

ABD London News

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Editorial

Doesn't money drive everything? Whenever you see a new initiative being put forward, it's always worthwhile to think about who benefits financially. For example are the policies of the Mayor of London driven by financial imperatives or solely by his desire to improve the health and welfare of residents?

It is worth considering this when looking at the proposed new taxes to be imposed by the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). Are they justified solely on health grounds, or is it because it will contribute substantially to the Mayor's budget problems? It's always seen as meritorious to impose high taxes on those products or services where it is judged wise to deter consumption - such as tobacco and alcohol. Even better if they are things that the consumers have difficulty avoiding - such as car fuel duties.

But before such taxes are imposed there should surely be a proper cost/benefit analysis and a clear

identification of the likely benefits to be obtained. In the case of the ULEZ we have neither. See page 2.

Likewise the use of speed awareness courses to "educate" drivers and which are now being used to finance police activities. This is incentivising the police to roll out more speed cameras and catch more "offenders" which they will then give a waiver to from prosecution to obtain money. That's instead of what they should be doing which is to reduce infringements (if that would reduce road accidents). See article on page 7 about a new campaign to stop this iniquitous arrangement. I hope readers will support it but please read the detail on the campaign web site before jumping to a conclusion that you like the system because it means you can take a course and avoid the points on your license! Remember it's money that is driving the increase in speed camera numbers, not road safety.

Roger Lawson (Editor)



Quotes of the Month

"I am not here today [at Great Ormond Street hospital] to talk about our healthcare system or our incredible hospitals like Great Ormond Street—that's for another day. But I am here to talk about a health emergency we are walking into. An issue of life and death. An issue that is already damaging the health of Londoners—including our children and our grandchildren every single day. And an issue that will become an increasing burden on our hospitals—like this one—until we tackle it head on. I am of course talking about London's dangerous and polluted air"... Mayor Sadiq Khan introducing his proposals for a tougher ULEZ regime. See article on page 2.



Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to be Toughened

As new London Mayor Sadiq Khan promised in his manifesto, he plans to tackle vigorously the problem of air pollution in London, a lot of which comes from motor vehicles. To that purpose he has announced proposals, and associated public consultations, on strengthening and bringing forward the planned Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

As proposed by previous Mayor Boris Johnson, the ULEZ would impose a charge on all vehicles that were not compliant with certain standards from 2020 within the existing Congestion Charge area of central London.

That is even assuming that their pollution controls were working properly and the figures were not being fiddled by VW et al, which we now know to be untrue.

In summary the latest proposals are:

- To bring the implementation of the **central London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) forward by one year** to 2019
- **To expand the ULEZ** beyond central London in 2020 (to within the North/South Circular).
- **Introducing a new Emissions Surcharge** from 2017 for the most polluting vehicles entering central London (congestion charge zone).

The charge for cars was to be £12.50. Zero or very low emission vehicles were to be exempt and most modern cars also, but not older ones and particularly not diesel vehicles. They needed to be Euro 4 compliant for petrol vehicles or Euro 6 for diesel cars - which meant only diesels manufactured after 2015 would likely be free of charge. Similar tough rules applied to large vans and HGVs with a £100 charge for the latter.

The objective, as with the new proposals, was to substantially reduce NO2 and particulate emissions which are the main health hazards and where London has been consistently breaching EU legal standards on certain roads (but as also happens in many other major cities). Although air pollution from vehicles has been falling, and will continue to fall as the vehicle fleet is replaced by newer

In essence those older vehicles such as cars, buses and HGVs made before January 2006, or a year later for vans. This charge will be £10 (Toxicity Charge).

- Giving TfL the go-ahead to start looking at a **diesel scrappage scheme** as part of a wider national scheme run by the government.
- Making sure TfL leads by example by **cleaning up its bus fleet** and buying only **hybrid or zero emission double-decker buses** from 2018.

Note that as many as 9,000 vehicles that do not qualify for exemption and hence will incur the £10 Toxicity Charge currently enter central London.



models, the timescale is quite extended for major impacts and the increasing use of diesel cars has not helped. Diesel vehicles were mistakenly promoted by the Government because of their alleged lower emissions of CO2, but are much worse for other pollutants.



There will obviously be a strong incentive for the owners to replace their vehicles with newer ones, or not drive in at all.

You can find out more information, and respond to the public consultation, by going to this web page:

www.london.gov.uk/cleanair

Here's some comments from this writer:

Ensuring older vehicles are replaced, or removed from central London by 2017 is wise as they are a major source of pollution. However this will bring hardship to many, particularly van owners.

Continued on next page.



ULEZ (Cont.)

Clearly those who own vans are often the less wealthy or run small businesses so putting in place a "diesel scrappage" scheme would be helpful. But will the Government go along with this and provide the necessary funding? That is a big question.

Expanding the ULEZ to within the North/South Circular in 2020 will affect many more people and will be particularly difficult for current diesel vehicle owners as it will affect relatively modern vehicles at that time. Again a diesel scrappage scheme would help enormously.

Note though that the previous plan to solely have the ULEZ cover the congestion charge zone made little sense as the air blows in from around and hence it was not likely to have much impact.

As with any taxation raising proposal which is claimed to be good for you (in this case improving the health of Londoners) one has to dissect very carefully the benefits and costs.

This scheme could be an enormous fund raising scheme for TfL and the Mayor and he needs money to meet his promise of not raising public transport fares.

Will it actually make a difference to air pollution in the capital? Or is it simply a means to raise more taxes?

Regrettably the answers to those questions have not been supplied

Roger Lawson

But it was a lot cheaper because the existing congestion charge cameras could be used. Presumably a whole new technology infrastructure will be needed for the wider area. What are the costs of this likely to be? We do not know.

One particular negative effect will be on the environment on the North/South Circulars which are already heavily congested and hence have poor local air quality in some locations. This might be made worse if the boundary is just within those roads. If it is just outside then lots of minor roads will become heavily used.

Note that the initial public consultation also covers such matters as giving the Mayor control over Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) receipts, the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street and your local town centre, the closure of roads (for car-free days, play streets, etc),

the funding of a boiler scrappage scheme, etc, so there is lots to comment on. So please make sure you respond to this consultation.

But unfortunately there is no cost information provided for these proposals, or cost/benefit analysis, as is usual with recent consultations from TfL so any responses may be ill informed.

One last comment: the survey system asks you for lots of personal information which is highly inappropriate. I suggest you avoid answering those as best you can.

But if they see any responses from 116 year olds living in Bromley with no specific gender bias then you will know who it is. For security reasons I simply do not give out such data as any simpleton now knows.



New Mayor's First Acts

As readers will be aware, Sadiq Khan has been elected to Mayor of London, soundly beating Zac Goldsmith who ran a rather lacklustre campaign. The new Mayor has moved rapidly to implement some of his policy initiatives which includes a freeze on public transport fares for 4 years. Previously it was suggested that it would leave a £1.9bn hole in Transport for London's budget but the Transport Commissioner, Mike Brown, says that he will deliver it. Exactly how is not yet clear but obviously TfL's expenditure will be reduced and staff cut back.

So it seems likely that support for local road safety and other schemes is likely to be reduced. Perhaps TfL could stop wasting money on speed cameras as one element of expenditure that has little benefit - for example the £15m alone proposed for average speed cameras on arterial London roads? But of course that is a revenue generating source so they won't do it (see article on speed awareness courses later in this edition).

In addition to that financial gap, the new Mayor has also announced a new "Hopper Fare" that will enable bus passengers to take two trips for the price of one so long as they are both within one hour.

Continued on next page.



Mayor's First Acts (Cont.)

This will be introduced in September this year. And what is the cost of this?

Hopper fares will be another £30m hit to TfL's budget it is estimated but it will benefit a huge number of people according to Mike Brown.

Needless to point out perhaps that Mr Khan is the son of a bus driver. Is this going to be regime for bus users, whereas Boris's became one for cyclists? We shall see no doubt.

Another initiative already announced is an attack on air pollution (Mr Khan apparently suffers from asthma so has a personal interest in the matter), with a formal policy consultation

What we need is a public consultation which gives us a proper cost/benefit analysis of the proposals.

There was certainly none done for the original ULEZ proposals which included many vehicles in the restrictions which would have negligible impact on air pollution. It now looks like it won't be any different with these new proposals so we will continue to have policies for London dominated by "gesture" politics.

New Mayor's Broken Promise

No sooner had new London Mayor Sadiq Khan taken office

already covered in the preceding article in this newsletter.

There will also be improved and cleaner buses and it also seems likely that the "Boris Bus" (aka. New Routemasters) will be replaced for new orders by other vehicles. Incidentally windows are being fitted to the New Routemasters to relieve the excessive temperatures bus users are suffering.

The ULEZ changes will of course assist in plugging the budget gap because people may not find it easy to change to compliant vehicles quickly enough so will end up paying the surcharge for non-compliant vehicles. Oddly enough the people most affected by these changes are likely to be Mr Khan's own election supporters - namely the poorer section of the community that is running older cars.

than it transpired that one of his key vote winning pledges was not what it seemed.

He promised to freeze public transport fares for four years but that will only apply to certain fares it is now reported.

Mr Khan told the London Assembly recently that the price freeze would not extend to season tickets because they can include stages on trains run by private companies.

Those companies are regulated by the Government and not by the Mayor and TfL. The Government has rejected any idea of freezing fares so the Mayor's original promise cannot be delivered in full.

Comment: air pollution in London is certainly a cause for concern but it has been improving.

Diesel vehicles are many times better than they used to be but it takes time for the installed base of vehicles to change. However the main problem is not private cars, but buses, HGVs, LGVs and taxis. In addition transport is only one element that makes up air pollution in London. Construction alone is a major factor, particularly when transport associated with it is also high.

Unfortunately the impact of air pollution on medical problems and life expectancy is grossly exaggerated by the advocates of banning vehicles. Any proposals to reduce air pollution by restricting the use of certain vehicles may have little impact and yet add enormous costs.



Mike Brown, Transport Commissioner, gave us the good news though. This means the cost of the "promise" will only be a £600m impact on TfL's budgets. That is in comparison with the £1.9bn that he was talking about under the previous regime.

But that's a lot of money to find to fill the hole in the budget and still deliver on the Mayor's other promises. Other articles in this edition partly cover how that problem may be solved, no doubt at readers expense.

Mr Khan is also hoping to save money by tackling inefficiencies in TFL where more than 400 staff earn more than £100,000 a year and both they and their families get free travel perks (now under review).

Old Mayor's Advice Ignored - Bus Passengers the Main Losers

An article in Local Transport Today (LTT) had long-standing public transport supporter David Begg complaining that Boris Johnson ignored advice to reduce road vehicle demand in central London while introducing the cycle superhighways.

By not reducing traffic volumes, the result has been worsening congestion and slower traffic speeds. He said "Bus passengers have been the main losers".

The article reported that bus speeds have fallen by more than 5% on a third of routes in London in the last year. This has also reduced bus passenger volumes. But even Mr Begg concedes that **"It is the substantial reduction in road space, with planned roadworks increasing by 362% over the last three years, which has led to significant increases in congestion"**.

Editor's comment: how amusing to see this arch advocate of road pricing and congestion charging admit that congestion has been caused in London by the previous Mayor's perverse destruction of the road network in the pursuit to get us all cycling.

This is surely a classic example of the law of unintended consequences. The desire to get more people cycling was as much driven by economics as TfL were unable to provide the public transport capacity needed as it was by the desire to encourage healthy exercise.



For example this writer published an article back in 2002 which said the following:

Pollution Caused by Traffic Calming.

As a contribution to the local debate on the merits of speed bumps, it is worth

covering a report produced by the TRL (Transport Research Lab.) last year. In the past, different studies in different countries seemed to produce very diverse results, but the latest methodology seems more likely to have produced accurate figures. TRL Report No. 482 studies the effect of a number of different traffic calming measures, including road humps, cushions, pinch points and mini-roundabouts.

They also studied the impact on traffic flows and delays experienced by fire engines. To quote from the report:

"The results of the study clearly indicate that traffic calming measures increase the emissions of some pollutants from passenger cars. For petrol non-catalyst, petrol catalyst and diesel cars, mean emissions of CO per vehicle-km increased by 34%, 59% and 39% respectively. For all three vehicle categories the increase in mean HC emissions was close to 50%. Emissions of NOX from petrol vehicles increased only slightly, but such emissions from diesel vehicles increased by around 30%. Emissions of CO2 from each of the three vehicle categories increased by between 20% and 26%. Emissions of particulate matter from the diesel vehicles increased by 30%."

<End of 2002 article>

The advocates of speed humps ignored this negative evidence in their commitment to road safety even though their impact on accidents is very marginal and may be a mirage.

Continued on next page.



Speed Humps and Air Pollution

Air pollution from motor vehicles, particularly in major conurbations such as London, has been a hot topic of late. The impact may be exaggerated but it has certainly become a matter of public concern with the increase in diesel vehicles allegedly making it worse.

It has been known for many years that speed humps actually result in more air pollution.

Speed Humps (Cont.)

As confirmation for the above a recent study from Imperial College, London also found high levels of pollution from road humps - indeed higher than from other forms of traffic calming (see the Daily Telegraph on the 11/6/2016 for a fuller report on this and some quotes from me).

For example they got 47% more particulates and 64% more NO2 from a petrol car when driven over humps, and even higher figures for diesel cars.

As I pointed out in my comments to the Daily Telegraph, accidents to school children are not particularly frequent outside schools so putting humps there is unnecessary.

But the health impact on children of air pollution may be particularly severe. There are numerous reasons why the use of speed humps should be banned and this is yet another - see this web site for lots more information written by the author on this topic some years ago, and the facts have not changed since: www.bromleytransport.org.uk (go to the "Speed Humps" tab).

Cycling and Walking Strategy

The Department for Transport (DfT) have recently published a document entitled "Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy".

The object is stated as doubling cycling activity by 2025 and reverse the decline in walking.

But there are few costs other than a projection of spending £300m and no cost/benefit analysis attached.

Opposition to Cycle Superhighway 11

There is mounting opposition to Cycle Superhighway 11 in North London. This scheme includes changes to the road layout at Swiss Cottage and closure of the Outer Circle of Regents Park to traffic for much of the day.

A petition at Change.org has been organised against this scheme and already has several thousand signatures. This is what the petition organisers have to say: "Transport for London (under the charge of their "Cycling Tsar" Andrew Gilligan) are proposing to implement a catastrophically ill-planned scheme called "Cycle Superhighway 11".

This scheme, if allowed to go ahead, will adversely affect local residents, all road users and public transport users in :

Finchley Road, Swiss Cottage, Avenue Road, Regents Park, St John's Wood, Baker Street and all surrounding areas by causing TOTAL GRIDLOCK on the roads and increased air pollution to all the affected areas as a result.

It is strongly suspected that this scheme has been DELIBERATELY designed to cause maximum road congestion and make life as miserable as possible for motorists that we simply abandon our cars and vans and lorries and instead join Boris Johnson and Andrew Gilligan's utopian "cycling-vision".

Please help support this petition to stop Transport for London from destroying some of the nicest, greenest areas of London and turning a major section of London into a congested car park."

Editor: Please sign their petition on Change.Org if you will be affected by this scheme.

It certainly appears to be the case that this is yet another

example of the possible increased congestion caused by a Cycle Superhighway being ignored.

In other words cyclists being favoured without any regard to the impact on other road users - or indeed any proper cost/benefit justification being provided.

Bristol Mayor Changes

One loser in the elections in May was Bristol Mayor George Ferguson (an independent). There was widespread dislike of his parking policies and wide area 20 mph speed limits.

The new Mayor is Labour candidate Marvin Rees. Will the policies change? It seems not in any significant way. No removal of 20 mph speed limits or RPZs in the short term it seems, but there may be fewer introduced in future..

ABD Launches Campaign Against Speed Awareness Courses

AMPOW Campaign Against Misuse of Police Waivers

The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) has launched a campaign against the misuse of speed awareness courses because the actions of the police in offering such "Education Courses" as an alternative to prosecution for speeding and other offences are distorting road safety policy.

It is leading to the proliferation of speed cameras and threatened prosecutions because the police now have a direct financial incentive to maximise their activities in this area. This is wrong.

The campaign is named AMPOW.

In our view there is no statutory support for this activity and it is contrary to law. In addition it is a perversion of justice for the police to waive prosecution on the basis of money being paid to them.

There is also no hard evidence that putting people through a speed-awareness course has any impact on their subsequent accident record, or behaviour in general.



So what we now have is an enormous industry dedicated to raising money to pay course operators, the police and other organisations who benefit from these arrangements.

The Government has claimed that the police only recover their "administration" costs but that is not in fact true.



They are actually using their proportion of fees paid by course attendees to finance more cameras and more staff to operate them plus to fund other equipment and activities from the surpluses generated. We can provide evidence on this.

We ask the Government to put a stop to these arrangements forthwith simply because Parliament has never approved these activities.

If they do not we will consider a legal challenge to prevent these abusive practices from continuing.

More Information

You can learn more about this campaign from a new web site set up to support the campaign here:

www.speed-awareness.org .

Members of the public can register their support for the campaign and sign a petition here by going to the web page given below.

If you have not already signed up to support this campaign, please do so now.

All the evidence on what has been happening and why it is illegal is present on the aforementioned web site. :

Speed Awareness Campaign Comment

Here is one comment already received on the above press release: "As a former senior police traffic officer and ABD member I have grave reservations about Speed Awareness courses. In my view they 'offer' an expensive

alternative to prosecution for excessive speeds which in the past would not trouble the guides to prosecutors, so low are the infringements.

So it is that the great and the good sit meekly through half a day's instruction whilst persistent, dangerous speeders get away with it because the police service has given up overt traffic enforcement. Add to this the proliferation of new speed limits which do not meet long standing criteria and more speed cameras and you have the recipe for both a cash cow and a feeling of driver persecution. Road safety? I don't think so..... Malcolm Brockman".

AMPOW Campaign Petition:
<http://www.speed-awareness.org/join.html>

Shorter Street Closure

The closure of Shorter Street in the City of London as part of the Cycle Superhighway works was covered in our last newsletter.

This closure means there are no sensible routes for vehicles to take if they are coming down Mansell Street, or have exited the Minorities car park, and they wish to go west along Upper/Lower Thames Street and the Embankment.

Shorter Street can now only be used by cyclists and buses in theory.



Car in the East-West Cycle Superhighway

But it seems some drivers can't read signs, or possibly they are too busy looking at the SatNavs which have not been updated.

See photos to the right that show a car in the Cycle Superhighway and a car in the bus lane. The former might be amusing as it is not for the fact that the driver is headed into a dual direction cycle lane so might meet cyclists head on. Perhaps it's good that Shorter Street is very short, as its name suggests.

There were 60 responses on the initial consultation on this part of the East-West Cycle Superhighway which generated 35 objections and additional negative comments to the closure of Shorter Street (including objections from the ABD and one from the City of London Corporation which pointed out that the alternative routes that traffic might take through the City were inappropriate).



However TfL are adamant that there are alternative routes and leaving one lane open to other vehicles on Shorter Street would cause congestion from tail backs on Mansell Street. That seems doubtful given the volume of traffic at that junction and whoever thinks that the alternative routes are practical clearly has not tried driving them.

For example, one suggestion was via the Aldgate gyratory but that gyratory is no more of course and the new road layout in that area is massively congested as a result.

TfL are not known for listening but the Editor has a meeting with TfL management to discuss it further.

Miscellaneous News

- Residents parking permit charges are rocketing according to a report in the Daily Telegraph as councils continue to see this as a source of funds. Among the highest charges in the country are Islington at £545 per annum and Croydon at £305.

- Leeds proposals to spend £250m on a trolley bus network have been rejected by the Government. There was also a vociferous local campaign against the scheme even though trolley buses are not as bad as trams in removing road space.

- Responses to the public consultation on the proposed Silvertown Tunnel, to run alongside the

Blackwall Tunnel, have been published. Fifty-eight percent of the 4,135 responses supported the scheme with thirty-one percent opposed. *(Editor: having been stuck for some time at the Blackwall Tunnel approach recently when a car caught fire in the tunnel, some redundancy in these crossings is urgently needed. As it was many vehicles were trapped for hours on a very hot day).*

- Hammersmith & Fulham Council is proposing to spend £1m to tackle air pollution in the borough.

- Humps in Nightingale Lane, Bromley which were replaced after road resurfacing had to be redone again after many complaints about the height. The Council did so promptly.

- Olly Martins lost the election to remain Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire in May. He was the person proposing to fund the police from speed awareness courses by setting speed cameras to operate at 70 mph on the M1.

- Major road changes are proposed in Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden as part of the boroughs "Go Cycle" programme to encourage cycling and walking. See the ABD London Blog for more information (see below).

- Mini-orcas (humps to divide cycle lanes from other road space) have been removed after four weeks on Aldgate High Street after pedestrians tripped over them. They were also a danger to cyclists and others.

Congestion Taxes Unpaid

Transport for London (TfL) have disclosed that in addition to running up bills of £500,000 in unpaid parking fines, which diplomats have avoided or delayed paying last year, they also have an outstanding amount of £96 million in unpaid "Congestion Charges". That is a considerable amount which would make some difference to TfLs budget shortfall.

The new Mayor Sadiq Khan repeated the claim by his predecessor that this tax is actually a "service charge" which should be paid. But the embassies claim that it is a tax, and as foreign embassies are exempt from taxes, they do not have to pay it.



There is a simple question to ask here. What service is being provided? In essence none so the embassies are correct to refuse payment. It was only rebranded a service charge to fool those who have been forced to pay it that this was not simply a money raising tax but something else. It is not.

So the Editor's advice to the embassies is: "don't pay it".

And TfL should stop calling it a service charge and correctly label it what it is. Namely a way to raise money from road users under the pretence of tackling road congestion when it has signally failed to do that at all.

This is yet another example of money incentives being dressed up as something else.

Follow the Blog

The ABD London region now has a blog so many of the articles herein first appeared there. The address is:

<https://abdlondon.wordpress.com/>

Please take a look at it and post your comments on the articles there (or of course send an email to the editor). Note that articles on topical news will be posted there first although they will still continue to be summarised in this newsletter.

You can register to "follow" the blog so you get notified of any new articles as soon as they appear.

Contributed articles to the blog are also welcomed.



Registering to Receive This Newsletter

This newsletter is free of charge and is sent approximately bi-monthly to anyone who cares to request a copy. It is sent via email (as a link to a web page from which you can download it). To register for a free copy simply go to this web page: www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm and fill out the box to be added to our mailing list.

Address Changes

Don't forget to notify the ABD of any change of postal or email addresses. You may otherwise miss out on future copies of this newsletter without noticing that they are no longer being delivered.

About the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers was formed from a merger of the Association of British Drivers and the Drivers Alliance. 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 Alliance 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

Contact and Publisher Information

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