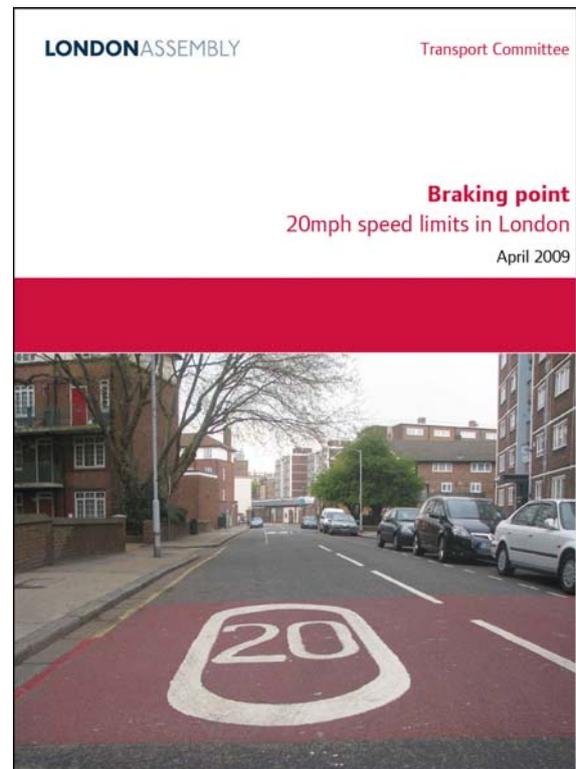
The impact on mobile phone use and seat belt use (comparing before and after observed rates) seemed negligible. Traffic speeds seem to drop slightly however.

The report then uses the reduction in traffic speeds to estimate accident reductions and cost savings.

*(Editor: As a scientific study, this is one of the most appalling examples of bad science that I have come across. No controls to enable proper comparisons to be made and no statistical analysis to see if the changes are significant. In addition, the whole exercise is biased by the publicity undertaken – the changes observed in traffic speed may simply be the result of the publicity rather than the actual police presence. In essence a total waste of time and money with the results simply unbelievable. It's more a PR exercise for the police than the unbiased study it claims to be).*

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## The Braking Point Cover (see above)



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## Travel Plans

Your editor recently had the opportunity to take part in the formulation of a Travel Plan for the office building where he has a new office. This involved the completion of a survey form about his travel patterns, which was one of the most poorly designed surveys he has ever encountered.

It did not cope with his personal circumstances at all. Neither did it seem to cope with people who have more than one mode of travel, or ask why they are used.

In essence, it was likely to result in the well known phrase in the IT world: “garbage-in, garbage out”.

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## Coulsdon Parking Proposals

ABD member Peter Morgan is running a campaign to oppose the plans of Croydon Council to stop the provision of free parking along the Brighton Road in Coulsdon.

They want to replace the “one hour free parking” arrangement with a pay and display system. Peter argues that this will replace a simple system that encourages short term use by shoppers with a more complex and expensive system. Indeed he argues it is driven by the financial motive to raise revenue (to subsidise the cost of Freedom Passes for example which is a mounting problem for all London boroughs).

Please support his campaign by sending an email with your objections to: [parking.design@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:parking.design@croydon.gov.uk) , or by post to Croydon Council at Order Making Section, Taberner House, Park lane, Croydon, CR9 1EN. This needs to be done before the 10<sup>th</sup> June. A ready made objection letter is also present at: [www.tinyurl.com/qsk99k](http://www.tinyurl.com/qsk99k)

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## News Snapshots

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

+ A segregated bus rapid transit scheme in Greenwich – the Greenwich Waterfront Transit project as it was called – has been scrapped. The cancellation of the Thames Gateway Bridge may have been a factor in this decision, but TfL budgets are under pressure due to heavy spending on London Underground and Crossrail, and a desire by the new administration to cut costs (TfL staff levels are being reduced for example).

+ A new scheme for Oxford Circus that will allow pedestrians to cross diagonally has been approved and has £5m of funding from TfL and other parties. This will be like such crossings in Japan where there is a dedicated pedestrian phase that enables them to cross in all directions.

More space on the pavements will be created also by removing some of the existing obstructions, with the intention of relieving the over-crowding that currently exists. It is not expected to impact vehicular traffic flows, according to the designers.

+ Ealing is trying to remove congestion by both removing some traffic lights and looking at reducing bus lanes.

+ It is reported that Specs cameras have been installed on the QE2 Dartford Crossing bridge. They will presumably be used to enforce the 50 mph speed limit although as there are no signs put up as yet, presumably they are not yet being used.



+ Brian Mooney has been appointed as the ABD's media spokesman to cover the London media. One of his main challenges is to field media enquiries as news stories break. This can result in a dash to a TV studio, a

recorded telephone interview for radio or being featured on a phone-in. Brian also helps his local paper, the West London Gazette, with comment on local developments. He can be contacted on 020-7385-9757, 07976 414913 (mob) or [brian.mooney@abd.org.uk](mailto:brian.mooney@abd.org.uk).

### 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](http://www.abd.org.uk)

Note that the ABD maintains a list of members who are familiar with individual London boroughs and may be able to help with information on local issues in those boroughs. The current list is below. If any members would like to take responsibility for any boroughs and report back on local transport issues so we can monitor them then please let me know. Roger Lawson

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Les Alden	Southwark	<a href="mailto:LHA@looksouth.net">LHA@looksouth.net</a>
Paul Hemsley	Ealing	<a href="mailto:ph@hemsleyassociates.com">ph@hemsleyassociates.com</a>
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Roger Lawson	Bromley, Barking & Dagenham, Bexley, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Havering, Islington, Lewisham, City of London, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest	<a href="mailto:roger.lawson@abd.org.uk">roger.lawson@abd.org.uk</a>
Peter Morgan	Croydon, Camden, Enfield, Harrow, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston, Lambeth, Merton, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth, Westminster	<a href="mailto:southlondon@abd.org.uk">southlondon@abd.org.uk</a>

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