

ABD London News

Click on any index item below to go directly to the article in a digital edition.

In this Edition

- Mayor's Latest Proposals for ULEZ
- UK Air Pollution—The Facts
- Diesel Vehicle Petition
- Speed Humps to Slow Cyclists
- Thames Crossings
- Publicity for Traffic Management Proposals
- 20 Mph Makes Very Little Difference
- Or 20 Mph Makes Matters Worse
- Dartford Crossing Fines

See the last page for publisher and contact information.

Editorial

There are two articles in this edition on air pollution and London Mayor Sadiq Khan's proposals to reduce air pollution in London which he considers a major health hazard.

Apparently he suffers from asthma himself, as I used to do when younger. So he has a personal interest in the matter. His proposals will also include generating a large amount of extra revenue for TfL which he urgently needs to fix holes in their budget after he made some rash promises to stop public transport fare rises so as to get elected.

This problem has been compounded by declining revenues from buses as usage has fallen—and forecast to fall further by 2.3% next year according to their latest business plan.

And just to show how ludicrous their budgets are, the standard bus fare in London is now £1.50 but TfL only receive 65p on average because of all the "concessions" available to passengers.

But to go out to public consultation on the ULEZ proposals without publishing clear information on the costs of the scheme, and the profits it might generate, or even details of the likely impact on air pollution is quite perverse.

You know when you are being sold a pup when you get more rhetoric than facts. It looks like we are reverting to the Livingstone style of politics where dogma matters more than truth.

Roger Lawson (Editor)
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Quotes of the Month

"Pedestrian inattention is the most common cited causal factor in City casualties..." Rory McMullan of the City of London Corporation in LTT. See article on page 6.

"It clearly is about raising revenue. There really is no need for there to be charges there at all in our view because drivers already pay something like £46 billion in motoring taxes every single year so anything on top of that is arguably a tax too far. This isn't a charge, it's a tax really, so it is a concern it's not about managing demand..." Paul Watters of the RAC on LBC on the Dartford Crossing Charge. See article on page 6.

"I travel from my home in Sloane Street to the Tower Hill car park near Byward St. I need the car for other reasons during the day. The journey time used to be between 25 and 40 mins. Since the CS was installed journey time is now 1hr and 15 mins minimum. Tell me who is creating more congestion and air pollution..." Rodger Slape on the Cycle Superhighway in a note to the Editor.



Mayor's Latest Proposals For ULEZ

On the 4th April the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, made his latest announcements on how he intends to reduce air pollution from road vehicles in London. Not a mention of how he intends to reduce the 50% of air pollution caused by things other than road transport which is still growing as the population of London increases, but let us say no more about that for the present.

Mr Khan has revised his previous proposals somewhat, presumably based on the last public survey which did show overall support for his proposals with some reservations. But he is now definitely committed to:

1. The introduction of a "T-Charge" of £10 for older vehicles (pre-2006) commencing in October this year. This will only apply within the existing Congestion Tax area of central London.

2. The introduction of an **Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)** for all vehicles from **April 2019**, which will again only apply to the central London zone and replace the "T-Charge" mentioned above. The ULEZ daily fee to drive in the zone will apply 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and apply to **all vehicles** that do not meet the following standards:

- Petrol Euro 4/ IV
- Diesel Euro 6/ VI
- Powered Two Wheelers Euro 3



These standards mean that petrol cars more than around 13 years old in 2019, and diesel cars over 4 years old in 2019 will have to pay a charge which will be £12.50 for cars, vans and motorbikes, and £100 for heavy vehicles such as HGVs and coaches. They will be in addition to the Congestion Charge where applicable.



The ULEZ will apply to all vehicle types, except black taxis, which are already being made cleaner through licensing restrictions. From next year all new licenced taxis must be zero-emissions capable.

Unlike the Congestion Charge, which only applies for limited hours on weekdays, these charges will apply all the time. So trips into central London for the evening may cost you £12.50.

There is again a public consultation on the above which everyone who drives in London should respond to and it is available from the link below:

Air Quality Consultation:
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/airquality-consultation>

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU RESPOND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

In addition to the above the Mayor is considering expanding the ULEZ to nearly all of Greater London in respect of heavy diesel vehicles such as buses, coaches and lorries to be implemented in 2020. Also he proposes to consult on extending the ULEZ to all other vehicles including cars within the North/South Circular, to be implemented in 2021. So you could be paying £12.50 just to drive within that ring road, although a lot of the previous respondents to the last consultation suggested a lower charge was more suitable.

Mr Khan is calling on the Government to deliver a nationwide diesel vehicle scrappage scheme and the Government is apparently going to look at it. There is some concession to residents who live within the ULEZ and for disabled vehicle users who will have a "sunset" period until 2023.

Comment: some information required to make any intelligent comments on these proposals is not apparently available. For example what is the likely impact of these proposals on the level of air pollution within the zone or outside it? What is the cost/benefit justification? What is the cost of implementing this scheme and how much revenue and profit will TfL obtain from it as a result?

Continued on next page.



ULEZ (Cont.)

These questions are very important because the Mayor has a very strong financial interest in these proposals as the additional charges will no doubt raise much needed revenue for the Mayor and TfL whose budgets are currently under pressure.

It is most regrettable that this is yet another example of asking the public's views on a matter without giving them the full facts to enable them to make a reasoned judgement on the proposals.

The Editor has asked TfL to provide this information and will let you know if I receive it (they did not respond to an initial request so I have submitted an FOI Act request).

But having walked the streets of the City of London recently I certainly think something needs to be done about air pollution because my lungs were definitely affected and I have not suffered from asthma for many years.

The problem was that all the roads such as Cannon Street, Eastcheap, Bishopsgate and around Aldgate were just gridlocked in the middle of the day with stationary traffic which consisted mainly of buses, LGVs, taxis and private hire vehicles. The air quality problem was also probably exacerbated by the start of the tree pollen season and the warm and stagnant air (little wind and no rain to clean the air).

But gridlocked traffic happens quite regularly now because of the impact of the Cycle Super-highways, road closures, removal of gyratories and other measures

promoted by the previous Mayor and local authorities over the last few years.

Vehicles may have been getting cleaner, only somewhat confounded by the Government's misconceived promotion of diesel vehicles so as to save CO2 emissions.

But if transport planners create gridlock then the inevitable will happen - air pollution will continue to get worse until only zero emission and expensive electric vehicles are allowed. We also need to tackle other sources of air pollution and the best way to do that is to stop the growth in the London population or even reduce it. But will the Mayor tackle that problem? I doubt it.

More on air pollution in the next article.

UK Air Pollution - The Facts

The BBC have published several articles recently on air pollution under the emotive headline "So I can breathe". But one by BBC Environment Analysis Roger Harrabin is actually quite accurate. It's title is "How bad is air pollution in the UK?" and his answer to that is "Air pollution is a major contributor to ill health in the UK, but it's hard to say exactly by how much".

He says that dirty air does not kill people directly but reports that it is estimated that it shortens the lives of around 40,000 people every year - mainly those

who already have heart or lung problems. How accurate are the media headlines about this he asks? He says that claiming that pollution kills 40,000 people is just wrong and it's also wrong to say pollution is rising. The 40,000 is also a statistical construct with a lot of uncertainty involved - it might be a sixth as big - or twice as big. And the "shortening" may only be a few days.

Air pollution in the UK has been dropping, but in London recommended NOx levels are still regularly breached and levels at the roadside have barely dropped at all. He says diesel cars are portrayed as the main villains and the biggest proportion of pollution does come from

road transport in general. But if you look at Greater London, private diesel cars only contribute 11% of NOx. Lorries produce a similar amount and in central London only 5% of NOx comes from diesel cars while 38% comes from gas used in heating homes and offices.

Mr Harrabin does suggest some solutions to the problem which you can read in the full article which is given on the link below

It's well worth reading as it debunks many of the myths spread by the Mayor of London, TfL and others.

Continued on next page.

BBC Harrabin Article:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-38979754>



Air Pollution (Cont.)

If the Mayor persists in attacking diesel cars and other smaller vehicles while doing little about air pollution from heating, industrial processes and other big transport emitters such as HGVs, LGVs, buses and planes then he will be wasting our money.

Postscript: Another well reasoned commentary on this issue was an interview with Professor Tony Frew, a respiratory expert on TalkRadio and it is definitely worth listening to if you want the facts about air pollution and its sources:

Tony Frew Interview:

<http://talkradio.co.uk/news/sadiq-khans-40000-pollution-deaths-year-zombie-statistic-and-isnt-true-says-respiratory>

Diesel petition:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/182686>

This petition is already doing very well and is now nearing 20,000 signatures.

Please would you support this petition by signing it, supporting it, and also share it as widely as possible requesting your contacts to do likewise.

Speed Humps to Slow Cyclists

There is a problem in Hyde Park where cyclists have been clocked travelling at more than 30 mph even though there is a posted speed limit of 10 mph. The paths in Hyde Park are shared by pedestrians and cyclists and the

Julia Hartley-Brewer who conducted that interview also attacked the promotion of the 40,000 deaths per year in the UK from air pollution in an article in the Daily Telegraph on the 7th April. She said "This 40,000 figure is alarmingly high. It is also alarmingly wrong".

Roger Lawson

Diesel Vehicle Petition

Please would you consider signing the petition in support of clean diesel cars given below.

Royal Parks staff said they observed several near misses when they monitored the paths. Pedestrians need to walk across the cycle path at some point but cyclists do not slow down and frequently verbally harass pedestrians who get in their way.

So the Royal Parks plan to install rows of granite setts as "rumble strips" to slow cyclists at a cost of £215,000. Needless to say the always vociferous cycling lobby are objecting with the London Cycling Campaign calling the plan "outrageous".

It is surely regrettable that this is another example of cyclists ignoring regulations and taking the attitude that everyone else should get out of their way.

Modern diesel cars are very clean indeed and manufacturers have been encouraged to invest in clean diesel technology in the rush to minimise CO2 emissions.

The attacks on diesel cars are particularly aggressive in London while ignoring the fact that they are so much cleaner than they used to be and that most of the worst pollution from diesel vehicles in London comes from HGVs, LGVs, buses and taxis.

In addition they ignore the emissions from many other sources such as home and office heating, industrial processes, etc.



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 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.

Thames Crossings - One Closer But Another In Doubt

The Department for Transport (DfT) have announced their preferred route for a new Lower Thames Crossing to relieve congestion on the Eastern side of the M25. Other options have been discarded and the chosen route is leaving the M25 at North Ockendon, via Orsett and Tilbury, a tunnel under the Thames and linking to the A2 near Shorne (the start of the M2).

This route will mean that traffic from the Channel Ports will be able to avoid the Dartford Crossing area altogether.

Money will also be spent on widening the A13 and on improving roads around the Dartford Crossing.

No timescale for delivery has been given and it might take as long as ten years, assuming the Government can actually find the money to build it.

As expected, not everyone is happy with the chosen route citing more air pollution, take up of green landscape and the impact on local communities. But it was always going to be a difficult choice when some action surely needed to be taken to cope with the projected extra demand on the existing river crossings.

There were a large number of responses to the consultation on the route to which both the ABD (London) and ABD (Kent) responded - we supported option

"C" with some additional suggestions. You can see all the responses in a document on the web. There was wide support for option "C".

The **Thames Garden Bridge** in central London now looks even less likely to proceed even though £46 million has already been spent on it after a damning report commissioned by Major Sadiq Khan. Written by Labour MP Margaret Hodge it suggested the project should be scrapped. She suggested it would have difficulty raising the funds (projected cost now about £200 million), would not be able to cover its running costs and hence might require a Government bail-out.

Editor's Comment: as in my previous report on this project, I can see many better uses for the money than spending it on this "vanity" project.

Publicity for Traffic Management Proposals

The ABD has set up a petition on the government website demanding that traffic authorities should be required to give greater publicity to proposed traffic management measures, such as reduced speed limits, traffic calming schemes, waiting restrictions etc, so that all road users are made aware of them and have the opportunity to object. See the link below.

Please consider signing the petition and passing the details on to others who may wish to do so. All too often, drivers who are regular users of a road are suddenly confronted with a new traffic restriction they did not know was in the pipeline, such as a reduced speed limit. This is because many local authorities only carry out the bare minimum level of consultation that is legally required, so the people most affected do not have a chance to give their opinions. The ABD believes this needs to change, as it can lead to a vociferous minority of residents or anti-car activists having undue influence over the decision making process.

The ABD has, therefore, set up a petition on the Government website requiring traffic authorities to do more to ensure that ALL road users are made aware of proposed traffic restrictions.

This should include, as a minimum, signs of adequate size to be provided along affected sections of road, showing what type of restriction is proposed (e.g. 'Proposed 20mph Speed Limit'), with a telephone number and/or website address where further details can be obtained and objections can be made.

Such a proposal will ensure that those likely to be affected can respond.

Traffic Management Petition:
<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/186407>





20 MPH Makes Very Little Difference

The roll out of 20 mph zones in Manchester is being halted because the impact on traffic speeds has been negligible.

Will campaigning group 20sPlenty be advertising this latest evidence of how pointless they are? I suspect not.

But the really disgraceful aspect is that one million pounds has been spent for no benefit when it could actually have been spent on other measures such as road engineering or education to actually cut accidents, reduce injuries and save lives.

Or 20 MPH Makes Matters Worse

A report in Local Transport Today (LTT) covered the impact of the 20 mph blanket signed-only speed limit across the City of London that was introduced in 2014.

Indeed in some cases they have gone up. And the cut in pedestrian and cycling accidents is less than the drop across Manchester as a whole.

Some £1 million has been spent to date, but planned spending of another £700,000 has been halted. Traffic speeds in the implemented areas have only reduced on average by 0.7 mph.

A report to be considered by the Council recommends "that additional measures to create safer roads across the city should be considered, while work is undertaken to better understand the full benefits of creating further 20mph zones". No admission of failure there of course.

It noted that although KSIs fell in 2015, in 2016 they rose by 14%.

It seems that pedestrians are the main casualties that make up this statistic. Pedestrian inattention is the most common reported factor in City casualties it seems.

Some of the increase was attributed to the growth in employment in the City of London in recent years, which has grown by 14% between 2013 and 2015.

But the good news is that cyclist casualties have fallen even though cycling trips have risen considerably.

Comment: As the ABD predicted, the overall impact on traffic speeds and casualties from an expensive scheme has not been discernible.

To quote: "20mph zones on more than 1,000 roads and 138 schools have been introduced in Manchester and, since 2014, an average speed reduction of 0.7mph has been recorded where the lower speed limit is in effect. However, analysis shows that so far, the amount of accidents experienced in 20mph zones has not fallen as quickly as initially hoped."

Comments: an enormous amount of money has been spent to achieve no obvious benefit whatsoever. The speed reductions and accident change are not untypical of signed-only 20 mph schemes. Yet the ill informed continue to press for their introduction.



The changes that are apparent in the reported statistics may just as likely be due to changes in traffic conditions and road layouts.

Dartford Crossing Fines

It is reported that fines of up to £3 million per week are being issued to drivers using the Dartford Crossing. The "free-flow" system that was introduced has improved congestion but is resulting in enormous numbers of fines which now make up about a third of the income to the operators (at £53 million in fines in 2015/2016).

The ABD objected when this system was first proposed because all similar systems have the same defect.



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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

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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