

ABD London

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Editorial

It is that time of year when it’s good to look back on past events and general trends. In 2017 we are seeing the impact of the election of Sadiq Khan as London Mayor in 2016. With the London Plan, the Mayor’s Transport Strategy and his proposals for the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) which I cover extensively in this edition, you can see exactly what Londoner’s are going to suffer as a result of his election.

In essence that is more interference in your live, more dictation about the transport modes you chose to use, and he has even gone so far as to dictate your lifestyle because he is going to force you to be more healthy by making you walk and cycle.

Would anyone have voted for this if he had put it in his manifesto? I doubt it.

The Mayor’s Transport Strategy consultation even went so far as to say: “London’s streets should be for active travel and social interaction....”.

This is nonsense. Streets are built and maintained at great public expense to provide an efficient and cost effective transport system for people and goods.

If people need exercise, or social interaction, there are many other ways they can obtain that without taking up scarce road space.

The priority should be on providing a transport network in London that meets the business needs and preferences of the public. It should not be distorted to meet other objectives.

You can see that the ABD and its supporters have quite a battle on our hands to defeat this tide of irrational and insane policies.

One way you can assist is to join the Alliance of British Drivers as a Member if you have not already. The more Members we have, the better we can promote your interests. See the link below for more information.

Roger Lawson (Editor)



Membership Information:

<http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/membership.htm>

Quotes of the Month

“The Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) are London’s arterial roads. Their purpose—and the reason they are run by TfL rather than London’s boroughs—is to keep London and Londoner’s moving”.....Objections from Conservatives on the GLA on proposals to trial 20 mph limits on these roads.

“Is Khan trying to kill the private hire industry—or is he just incompetent”Gareth Bacon, London Assembly Member. See article on page 9.

“TfL’s pro-cyclist / anti-anything with an engine stance is now going beyond psychotic.”.....Roger Wood in letter to the Editor. See page10.



Mayor's Transport Strategy – Campaign Report

The formal consultation on the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) is over but responses to our campaign against it are still coming in. We are also continuing to deliver leaflets to London residents to raise awareness of the Mayor's plans and gain more supporters. Thanks to all those who have submitted objections to TfL or the Mayor or have helped in other ways. Here is a summary of what has been achieved. More information on our campaign is present here from the link below.

The campaign hasn't been an easy one. The public consultation on this very important issue was launched in the Summer months and with minimal publicity by Mayor Sadiq Khan. As a result, media coverage was low. In addition lots of information about the proposals was concealed and requests under the Freedom of Information Act frustrated. In summary, a defective public consultation both legally and morally.

Myself and Brian Mooney put in a lot of work on social media, getting circulation on email lists and delivering tens of thousands of leaflets (with the assistance of other volunteers) so as to raise awareness of what Sadiq Khan is planning – effectively an attack on all private transport modes using the “healthy streets” concept and environmental scare stories in support.

One way or another, we reached into all 32 London boroughs, despite working against the clock. We got positive responses in support from all parts of London and all sections of the community. You can read some of the comments received on a link from the web page given below.

We will wait to see the results of the public consultation in the next few weeks and let you know what is published. But the Mayor may well ignore public criticisms of his plans (he can do that as he is effectively a dictator in London), so we will have to continue to fight on the individual proposals as they are progressed.

For example, allowing local boroughs to bring forward congestion charging plans may provide further battlegrounds and there will be Borough elections in May next year where you can express your opinions.



MTS Campaign Support Site:

<http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/against-mts.htm>

The Mayor has admitted that he is in discussion with unnamed boroughs to bring forward congestion charging plans.

This will not just create problems in an individual borough because to avoid being charged traffic will divert into neighbouring boroughs and create pressure for charging in that borough too. This disastrous domino effect has already been shown with CPZs. A similar pattern could occur if boroughs are forced to remove parking spaces.

It is important to communicate your views on the Mayor's Transport Strategy to your local borough councillors, London Assembly Members and even your local Members of Parliament over the next few months.

If you don't know who they are, contact the ABD for assistance. But we do need more financial support if we are to continue this fight (the campaign has already cost the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) several thousands of pounds and we could have done a lot more with more resources.

Please DO MAKE A DONATION USING THE LINK BELOW:

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.
TO PUT UP A GOOD FIGHT
WE NEED BETTER FINANCIAL
SUPPORT AS WELL AS
ENTHUSIASTIC VOLUNTEERS!

Roger Lawson

DISABLED DRIVERS

One group of people who have suddenly realised that the Mayor's Transport Strategy and his London Plan (see later) are going to make life very difficult for them is disabled drivers and their carers. Motoring costs will go up, and parking will be severely restricted.

There are 1.2 million disabled people living in London so you can see that enormous numbers of people will be potentially affected.

A letter received on this subject is on the next page, but there were many others.

MTS Campaign Donation Page:

<http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/donate.htm>

The Disabled and the MTS

It has been remarkable that a large number of the responses to the ABD's campaign against the Mayor's Transport Strategy came from disabled people, or those caring for them. Below is one example of a letter sent to the Mayor on this topic.

Subject: objection to tyrannical taxes

Dear Mr Khan,

I wish to object to your Stalinist policies intended to impose even more taxation on already monumentally taxed motorists driving in London. Can I remind you that in this country it is not yet a criminal offence to be a motorist, and your treatment of them as virtual criminals is a scandal.

Do their interests not count? Or are they just tax-fodder?

There is a fundamental democratic principle which seems to have escaped you - 'No taxation without representation'. It is the principle on which Americans parted company from Britain. You certainly don't represent me, a London taxpayer, and I suspect there are many others who would say the same.

If I'm wrong, Mr Khan, challenge me – though I doubt you will consider a mere taxpayer worthy of an answer. I know what I expect from the London Soviet, but I'm quite prepared to admit I'm wrong if you can demonstrate that you are a democrat. If you aren't a totalitarian, Mr Khan, then come and talk to me – and millions like me in London who are sick of Soviet government.

My wife is disabled and moving around for us has become a nightmare in London. Successive ideologically obsessed, national and London Mayoral governments have ramped up the difficulties of driving in London and have imposed punitive measures on anyone who has the audacity not to walk or ride a bike or travel on the dysfunctional public transport system.

Do you, Mr Khan, intend to make life even more difficult for disabled people like my wife, as well as for millions of able-bodied people whose lives are not so cushioned as yours? How would that look on the election posters?

Soviet style dictats which sneer at democracy are imposed without regard for those whom governments are supposed to serve. Public opinion is swept aside in a cynical, Stalinist, totalitarian, environmental policy, in

I've thrown down the gauntlet and all that remains is to see whether you have the honour, the sense of democratic obligation and the justice to pick it up. I await your reply.

Yours sincerely, Peter Newsham

<END>

Panic on the Streets (ULEZ)

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced a consultation on the extension of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to within the North/South Circular in 2021.

Any vehicle that does not meet the required emission standard will be required to pay a charge of £12.50 for cars/vans.

Continued on next page.



the formulating of which hardly any rigorous scientific expertise has been used - merely the intolerant, doctrinal posturing and ignorant polemic of bullies.

You are supposed to represent ALL Londoners, not merely your tiny political clique and your sycophantic fan-base in the East End. A majority of London taxpayers live outside your exclusive and introspective inner-city bubble.



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.

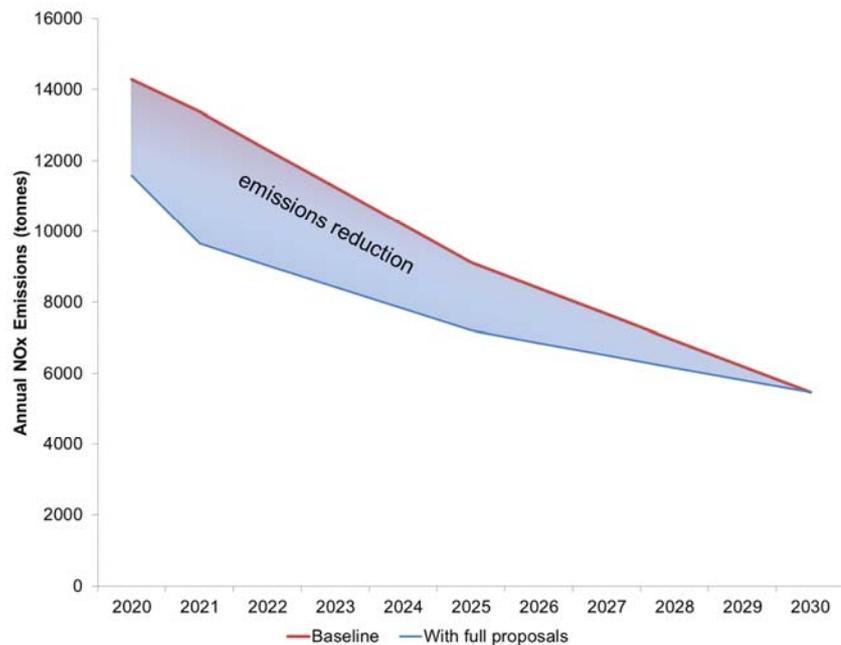
You can register to "follow" the blog so you get notified of any new articles as they appear.

You can also follow us on Twitter at @Drivers_London to pick up topical news as it appears.



Panic on the Streets (Cont.)

That's in addition to any central London Congestion Charge that might also apply. Cars and vans will need to meet the Euro 6 standard for diesels and Euro 4 standard for petrol vehicles. In addition motorcycles will be included in the above and the ULEZ tighter emission standards will apply to the whole of London from October 2020 for heavy vehicles (buses, coaches, lorries and other specialist vehicles). The announcement was launched with the following claims from Alex Williams of TfL: *"Right now, air pollution in London is a public health crisis.....filthy air contributes to thousands of early deaths each year in London, and impacts our health over the course of our lives, leading to decreased lung function in our children, and greater risk of dementia and stroke when we get older."*



This is scaremongering of the worst kind. The claim relating to deaths is an exaggeration and the claims about dementia and stroke are disputed by some authorities. In any case these are often based on epidemiological studies and results from such research may simply reflect the fact that those who live in poor

inner-city neighbourhoods lead unhealthy life styles.

Even the suggested reduction in air pollution from these new taxes are only expected to have any impact in the next few years and by 2030 the benefit will have disappeared anyway. See chart above produced by TfL.

So very high short-term costs are being imposed on many vehicle owners as they will need to change their cars/vans unnecessarily.

See a later article about claims that air pollution is causing an epidemic of asthma. It's basically nonsense.

London's air, and the vehicles which drive in London, have been getting cleaner and that will rapidly progress as vehicles are replaced without this expensive scheme (of which the Mayor is refusing to disclose the costs).

Where is the cost/benefit justification? There is none.

The Mayor claims that London's air is "lethal" but that is simply not true. Sadiq Khan is now not just scaring children and dragging them into his politicking, but now is attempting to disconcert the elderly who might be worried about the diseases of age. It's simply unprincipled. To say there is a "public health crisis" is just wrong. Londoners are living longer and there is no evidence that air pollution is shortening the lives of Londoners to any measurable extent.

Make sure you respond to the public consultation by using the link at the bottom of this page.

On-line responses are very easy to make, so do it now!

The ABD will be submitting a response of course but the more people who respond the better when it comes to these consultations.



ULEZ and LEZ Consultation:

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/environment/air-quality-consultation-phase-3b/?cid=airquality-consultation>

Does Air Pollution in London Cause Asthma?

One response received to the ABD's campaign against the Mayor's Transport Strategy was that we should not oppose it because it might stop their kids getting asthma. Children have been widely used in Sadiq Khan's publicity over his plans to reduce air pollution and there is a strong emphasis in the Transport Strategy on the potential environmental benefits. But unfortunately, a lot of the arguments put forward are simplistic and show little understanding of the causes and prevalence of asthma.

Like the Mayor, this writer has suffered from asthma, so I have a personal interest in this issue.

Note also that the ABD does not oppose cleaning up London's air because one does not need a scientist to tell you that air quality in central London, and in some outer London "hot spots", is sometimes appalling bad and not just makes walking or cycling unpleasant but probably exacerbates some medical conditions (including pre-existing asthma of course). The ABD's opposition to the Mayor's Transport Strategy is based on other factors and the irrational, ineffective and uneconomic approach to the environmental issues.

Let's cover some of the basics about asthma:

Does air pollution cause asthma (in children or others)?

As far back as 1995, a Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) looked at this issue and came to the conclusion that although air pollution may provoke asthma attacks or

aggravate existing chronic disease, the effect is generally small with other factors such as viruses, cigarette smoke, diet and house dust-mite droppings more important. They also noted that there had been a general increase in asthma in the last 30 years so it was now a very common disease.

Was this down to more urbanisation and are city dwellers more likely to suffer from it because of air pollution?

The answer is no. Indeed, a study in the Isle of Skye, where air pollution was believed to be minimal, showed as high a prevalence of asthma as anywhere else.

Very heavy air pollution may reduce lung function in children according to more recent studies, but it is not the cause of the asthma epidemic in the last 50 years.



Why are allergies, that drive asthma, more common? There have been many possible causes put forward for this. It seems to relate to the exposure of very young children, or their mothers, that condition the immune system to over-react.

For example, it has been argued that excessively clean houses are one cause. Smoking by mothers, or in houses, may have been another cause. Or a general increase in pollutants in the home. As we reported in the ABD London newsletter in June 2017, the concentration of some air pollutants can be five times higher indoors than outdoors.

This is due to gas stoves, food cooking, dog/cat hairs, dead skin, lint particles from tumble dryers, deodorant sprays, scented candles and air fresheners.

The desire to minimise heat loss from homes, and reduce drafts (and hence fresh air) along with smaller homes might have contributed to these problems. Obesity is also a factor in asthma risk and we all know that has been rising.

Are diesel vehicles a cause of worse air pollution and asthma? Diesel vehicles became popular for cars, and always have been for HGVs and buses, because of reduced fuel consumption and a desire to minimise carbon emissions. However that did not take account of the large emissions of NOX and particulates from such vehicles.

But removing all diesel vehicles would not likely have much impact on overall air pollution levels in London.

The reason is that much of the air pollution is from other sources such as home/office heating, industrial activities, or simply blown in from the countryside around.

Even with vehicles, much of the particulates come from tyre and brake wear so converting all vehicles to electric ones will only reduce the emissions, not eliminate them. And removing private cars will have minimal impact when taxis, PHVs, LGVs, and HGVs continue to increase in number and are much bigger sources, as are trains, planes, river traffic and other transport modes. To reduce air pollution needs a much more "holistic" approach rather than focussing on one or two perceived evils alone.

Continued in next page.



Air Pollution & Asthma (Cont.)

It seems very unlikely that attacks on diesel vehicles will have much impact on the causes or prevalence of asthma in any sensible timescale and the latest diesel vehicles are now very clean.

The above is a simplification of a very complex topic, but I hope it explains some of the key points. Does Mayor Sadiq Khan believe he is doing good by his aggressive environmental policies that will get us all walking and cycling (other than the disabled presumably)? Is he simply ignorant of the real issues?

Or is he promoting these policies for other reasons, such as the financial problems of Transport for London, his desire to raise more funds and his desire to be seen as “doing good” to help his re-election?

Lastly, it's worth mentioning that although asthma has become a lot more prevalent, the medical treatments for the disease are now quite effective in other than the worse cases. Certainly, much better than when I was a child.

The high prevalence of asthma in the UK has been given as one reason why the UK became a centre for the medical research into treatments. But it seems to be a worldwide phenomenon that asthma levels have increased.



My conclusion is that cleaning up London's air might make it a more pleasant place to live and work, but it won't have much impact on the prevalence of asthma.

Incidentally a great article on the scare-mongering associated with air pollution is present here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9qkpk8>

Roger Lawson

Mayor Pushes Ahead With ULEZ

London Mayor Sadiq Khan announced on the 3rd November that he is definitely going ahead with the introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in central London from 2019, i.e. he is bringing forward the original planned date based on the results of his last consultation.

This will cover any vehicle that enters the existing Congestion Charge zone and will operate seven days per week, 24 hours a day, unlike the Congestion Charge (a.k.a. tax). The additional charge will be £12.50 for cars, vans and motorbikes that do not meet defined emission standards, or £100 per day for lorries, buses and coaches.

Diesel cars that do not meet the Euro 6 standard, which means most of them that will be more than 4 years old in 2019, will need to pay the additional charge – making it cost as much as £22.50 to drive into central London. Petrol cars will only have to meet the Euro 4 standard so even older such vehicles may be OK. Go to this link at the foot of this page to check your vehicle.

The ULEZ will replace the “T-Charge” on older vehicles which came into force in October this year.

The Mayor is also introducing a “particulate matter standard” to the ULEZ standards bearing in mind recent concerns about that kind of air pollution. It is not clear how that will work as it suggests that vehicles that comply with the Euro standards might fail on other grounds.

Bearing in mind that the ULEZ may be extended across a wider area (for example to the North/South circular), it seems likely that not many London residents will be buying diesel cars in future as emissions standards tighten, and more will buy electric vehicles.

The consultation responses (over 18,000 in total) showed 72% of the general public support the principle of a ULEZ, with only 21% opposed.

But for those who drive within central London, 65% were opposed. Some 52% of drivers were also opposed to bringing forward the ULEZ to 2019.

The ABD was one of only three stakeholder groups who opposed the ULEZ.

Continued on next page.



Check your vehicle for ULEZ compliance:

<https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/check-your-vehicle?intcmp=32646>

Mayor Pushes Ahead With ULEZ (Cont.)

The Mayor also makes a pitch for a national vehicle scrappage scheme, a new Clean Air Act, changes to VED, and more money for City Hall in his press release.

Will the announced measures reduce air pollution? Probably although these are improving anyway as older vehicles are scrapped and replaced. But the main culprits as regards pollution were and are HGVs, LGVs, buses and taxis. Imposing such draconian standards on cars and even motorbikes 24x7 is not a cost-effective solution.

The fact that the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL) have failed to provide any cost/benefit justification, nor even any of the budget costs of the scheme in response to an FOI Act request just tells you one thing. This scheme is as much about making money for the Major's coffers as improving air pollution. This was also reflected in the consultation comments "written in" where 5% of respondents suggested it was a tax/revenue raising scheme for TfL.

But there were very few comments in support of extending the ULEZ boundary. Only 1% supported extending it to the North/South Circular. But the Mayor is now proposing to do that (see preceding article). This will impose a major financial burden on London residents.

The Mayor makes it plain that London needs to cope with the rapidly expanding population and business activity. The population of London might reach 10.5 million by 2041 he says (currently 8.8 million). That means a lot more houses have to be built (66,000 per annum he says) and support for more workplaces.

In addition it has major implications for transport infrastructure while at the same time he wants to clean up London's air. He wants to make London a "zero carbon" city by 2050, although no doubt he will be long gone by then.

As part of this he aims to reduce "car dependency" (an emotive and inaccurate phrase disparaging people who have made a rational or personal choice about how they travel when you don't see this said about those who rely on cycles for their daily travel needs).

Why has the population of London grown so rapidly in recent years and continues to do so? Page 12 of the Plan explains why. It says 40 per cent of Londoners were born outside the UK, and the city is now home to 1 million EU citizens, no doubt attracted by the vibrant London economy. This has put a major strain on housing, transport, social services and other infrastructure (incidentally an unbelievable 1.2 million Londoners are apparently "disabled").

This state of affairs has come about because of national policies on immigration with no effective policies to distribute that more widely across the country compounded no doubt by a desire by some politicians to improve their chances of being elected.

Specifically looking at transport, the Mayor's target is for 80% of all journeys to be made by

The London Plan

Sadiq Khan Plans Your Life

If you live in London, you should pay attention to the "London Plan" that Mayor Sadiq Khan has recently published. Indeed if you live in other large conurbations you might wish to review it also because the policies he is promoting might spread elsewhere.

What's the London Plan? It's a document that sets the "spatial development" strategy for London over the next few years and has legal implications for planning developments, housing construction, transport infrastructure, and many other aspects of our lives.



walking, cycling and public transport (that of course includes the 14% of Londoners who are disabled!). It's currently 64%. This is going to mean an aggressive set of policies to reduce car use – hence the ABD's campaign against the Mayor's Transport Strategy which supports the London Plan.

The Mayor highlights the health inequalities in London, with deprived areas of London having reduced life expectancies (as much as 15 years for men and 19 years for women) - surely an astonishing statistic. What is the reason for this?

Poor housing conditions are certainly one, but lack of daily activity is allegedly another so the Mayor wants us all to be walking and cycling.

Continued on next page.



The London Plan (Cont.)

The Mayor does have plans to improve public transport including proposals for Crossrail 2 and extension of the Bakerloo line but these proposals will do relatively little to soak up the increased demand, and there are no proposals of significance to improve the road network. Hence no doubt the need to encourage us all to walk or cycle.

The Mayor's plans to support the need for more housing include targets for every London borough (for example over 2,000 new homes every year in Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Greenwich, Hounslow, Newham, Southwark, and Tower Hamlets).

This includes high concentration developments in locations with good public transport access levels (PTALs), particularly inner London boroughs. Outer London boroughs might see a relaxation of planning regulations to allow more "in-fill" developments including building on back gardens as the Conservatives promptly complained about.

There will be more encouragement for smaller builders, more efficient building techniques and "proactive" intervention in London's land market (more "compulsory purchase" perhaps).

One aspect of transport infrastructure that the London Plan covers is that of parking provision for new housing, office or shop developments. It wants most developments to be "car free" (i.e. no parking provision),

particularly those with high PTAL levels. The details of what this means in practice are not clear, but it looks like the intention is to reduce parking provision substantially, thus resulting in more on-street parking and obstruction.

The Mayor concludes his near 500-page tome on the subject of the "Funding Gap". By this he means the gap between the public sector funding required to support London's growth (and his plans) and the money currently committed. In other words, he wants more money, including a bigger share of taxation collected from Londoners. For example, he repeats his call for control of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) which any right-thinking person should surely oppose. Yes the Mayor wants more money and more power. 

Comment: Unfortunately the establishment of directly elected Mayors such as Mr Khan has resulted in empire building of the worst kind. They are effectively dictators within their realms with no effective democratic constraints on their policies and negligible public accountability.

In summary, it is not clear that the building of lots of new homes (which of course will emit more pollutants, particularly during construction, more than offsetting any reduction from restraining car use), of a fairly low standard in dense conurbations, is going to improve the quality of life for Londoners. It is undoubtedly the case that more new homes are needed in London but building new homes without complementary improvements to the transport infrastructure, which

has consistently lagged behind the growth in London's population, does not make much sense.

As is already seen in the statistics, older London residents are moving out and being replaced by immigrants. Some readers might wish to consider doing the same given the outlook for the quality of life in London. Simply reacting to the population growth in London without trying to constrain it, or divert it elsewhere, is surely a mistake.

You can submit your comments on the London Plan to the public consultation by going to the link below. Please be sure to do so.



National, and London Infrastructure, Both Deplorable

Just to emphasise how bad the transport infrastructure is in this country, and particularly in London, here are some recent comments from Lord Adonis, Chairman of the National Infrastructure Commission (a think-tank set up by the Government to advise it).

He said traffic speeds in London had fallen dramatically over the past five years and in much of the City were lower than in 1914.

Continued on next page. 

London Plan Public Consultation:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan/comment-draft-london-plan>

Infrastructure (Cont.)

In addition, between 2012 and 2015, speeds on inner London roads fell by up to 9% (and that's before the full impact of the Cycle Superhighways).

Another example is that overcrowding on rail services in London was up by 45% between 2011 and 2016.

He especially pressed the need to address "perhaps the most serious infrastructure failure of all" and reach a firm decision on expanding Heathrow Airport – an issue yet to be resolved 13 years after the initial statement of policy for a third runway.

But immigration might be better termed "migration" as in the same edition of the Standard, there was a report that there are now over 410,000 Romanians and Bulgarians in the UK, and from this writer's experience a lot of them are driving Uber cabs in London.

Another interesting press report was on the undermining of public transport by services such as Uber and Lyft in the FT Magazine on 7/8/2017. It seems in some US cities, they are so cheap and convenient that bus services have difficulty competing. Some cities are actually using such services to provide "public" transport, while Lyft is offering a "shuttle" service in some locations (a fixed fare, fixed route trip in a shared vehicle). Now we know that TfL is facing a fall in bus usage. Is that because of rising competition from PHVs such as Uber? Is that why Uber is facing an attack on their licence?

He effectively suggested that without action the UK faced gridlock accompanied by worsening air quality and that "we've got to get real about tackling congestion and with it, air pollution....".

Comment: There are two things that are required to solve these problems: a) Government commitment and real action rather than more debate; b) sensible plans that might improve matters rather than political gestures that talk about making "London's streets places for active travel and social interaction...." which is the key foundation of Mayor Sadiq Khan's London Transport Strategy. That has little to do with improving the transport network for the efficient movement of goods and people which is what it should really be for.

Killing the Private Hire Industry?

Gareth Bacon, leader of the Conservatives in the London Assembly, has published a revealing article on the policies of Mayor Sadiq Khan under the headline "**Is Khan trying to kill the private hire industry – or is he just incompetent**".

It suggests that Khan is pursuing short term flashy policy gimmicks but he is hampered by his election promise to freeze public transport fares. This means he is "scrambling around to make savings and raise money". One victim of this is the private hire (minicab) industry where proposed increases in license fees are astronomical. This could force hundreds of mid-size PHV operators out of business.

Postscript: despite many of London's infrastructure problem's being caused by too many people in too small an area, compounded by a rapidly growing population, Mayor Sadiq Khan apparently wants to bring in even more people.

He wrote an opinion piece for the Evening Standard after the above was written that said not only that access from the EU should not be restricted after Brexit, but that "we also need to make it easier – not harder – to bring in talented people from outside Europe....." and he went on: "For us to prosper, we must continue to have barrier-free access to the European workforce". This apparently contradicts even Labour party policy on immigration. 

The costs for larger operators such as Uber will rise enormously – as much as 102,500 per cent the article suggests. That's assuming they even manage to retain their license which is under threat.

The recently published Mayor's Transport Strategy indicates he wants us all to walk, cycle or use public transport as it's more "healthy" than getting in a car or PHV. So his tactics are certainly consistent if nothing else. He not just wants you to stop owning and driving a car, he wants you to stop using private hire vehicles and taxis also!

But like all good politicians, he is not proposing a simple ban, but attacking them indirectly by raising their costs and getting tough on licensing conditions.

The full article is easily found on the internet and it's well worth reading.

Cycle Super-highways and Motorbikes

Here's a letter received from a resident of south-east London which is worth repeating:

Hi,

I'm thankful I'm retired now, and only have to visit London when I choose to. I used to commute by motorbike and that (for the time being) is still my preferred method of transport. I always perceived motorbikes as being virtually negligible in their contribution to congestion and/or pollution, and never thought of them as 'bothering' anyone.

It actually disgusts me that TfL see them very differently, with the same disdain they apply to any other type of motorised vehicle.

Their pro-cyclist / anti-everything with an engine stance is now going beyond 'psychotic' - their latest mailshot was about how they propose to redesign Lower Road / Jamaica Road (which aren't short of cycle lanes as they are) into yet another Cycling Superhighway, with a whole "boulevard" for them and - consequently - a whole lot LESS space for 'everybody else'.

Never mind the disruption or the cost: it's so easy to play easy with budgets when they're using other people's money to do it!

I actually do count myself lucky to be retired. Where I take myself now (and it usually involves my wallet) is my own choice, and there's coming a time soon when it won't be London.

The problem with TfL, unfortunately, is that they're not just wrecking the road network out of 'necessity'... they're actually taking a sneaky pleasure from doing it!"

Roger Wood

<ENDS>



New Thames River Crossing at Rotherhithe?

Transport for London (TfL) are proposing a new river crossing between Rotherhithe (Canada Water) and Canary Wharf. Before you get too excited, this would be for pedestrians and cyclists only. Their preferred option is a bridge, although they have also considered a tunnel (more expensive even if done as a submerged tube), or a ferry (much cheaper).

The bridge would cost as much as £300 million but they estimate as many as a million pedestrian trips and 340,000 cycling trips per year would use the crossing. But recovering the cost over ten years would require the users to pay over £20 per trip.

Needless to say, they are not being asked to pay for that as there would be no tolls or charges for use – at least they are not mentioned in the consultation document.

Comment: the only option that makes any financial sense in my view is a ferry which is much cheaper and more flexible to cope with demand variation and inaccurate forecasts of usage. The Rotherhithe Tunnel can be used by pedestrians and cyclists but demand there is minimal so even TfL's forecasts of usage seem optimistic to say the least.

Such large expenditure being considered for this project would surely be better spent on a proper road crossing (bridge/tunnel) further downstream which has been wanted for many years but gets continually delayed.

This could likely be another vanity project like Boris Johnson's Emirates Cable Car, or the recently cancelled "Garden Bridge".

The cable car has over a million users a year and covers its operating costs at least, but is mainly used by tourists. At a return trip cost of £9, you can see why. It's questionable whether it will ever recover its capital costs. Perhaps Mayor Sadiq Khan wants a bridge they can name after him as a legacy when he departs? There seems no good reason to build it otherwise.

But it's a good example of the financial profligacy to pander to the London electorate, particularly cyclists, beloved by the current Mayor. To respond to the public consultation, see the link below.

Rotherhithe Bridge Consultation:

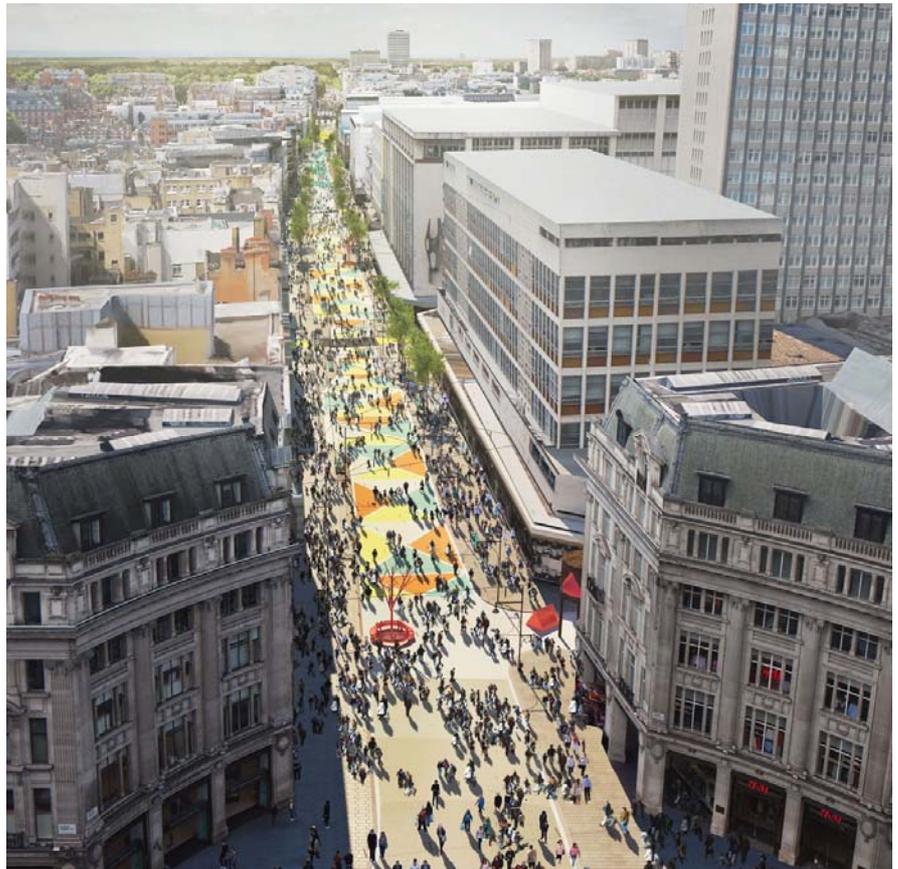
<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/rivercrossings/rotherhithe-canarywharf/?cid=r2cw-crossing>

Silvertown Tunnel

Meanwhile the proposed tunnel at Silvertown to relieve congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel has been delayed by six months by the Government to give it more time to consider the air quality impacts of the scheme.

No decision will now be made before the 10th May 2018. This is the second delay on a decision on this matter following the recommendation in favour by the Planning Inspectorate after a Public Inquiry.

Mayor Sadiq Khan is also still in favour of proceeding, as of course are most of the residents of South East and North East London.



Oxford Street to be Pedestrianised

Transport for London (TfL) have announced major changes to the western end of Oxford Street in central London. The road itself will be pedestrianised (artist's impression of how it might look above).

All the multiple bus routes that currently use the road, and which cause very poor air pollution will either be simply "withdrawn", or diverted down Wigmore Street and Henrietta Street in some cases. Even cyclists will be prohibited although one can imagine the problems that will arise in enforcing that restriction.

Use the link to the right for more more information.

A lot of the surrounding roads will also be affected, and routes north and south across Oxford Street limited. For example, the Harewood Place/Hollies Street route north from Hanover Square will be barred except to buses and taxis.

This will make it difficult for some vehicles which need to reach the car park under Cavendish Square from the South. This is a large car park used by many shoppers and visitors to the surrounding medical practices in the area around Harley Street.

Cavendish Square will be substantially improved though and as a result the entrance/exit to that car park needs to be reversed.

Note that this section of Oxford Street (west of Oxford Circus to Orchard Street, where Marks & Spencer is sited) is already restricted to buses and taxis.

Comment: The "bus jams" caused by queuing buses on Oxford Street, often quite empty, certainly needed tackling and there are frequently accidents caused by folks stepping in front of buses. Pedestrianising the street is surely a good concept although some bus passengers may be seriously inconvenienced and Wigmore Street may become congested.

Otherwise, the ABD is generally not in favour of restricting roads to certain types of vehicles, or of having time limited road closures as in these proposals.

Oxford Street Pedestrianisation Consultation:

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/oxford-street/?cid=oxford-street>

M25/A3 Wisley Junction

Anyone who regularly travels around the western side of the M25 will know that the A3 junction near Wisley has been a congestion hot spot for many years. Traffic joining the M25 from the A3, or leaving it to get on the A3, results in traffic jams. Likewise queues can arise on the A3, partly because the roundabout at the junction contains traffic lights. Highways England have now published their preferred proposals to improve the situation.

There was an informal public consultation which considered several options, but Highways England have revised the one which proposed simply a larger roundabout so as to try to meet

environmental concerns (RHS Wisley Gardens are very close by). That is the one they are proposing to put to a formal public consultation in early 2018. Prospective completion date might be as late as 2025.

Comment: This junction is well overdue for improvement so the reaction of most motorists is likely to be that the sooner this is implemented, the better. The proposed solution does look like a reasonable compromise although the details of the traffic modelling would have been helpful. Perhaps we will see that in due course. Will the suggested design actually cope with the likely additional traffic flows around the M25, particularly if Heathrow airport is expanded? The proposed solution may provide only temporary relief and there will be considerable disruption while it is constructed.

Bank Junction Closure – Make Sure You Object

I was in the City of London last week, and walked through the Bank Junction area, as I often do. It was very clear that the “experimental” closure of that junction to all traffic except buses and cyclists during the hours of 7.00 am to 7.00 pm had certainly reduced the volume of traffic.

But it was also obvious that some vehicle drivers were still not aware of the restriction (and the fines they will collect) as I reported back in May.

This junction is of course the central hub of the road network in the City.



So closing it was bound to disrupt the network and cause congestion elsewhere. For example, it has noticeably worsened traffic congestion on the alternative routes such as Cannon Street and Gracechurch Street/Bishopsgate. These were already badly congested before this experiment was implemented but now you often get stationary traffic for much of the day. And that includes buses resulting in appalling bad air pollution.

This closure also causes major problems for delivery drivers and taxi drivers. A representative of The NED Hotel has contacted me about their difficulties.

This is a new luxury hotel which recently opened on Poultry very close to the junction. The front entrance cannot even be reached by taxis without incurring a fine.

Although there is a rear entrance, visitors obviously have great difficulties persuading taxi drivers or other vehicles such as PHVs (minicabs) to go anywhere near the location. They probably would not have opened the hotel if they had known the roads around Bank would be closed.

Comment: A large proportion of the accidents and casualties, which this closure was aimed to reduce, are caused by pedestrians stepping into the road without looking.

It is undoubtedly the case that with rising numbers of pedestrians in this location, and with pavements that are too narrow, it would make sense to redesign this junction. In addition, the traffic congestion that existed before this scheme was introduced caused high air pollution.

A better solution would be to reduce the complexity of the junction so as to smooth traffic flows.

The City of London Corporation is looking at some longer-term options for this junction, although they are all very expensive. These include:

- Closure to motor vehicles on the North/South Axis (King William Street/Princes Street).
- Closure on the East/West Axis (Poultry, Queen Victoria St, Cornhill, Threadneedle Street)
- Closure on Cornhill and Poultry.

A reduction in available capacity, perhaps by use of a “shared space” scheme.

Continued on next page.



Bank Junction Closure (Cont.)

It is not clear why those roads are proposed for closure rather than say Victoria Street, Lombard Street and Threadneedle Street. But reducing the number of roads feeding into the junction is clearly a priority to simplify the junction and increase the pedestrian space. A shared space scheme may be a viable option and the ABD has no objections to such schemes so long as they are carefully and well designed, which sometimes they are not.

At present pedestrians in the area take little notice of formal crossing points so reflecting that in the road design may make sense.

In summary, we would support development of solutions that ensure that this junction remains a key and useable part of the road network. In other words, not just a “place” as the transport planners might desire. It is simply not acceptable to corrupt and damage the road network in the way currently happening.

There is a public consultation being undertaken on the current experimental scheme. You can find more information on the web and you can send your comments to:
bankonsafety@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Postscript: The City of London Corporation have published an initial report on the closure of Bank junction to most traffic, here are some more comments having read the report entitled “Update on Monitoring” by Gillian Howard:

From Figure 3 in the report it is obvious that although the number of infringers dropped from the initial level, it has now stabilised and is still running at around 4,000 per week, i.e. 800 per working day. This is obviously an unacceptable level and indicates that either the restriction is inadequately signed or that drivers simply do not expect to meet such a restriction.

One problem is that SatNav systems may not be updated for many months if not years and in the meantime, hundreds of thousands of people are likely to be issued with fines for contraventions every year. This is simply unacceptable.

As regards the initial collision data, this shows a reduction which it should do because of the reduction in traffic volumes.



But to try and interpret such data over such a short period of time after a change in the road layout would be inappropriate.

Any road safety expert knows that after a road layout change, the immediate result tends to be a reduction in accidents for a few months but that often the change disappears over time as drivers become familiar with the new layout and revert to old habits. That is why 3-year before and after data is normally used to identify any real impact.

One very unsatisfactory aspect of the reported data is that no information on traffic volumes through the junction is reported (before and after) so one could examine whether the change in accident figures is due solely to removing traffic or not.

The report also refers to meeting the “success criteria”. But these have clearly been chosen to ensure that the outcome is beneficial.

Nowhere in the criteria is the need to maintain a viable road network for all traffic on what is a key junction in the road network.

Nor is there any criteria to minimise the additional journey times imposed on all traffic. This is clearly a biased approach to judging the merits of this change to the road layout.

Roger Lawson

City Traffic Reduction

The City of London Corporation are developing a Transport Strategy as part of the Corpora-

tion’s “Local Implementation Plan” that all local councils in London have to prepare. The proposals from Steve Presland, Transportation and Public Realm Director, include “measures to reduce traffic” and “the reallocation of road space to increase priority and comfort for people on foot...”. There will be research to agree the optimal allocation of space between all travel modes and a review of the potential “for permanent or timed road closures to improve conditions for people walking, cycling and using public transport”. Yes we are likely to see more damage to the road network such as the one recently introduced at Bank. The move to reduce traffic is despite the fact that the level of business activity in the City is likely to increase over the next few years. So traffic congestion will no doubt get even worse.



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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.

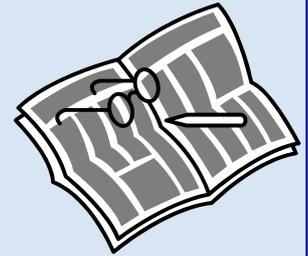
About the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers (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 ABD London region web site at www.freedomfordrivers.org

Contact and Publisher Information

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<https://abdondon.wordpress.com/> or you can follow us on Twitter here: https://twitter.com/Drivers_London



A.B.D. London Campaign Director and Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8295-0378). Use the ABD-London web site Contact Page here to contact: <http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Contact.htm>. 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). 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 anyone with an interest in transport matters. Our internet web address is: www.freedomfordrivers.org (or www.abd.org.uk for the national ABD web site). This newsletter is supplied in electronic form which can be displayed and printed via the free Adobe Acrobat Reader. Past copies of our newsletters can be obtained from the www.freedomfordrivers.org web site.

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