

ABD London News

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Editorial

It's summer and the potholes are at last being filled—at least some of them. I have suggested that a competition be run to see who can report the most potholes to my local council using "Fix My Street". Over a year the highest number of reports would win a cash prize that I would sponsor. This is on the basis that holes do tend to get filled if reported. But no promoters of this idea have come forward as yet so I may just have to try winning the prize myself.

Further amusement recently was the receipt of an anonymous letter on the subject of our campaign against the Mayor's Transport Strategy. It was more polite and intelligently written than some of the few complaints we have received about our leaflet (now nearing 100,000 delivered). The main complaints to date seem to be about the grammar and design of the leaflet rather than the content although they fail to be specific. It's odd is it not that they rarely have much to say about the content?

Of course the leaflet is designed to catch the eye, and generate a response so perhaps it is not surprising that there have been a few reactions from the green lobbyists, anti-car fanatics and cycling enthusiasts. But they are swamped by the positive responses (two of them are given below, and they are very typical of those received).

The anonymous letter I received threatened to mount a demonstration outside my home. I was somewhat disappointed when it failed to materialise. It's always good to have a conversation with ones opponents. There is always a chance that they might understand your point of view and actually consider the facts of the matter.

So if the anonymous correspondent is reading this, please get in touch.

Roger Lawson (Editor)



Quotes of the Month (some more responses to our MTS Campaign).

"As a Disabled pensioner these proposals are disgraceful. Also having a son who is a self employed gas engineer, how is he supposed to get to his customers? How do my children get to see me and take me out? How do I get my food shopping delivered? The sooner I die the better; these proposals are obviously for the fit. I hope those who propose them never never get old or disabled or need services at home like carers who are hard enough to get without all the extra charges".... A.S.

"I voted for Sadiq Khan in the election believing him to be honest and up front with us. If these plans become a reality I am hugely disappointed that he has chosen to pursue this in an under-hand way. I haven't read anything in the press about it" A.O



Cycle Superhighways Brought in Too Quickly?

London Transport Commissioner Mike Brown conceded at a recent LBC event that former London Mayor Boris Johnson pushed through implementation of the cycle superhighways too rapidly.

He said "I think it was ill-judged, it was too fast and ill thought through in the speed in which it was done which I'm afraid is the main downside of living in a democracy because people want to do things in their term". In other words, Boris wished to get some implemented before he departed for higher things and pushed the plans through too quickly.

Mike Brown did say that he supported the superhighways which he suggested had reduced accidents to cyclists and expenditure on cycle schemes is still rising.

What was wrong with the cycle superhighways? They have increased congestion substantially – for example on a key east/west route along Upper/Lower Thames Street and the Embankment. Indeed cyclists have to now breath air on one of the most heavily polluted roads in London because of the air pollution from slow moving traffic and the fact that many buses and HGV/LGVs use that road. The extra journey times were forecast but the cost/benefit and alternative routes were not properly considered.



Motorists are as a result deeply unhappy.

Other routes including some still being developed are causing opposition from road users because of the lack of thought in their design and the impact on traffic speed and congestion. Transport for London (TfL) still seem to prioritise the needs of cyclists over all other road users.



If more consideration had been given to the design of cycle superhighways, and their routing, all these problems could have been avoided.

The photographs illustrating this article were contributed by a reader. They show how in many cases the cycle superhighways are not occupied by cyclists

New cycle superhighways being planned include Tower Bridge to Greenwich (No.4), Kensington Olympia to Brentford (No. 9) and Swiss Cottage to the West End (No. 11). Numbers 1, 3, 5, 7 and 8 have already been completed and the East-West and North-South routes will also be finished this year.

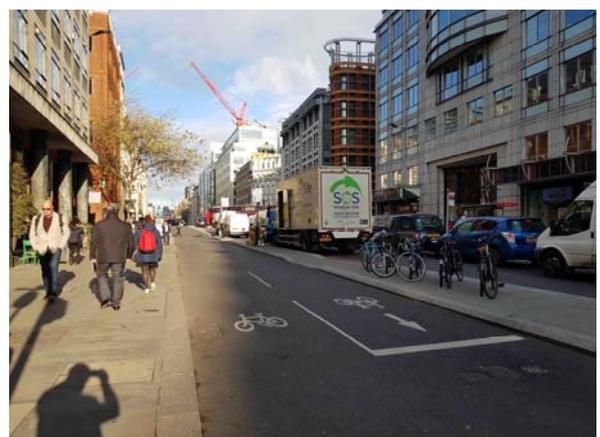


That's while spending enormous sums of money supporting cyclists when very little is otherwise done to improve the road network.

But cyclists are also unhappy because of the poor design of some aspects of the 4 Cycle Superhighways. For example where there are junctions with other roads or they run along main roads.

but the removal of road space has caused traffic congestion to other road users.

The photographs are of Blackfriars Bridge, Southwark and Faringdon Road (from top to bottom).



Speed Limits in London to be Reduced, with More Enforcement

Mayor Sadiq Khan has stated that speed limits on London's roads are to be reduced. In addition, there will be more "enforcement" of the limits.

The London Assembly Transport Committee published a report a few months ago calling on Transport for London (TfL) to review the speed limits on all of its roads in the capital. They believed this would encourage more walking and cycling.

In response to a letter from Conservative London Assembly member Steve O'Connell which raised concerns that the majority

of drivers ignore 20mph speed limits, the Mayor said: "Lowering speeds is fundamental to reducing road danger and Transport for London (TfL) is actively developing a strategy to increase the number of communities which will benefit from 20mph speed limits and speed reductions". The Mayor said he will be publishing an action plan this summer which will provide details on City Hall and TfL's approach and time-scales for implementing lower speeds, as well as what measures will be rolled out in order to enforce them and ensure compliance. The plans apparently included imposing 20-mph speed limits on TfL controlled roads, which are the main roads in London.

However GLA Conservatives have raised concerns over the speed limit proposals, saying: "The Transport for London road network or red routes are London's arterial roads.



Although they make up just five per cent of London's roads they contain approximately 30 per cent of London's traffic. Their purpose - and the reason that they are run by TfL rather than London's boroughs - is to keep London and Londoners moving."

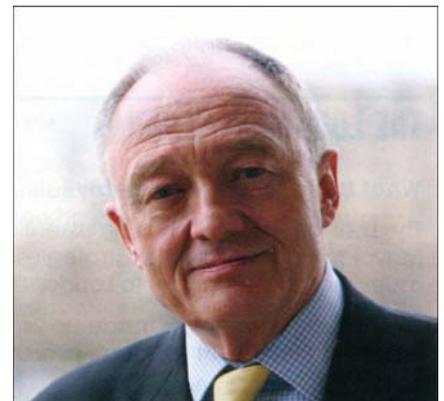
Comment: they are right to raise concerns. This looks like a plan to make London's road transport network even more sclerotic than it is at present.



The London Assembly seem to believe that simply reducing speed limits will cut road casualties when that is unlikely to be the case. The reason why speed limits, particularly 20-mph ones, are often ignored is because drivers see no purpose in them on some roads at some times of day. Drivers object to having their intelligence about what is or is not a safe speed at which to drive undermined by limits that apply regardless of traffic, the presence of pedestrians or cyclists, the weather and all the other factors that affect at which speed it is safe to drive. Imposing the lowest common denominator speed limit set by token gestures rather than a limit set in a scientific manner using the 85th percentile of free flowing traffic speed will not increase compliance or safety.

Ken Livingstone Quits

Former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone has resigned from the Labour party. That's probably before he was thrown out for his comments on Hitler. Readers should be reminded that the declared car-hating Livingstone was the catalyst for the destruction of London's road network and it has gone downhill ever since. From the London Congestion Charge (a.k.a. tax) imposed to reduce congestion which it has not done, to the creation of Transport for London as a body that promoted the wonders of public transport, cycling and walking to the prejudice of all private transport.



In reality TfL is an enormous and expensive bureaucracy that is now running a massive budget deficit. Mayor Sadiq Khan has simply taken up similar policies in his new Transport Strategy, for example with the ULEZ proposals which will impose enormous costs on Londoners for very little benefit.

Continued on next page.



Ken Quits (Cont.)

Like Livingstone he is a “populist” Mayor who panders to the electorate with promises to freeze London’s public transport fares, promises to fix air pollution, promises to fix our health problems by encouraging walking and cycling, and other very expensive policies that won’t work with a growing and ageing population in London. But as in the case of Livingstone there are signs that the public are becoming disenchanted with his regime as they see the results of his policies.

Editor: Incidentally I happened to walk past Sadiq Khan on the streets of London recently. I had not realised how short he is which is not obvious from his TV appearances.

Does Heidi Alexander have special expertise or knowledge of the transport sector which would qualify her for this position? A quick search of the internet reveals only that she expressed concern about access to Lewisham Station. Otherwise she is quoted as being “excited about her appointment” and that “I know just how important it is we ensure everyone has access to a high-quality and affordable public transport network with safe cycling routes across the capital”.

So it looks like more of the same policies we have endured in London in recent years. Not that Heidi looks like she does much cycling from her physical appearance. If she does not she might want to practice a bit because no doubt there will be calls for photo shoots of her cycling with the Mayor very soon.

He would make a good shoe-in for Rick Moranis in a remake of “Honey, I shrunk the kids” if you recall that popular film of the 1980s. To quote Mr Khan: “Although I’m 5ft 6 I’ve grown in relation to the ideas I’ve got and what I’m going to do”.

City Corporation Meetings

The City of London Corporation that covers the square mile in the business district is drawing up their Transport Strategy. They are holding several meetings on the 29th June and the 6th July to discuss the proposed “vision, aim and outcomes”. Anyone with an interest in the road network in the City may care to attend – it’s free. Search the internet for “City of London Transport Strategy” for more details.

Opposition to Oxford Street Changes

Proposals to pedestrianise most of Oxford Street in central London have been put forward— see our Dec 2017 newsletter.

But according to a report in the publication Transport Network, the scheme is in jeopardy because Westminster Council has objected. They report that residents in Marylebone, Fitzrovia and Mayfair raised concerns about the diversion of traffic, including bus routes, which were likely to cause traffic congestion in surrounding streets. Westminster council instructed staff to stop work on the proposals. Note that the ABD also said there would be problems with traffic congestion.

Heidi Alexander Appointed Deputy Mayor for Transport

Mayor Sadiq Khan has appointed Heidi Alexander, M.P., as Deputy Mayor for Transport. She takes over from Val Shawcross who has overseen major damage to London’s road network as a result of the Mayor’s policies.

Heidi Alexander will be resigning from her position in Parliament where she has acted as a representative for Lewisham East. A bye-election is therefore being held for a replacement. She has not announced the reason for her departure from Parliament except she was known to be opposed to Brexit and not apparently a Corbyn supporter.



Follow the Blog

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

<https://abdondon.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.

MTS Campaign Meeting Report

On Saturday the 28th April we held a meeting for supporters of the ABD's campaign against the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) in central London. I chose to drive to the venue as I was carrying quite a weight of equipment and papers, but it turned into a typical nightmare trip on London's roads. It ended up taking 2 hours to drive the 15 miles there. We were doing well until we hit a closure of Upper Thames Street and The Embankment with all traffic being diverted across Southwark Bridge south of the river – the exact opposite direction to where we wanted to go. So I turned round and aimed to take a route around to the North via City Road and the Angel, Islington. But that route was also closed by apparent crane work.

The increased population is also leading to higher air pollution (and not just from traffic). These of course result from past policies adopted by London Mayors. But one of his key problems is shortage of money with a massive budget deficit looming. This results from public transport fare freezes which he promised so as to get elected, increasing subsidies and general financial mismanagement.

I explained that the answer from the Mayor are policies that will extract more money from Londoners (and those who visit London from outside) and restrict private travel in the name of making the population healthier. There are a number of ways the Mayor can implement these policies, via the London boroughs and directly.

There was no advance notice or signs of these closures on two of the key routes in London. Even on a Saturday they are now very busy. What a dreadful way to run a transport network of a major world city!

I did eventually manage to get there in time to give my presentation, but one or two people didn't make it perhaps because of the traffic congestion. What follows is a brief summary of what was said at the meeting. The Powerpoint presentation slides are available if you need them.

After a brief explanation of the objectives and background of the Alliance of British Drivers I explained the key themes of the Mayor's Strategy. These are to turn streets into places for "active travel and social interaction", and to reduce "car dependency". The latter is of course an emotive phrase when nobody talks about

What alternatives could the Mayor have proposed? Obviously one of the key factors has been the growing population of London and he could have reduced that by encouraging redistribution of business activity and population as was done in the 1960s via New Towns, or by not promoting it as "more open" to immigration as he has done recently.

The implementation of cycle superhighways in the manner done, road space removal (road closures, removal of gyratories, etc) and other detail policies emanating from TfL have also contributed. I suggested that it was possible to improve the road network for cyclists and for road safety without such damaging impacts on the road network.

"cycle dependency" or "public transport dependency". Why should it be used to describe people's rational choice of transport mode? Such phrases are just part of the "spin" put on these policies and the graphic I showed taken from the Mayor's document demonstrates how unrealistic are the depictions of London in the future. Such graphics often ignore the needs for local transport deliveries of goods and services in London. In addition the Mayor has ignored the needs of the growing proportion of elderly and disabled people in London, many of whom have responded to our campaign as they are dependent on private cars or PHVs.

I talked about the Mayor's problems which the Strategy aims to counter. This includes a rapidly growing population in London which is putting a stress on public transport capacity.



There was a brief explanation of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and the misleading claims made about deaths from air pollution in London (as one member of the audience put it: "40,000 deaths a year in London", which shows how spurious statistics are being propagated).

There is no major health crisis, Londoners are living longer and air quality is improving! We then had a session from Howard Cox of FairFuelUK. He explained what his organisation has been doing to obtain 1.7 million supporters for a campaign that is well worth supporting. He has been good at obtaining both media and political support as a result.

Continued in next page.



MTS Meeting (Cont.)

He questioned why the Government have not looked at alternative ways of improving air quality and looked at other sources of emissions rather than just focusing on vehicle owners.

FairFuelUK are working with others to produce better scientific evidence on the real health impact of emissions and the cost of ignoring alternative solutions to reducing emissions. (Note: the ABD has published some information on this subject already and more is likely to come out soon).

I explained what the campaign against the MTS had been doing and what we will do going forward.

There was plenty of time for questions from the audience. Two particular subjects that arose was the status on Cycle Superhighway 11 (CS11) and Bank Junction closure in the City.

On the former, which was proposed to result in the closure of Regent's Park to vehicles, it seems that it may be being held up by objections from affected borough councils after all. CS11 is a good example of how local opposition can delay or thwart unreasonable proposals. On Bank this is an experimental scheme but will be subject to a review in a few months' time and I explained what representations the ABD had made on this topic.

The key as always if you want to have an impact on politicians is not just to moan in private or on social media, but to directly contact the political decision makers.

The audience was encouraged to support us in several ways to enable us to generate more supporters and more funds to fight the campaign.

Lastly there was a session on how to defeat the MTS. This can be done in local boroughs (for example I explained earlier how the ABD had defeated a proposed congestion charge in Greenwich promoted by Ken Livingstone over ten years ago), or perhaps by ensuring Sadiq Khan does not get re-elected as Mayor in two years' time.

As he is doing a good job of becoming unpopular for other reasons, just like Ken Livingstone at the end of his reign, perhaps the slogan should be similar to the popular one in that era – namely “anyone but Khan” for Mayor at the next election.

Those are the Mayor London, London Assembly Members, your local M.P, local Councillors, et al. It is also necessary to respond to relevant public consultations and get the vote out when necessary.

In my experience politicians do listen, particularly when it seems they might be at risk of losing an election by pursuing unpopular policies! Please bear that in mind. That was perhaps one of the most important points communicated at this event.

Roger Lawson

Can You Help?

If you are willing to help with this campaign, even if it just means delivering some leaflets in your local roads, please call 020-8295-0378.

It was noted that the ABD can give assistance with local campaigns in several ways – you just need to ask for it.

We covered how supporters can help the campaign. Recruiting more supporters is one key aspect over the next few months, ensure that people find out what is being done in their local boroughs (a member of the audience suggested that people ask if there are any proposals for a local congestion charge) and provide funds to fight the campaign. It is important to ensure that more London residents know what is being proposed because there is general ignorance on the subject – few people have actually read the Mayor's Transport Strategy document but it will dictate many aspects of travel and parking in London over the next few years.



Too Much Parking Says Mayor

A sign of things to come are the objections by TfL to parking provision proposed for a major new housing development in Charlton. That's even before the limitations proposed in the London Plan for minimal parking provision on new developments with high public transport access levels (PTALs) have legal effect because the London Plan is still under consideration by a planning inspector.

The proposed development is one for 771 residential units on a site near the River Thames not far from the Thames Barrier on a former industrial estate (the VIP Trading Estate on Anchor & Hope Lane).

Continued on next page.



Too Much Parking (Cont.)

The developers are proposing 210 parking spaces in a basement car park, i.e. 0.27 per residential unit so only a minority of residents would have a car parking space. But apparently, and based on a report in LTT, this is too many for TfL who suggest that car parking should be minimised in this location. This is one aspect of the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy which is to restrict parking provision so that Londoners are deterred from owning a car.

Even if the local council (the London Borough of Greenwich) approve the planning application it could still be blocked by Mayor Sadiq Khan.

How the Mayor Spends Your Money

An interesting report was recently published by the City of London Corporation on how they plan to spend a £1 million grant from the Mayor of London for a Low Emission Neighbourhood scheme (LEN). This was a figure (£990,000 to be exact) to be spent over three years and although some minor projects have been delivered it seems that the intended "transformational" scope is missing and that the money needs to be spent in the 2018-19 financial year or it will be lost.

As a result two schemes have been put forward: 1) for a Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) restriction on Moor Lane in the

Comment: Although Charlton Station is not far away and there are bus routes on the Woolwich Road, there are few other local facilities. Residents of this location would be cut off from easy access to a lot of south-east London and would probably end up commuting into central London for employment via a relatively slow (25/30 min) and already overcrowded train service. Some people do need vehicles for their employment as do some disabled people. The developers might also find that apartments without parking provision will be difficult to sell and hence they may pull out or delay the development. Charlton is not exactly a high-density city centre location so these objections to providing some parking provision seem unreasonable. One question that readers need to ask is this:

City; and 2) for a similar restriction on Beech Street. Beech Street runs east/west underneath the Barbican like a tunnel and is a particularly poor location for air quality as a result.

But it looks like only a Moor Lane ULEV scheme will be delivered in 2019 using the LEN funding. The air pollution benefit may be relatively low but it will enable the impact of such schemes to be measured, particularly as they affect taxi drivers who are some of the more common users of that road. It will also encourage taxi owners to upgrade to newer zero emission capable vehicles.

The Beech Street proposals will be phased but if found to be viable will ultimately be restricted to west-bound only ULEV vehicles. Funding for this will apparently come from later schemes and might be delivered in 2021.

Is this a form of gerrymandering? With no provision for parking most of London will become inhabited by those who do not own a vehicle (i.e. the poorer section of the community that cannot afford one). In effect the Mayor is ensuring that those who are likely to vote Labour (and for him) are likely to purchase the properties and become a part of his electorate, whereas the wealthier prospective buyer will look elsewhere – or simply give up trying to live in London. Only those who can qualify for "affordable" properties will be living in London the way things are going. Is this not as big a political scandal as the selling of council houses to likely Conservative voters in Westminster, circa 1990? As in that case, the alleged justification for this policy may be different to the underlying motive.

Comment: Moor Lane is a very minor part of the City road network and it would seem likely that air pollution there not just arises from vehicles on the street itself but is blown in from the surrounding area.

It may be a good location for an experimental ULEV scheme but it's a huge amount of money for a scheme that will probably have relatively little impact on air pollution. Beech Street would have a much bigger impact but would seriously affect traffic in the City as it is one of the key routes. No doubt that is the reason for deferring that scheme. But there seems to have been no consideration of the impact on the residents of the Barbican who have car parking provision in underground car parks and would be affected by the closure of Beech Street (partial or otherwise).



Silvertown Tunnel Gets Go-Ahead

The Government has given the go-ahead for the new Silvertown Tunnel in East London under the Thames. This will run slightly to the East of the existing Blackwall Tunnels which are one location of high traffic congestion every day. The slightest hiccup such as minor accidents or people running out of fuel in the existing tunnels or on the approach roads can create miles of traffic queues.

With the Secretary of State giving planning consent, and Mayor Sadiq Khan not apparently going to block it despite the many objectors to the scheme, it looks likely that construction will start next year with completion in 2023.



The route of the new tunnel is shown above. This is what the Mayor had to say: "I'm delighted that the green light has been given to progress with the Silvertown Tunnel. Since I became Mayor I've been determined to ensure the Silvertown Tunnel doesn't have a

detrimental impact on our environment. That's why the new plans have such a focus on cleaner transport, with only buses with the highest emission standard using the tunnel, and substantial investment in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure."



A toll will be introduced on both the new tunnel and the old tunnels to help pay for the scheme. Although there were objections on air pollution grounds, it is not expected to make matters worse in that regard and the smoother traffic flows will mean substantial benefits. That's apart from the economic benefits of reducing the wasted time of people stuck in traffic jams and the improved public transport provision (the new tunnel will be large enough to accommodate double-decker buses).

Editor's Comment: On behalf of the ABD I have submitted a number of supportive representations for this scheme over the last few years.

For residents of South-East and North-East London this will prove to be a major improvement to the road network which is long overdue. Let us hope there are no further delays and that schemes for other Thames crossings are also progressed.

Follow us on Twitter

To get the latest news and comment on traffic and transport issues in London, you can follow us on Twitter.

Our Twitter handle is **@Drivers_London**

Any new ABD London blog posts are notified by Twitter and you can of course respond with your own comments.

Smart Motorways Not So Smart

Anyone who drives around the M25 will have noticed that the speed limits set on the overhead gantries appear to bear no relation to the traffic volumes. Speeds are often set at 60, 50 or even 40 for no obvious reason. Other "Smart Motorways" across the country show the same problem, and the result has been a large increase in the number of people fined (or diverted to speed awareness courses) for exceeding the set speed limit. The number of infringements doubled last year according to the Times. *Continued on next page.*



Smart Motorways (Cont.)

The justification for smart motorways was that they can reduce congestion by smoothing the traffic flows and help to maintain safety. The speed limits are set partly by automated systems that measure the speed of traffic, but apparently they are also set “pre-emptively” by staff where known congestion is likely to occur at busy times.

But as traffic volumes can be unpredictable this sometimes results in lower speeds being set than is appropriate – you can frequently see this around the western side of the M25 near

London airport and on the eastern side near the Dartford Crossing. In addition it is known that the odd particularly slow moving vehicle can result in the speed limit being reduced by the automated system. In other words, the “smart” system is not at all intelligent. However Highways England is now undertaking a comprehensive review of variable speed limits on motorways. Surely it would be better to simply have an advisory system to tell drivers that there was congestion ahead so that they can slow down and avoid the “stop/start” problem that reduces traffic flows?

At present you have a dumb system instructing intelligent humans (which they mostly are) with the

result of needlessly slower traffic speeds and drivers being caught out by unexpected changes in the limits or signs they may not have seen or noticed.

Urban Vehicle Emissions

Who is responsible for excessive urban vehicle emissions? Is it the vehicle manufacturers, or people buying cars and vans without thinking? The ABD has recently issued a press release on this topic which lays the blame firmly on Government. See link below. In London that means the Mayor of London supported by TfL, plus the local London boroughs.

Press Release on Vehicle Emissions:

<http://www.abd.org.uk/government-entirely-responsible-for-urban-vehicle-emissions-issues>



In summary vehicle emissions have improved enormously in the last few years, but those improvements have been defeated by unwise policies for tackling traffic congestion. Traffic speeds have slowed, which increases pollution. The ABD suggests in our press release how pollution could be tackled with more sensible policies.

London Airport Expansion

It seems that the Government has decided to try and push ahead with a third runway at London Heathrow airport. It is likely to be voted upon in Parliament in the next few weeks which will provide some distraction from the Brexit debates. The plan is to double the airport's capacity to cope with rising passenger and freight demand.

However Chris Grayling, Transport Secretary, said it would only go ahead if the UK's air quality obligations could be met.

Apart from the hundreds of people whose homes will be demolished, there are many objectors to these plans from west London politicians and from others such as Boris Johnson and Zac Goldsmith. Residents of many areas of London are strongly opposed because of the increased noise and air pollution that are likely to result. Tory MPs have been promised a free vote on the issue, and it also seems unlikely that the Labour party will support it without reservations.

One major problem with this choice for airport expansion is that the new runway will be sited so that it crosses the existing M25. So that will have to be put in a tunnel.



The increased road traffic going to and from the airport combined with the emissions from aircraft will make the area surrounding Heathrow one of the worse pollution hot spots in London – indeed it already is. So how will that be fixed? Perhaps by a local “congestion charge” no doubt.

If you wish to join the opposition to Heathrow expansion (as this writer did many years ago), why not support Hacan (logo above).

Continued on next page.



London Airport (Cont.)

Hacan have long opposed the noise from the airport. See <http://hacan.org.uk/> where you can read more information on this issue.

It seems very odd to me that airport expansion has to be concentrated in the heavily populated south-east of the country. The unbelievable figure of 30% of the UK's exports currently go through Heathrow. It's the London-centric mentality of politicians and planners yet again. This will rise further if a third runway is built. No other nation has such a focus for centralising transport to such an extent in an already overcrowded part of the country so far as transport facilities are concerned.

The latest detail data on that indicated 800 drivers per day were infringing with the result that they will get a £130 penalty fine (reduced to £65 if they pay promptly). That's equivalent to £15 million per year in total.

We also suggested that the road junction be redesigned to improve safety at the junction and provide more pedestrian space. There were plans for a longer-term project to improve the junction but it looks like this has now been dropped as there is no mention of it.

What are the facts about this scheme? Firstly only 45% of respondents supported the scheme in the consultation without changes being made, i.e. **THERE WAS NO OVERALL SUPPORT.**

Freight and passenger traffic should be distributed across the country so that road traffic is minimised via the expansion of regional airports.

Roger Lawson

Bank Junction Closure

Bank junction in the City of London has been closed to all but cyclists and buses for more than a year on an "experimental" basis. But it is now likely to be made permanent. The closure was declared to be in the interests of road safety following the death of a cyclist a couple of years ago, and to reduce air pollution. The City of London Corporation have now issued a press release and report on the scheme.

Journey times on alternative routes to avoid Bank Junction have been substantially increased in some cases. For example it now takes an extra 1 to 2 minutes along Cannon Street, a relatively short road.

Taxi drivers are particularly concerned by their inclusion in the ban, and they have problems with delivering people to some locations – for example the new NED hotel just west of the junction.

As regards the road safety benefits, obviously if roads are closed then accidents are reduced. But as the traffic simply diverts to other roads, there may be no overall benefit. In addition there is always a temporary improvement in accident figures after road engineering work which is why a three year before and three year after analysis is



In summary, Corporation staff claim it has been a great success with casualties reducing by 52%, air pollution reducing and bus journey times improving. They also claim no major impact on surrounding roads and that three quarters of people responding to a consultation supported it.

The ABD opposed the closure because this is a key hub in the City's road network, and because there were many people who were not aware of the closure and ignored the signs.



usually considered best practice by road safety engineers. But in this case the City Corporation have not waited for the full results.

I spoke briefly on the LBC Nick Ferrari show about this proposal and questioned why the whole of the City was not closed to traffic as that would obviously improve road safety even more. If you think that is a good idea, then you are ignoring the needs of certain road users (including bus users), and the need to deliver goods and services to offices and shops in the City.

The report mentioned above will now be considered by a number of City Corporation Committees. Let us hope that some members have the sense to object.

Roger Lawson

No Benefit From Speed Awareness Courses

As readers may know, the ABD has been running a campaign against police waivers and speed awareness courses for some time. The slush funds created by that means are what has been financing the growth in the number of speed cameras.

The Department for Transport (DfT) have, after a long delay, published the Ipsos-MORI report that they commissioned into the effectiveness of speed awareness courses. This is the key statement in the Executive Summary: *“this study did not find that participation in NSAC [National Speed Awareness Courses] had a statistically significant effect on the number or severity of injury collisions”*.

Otherwise they are just a way to bribe the police to look the other way when an offence is committed (a waiver of prosecution as they call it). That’s corruption and a perversion of justice!

Regrettably the invention by the police of education courses and the associated “waivers of prosecution” has resulted in the financing of ever greater numbers of speed cameras, with empires being built within the police and in commercial organisations that are financed by the cut they get out of the fees paid by course attendees.

In reality this diversion of resources from tackling real road safety issues has been detrimental to improving road safety in the UK.

In other words, as the Alliance of British Drivers has repeatedly said, this unethical and legally dubious diversion of drivers to speed awareness courses is primarily about generating money, not about road safety because there is no evidence of any real benefit. Indeed drivers who have attended such courses might be interested in another statement in the report: “the NSAC was not designed to reduce the incidence of collisions”. So what exactly is the objective one might ask as it appears not to be focussed on improving road safety?

Was the study too small to produce statistically significant results? Not exactly because the records of 2.2 million drivers, of whom 1.4 million had accepted a course offer, were studied over a period of 4 years. This data was linked to subsequent speed reoffending and involvement in collisions to produce the report’s conclusions.

Most drivers do not realise that attending a course actually helps to finance more cameras and hence more chance they will face a real prosecution in future for a trivial offence.

The ABD’s campaign against this illegality is documented on this web site which explains the history, the financial arrangements and the evidence of police profiteering:

<http://www.speed-awareness.org/>

There is a link to the Ipsos-MORI report from that web site (from the campaign blog article).

Roger Lawson



That’s a large sample. The only impact they found was that there was a minor reduction in reoffending after involvement in an NSAC, but that is surely hardly surprising because drivers might simply take more care about speeding after being caught for one offence because you cannot be offered a second NSAC within 3 years. Alternatively perhaps some drivers simply go out and purchase a device or software that warns them about cameras.

The report argues that an even bigger study might prove there is some benefit but the proponents of such courses are surely clutching at straws if they think that expense is worthwhile. Regardless we suggest speed awareness courses should cease to be a money-making industry for ex-police and road safety officers and should only be offered to people who are actually convicted of speeding offences.



London Environment Strategy

Mayor Sadiq Khan has published his London Environment Strategy. There will be report on it on our blog and in our next edition— at 450 pages it’s not exactly a quick read.

But the Executive Summary alone points out that “in some areas the city’s electricity infrastructure is approaching full capacity”. Is that why he does not even like electric cars? Water demand is also set to outstrip supply by 2020. Clearly too much population is the problem, but that it not mentioned.



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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 (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



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