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Editorial

This newsletter is a bit earlier than planned because there is a lot of news to cover, and also the ABD in London is launching a major new campaign in the next few weeks and there is likely to be a special edition of this newsletter covering that topic in December. The lead article in this edition covers the topical subject of wide-area 20 mph zones – do they work to reduce accidents and are they cost effective? My analysis of the Portsmouth scheme suggests it’s definitely unproven.

Another major article is on the profits that London boroughs are making from parking and other traffic offences. With council budgets under pressure, be warned that they are likely to use this revenue source even more aggressively in the next year or two (unless people start objecting of course). But it’s down to you to speak out if you want to stop this.

Good news on the removal of the Western Extension of the Congestion Charge is also in this edition.

As always, please send in any comments or questions you may have on the contents of this newsletter (contact information is on the last page).

Roger Lawson,
Editor

20 Mph Zones in Portsmouth



The issue of 20 Mph zones has been covered several times in our past newsletters, but as there are continued calls to introduce them on a wide area basis in London, it seemed worthwhile to examine the results of an experiment in Portsmouth. The photograph above is taken from the cover of the “Final Report” on the “Interim Evaluation” by the Department for Transport (DfT) of the introduction of a blanket 20 mph speed limit in Portsmouth, and shows how uninformed children are often roped into supporting such campaigns. The full report, published in September this year can be obtained from:

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/speedmanagement/20mphPortsmouth/

The scheme in Portsmouth covered 94% of the roads in the city and was established by simply putting up 20 Mph speed limit signs all around the entry points. No other road engineering measures were undertaken, unlike in most 20 Mph zones. The cost was £573,000 in total. It was introduced in 2008, so only 2 years “post installation” data is available instead of the normal 3 years that traffic engineers prefer. Traffic speeds before the scheme was implemented were on most roads “less than or equal to 24 mph” according to the report, mainly because these are mostly narrow streets, with mainly terraced housing and parked cars lining the streets.

The Claims

They emphasise a significant reduction in the average speed of traffic in some areas (those that were above an average speed of 24 mph saw a reduction of 6.3 mph). However, the average reduction in mean speeds was only 1.3 mph overall.

They claim a reduction in road casualties of 22% comparing the 3 years before to the 2 years after, but they acknowledge that national figures for comparable areas fell by 14% in the same period, giving a net reduction of 8%.

Many people have hailed this scheme as a major success, in that it claims to show significant improvements in traffic speed and accidents, with a simple, low cost, signs-only approach. Do the claims stand up to scrutiny? Your editor does not think so for the reasons given below. Would a similar approach work in other areas, where roads are more open (and generally have higher current speeds)? Probably not is my conclusion.

Claims Refuted - Speed

Until this year, the DfT did not recommend the introduction of 20 Mph zones without “self-enforcing” measures to ensure compliance. This typically meant speed humps which most residents hate because of the discomfort of driving over them, the noise and vibration they generate in adjacent properties, and other disadvantages. Indeed the DfT used to say that “*Extreme caution should be exercised when considering making 20mph limits using speed limit signs with no supporting speed reducing features. The weight of evidence points strongly to signed only 20 mph limits having little or no effect on traffic speeds*”. But in 2010, they have relaxed their views due to political pressure from anti-speed fanatics and those who wanted 20 mph zones without humps, without any new evidence.

Does Portsmouth show their revised view is justified? It's very questionable for the following reasons:

1. The overall reduction in average speed was only 1.3mph. This was statistically significant at the 95% level, and hence is likely to be a real reduction (and not a random fluke).

But all other more selected areas were not, and their picking out some roads that had higher speeds beforehand to claim that these show significant reduction is a manipulation of the data which is not sound. These might simply be random higher readings that would be washed out if remeasured.

Indeed they actually point out that some roads still had consistently higher speeds in the range of 24 to 29 mph presumably because these were not perceived by road users as being appropriate for lower speeds so compliance with the new speed limit was poor.

2. They do not state how the speed readings were taken. If these were taken by using speed guns as seems likely, it's hardly surprising that the readings fell afterwards when people were aware of the 20 mph zone when they may have ignored such observation before.

3. Anyone experienced in looking at traffic schemes knows that any change in a road layout or signage tends to show an impact in the first year, as drivers perceive the difference and take more care. One per cent is certainly assignable to this cause. That is why three years of before/after data is usually preferred. Did the report contain any data on the first year benefit versus the second? No it did not, which might have been helpful to understand this issue.

4. They ignore the well known “Hawthorne” effect of experimenting on people – tell them something will improve and it likely will, for a limited time at least. See this page for a simple explanation: www.freedomfordrivers.org/Hawthorne_Experiments.htm To prove their claims, they really need to remove the speed limit and see if speeds return to the level previously.

In summary, the residents might like the new speed limits, but the effect may well have been minimal (as many claimed with renewed calls for “more enforcement”).

It is worth emphasising, that the area concerned is very different to most residential areas in the rest of the country where existing speeds are nearer 30 mph than 20 mph.

Claims Refuted – Accidents

The claims for accident reduction are even more doubtful. In reality the KSI (Killed and Seriously Injured) actually rose from 19 to 20 per year after the installation of the zone.

Neither is there any data published on statistical confidence tests on the reduction in minor accidents or overall accidents. Presumably because they did the tests and there was no “validation” demonstrated. In any case we know that the figures for minor accidents are subject to wild under-reporting which has been growing of late.

No data on traffic volumes is supplied which is a key measure when looking at accident figures. If traffic volume is reduced for some reason, then accidents will also.

The same complaints about short term effects and the Hawthorne effect mentioned above for speed also apply to the accident data.

The Spurious Claims from Hull (Again!)

The wonders of traffic calming schemes and 20 mph zones in Hull are promoted in Chapter 8 of the report, and seems to be yet another example of that City’s self promotion. Your editor did a good job of demolishing the claims from Hull some years ago – he showed that the reduction in casualties could be explained by people simply moving out of the City, or moving to other, safer more transport modes (such as cars). See this BBRAG Newsletter for more information:

www.freedomfordrivers.org/News27.pdf

But they point out that sign only schemes in Hull also only resulted in a 1mph improvement in speeds. Is it worth it one has to ask? Speed display devices might be more effective.

They also compare the 20 Mph zones in London as analysed by TfL which show accident savings of over 40%. But these are more costly schemes, with extensive road engineering measures (and not just speed humps).

The Key Question

So the key question is: was the expenditure of £573,000 in Portsmouth a good use of scarce funds, or could it have been spent more wisely? More research and more data is required, but on these figures, the cost-benefit of potentially saving a few minor accidents (if that benefit is there at all), hardly justifies that level of expenditure.

Your editor’s view is that 20 Mph zones are worthwhile in selected areas, where traffic speeds are already low (and hence compliance is likely), and where traffic engineering is used in addition (but not speed humps). But regrettably politicians are often looking for cheap and simplistic solutions, so it’s either “speed humps everywhere” or “20 mph everywhere”. What is really needed is a detailed analysis of the problem and the environment, with well designed and specific solutions.

The data from Portsmouth simply does not support “sign-only” schemes over a wide area at this time.

Removing Traffic Lights



As mentioned in one of our previous newsletters (see issue 20), TfL are proposing to scrap a number of traffic lights in London. In addition your editor has put forward a proposal locally to remove some in Chislehurst.

It is very interesting therefore to see the impact of doing so in Portishead, near Bristol. A video that is well worth looking as it shows the result is here: www.wimp.com/trafficlights. Traffic flows much more smoothly and congestion is reduced, with no increase in accidents. The video was produced by Martin Cassini who also has a web site with more information at www.fitroads.com as he seems to be running an active campaign on this issue.

Ealing Success

Another success story is the London Borough of Ealing where traffic lights were covered up in 2009 at two junctions – Gunnersbury Lane/Bollo Lane and Wester Road/Featherstone Road. After eight months, the results were obviously a success with more traffic flow through the junctions but queue lengths decreased by two thirds. Pedestrian waiting times reduced by half and no accidents were recorded. The vast majority of local residents supported the change. As a result the council has decided to try the same approach at 5 other junctions. See www.ealinggazette.co.uk/ealing-news/local-ealing-news/2010/10/13/council-gives-green-light-to-remove-more-traffic-lights-64767-27463322/ for more background.

There's Always Someone...

Labour GLA Member Valerie Shawcross has written a misleading letter to some local newspapers about the removal of 145 traffic lights and "pedestrian crossings" in London. Here is what your editor said in response:

"The letter from Labour GLA member Val Shawcross concerning the removal of 145 traffic lights was surely misleading. There is no suggestion that pedestrian crossings will be removed - simply that the traffic lights controlling them will be removed along with traffic lights at junctions which are unnecessary.

I suggest 145 is a trivial number and it should be much larger. There are about 5,000 traffic lights in London, and they grew rapidly during the regime of the former Mayor. I would like to see about 1,450 removed, not 145! That could include 3 in Chislehurst where I live which are totally unnecessary and cause major traffic congestion.

The removal of the proposed lights is only being undertaken after a very close review of the safety issues. No traffic lights are proposed for removal which might increase accidents.

The letter from Ms Shawcross is an attempt to stir up needless controversy and distort the facts, when removing many traffic lights would be a positive step to reduce traffic congestion, avoid pedestrians being delayed and with no downside to road safety."

You can write to Ms Shawcross directly on this issue to valerie.shawcross@london.gov.uk as she is wanting to hear your views. I suggest you also copy your local Greater London Assembly member (don't know who that is? Go to this web page: www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/the-london-assembly/members).

Profiting from Parking



London boroughs are now making enormous profits from on-street parking charges and fines for parking infringements. They also make large profits from Permit Parking Schemes and are using these charges as a general fund raising technique despite the fact that a previous court case judged that to be illegal. In addition they use other "decriminalised offences" such as bus lane infringements, yellow box junction infringements, illegal turns and other "moving traffic offences" to generate income.

These profits are used to subsidise concessionary fares (such as the Freedom Pass for older residents), and to subsidise other public transport programmes, with only a minor amount usually spent on road improvements and parking facilities.

An Incentive to Issue Fines

The profits made are so large, that councils now have a major incentive to issue fines to more and more people, so that minor infringements can mean you getting a £120 fine for an accidental oversight such as staying a few minutes past the allotted time. In addition they issue penalty notices for offences that have not taken place – for example for alleged parking when the vehicle was being used for loading or unloading goods – this is not an offence but you then have to go through the appeal process and dispute it. Permit parking and other parking schemes are introduced, not because people want them or there is a need to "regulate" parking, but because they generate profits.

No Democratic Control

For the same reason, cameras are being installed in more and more locations to pick up alleged infringements of moving traffic offences. Local councils see this simply as a revenue source to fund their operations particularly now that budgets are being squeezed and pressure is on to control rises in council taxes. In reality they actually set the level of fines via the forum of London Councils and there is very little democratic input to this process. There is a review currently taking place in which they are probably going to suggest they go up even further.

The levels of fines are now so high (they can easily be the equivalent of a day's wage for the average worker), and the excuses for issuing them now so trivial, that it is becoming a gross injustice to have these fines outside the normal legal system, where your rights to appeal are so severely restricted.

No Consistency

There is no consistency in London on how parking regulations are operated. There seems to be little guidance on "best practice" for them to follow with the result that drivers often do not understand how different boroughs operate, with some boroughs seeming to take particular delight in oppressive enforcement regimes.

Parking Profit Totals

The figures on parking charges and costs (and decriminalised traffic offences) from a few representative London boroughs were requested in summer 2010 and most chose to treat them as Freedom of Information Act requests. These requests were submitted to the following London councils: Bromley, Camden, Greenwich, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Richmond and Westminster.

A summary of the overall profits for each borough is given below. The detail data and more comments are available in a report entitled "Profiting from Parking" on this web page: www.freedomfordrivers.org/Parking.htm

Profits from Parking Provision and Enforcement

Council	Profit (£m)
Bromley	3.8
Camden	10.7
Greenwich	-0.1
Kensington & Chelsea	21.5
Hammersmith & Fulham	12.4
Richmond	6.0
Westminster	43.4

Only Greenwich fails to make substantial overall profits from parking. Some of the variation between the others is down to the different characteristics of the boroughs, their efficiency in imposing and collecting charges, their level of charges (permit parking charges vary for example), and their general attitude to car usage. But it is very clear that some of the inner London boroughs make enormous profits from these charges, and it is well known that boroughs such as Camden and Westminster seem to have more oppressive parking enforcement than most outer London boroughs.

Permit Parking

Some boroughs make a small profit on permit parking schemes, while others make very large ones (and probably illegal amounts in that they consistently budget for a large surplus and hence are using it as a general revenue raising opportunity). For example Camden made a profit of £3.5m on operating such schemes and that's ignoring the profit on "enforcement" of such schemes that they refused to disclose. Kensington & Chelsea made a profit of £3.2m which was more than 100% of their costs. Hammersmith & Fulham made a profit of £3.6m which is 7 times their costs.

Bus Lane and Moving Traffic Offence Enforcement

The figures on these are less significant and some boroughs do not enforce such offences, or enforcement is handled by TfL. (*Editor: I hope to cover the TfL data in a future edition*).

Where the Money is Spent

Boroughs generally apply the surplus from parking and decriminalised traffic offences to other “transport” programmes. That often includes minor road works and road safety schemes to some extent but it also includes “modal shift” initiatives, and other public transport programmes. Money can also be applied to the development of new “permit parking” schemes so that even more profits are generated in future. But very large amounts are usually applied to subsidise “concessionary fares” which includes the Freedom Pass for older and disabled residents, and the Taxicard scheme. For example Camden spent £5.2m on Concessionary Fares and Westminster spent £7.6m.

Obtaining Other Boroughs Figures

A template letter that you can use to obtain the financial data on parking and decriminalised moving traffic offences for other boroughs is available on the ABD London web site.

Leapfrogging and Empire Building

When charges are reviewed, there is a natural tendency for local boroughs to justify such charges on the basis that other boroughs are charging more, irrespective of the costs, or profits that are being made. For example a recent document from Ealing council attempts to justify increases of up to 66% in the charges on that basis, even though they are already making substantial profits already from permit schemes.

Similarly Hammersmith & Fulham are proposing to increase pay & display parking charges to be “in line with those of other inner London boroughs”. The standard price of an hours parking will increase to £2.20 with it going up to £2.80 in town centres. The justification is that Camden charges up to £4.90 for one hour.

Council parking managers know that their jobs, and how much they get paid, very much depend on the size of the empire that they can build. So there is a natural tendency to recommend to councillors that charges go up, that permit parking schemes are extended and that new parking schemes are introduced where there were none before. Profits are what drive this bureaucracy.

Enforcement Driven by Profits, Not Compliance

When considering enforcement operations, these are driven by profits also. No councils seem to actually collect information on compliance – in other words how many people are infringing parking regulations and whether the rates are getting better or worse. They simply measure how much revenue and profit is generated and the sub-contract parking enforcement operators are set targets on that basis. When considering decriminalised traffic offences, cameras are often introduced not because of congestion (e.g. blocked yellow junctions), or road safety issues but because profits will arise.

The rising cost of the Freedom Pass, and other concessionary fares, has also given councils a powerful incentive to raise income to subsidise these costs which they can do from parking profits. They have to source the funds to pay for those from local council taxes or from parking profits. So to keep the headline rate of council tax low, boroughs resort to this sleight of hand to conceal how Londoners are paying for this hand-out to pensioners.

Summary

I hope this article has shown how London councils are profiting from motorists as a result of public ignorance and lack of democratic control of these charges. Boroughs where local democracy is weak, or the council does not inform their residents of how charges are collected and applied, are a particular problem. Inner London boroughs are particularly poor. It is rarely the case that parking charges come to the fore as a political issue because of the complexity of the subject and the lack of public information, although the Liberal/Democrats managed to lose control of Richmond on just such an issue recently.

Democratic control needs to be reintroduced - see the full report mentioned above for some proposals on how that could be achieved. Here's a good quote from ABD member Peter Morgan on the existing system: “*The whole system is an outrage, where the councils set the fine levels themselves, set the rules, enforce them, impose the penalties and then keep the money*”.

CCTV Parking Enforcement



Londoners have paid £7.3m in fines in one year after being caught out by CCTV cars which "compromise road safety", according to one privacy campaign group. Currently 24 councils use

cars mounted with cameras on masts to spot traffic offences, Big Brother Watch said. The group claims these patrol cars are being used by councils to "make money, with road safety only an afterthought".

Lambeth Council, which earned the most at £1.68m, in fines, said its income went towards road safety schemes. Big Brother Watch said it obtained these figures from councils under a Freedom of Information request. Councils issued the fines to 161,000 London motorists between April 2009 and March 2010. Across Britain, 31 councils use the patrol cars and 25 of these issued fines worth £8m using these vehicles, the campaign group said. Up to March, Lambeth Council fined 34,016 motorists, followed by Havering Council where 18,602 drivers paid £923,331 and Westminster Council where 14,217 motorists were issued with fines worth £725,851. London has 45 CCTV cars in operation, with Waltham Forest, Camden and Bexley councils each having four of these vehicles, the highest number in the capital. See www.bigbrotherwatch.org.uk/drive-byspies.pdf for more information.

(Article reprinted from the ABD's OTR newsletter).

Congestion Charge Changes



Boris Johnson has formally announced the removal of the Western Extension of the Congestion Charge Zone (WEZ). In the latest of three consultations (yes TfL seem

to work on the principle that if you don't get the right answer first time, keep asking), some 62% of respondents supported the removal of the zone. Anyway it was clear from all three consultations that there was general support for scrapping it.

TfL claim that traffic might increase in the WEZ, although it is likely to fall in the central zone as residents in the WEZ would no longer have free access. But the level of congestion in the WEZ did not in essence change after the WEZ was introduced.

The Mayor also pointed out the loss of revenue to TfL from charging in the WEZ, but as he said in his announcement: *"It has never been the justification for congestion charging that it raises revenue. The money no longer coming to TfL from payment of the charge will remain in the pockets of those who would otherwise be payers and will be available for spending on other things...."*

(Editor's Comments: Mr Johnson has clearly got a good understanding of economics, and it's worth pointing out that with the congestion charge in general almost all the revenue goes into operating the system so it goes into the operators pockets – Capita as was, now IBM – but in future it will stay in the pockets of the road users).

See www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/mayoral-decisions/md695 for the full announcement. The WEZ will end on Christmas Eve (Dec 24th 2010). The ABD issued a press release to celebrate which can be seen at www.freedomfordrivers.org/News.htm. Thanks to all the ABD members, and the West London Residents Association headed by Gordon Taylor for their work that made this happen. The ABD would of course like to see the main congestion charge scrapped also, and suggested it be removed in our consultation submission, as did Westminster City Council.

If you have the patience, it's worth reading other consultation responses, and the comments on them by TfL, which can be obtained from the above mentioned web page. The ABD's comments are mentioned many times.

One interesting note in there is in relation to what to do with the surplus cameras. It seems that *"TfL is considering, and discussing with interested boroughs, whether and how some cameras can be retained for traffic monitoring purposes"*. These cameras are similar to, and made by the same people, as those used for trials of 20 mph average speed cameras so is this what is being considered?

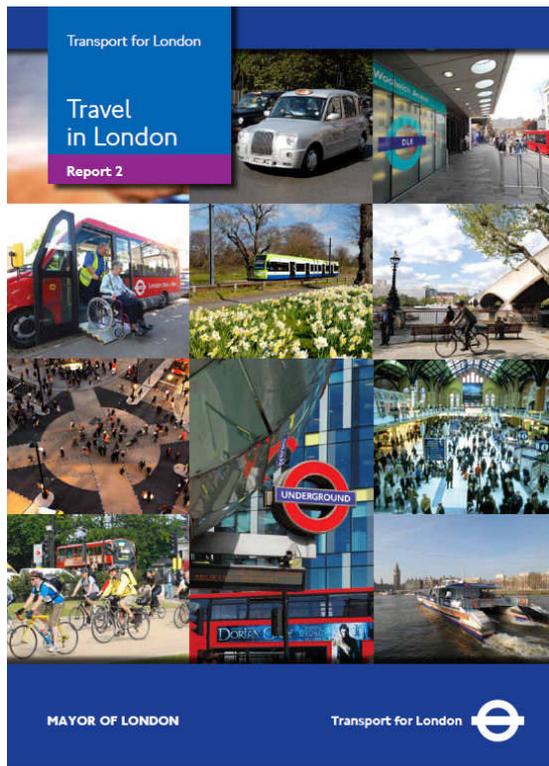
Charge Increase



At the same time as the WEZ is removed, the charge for the main zone will rise to £10 from £8 (it has now doubled since it was first introduced). However, there will be reduction to £9 for those who use the new “Auto Pay” system where you register your vehicle and then get debited automatically. This might reduce the number of accidental infringements from which TfL get a lot of the income from this scheme – indeed without those the system would probably lose money.

But for those who read the consultation response, we did not both support and oppose the charge increase – we only opposed it!

Travel in London



TfL stop have stop publishing their Annual Monitoring Report on the Congestion Charge system – the last one was in 2008. Was this because of the bad news it revealed – that congestion was unchanged and air pollution no better? We will no doubt never know. But a partial replacement is the Annual Travel Report - the cover of this year's report is shown above.

This is well worth a read if you want to learn about travel patterns in London and it does contain a section on the Congestion Charge – see www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/publications/1482.aspx for the whole 380 pages. Some highlights are as follows (much of the data relates to 2008/09 due to delays in reporting):

- Total road traffic fell in London by 2% in 2008, which accelerates the previous trend seen in London over the last few years. The fall was slightly higher in central London than in the suburbs. Meanwhile public transport usage (mainly buses and tubes) continued to rise. *(Editor's Comments: You will hear many people suggesting that London will suffer from gridlock as car ownership trends continue to rise, but the data demonstrates clearly that the truth is otherwise).*

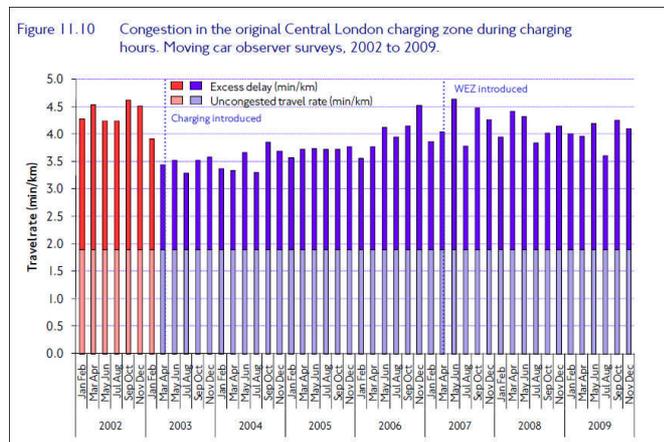
- However traffic congestion in London generally continued to increase. To quote the report “Recent increases in congestion are thought to reflect a range of planned and unplanned interventions in the road network that have combined to reduce the effective capacity of the road network for general traffic”. *(Editor's Comments: They mean road works combined with deliberate reductions in road space, more traffic lights and misconceived schemes such as Trafalgar Square and Aldgate. Indeed they mention in the report that loss of capacity between 2004 and 2008 in the central London zone might be as much as 30%! That's the legacy of the Livingstone regime).*

- Total CO2 emissions have grown by 7% since 2003, but ground based transport emissions have fallen by 5%. *(Editor's Comments: So road users are not to blame for increased emissions, contrary to what many politicians say. In reality, car users are contributing more than many other groups to emission reduction, and yet are the regular target of vilification).* Reductions in NO2 and PM10 emissions from ground based transport are even higher, although such transport continues to be the major contributor to these emissions and London continues to breach the EU Limit Values for PM10s at a small number of locations.

- The number of vehicles entering the central Congestion Charge zone declined in 2009 and the first half of 2009. This appeared to result in small reductions to delays, but congestion levels were “still well above those formerly achieved by the scheme”.

(Editor's Comments: Looks like congestion improved slightly because of the recession's impact on traffic volumes. Otherwise it has not improved).

Here's a chart from the report that shows the trends in congestion since before the charge was introduced:



Has there been any real benefit in terms of reduced congestion? It's not at all obvious from the chart that there has.

- Cycling is probably rising, but it is still only 2% of all trips. Cars and motorcycles take up 39% of trips, which is way ahead of public transport usage. For a breakdown of trips by borough see page 72 of the report, but bear in mind that multi-leg trips distort the figures e.g, a trip by walking, by train and tube might count as three trips, whereas motorised trips may be solely counted as one.

Government Spending Review



Readers are no doubt aware of the Government's budget review, which will affect the amount of money granted to London (and hence to TfL and the London Boroughs).

According to Peter Hendy, Transport Commissioner, the new settlement will mean a reduction of £2.2 billion in Government funding in 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 – that's a 21% reduction which is less than other local authorities are facing.

What are the implications in terms of London's transport systems? Well it's not totally clear and probably won't be until the new year. But a lot of hard work is no doubt going into where budgets can be shaved.

Some of the impacts that are likely are as follows:

- Upgrades to the underground network may be delayed, and some parts of Crossrail will be deferred (possible savings of £1 bn have been identified).

- Budgets for road engineering and safety schemes may be reduced, which will affect the local boroughs who "bid" for a share of this money under "Local Implementation Plans".

- Cycling schemes such as the London cycle network will be cut.

- The rapid installation of electric car charging points will be slowed down.

- Parking charges will rise wherever TfL can make them stick. Already parking at some of London's underground stations has gone up 66% to the annoyance of many commuters. Also TfL are talking about imposing parking charges on the roads they control, where there are none at present.

- Bus and tube fares will rise at RPI+ 2%, although it appears to be the strategy to try and maintain the bus network and service level, even though it requires major subsidies.

- TfL will be cutting staff, and they have already cut out free sandwiches for board members, and banned colour photocopying.

- The Freedom Pass and other concessionary fares remain sacrosanct (but TfL don't pay the cost of course, which is passed to boroughs so their budget problems are going to worsen as TfL hikes the fares).

Peter Hendy will also lose his part time job as Chairman of the Commission for Integrated Transport – one of the quangos that is being abolished. (Editor's Comments: No tears to be shed for that body which has never reached the impossible objectives that it set out to achieve.

As regards the spending review generally, it is a pity that Crossrail is to go ahead, which is likely to be a financially disastrous project – see this BBRAG newsletter for more information: www.freedomfordrivers.org/News30_Email.pdf. This is what the editor of the Investors Chronicle recently had to say on the subject: “...a preposterously expensive east-west rail link that will enable businessmen to get from Heathrow to Canary Wharf without having to run shoulders with the hoipolloi”).

News Snapshots

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

+ The M4 bus lane is to be abolished according to Philip Hammond, Transport Secretary. Created in 1999 to enable faster journeys for buses and taxis to and from London airport, it was generally disliked by the public. Usage of the lane was relatively low so it took out a massive amount of people carrying capacity for very little benefit.

+ In Croydon, the council imposed Pay & Display parking controls in Coulsdon town centre, despite many objections. One of their justifications was that the previous “one hour free parking” system was widely abused. After the introduction of Pay & Display, parking fines went up 11 times. *(Editor’s Comments: Yet another example of the profit motive of councils when new parking schemes are devised).*

+ TfL is testing dust suppressant sprays to try and reduce particulate air pollution. Dust binders have been shown to be effective in trials sponsored by the EU in Austria and Italy, and are likely to be tried on the Marylebone Road and Lower Thames Street, which are hot spots for such pollution in London. Particulates such as PM10s come from diesel engine emissions to a large extent but also from tyre wear and brake wear.

+ Daniel Moylan, TfL Deputy Chairman, recently collected a Congestion Charge fine which he blamed on administration errors by the new operator, IBM. There have also been complaints about the operation of the “Auto-Pay” system by fleet owners, and this system is going to be rolled out more generally. *(Editor’s Comments: More symptoms of the difficulty of operating a complex system both cheaply and reliably).*

+ As suggested in our previous newsletter, the award of a new long-term operating contract for the Dartford Crossing has apparently stopped any idea of “selling off” the crossing. However, to pay for a new “toll-free” system of automatic payment, tolls are likely to rise to £2.00 per car next year, and £2.50 the year after. *(Editor’s Comments: This is simply ridiculous. The tolls should be removed and the crossing made free, as originally promised).*

+ Upgrades of the M25 will be protected under the Government’s spending review, although there are apparently plans to introduce “hard-shoulder” running on the southern stretch.

+ Under Boris Johnson’s “Devolution Proposals” (following the scrapping of the Government’s “Office for London” – for details see www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/proposals-for-devolution.pdf) the Mayor is asking for more flexibility over traffic control on TfL roads so he “can develop more effective solutions to get traffic in London flowing more smoothly”. He is complaining that the Department for Transport limits what he can do in traffic schemes and signage and he needs more flexibility. For example, he would like to allow cyclists to turn left at a red signal *(Editor: why not cars also?)*. It takes too long to get new signage approved apparently.

+ Westminster council is going to increase the number of traffic wardens by 25% so as to boost revenue from parking fines even further (see the figures elsewhere in this newsletter which show that Westminster probably already makes more money than any other London borough from this source). It is recruiting 50 more traffic wardens while slashing staff in other departments to cut costs.

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

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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 keep an eye on local news and advise on local transport issues then please let me know. Roger Lawson

Contact person	Borough	Email
Les Alden	Southwark	LHA@looksouth.net
Paul Hemsley	Ealing	ph@hemsleyassociates.com
Hillier Simmons	Hounslow	hilliersimmons@compuserve.com
Brian Mooney	Hammersmith & Fulham	fairdeal@abd.org.uk
Roger Lawson	Bromley, Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Havering, Islington, Lewisham, City of London, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest	roger.lawson@abd.org.uk
Peter Morgan	Croydon, Camden, Enfield, Harrow, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston, Lambeth, Merton, Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth, Westminster	southlondon@abd.org.uk

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 and is distributed free of charge to ABD Members in the London area and to those Members of BBKAG who formerly received the Bromley Borough Roads Action Group newsletter. 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, 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 £25.00 per annum if paid by cheque, debit or credit card; or £20.00 if paid by standing order (however there is an additional charge of £5 if you wish to receive the ABD national newsletter on paper rather than electronically). 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.

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