

ABD London News



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Editorial

The Mayor of London is moving ahead to tackle air pollution in London. His proposals are the most aggressive to date despite the fact that he cannot tell us what benefit his proposals will actually bring to the capital.

If you have not yet responded to the public consultation on the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), please make sure you do so now. You only have a few days left. See page 2 for more details. **ANYONE WHO DRIVES IN LONDON NEEDS TO RESPOND NOW!**

This consultation is the usual kind we get now. One that does not provide all the data, or all the costs of the proposals. In other words there is no proper cost/benefit analysis.

This is why the Government and the Mayor of London (via Transport for London) waste so much money on populist schemes when the money would be better spent on something else.



The latest bid for more power by the Mayor is to take over suburban main line rail services into London. Bob Neill MP supports it but Transport Minister Chris Grayling does not. Bob accused him of political bias. But I agree with Mr Grayling. Why give Mr Khan power over transport outside London? He has too much already. Will he want to run HS2 next?

Roger Lawson (Editor)

Follow the Blog

The ABD London region has a blog where many of the articles herein first appeared. It is present here:

<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 are posted there first although they will continue to be summarised in this newsletter.

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

Quotes of the Month

“So this policy if implemented might result in a reduction of 0.4% in overall NOX emissions in the borough of Merton”..... Submission to Merton Council on proposed Diesel Permit Parking Surcharge—see page 3.

*“And, above all, it diminishes the really rather low esteem cyclists already have. People do not like cyclists, and you are doing nothing to enhance their reputation”.....*Magistrate, Catherine Hobey-Hamsher .See page 4.



Second Consultation on ULEZ - Make Sure You Respond by 18th December

The Mayor of London has announced the second stage of consultation on the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). If you are a resident or drive a vehicle in London, this consultation will affect you so it is important that you respond to it.

For example, anyone who drives a diesel car registered before 2014 may face a charge of £12.50 to drive within the North/South Circular from 2019 - or even earlier! That's in addition to the Congestion Charge (a.k.a. Tax) so you will be paying over £20 to drive into central London.

In addition older vehicles (pre-2006) will be paying an additional £10 as an "Emissions Surcharge" (or T-charge) almost immediately and many commercial vehicles will face very substantial additional charges.

Is this simply a money making scheme to fund Transport for London? Or a genuine attempt to tackle air pollution problems? You can try to answer that question by studying the supporting documents, but you won't find any cost/benefit analysis. In addition it actually says "Predicted air quality concentrations and analysis of change in population exposure to air pollution will be provided during the statutory consultation in 2017 if the Mayor decides to take this forward".

It would seem to be a case of consult first, then provide the

data to justify the scheme later. That's in the hope that polemics about the impact on health from transport pollution will swing the views of the public to come to a conclusion before they know the facts.

The Mayor has already done one consultation on the proposals, and there was general support indicated there but here's one quote they give in the report on that consultation: "These latest proposals are attempts to foist unfair stealth taxation upon the vast majority, thus making the rich/poor divide worse". Bearing in mind that there is no evidence given on the real impact, when pollution is coming down as the vehicle fleet modernises anyway so at best there will be only a short term benefit, it certainly looks more like a tax raising scheme to this writer.



The latest proposals include extending the ULEZ London-wide for HGVs and buses, possibly as early as 2019, and extending the ULEZ area to within the North/South Circular and bringing it forward to 2019.

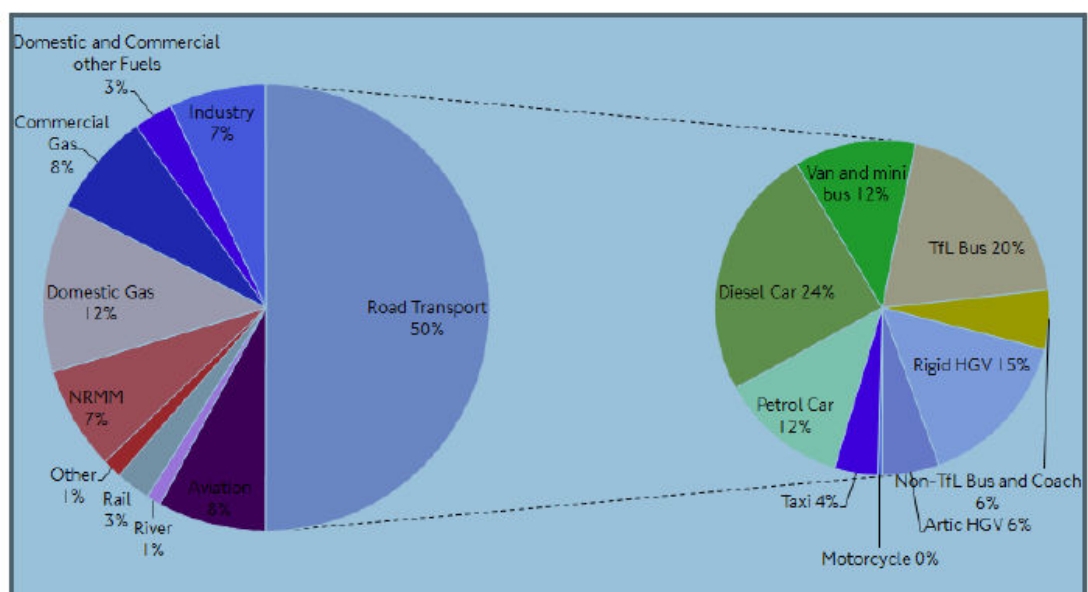
So make sure you respond to this consultation which you can do by clicking on the link below

You need to do this before the 18th December!

https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/environment/air-quality-consultation-phase-2/?cid=airquality-consultation#Have_your_say

The chart on the right from the consultation report gives you some background information you may find helpful (even though it is of course out of date!). Diesel cars only represented 12% of NO_x sources even then, and probably less now.

Figure 3: NO_x sources in Greater London in 2013 (LAEI 2013)²⁰



Diesel Permit Parking Surcharge in Merton

The London Borough of Merton are proposing to introduce a surcharge on all Parking Permits where the vehicle is diesel powered. It has already been approved by Councillors although the decision has been called in for scrutiny at a meeting on the 14th December.

Although the increased charge would be phased in over some years, the surcharge may be as much as £150 which would treble the existing cost for car owners in Merton.

The Council is doing this in the name of attacking the level of NOX emissions and resulting negative health impacts. However, the report they have commissioned and published on this subject leaves out a lot of the evidence necessary to make an informed decision on the matter. For example, a quick analysis revealed that this policy may only reduce such emissions in the longer term by 0.4%. A negligible figure and which might even be impossible to detect.

Why should diesel vehicle owners who require on-street parking be penalised when those with off-street parking or who drive in from outside the borough are not? It's simply irrational and smacks of "gesture politics" of the worst kind.

Perhaps it has more to do with economics because it would raise revenue for the council when council budgets are so under pressure.

But unfortunately raising permit parking charges to do that is illegal which has been backed up by several legal case precedents. Or of course it may be simply an attack on car owners in one of the few ways that Councils can do so. Regardless, any residents of the Borough of Merton should complain to their local Councillors and attend the council meeting on the 14th December to see what transpires.

You can read the full ABD's submission to Merton Council on this matter by clicking on the link below.

ABD's Response to Merton Permit Surcharge Proposals:

http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/ABD_Letter%20to%20LBB%20Merton%202016-12-02.pdf

Heathrow Airport and Environmental Pollution

The Government has backed the construction of a third runway at Heathrow despite widespread objections on environmental grounds. Zac Goldsmith, who stood for the job of London Mayor, resigned as an MP as a result to fight a bye-election on the issue which he proceeded to lose. Both he and elected Mayor Sadiq Khan opposed the further expansion of Heathrow.

It will bring major challenges to the road network because the new runway will have to run over

the M25. So that will likely have to be moved into a tunnel. In addition the western side of the M25 is one of the most congested parts of the UK road network already and the extra traffic generated by Heathrow expansion will make that even worse. So widening of both the M25 and M4 is probably required. The costs of those improvement could be over £3 billion and it could take over 6 years to implement with no doubt a lot of traffic disruption while it is being built.

In addition the extra aircraft movements and more traffic will have negative environmental impacts in both air pollution and noise.



Editor's Comments: this is surely one of the worse decisions ever made by a UK Government.

There were a number of better alternatives for airport expansion, including the encouragement of the use of other regional airports. Why does the whole country find it necessary to travel through Heathrow when smaller airports are altogether easier to use?

Mayor Calls for Congestion Charge on VW

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has asked that Volkswagen pay £2.5 million for "missed" congestion charge payments after the emissions rigging disclosures. He suggested that was the figure owners avoided paying by claiming a discount for a low emission vehicle when they were nothing of the sort. Vehicles affected are Audi A1 and A3, Skoda Fabia and Octavia, Seat Ibiza and Leon, and VE Golf and Polo cars.

Comment: the Mayor said "if you don't ask you don't get", but of course there is no threat of legal action or formal claim.

It looks like political posturing as the chance of making this stick legally is surely very low. It is the owners of the vehicles who claimed the discount on the basis of the information available to them and in good faith.

Is the Mayor going to go back to them and ask for more money? I don't think so. It is also arguable that the real life emissions of the vehicles concerned were indeed low and hence would have qualified anyway.

Traffic in the City of London, and Beech Street

The City of London Corporation has recently published a report entitled "Traffic in the City of London". It acknowledges that "certain major infrastructure project such as Crossrail and the Cycle Superhighway" along with new building development have increased demand on the highway network. As a result traffic congestion in some parts of the City has increased.



Their solutions include "reducing the amount of traffic in the City to a level our community finds acceptable", making representations for London wide policy change (e.g. changes to the Congestion Charge, which would include higher charges and wider geographic coverage) and reducing goods vehicle movements. They also propose to "actively discourage vehicle movements".

In addition they suggest bridge tolls over all the Thames bridges using ANPR technology as on the Dartford Crossing to reduce traffic volumes and more active management by TfL of traffic signals to reduce traffic into the City.

Zero Emission Vehicles Only and Beech Street

They also suggest a ban of all vehicles in the City other than zero emission ones and have already firmed up proposals to do that for Beech Street.

Or alternatively they wish to close it completely to through traffic. Beech Street runs underneath the Barbican and is heavily used as a cross-city route.

The City Corporation's report is well worth reading and is a good example of the anti road transport mentality that is now so prevalent.

Banker Fined for Dangerous Cycling

The latest example of a cyclist who thought he could ignore the law has been reported by several newspapers.

In the case concerned, City banker Tanneguy De Carné, aged 53, rode through a red traffic light on Mansion House Street and then cut in front of a marked police car.



He ignored the requests of officers to stop and then led them on a chase around City of London streets for 20 minutes before finally halting. That included riding furiously on pavements full of people.

He was fined £1,250 plus costs for dangerous cycling plus £1,000 for failing to stop.

And what was the response of Cycling UK? They are writing to the Court to complain about the attitude of the magistrate who made some negative comments on his behaviour and the reputation of cyclists. That will surely improve their image will it not?

The Garden Bridge - Surely a Vanity Project?

Most Londoners will have heard about the proposed "Garden Bridge", even if the rest of the country has not. But I have not commented on it before. This would be primarily a pedestrian bridge between Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridge (near the Temple to the South Bank). As its name suggests, it would be planted with trees and wild flowers.

It would not be publicly owned but be owned by a private limited

company (registered as a charity) and may support buildings. It is also likely be closed some days of the year for private events to help pay for it. Note that not even cyclists will be able to use the bridge without dismounting.

What is the cost of this project and who is paying? The latest estimate seems to be about £185 million when it was originally £60m. A lot of the cash is coming from private donations, but £60m has been granted by the Department for Transport and Transport for London.

In other words, from taxpayers money. Indeed a lot of that money has already been spent on design work, even though the project may not go ahead.

The cost of maintenance of the bridge is also of concern, and who will pay for it if it does not prove viable (it might well fall back on public funds in that case).

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is reviewing the project and the National Audit Office has previously criticised the financial justification for the bridge.

The best demolition of this project was written by Giles Fraser in the normally tree-loving pages of the Guardian. He said:

"Garlic bread? Cheese cake? Some combos just sound wrong, according to the famous skit from the Bolton comedian Peter Kay.



So we can assume that he would happily expose the vainglorious stupidity involved in combining a garden and a bridge. Still, he may not have to, for Mervyn Davies, chair of the Garden Bridge Trust, did a pretty good job in the Times this week, arguing that the building of a green-topped concrete bridge over the Thames, from the South Bank to Temple tube, would constitute a much needed economic boost to 'areas in need of regeneration'. Would that be the Royal Courts of Justice and all those poverty-stricken barristers' chambers? Or the National Theatre? Waterloo station? Or the South Bank, with IBM and ITV?"

Editor's comments: I can certainly think of lots of better things to spend £185 million on (and that's assuming the cost does not escalate further as such projects tend to do).

According to the BBC, Boris Johnson became a strong supporter after being lobbied by Ms Lumley who has known him since childhood.

But surely this is just another of Boris's vanity projects like the Emirates Cable Car, and his promotion of cycling, with any measurement of the cost effectiveness of the project being left out.

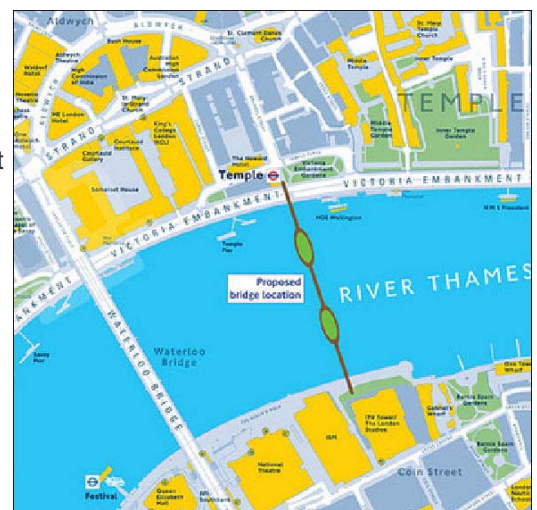
If someone could advise me what the cost per pedestrian trip will be over say the next ten years, taking into account the capital and maintenance costs I would be interested.

I was unable to find any such information.

But I am pretty certain that those who live outside the metropolis, and even those of us who might very occasionally use this bridge, could find lots of better uses for the money.

Perhaps there should be a user toll to pay for it like that proposed for the Silvertown Tunnel?

Roger Lawson



TfL's Damaging Proposals for Cycle Superhighway 11

Transport for London (TfL) are proposing to install a new Cycle Superhighway in London, with dedicated cycle lanes linking Swiss Cottage to the edge of the West End at the northern end of Regent Street.

To facilitate this scheme, dubbed CS11, they also plan to make dramatic changes to arterial through routes and surrounding roads in the NW3 and NW8 areas.

The main proposals are to replace the one-way gyratory system around Swiss Cottage with two-way streets; close off the northern end of Avenue Road to all traffic except buses; close the rest of Avenue Road – a main route into central London – to traffic for 20 out of 24 hours a day; and close four out of the eight gates to the Outer Circle of Regent's park, also for 20 out of 24 hours a day. Dedicated cycle lanes will be installed over this route, further squeezing traffic onto less road space.

Accompanying this, and evidently in some misguided attempt to aid the flow of traffic in this new layout, TfL are planning to ban various right and left turns off Finchley Road in its approach to Swiss Cottage, making it extremely difficult to reach

neighbourhoods such as Belsize Park by car.

Into this mix comes central government's long term plans for the construction of HS2, the new high speed rail link to the midlands and north of England, which include the building of a railway tunnel under Adelaide Road (another road leading into Swiss Cottage), and of two massive ventilation shafts – one in Adelaide Road and the other one near Fairfax Road, also in the Swiss Cottage area.

In a nutshell, these two unconnected projects will inevitably clash with, and intrude on each other, resulting in massive disruption, traffic congestion, increased air pollution, and absolute hell for local residents – for up to sixteen years.

That is the timescale for completing the HS2 works. On its own, if CS11 in its proposed form goes ahead this will be bad enough. However, combined with the estimated hundreds of HS2 lorries that are expected to be using the roads in this area every day, the mind boggles as to the impact this will have. TfL's response to this is that they don't think it will be a major problem.

Needless to say, the CS11 plans have been met with fierce opposition from residents and road users. A consultation resulted in a 60% approval, but it was later revealed that TfL had canvassed every single cycling club in Greater London, including many south of the river in areas nowhere near the affected area, to take part in the consultation.

However, various protest groups have been formed to try and persuade TfL to either moderate their plans or abandon them altogether, with petitions organised and approaches made to MPs and officers of TfL and Westminster and Camden councils.

No final decision has yet been made. Westminster Council are opposed to the CS11 proposals, and Camden council partly opposed. Putting off CS11 until later is not an option because of the sixteen-year timescale of the HS2 works.

In the meantime, rumour has it that TfL will now scrap the plan to close the four gates to the Outer Circle. The cycling fraternity will not be happy.

Anyone driving around the Outer Circle these days knows that this road has almost been hijacked to be used as a training circuit for two-wheeled enthusiasts.

Supporters of CS11 have called the Outer Circle a dangerous rat run, which is complete nonsense. It is only subject to light traffic, and most of any danger that might exist comes from mobs of cyclists crowding out other vehicles.

Anyone with an interest in this matter can look up the CS11 plans on the TfL website, and the main protest website, www.cs11.london.

Please give the latter your support.

Danny Michelson

ABD Comments on HS2

The Alliance of British Drivers recently issued a Press Release on HS2, a project that might benefit a few people who do business or live in central London. This is what it said:

Proposals for a network of high-speed railways linking London with the Midlands and the North of England were dreamt up in the dying days of the last Labour government, in a desperate attempt to boost its chances of re-election. The proposals were not properly worked up or costed, but the subsequent Coalition and Conservative governments could

not resist the lure of such a grandiose project. Despite the concerns expressed by many about the spiralling costs and the overestimation of benefits, HS2 has taken on a life of its own and seems unstoppable. But it is not too late for common sense to prevail and stop this ludicrous waste of public money on a project that will benefit very few people. The money that would have been spent on HS2 should instead be used to improve the travelling conditions for millions of citizens.

The Government's current estimate of the cost of implementing HS2 is £56.6bn at 2014 prices, but this is considered an underestimate by independent analysts.

The Taxpayers' Alliance estimates the cost will be at least £88bn. But it is not just the escalating costs that are of concern. The projected benefits are likely to have been greatly exaggerated and the business case for the project is very dubious.

The first stage of the project is not expected to be finished until the mid 2020s, by which time further developments in electronic communications may lead to reductions in demand for travel between major cities.

In addition, the railway line would pass through areas of high landscape value and adversely affect the quality of life for people living close to it.



Currently, 83 per cent of passenger-miles travelled in the UK are by car, van or taxi, with just 10 per cent by rail. A 2010 RAC Foundation report found that road and rail public transport users were subsidised by the Exchequer (i.e. taxpayers) at 6p and 21p per passenger-mile respectively. Private and commercial road users made a 4p per driver-mile net positive contribution to the Exchequer. Yet funding to improve and maintain the road network does not reflect its vital contribution to the country's economy. It is estimated that £12bn is required just to clear the backlog of pothole repairs. At current rates of spending this will take 14 years. In addition, the Government's plans for improving the capacity of the strategic road network include 'smart' motorways, with hard shoulders converted into running lanes.

This is much cheaper than physical widening but there are concerns that these cost-cutting schemes could seriously compromise safety. Scrapping HS2 would release funding that could be used to accelerate upgrading of the road network to a proper standard, as well as helping to clear the maintenance backlog.

While the ABD is primarily concerned with roads and drivers, it acknowledges the vital contribution that railways make to the transport system. If HS2 were scrapped, therefore, part of the funding released, say around 15 per cent, should be used to improve existing rail services and capacity. Properly targeted, such investment would produce much greater benefits than HS2.

ABD Chairman, Brian Gregory, has these comments:

"No objective analysis of HS2 can justify its implementation. It is purely a vanity project. I hope that our new Prime Minister, who has shown herself to be more down-to-earth than her predecessors, will take a cold, hard look at HS2 and conclude that it should be scrapped.

The money saved should be used instead to improve those transport systems on which most people rely every day."

ENDS





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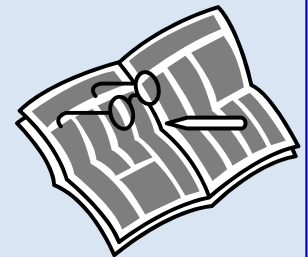
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About the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

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

This Newsletter is published by the London Region of the Alliance of British (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 anyone else who has an interest in traffic and transport issues in London. All material contained herein is Copyright of the A.B.D. or of the respective 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. The ABD London Region also publishes a blog which can be found here: <https://abdlondon.wordpress.com/>



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