

ABD London News

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

In this Edition

- 20 Mph Speed Limits on Major Roads
- 30 Mph Limit on A40
- No Benefit From 20 Mph Speed Limits
- How to Travel Safely
- Degrading the Road Network in the City
- Bus Jam Near Bank
- Changes to Congestion Charge
- The Cost of Khan
- London Airport Court Case
- £50 to Drive to Westminster, and Cycle Superhighway Challenge
- Environment Strategy Misses the Point
- Mayor Pushes Ahead with ULEZ Expansion
- Do Low Levels of Air Pollution Damage Your Heart?
- Stopping the School Run by Closing Roads
- Mayor's Transport Strategy Letters

See the last page for publisher and contact information.

Editorial

Both Mayor Sadiq Khan and the UK Government are getting entangled in legal challenges (to CS11 and Heathrow expansion) - see later articles in this edition.

If Sadiq Khan wonders why he is getting into legal battles it is because he is not listening to a major proportion of the population, or the people most affected by his proposals. Cyclists may support the changes in Regents Park but favouring their views alone and ignoring others is not what democracy is about. There needs to be a compromise that satisfies everyone and which does not change the status quo to the major disadvantage of one group versus another. It is of course the same reason why the Mayor is supporting a legal challenge over Heathrow airport – because the Government is not listening.

If the Mayor is getting objections to his Transport Strategy it is because it favours young, active people who live in central London and ignores large swathes of the capital's population.

When politicians stop listening, the law tends to be invoked. Nobody goes to law if they can avoid it because it is a very expensive and time-consuming process for even the simplest case (judicial reviews are potentially simple but rarely are in practice).

On the subject of “not listening”, I requested a meeting with the new Deputy Mayor for Transport Heidi Alexander, but she has refused it. That's another example of how democracy fails to work in London.

Roger Lawson (Editor)



Quotes of the Month

“In terms of accident and injury data, the impact of the pilot schemes upon road safety is projected to be neutral....”.....Stuart Jarvis, Hampshire County Council on their wide area 20 mph schemes. See article on page 3.

“To suggest that a fuel duty level dictates how many vehicles are on our roads is, quite frankly, ludicrous. It is the level of economic activity that drives traffic levels....”..... Chris Snelling of the Freight Transport Association commenting on a road pricing report.

“This policy falls at the first hurdle, as it would barely reduce congestion. The mayor of London's own figures show that private hire vehicles in the Congestion Charge zone would fall by a meagre one per cent. Talk of congestion and pollution is just a smokescreen. The mayor needs money, he needs it quickly, and he doesn't care who he fleeces to get it.”.....Gareth Bacon, London Assembly Member on the Mayor's proposals to include PHVs in the Congestion Charge. See page 7.



20 Mph Speed Limits on Major London Roads

As forecast in our last edition, London Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced measures to improve road safety in London including a 20-mph speed limit on all major roads within the Congestion Charge zone. That will include such major arteries as the Embankment and Upper/Lower Thames Street. In addition he will be encouraging local London boroughs to introduce the same limit on TfL controlled roads in 32 town centres.

He is also proposing to improve 73 junctions which have been identified as those with the worse road safety record. These proposals are part of the Mayor's "Vision Zero" policy which attempts to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on the roads.

For example, outside rush hour times traffic moves much faster than 20 mph on many parts of the TfL road network (the "red routes"). This just looks like another attempt by the Mayor to remove all vehicles from the streets of London so as to achieve his vision of almost no private vehicle use (including cars, LGVs, taxis and PHVs) as spelled out in his Mayor's Transport Strategy.

The only sensible part of his proposal is to improve junctions where there is a known poor accident record. Otherwise this latest move to slow traffic in London is another nail in the coffin of an efficient road transport network for our capital city.

Comment: ABD Campaign Director Roger Lawson had these comments on the proposals:

The Mayor trots out those old misleading claims that reducing speed limits will remove almost all fatal and serious accidents. This is simply not borne out by the facts.

For example, the City of London Corporation that covers the square mile introduced a blanket 20-mph speed limit in 2014. It had negligible impact on overall casualty figures, minor injuries actually increased and there were 2 fatalities in that area in 2016 – see a report on the ABD London blog for more details. The results of signed-only 20 mph schemes have been very mixed and a Government report on the subject is still awaited.

Although the "Vision Zero" concept might make for good media coverage it does not

Sadiq Khan is surely the most incompetent London Mayor we have yet had.

Those who oppose this proposal should contact their Greater London Assembly Member or write to the Mayor himself. See the links at the foot of this page.

30 MPH Limit on the A40

The ABD has received a number of complaints about the temporary 30-mph speed limit imposed on the A40 between the Target Roundabout and the Greenford Flyover.

London Assembly Members:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/people/assembly>

Mayor of London:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/contact-us-form>



necessarily help if ill-informed road safety policies are introduced. The reduction in speed limits will slow traffic causing additional costs in increased journey times and the police will no doubt be vigorously enforcing these new limits.

Many people will say that with average London traffic speed now nearer 10 mph than 20 mph, it may not make much difference. But that is not always the case.



It was previously 40 mph and there seems to be no obvious reason for the new limit. This limit was put in place on the 15th December 2017 so has now been present for many months. *Continued on next page.*



30 MPH Limit on the A40 (Cont.)

The justification is apparently that some corrosion of the central safety barrier was noticed so there were “safety concerns”. But according to Transport for London (TfL), “until we have the funding in place and contractors are able to reschedule the works, we are still unable to provide you with a timetable when normal speeds will resume”. But they are “hopeful” that the works will be completed soon.

Those affected by this matter should consider complaining to TfL. A limit of 30-mph on this stretch of road is unnatural.

With speed cameras enforcing the 40 limit it seems unnecessary even if the barriers are not as good as they might be.

Adrian Stokes posted this comment on our blog on this subject:

I have travelled along this stretch once or twice. First, I can't see any reason why the speed limit will make the road more safe (except for people who wish to drive into the crash barriers to see how strong they are). Even so, what is the evidence that 40 mph is unsafe whereas 30 mph is safe??? Also, it was my understanding that the Highway Code specifies that, where a temporary limit is imposed, it must be in units of 20 mph so that 30 mph is not legal (I can't find the reference).

When they reduced the limit on the A406 towards the Chiswick Flyover due to roadworks, the speed limit was reduced from 40 mph to 20 mph!!!! This, of course, was totally and universally ignored. A final point (not that I hope it is relevant) is that such temporary speed limits can be in place no longer than 18 months).

I had a huge fight with the Department for Transport some years ago when they imposed a temporary 30 mph limit on the flyover at Fiveways Corner (M1 J2) due to “safety concerns”. Eventually, they conceded it was illegal and removed it.

Best wishes
Dr. Adrian V Stokes OBE

No Benefit From 20-MPH Speed Limits

Hampshire County Council have reported that there is no road safety benefit from signed-only 20-MPH speed limits. The county have installed such limits in 14 residential areas since 2012.

But this is what Stuart Jarvis of the Council said: “In terms of accident and injury data, the impact of the pilot schemes upon road safety is projected to be neutral and there is no evidence of enhanced road safety benefits compared with that observed for the entire road network maintained by the county council”.

The overall accident rates for the pilot schemes have actually risen, although this is not considered to be statistically significant. There have been marginal, or nil, reduction in traffic speeds in the scheme areas.

The residents in the scheme areas seemed happy though so it is not proposed to remove the existing 20-mph limits. But it is unlikely that any new such schemes will be installed. See the link at the foot of this page for the full council report.

Comment: The ABD has consistently argued that such schemes cannot be justified on any sensible cost/benefit basis and that the large amounts of money spent on them would be much better spent on other road safety programmes.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the latest Hampshire report does not mention the costs and links on the council's web site to previous reports and decisions that might have mentioned the costs seem to no longer work. I wonder why that is?

It is regrettable that Transport for London (TfL), and local borough councils such as Croydon, have consistently ignored the mounting evidence that wide-area signed-only 20-mph schemes are a waste of money. TfL continue to finance them with taxpayers' cash, and local borough councils in London are still implementing them.

Why do they continue to ignore the evidence?



Hampshire Council Report:

<http://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s19310/Review%20of%20Residential%2020mph%20Pilot%20-%20Report.pdf>

How to Travel Safely in London

London residents will no doubt be aware that the capital is suffering from a major crime wave at present. Robberies on the street (muggings) are now a major problem in London, typically by youths armed with knives while moped crime is at record levels. The latter is where mopeds are stolen and then used in street robberies. The police have been markedly ineffective in preventing such crimes or catching the criminals.

One recent case was that of comedian Michael McIntyre who was mugged for his £15,000 Rolex watch while doing the school run in north London. Even Home Secretary Sajid Javid had his phone stolen outside Euston station as he called a cab.

The Mayor published a "London Knife Crime Strategy" last year but the impact on such crime has not yet been apparent with fatal stabbings rising this year.

In the case of moped crime, the police do not seem to have been responding with new tactics to tackle it and are allegedly being hampered by rules that prevent them chasing such criminals. Police officers are reluctant to do so simply because if the criminal is injured they may be the subject of an inquiry. Their procedural rules need changing and they need new motorbike patrols using smaller, agile bikes.

One of the problems is that although there is now very extensive video coverage of London's streets, the criminals' faces are concealed by crash helmets and

Here are a few tips on how to avoid being mugged:

- Don't wear expensive watches. They don't tell the time any better than cheap watches.
- Avoid flashing expensive jewellery, watches or mobile phones on the streets, particularly at night.
- Do not use your mobile phone while walking or standing on the streets of London. Let all calls go to voicemail and respond later in a safe place. This will also avoid you being the victim of a road accident as in London many pedestrians do not see or hear vehicles and step out into the street without looking.
- When driving a car, always allow space in front of you to the next vehicle so you can drive around it and escape if attacked, and where there is more than one lane use the outside lane at

the mopeds are typically only recently stolen. Here's one suggestion that might help. Why not license the helmets used by riders as well as the mopeds or motorbikes. Licensing helmets might enable criminals using helmets to be traced, and unlicensed or stolen helmet users could be stopped and questioned or prosecuted. All helmets would have to display their licence number clearly. Is this a workable solution or not?

Postscript: the latter suggestion was criticised by some twitter respondents on the basis that it would not work as the police are unable to stop moped riders. Clearly if that is the case then it probably would not so it would have to be linked to a way of ensuring they could be, and to an active "stop and search" pro-

gramme. Regardless, the key point is that new tactics and new laws need to be considered to stop the crime wave.

traffic lights so that you cannot be boxed in. Even if a moped rider stops alongside you, remember that a car can push a moped and its rider out of the way.

Don't drive with your windows open in hot weather. It easy for criminals to reach in and steal things, attack you, or unlock the doors (which should of course be locked).

How can this crime wave be reduced, other than by people taking more precautions? Clearly the police numbers in London have been falling in recent years – now down to about 30,000. Mayor Sadiq Khan blames this on lack of funding, although per head of population funding of London's police is higher than in other parts of the UK. But others blame the reduction in "stop and search" activity due to pressure from the black community.



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.

Degrading the Road Network in the City of London

On the 29th June I attended a Transport Strategy Meeting hosted by the City of London Corporation. The Corporation covers the square mile and acts as one of the London boroughs in most respects. They are currently drawing up their 25-year Transport Strategy, are holding a number of consultation events and have done surveys.

The meeting was hosted by Bruce McVean, Strategic Transportation Group Manager, and there were less than a dozen people attending most of whom seemed very unlike the typical City office worker who dominate

the streets of London during the day, i.e. it was a very unrepresentative sample of those who might be affected by the proposed plans. The number of City residents attending also seemed minimal which is not surprising as there are so few of them.

Bruce mentioned that a new “Road Danger Reduction and Active Travel Plan” was out for consultation which was news to me. Bruce talked about the “draft outcomes” for the Transport Strategy as they have clearly already come to some conclusions. Some of the evidence already obtained suggests that 60% of people think that pedestrian space is too small a share of street space and that cycling is

under-prioritised. Bearing in mind that the vast majority of those surveyed or who have responded to the consultations will be pedestrians or cyclists this is perhaps not surprising. Should they not have asked a similar question of road users? Such as do you think roads are overcrowded and would you like more road space allocated to vehicles?



One can guess the answer they would have obtained. Everybody wants “more” without consideration of any rational or economic allocation.

Bear in mind that private cars are a vanishing species in the City. The roads are occupied mainly by buses, taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs – minicabs), and goods vehicles. In fact 93% of travel in the City is already by public transport, walking and cycling. The Mayor of London’s target is 80% so the City already exceeds that, but Bruce said the Mayor would like it to be 99%! If the Mayor gets his way there would be no private cars or cabs in the City at all!

Some 90% of on-street journeys in the City are already partly or completely walked – this reflects the reality of city commuting where several hundreds of thou-

sands of people arrive at the main-line stations and walk to their office.

I took the same conventional route to this meeting in the City of London Guildhall, where the meeting was held, from Cannon Street Station and walked through Bank junction. Still lots of vehicles seen to be ignoring the closure and no doubt collecting a fine as a result. Bruce suggested this closure was a major success when it does not provide any more space for pedestrians as a full redesign of the junction would have done. Neither does it fully solve the road safety problems at the junction as there are still likely to be conflicts between buses, cyclists and pedestrians. It looks like a proper solution is being kicked into the long grass while major damage to the road network is being implemented.

Bruce indicated that there will be 90,000 more workers in the City in the next few years which may be true and will certainly put an extra load on the streets. Pedestrian space at certain locations is already very crowded (e.g. at Bank). I asked whether the Corporation knew where cyclists were coming from and who they are.

It seems the Corporation do not know but are currently doing a study on that. I asked because I was sceptical whether cycling could help other than the minority of people coming from nearby boroughs and hence there may not be the growth in demand for cycling anticipated. A member of the audience suggested there might be a growth in “cargo cycles” as an alternative to LGVs.

Continued on next page.



City of London Road Network (Cont.)

The “draft outcomes” already determined indicate that “people walking will have their needs prioritised” and that there will be “motor traffic reduction”. The latter and the change to lower emission vehicles will reduce air pollution (which is still a problem in the City which I noticed on my short walk even though the streets I walked through actually had very few vehicles on them at 2.30 pm).

I just don’t understand why many people who responded to the survey felt that streets were “dominated by motor vehicles” – that’s not my experience on most City streets.

I consider the suggestion that cargo bikes could take over LGV deliveries as a very inefficient use of labour and is unlikely to be cost effective.

But you can see from this brief description of this event the way the winds are blowing. The City is following the Mayor’s Transport Strategy and other London boroughs are likely to follow suit. The road network will be degraded in the alleged interests of cyclists, pedestrians and environmental dogma.

As regards the “Road Danger Reduction...” Document, the objective is zero KSIs (“Vision Zero” as it is called). A laudable if perhaps impossible objective unless all vehicles are removed and we revert to a pre-industrial age (cargo bikes are one example, perhaps rickshaws already common in the West End and Sedan chairs will be next).

The proposal is to use street space “more fairly and effectively”, and that includes the suggestion that “transformational change will be accelerated through temporary interventions and trialling projects prior to making permanent changes”. In other words more closures like Bank junction and closures perhaps of some streets at lunchtime as indicated in the aforementioned document.

As I said to Bruce at the end of the meeting, the likely strategy seems to have been developed by deciding what they wanted to do and then doing a consultation based on asking the questions needed to get apparent support for it. The discussions at the previous Workshop event I attended do not seem to have been taken on board at all.

But at least the Corporation have got around to working with the Police on a “Causal Factors Programme”. That involves looking at the causes of collisions and where they take place which may enable dangerous behaviours and locations to be tackled.

This is similar to what other London boroughs have been doing for years. A statistical analysis approach of where, when and why accidents take place is one of the best approaches to improving road safety. That is of course different to the “driven by political gestures” approach such as the wide-area 20 mph scheme imposed on the whole of the City which has proved totally ineffective in reducing accidents. KSIs have not been falling in the City, not helped by increases in both pedestrian and cyclist numbers who are the main casualties.

It is certainly a priority to improve pedestrian space where it is currently congested (such as Bank) but that needs to be done without damaging the road network. I opposed temporary or timed closures because these create major difficulties for road users. Vehicle users should not suddenly find that their planned route is blocked and even Sat Nav devices get baffled by such timed closures.

Removing vehicles altogether from the City is also not a viable suggestion. There is still a need for buses, construction traffic, goods deliveries and service operators’ vehicles. Even private cars and taxis provide a valuable service to a few people (and they are already very few – reducing them further won’t make much difference).



But one suggestion is to “research opportunities for timed closures to certain classes of traffic” which would be a retrograde step.

Behavioural change is one approach being suggested. This arises from such problems as pedestrians stepping into the street without looking or under the influence of alcohol, and pedal cyclists taking unnecessary risks in their hurry to progress.

The latter will be targeted by a “City Etiquette” campaign so that they take more notice of pedestrians. Education of all road users is one of the main themes, and people opening vehicle doors without looking is another problem that may be amenable to education.

Continued on next page.



City of London Road Network (Cont.)

In summary, there are some useful ideas on the document but it's not likely to make major inroads into the road safety statistics unless more money is spent on road engineering. It's not always an easy task to reconfigure roads in the City – Cheapside is a good example of what can be achieved. But schemes like Bank junction are surely ones to avoid.

Roger Lawson

Postscript on Bank Junction

A final decision on making the Bank junction closure permanent has been postponed to a full meeting of the Corporation on the 13th September but the Planning and Transportation Committee strongly support it.

There is no way it can be changed to even allow taxis through now.

The London Evening Standard reported that the RAC claim over £10 million has been paid in fines by motorists so far based on an average of 750 tickets per day being issued. I can quite believe it. They suggest the signage is poor, but of course the Corporation has little interest in improving it. They are no doubt happy to collect the money.



them regularly on Oxford Street. Photo above. This was on King William Street leading to the Bank junction. The latter has recently been closed to most traffic except buses. There was no obvious cause for the jam. I hope the bus occupants got out and walked.

R.W.L.

Bus Jam Near Bank Junction

On the 17th July I saw one of the longest "bus jams" that I have ever seen, although you see

Changes to Congestion Charge – PHVs Targeted To Raise Money

The Mayor of London and TfL have announced proposals to change the Congestion Charge (a.k.a. Tax) so as to raise more money. The main change is that PHVs (minicabs) will no longer be exempt from paying this tax. Uber and other drivers will no doubt be up in arms about this and it will mean their clients pay a lot more.

Another change is that the Ultra Low Emission Discount (ULED) which currently applies to vehi-

cles that emit less than 75g/km of CO₂ will need to have zero emission capability by 2019 and by 2021 only electric vehicles will qualify. That means that many of the 20,000 vehicles currently registered for the ULED will need to be changed if the owners wish to continue to qualify for the discount.

A Blatant Lie

What's the justification for these changes? The consultation announcement says that the Congestion Charge "was a huge success". It claims a reduction in traffic and a 30% reduction in congestion as well as improvements in air quality since it was introduced. These claims are simply spurious. There was a short-term reduction in some vehicles entering the central zone, but the numbers of taxis,

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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.

PHVs and buses increased. The result was that congestion soon returned to what it was before the tax was introduced and has since got substantially worse.

Continued on next page.



Changes to Congestion Charge (Cont.)

The Congestion Charge did not produce any improvement in air pollution which was never expected to happen and did not. The real facts are spelled out on the Congestion page of the ABD London web site.

The claims made by TfL are downright lies. But traffic delays have been increasing which is the justification put forward by TfL for the proposed changes.

Why Should Taxis Be Exempt?

One controversial aspect of the original scheme was that registered taxis (black cabs) and PHVs (private hire vehicles) were exempt from the congestion tax.

It was never very clear as to why some vehicles should be exempt while others are not. Why should private car occupants pay the charge while people using other vehicles for similar journeys should not?

Even more puzzling is why PHVs are now proposed to be taxed while taxis are not. What is the logic of this? Note that the increase in PHVs due to the popularity of services such as Uber has led to many more vehicles entering central London of late and hence have contributed to congestion significantly in the last couple of years. But will the tax now proposed actually reduce their numbers? That is surely unlikely for the same reason that the congestion charge scheme did not reduce congestion. The unsatisfied public demand is such as to soon soak up the capacity released by people unwilling to pay the tax.

You cannot solve congestion via taxation!



It's About Money

The conclusion must be that these proposals are more about raising money for the Budget of Mayor Sadiq Khan. He desperately needs it. See separate article in this newsletter below on that subject.

A Timely Announcement

One might ask why the Mayor chose to announce these changes on a Friday lunchtime when the news channels were dominated by the Brexit decisions and the England World Cup match for the next 48 hours. This might have enabled him to escape the opprobrium of PHV drivers for a few hours but not much longer I suggest.



TfL Consultation on Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Exemption from the Congestion Charge:

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/policy/private-hire-charge-exemption/?cid=ccyourviews>

More Information

See the link above for more information and to respond to an on-line consultation:

The Cost of Khan

Gareth Bacon, leader of the GLA Conservatives, has published a very interesting document entitled "The Cost of Khan". It supplies a half-term report on the regime of Mayor Sadiq Khan and the negative impact he has had in certain areas (crime, planning, parking, housebuilding for example). In essence he suggests one of the key problems is financial mismanagement.

Of particular interest to our readers will be his comments on the activities of TfL (Transport for London) and the budget for that organisation. They cover:

- Cancellation of new tube trains for the Jubilee and Northern Lines that would have provided much needed extra capacity. That might have saved £600 from the TfL budget but that's desperately needed after Khan's expensive promise to freeze public transport fares which cost at least £640 million in foregone revenue. Even that promise was only partly kept.
- The pay of executive staff in TfL. The number who are paid more than £100,000 p.a. increased by 25% last year.

The result is that there are now 576 such employees. Is the Mayor really cutting the flab out of TfL budgets as he promised to do?

- The "T-Charge" which was introduced last October and will cost Londoners £23 million a year despite the Mayor's own Impact Assessment saying it will have only a negligible impact on pollution (and that has been borne out by real data since).
 - Nominee passes which you may not be aware of are highlighted. These allow TfL employees to nominate family members and anyone who resides in the same household to obtain free travel.
- Continued on next page.*



The Cost of Khan (Cont.)

Even flatmates qualify for free nominee passes! There are 39,884 people who are nominees and the cost might be equivalent to £32 million in lost revenue per year.

Those and other reports show how the Mayor has been so wasteful of financial resources with the result that he is desperate to raise money from the T-Charge and the ULEZ charge which will impose major unnecessary costs on Londoners. In the personal view of this writer TfL continues to be a massive and very expensive bureaucracy which is unaccountable to the public.

Some readers were surprised by this writer's previous comments opposing the expansion of London Airport. A good letter by Dr Sally Cairns in the Financial Times summarised the reasons very well – here's a part of it:

“Heathrow already subjects more than half a million people to significant noise annoyance; generates more than 30 million car journeys a year through a busy part of London with air pollution problems and is the UK's biggest point source of carbon dioxide emissions. Objecting to Heathrow expansion is not about nimby-ism – it is about the lack of evidence for the benefits, and the strong likelihood of high social and environmental costs”.

The letter writer gives an address in Wokingham, but it was painful to watch BBC TV News with some of the residents talking who

It formulates transport policy that will increase the bureaucracy and then does public consultations designed to get the right answers. TfL needs major reform but the Mayor does not seem to have it under control.

The “Cost of Khan” Report is available on the web.

Roger Lawson

London Airport Court Case

A legal battle is now in prospect after Parliament voted to progress the expansion of London Heathrow Airport with a third runway. Local west London borough councils and the Mayor of London are queuing up to join a threatened legal action against

live where the new runway will be located and whose homes will be demolished as a result. That's if it ever happens. In the meantime, they are stuck in limbo and probably for some years, being unable to sell their homes.

Note though that the air pollution problems around Heathrow are caused to a large extent by aircraft. Cars and goods vehicles do contribute but are getting cleaner very rapidly with electric cars now very viable for most drivers. Electric aeroplanes of any size are a long way from reality and the growth in air traffic is a major problem for toxic emissions.

The legal and other delays, such as the likely reluctance to fund the enormous cost, could mean years wasted when other solutions to increased travel demand are available and could be progressed more rapidly.



the development on the grounds that it will be unable to meet environmental regulations. An application for a judicial review looks likely from at least Hillingdon, Richmond, Wandsworth and Windsor & Maidenhead with support from Mayor Sadiq Khan. Hillingdon have already reserved a budget of £200,000 for the case.



The disruption caused by the expansion of road capacity to serve a larger airport and the need to divert the M25 into a tunnel will be a major problem for road traffic during the lengthy construction period.

Many factors mitigate against expansion of Heathrow, despite the apparent commercial benefits of doing so.

Personally I also object to being woken up at 5.30 in the morning by aircraft on landing flight paths for Heathrow just because I have my bedroom windows open in the hot weather.

Roger Lawson





£50 to Drive to Westminster, & Superhighway Challenge?

The City of Westminster (one of the London boroughs) is proposing to impose a 50% surcharge borough-wide for parking of older diesel vehicles – those registered before 2015. It has already trialled such a scheme in Marylebone. On-street parking charges will rise therefore to £7.35 per hour in the West End.

The Times newspaper suggested that taking into account the London Congestion Charge (a.k.a. Tax), and the additional tax of £12.50 being imposed by the Ultra Low Emission Zone in 2019, that will mean that driving into the area and parking for just a few hours will result in charges of over £50. That should deter the casual shoppers or business visitors unless they own newer lower emission vehicles.

There is likely to be a public consultation on this proposal, commencing in mid September, so if you are affected by it keep an eye out for that. Westminster Council consultations are listed on the link given below.

Cycle Superhighway Challenge

Westminster Council are pushing ahead with a legal challenge to Cycle Superhighway 11 (CS11) which runs through Swiss Cottage and Regents Park.

A judicial review has been launched and will likely be heard in September. In the meantime, the street works which were due to start imminently have been put on hold.

New Deputy Mayor of Transport Heidi Alexander called the Council's move a "disgrace". But why should not a local council challenge the typically unaccountable actions of Transport for London (TfL) if enough of their residents object?

CS11 has been vigorously opposed by many people who live in North London. The basis of the council's objections is that the current plans will increase congestion and air pollution.

Westminster has also opposed TfL's plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street.

City of Westminster Consultations

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/consultations>

Environment Strategy Misses the Point

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has published his Environment Strategy. Cover photo is to the right, and note how the Mayor continues to use children to promote his policies.

The executive summary talks about the "greening" of London with more trees, green roofs and walls to reduce energy demand, the encouragement of more walking and cycling to improve air quality and many other environmental improvements. But the report fails to mention the key problem.

Namely that there are too many people in London!

It highlights that water supply is set to outstrip supply by 2020 and the city's electricity infrastructure is approaching full capacity. Air pollution is also high but that's not just from transport, albeit much of the transport emissions are generated by the goods vehicles and public transport vehicles required to serve the growing population. Non-road emissions such as from construction, river traffic or wood burning constitute half of emissions in London and are a growing issue – that's what the Mayor says, but he has no solution to that other than to "work with the government and other partners".



London's population is growing rapidly and the more people there are, the more energy and water are consumed.

Continued on next page.



Environment Strategy (Cont.)

Also, the more people there are, the more emissions that are generated. More people require more businesses that provide employment and to provide services to those people.

It also results in a sclerotic road transport network where no new capacity has been added for many years. But instead of tackling the root cause of the problem the Mayor is talking about planting a few more trees and providing more open spaces.

In summary, many of the Mayor's proposals are worthy and may have minor impacts on the quality of life in London. Encouraging us all to drive zero emission electric vehicles by 2050 may help in some regards.

It imposes major costs on Londoners out of all proportion to the benefits. In summary for a total cost of £516 million to London vehicle users, the health benefit is valued at £7.1 million over 5 years. This is surely one of the most ineffective uses of financial resources ever devised.

Not only that, the infrastructure to be put in place for this scheme will enable the Mayor to introduce congestion charging schemes in future over most of London. Will it be demolished once it is no longer needed as the vehicle fleet is modernised? Don't bet on it.

Note that the ABD supports improvements to London's air quality because there are certain locations where it is clearly a

But they will add a further heavy load on the already stretched electricity network.

The report fails to spot the elephant in the room and propose how to deal with it. Namely that there are too many people in too small an area of land. The densification of London, with more and more homes and other buildings to support the growing population, supported by a few more green parks will not tackle the fundamental problem.

Mayor Pushes Ahead with Expansion of ULEZ

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced that the proposed expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to within the

significant problem. Focussing on transport alone will not solve it though. Likewise penalising older diesel vehicle owners is not fair when they were bought in good faith and encouraged by Government aims to reduce CO2 emissions – and doing so will have only a minor impact. What we have is political posturing where the Mayor wants to be seen as doing something while he is fixing his budget problems at the same time by the money to be raised from the ULEZ. It's an ignorant policy led by an ignorant politician.

You may say, I am not too concerned because I don't drive an old diesel vehicle or I can afford to buy a new vehicle that is exempt. But once the Mayor obtains this power to obtain

North/South Circular will go ahead in 2021.

This will mean that it will cost you £12.50 per day (365 days per year and at all times) to drive within that area from 2021 if you drive an older car (roughly diesel cars/vans more than 6 years old in 2021 and petrol cars/vans more than 15 years old). There will also be heavy charges for non-compliant HGVs and buses. The only concessions the Mayor has made is for an extra 4 years for disabled vehicles and for charity minibuses. He claims "staunch support" for these proposals but only 56% of respondents to the consultation supported it – and that after a very biased consultation report.

In reality this scheme is a very expensive solution to cleaning up London's air when not only is that happening already as older vehicles are scrapped, but there are also better alternatives.



money from vehicle owners in London he can easily vary the rules so that everyone is paying a lot more money in taxes.

For example, he could claim that come 2022, the new ULEZ has proved to be less effective than expected in reducing air pollution. Indeed that is very likely to be the case. Or he might simply say that air pollution is still not good enough. He could justify charging all vehicle users accordingly, even the latest petrol and diesel vehicles. Indeed he could argue that even electric vehicles should be included as they generate particulates from brake and tyre wear. So it could be not just £12.50 per day for older diesel vehicles, but for everyone!



Expansion of ULEZ (Cont.)

As we saw with the central London Congestion Charge (a.k.a. Tax) this was initially set at £5 per day but is now £11.50, i.e. it's more than doubled but has not proved any more effective. It now generates significant revenue for TfL above operating costs. So instead of the ULEZ charge being £12.50 it could soon be moved to £15, £20 or even £30 per day and for everyone.

Do you think that the Mayor and TfL have no such intention and have not even looked to the future prospects for this scheme? Think again. The ULEZ is being driven by the desire for more income by the Mayor. Follow the money as always in politics. Discouraging motor vehicles by high charges on everyone who owns one would be perfectly

consistent with his objective, as stated in his Transport Strategy, to reduce car usage in London to a fraction of what it is at present.

A particularly sickening aspect of this matter is the involvement by the Mayor of very young schoolchildren to promote his policies and his politics. He announced the latest extension at Netley Primary School in Euston. This "photo opportunity" was covered by the national media extensively. But what do schoolchildren know about this subject? And why should their teachers be allowing this kind of politicking in their schools? Netley Primary School is close to the Marylebone Road, one of the most polluted roads in London, but even so this hardly justifies the involvement of young children. Mayor Sadiq Khan is a serial offender in this regard as he has done this previously. Children should not be used by politicians to promote their financial policies. Roger Lawson

Do Low Levels of Air Pollution Damage Your Heart?

Following the recent publication of a scientific paper analysing heart condition and the impact of air pollution, the national media immediately jumped to headlines such as "Low Levels of Air Pollution Linked to Changes in the Heart" as published by the BBC. Stories were typically illustrated with pictures of traffic jams, car exhausts and visible London air pollution. Calls to reduce the legal maximum air pollution figures were added.

What does this scientific paper actually show? You can read it from the link below. It's a paper by Nay Aung et al. But here are some comments on it:



Nay Aung Paper: <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.118.034856>

1. The paper was published in the journal "Circulation", a small distribution specialist scientific journal. It is based on information from the UK Biobank which contains medical information on thousands of volunteers who have in this case had heart scans.

2. The study correlated the information from 3,920 individuals to air pollution data (specifically NO2 and PM2.5) where they lived from 2005-2010.

3. The study concluded that after adjusting for numerous other factors such as demographics (age, sex, ethnicity), anthropometrics (height, body mass), socioeconomic factors (income,

employment, educational status), cardiac risk factors and physical activity there was a positive correlation between minor changes to left ventricle (LV) mass and other heart changes to air pollution levels where the volunteers were resident.

4. Such changes to a heart are known to precede heart disease.

5. The paper's authors therefore concluded that "our findings add to the growing evidence of the damaging effects of ambient air pollution even in the setting of relatively low exposure levels".

Are their conclusions justified beyond any doubt?

In particular are the popular media's headlines justified? My conclusion is no.

For example, like any epidemiological study it only provides a possible statistical association, not a direct cause. As Prof Kevin McConway commented on this paper (as reported by the BBC): "Heart disease is affected by a wide range of factors – smoking, drinking alcohol, diet, exercise, social position, and more. Suppose that people whose heart health is worse because of some of these factors are also more likely to live in places where air pollution is high.

Continued on next page.



Low Levels of Air Pollution (Cont.)

That could show up as a correlation between air pollution and heart disease, even if the pollution itself is having no direct effect on the heart”.

Another possible issue is that air pollution inside houses is known to often be many times worse than that in the most polluted streets. That pollution comes from cooking, new paint, fabrics, carpets, smoking by other residents, animal hair, etc. Lack of ventilation in houses and apartments can increase levels substantially so people who live close to noisy roads who never open their windows as a result may be particularly affected.

The report is open to attack on the detail of their statistical methods, and they also note that other similar studies did not provide the

same evidence in all cases. In summary the overall evidence is quite weak. Neither does the report confirm that the minor asymptomatic changes noted to heart mass lead in this case to significant heart disease.

Their reference to “low exposure levels” may also be misleading because air pollution levels were not measured outside the volunteers’ houses or where they work. In addition the fact that the people studied were volunteers, i.e. were self-selected rather than being a randomised sample, could have biased the outcome even though lots of adjustments were made for possible confounding factors.

All the report really suggests is that more study should be undertaken of a possible effect. The conclusion drawn by some commentators that air pollution legal limits need to be reduced further is not substantiated by this report. In the meantime, readers are advised not to live within a few metres of a busy road

because it may be bad for your health. But that’s no surprise is it? Just living in a noisy environment is known to be damaging to your health. High noise levels are correlated with cardiovascular disease according to the World Health Organisation. It seems it increases stress levels which has a negative impact on health.

What the Aung report does not do is justify even more aggressive attempts to reduce air pollution in cities such as London, where NOX and particulates are already falling after the mistaken support of more diesel vehicles by the Government. Road vehicles will soon no longer be a major contributor to air pollution in cities so more scaremongering of this ilk is not required.

The answer to the question posed in the headline of this article (“Do Low Levels of Air Pollution Damage Your Heart”) is simply that it is “Not proven”.

Roger Lawson

Stopping the School Run by Closing Roads

The “school run” is now a major cause of traffic congestion. It has got worse for three main reasons: 1) more ownership of cars, 2) the ability of parents to apply to any school for admission of their children introduced a few years ago and 3) parents concern with the safety of their children if they walk or cycle to school.

Other contributors have been the expansion of the school population resulting in more trips and leading in some cases to schools building on their car parks so that teachers now have to park on the streets. Planning decisions often ignore the additional traffic congestion caused by school expansion. Lifestyle changes, particularly by women have also contributed with more of them fully employed meaning they now have busy schedules.

Although schools do often have “catchment” areas that limit applications to a geographic area around the school if there are too

many requests for places, in practice these are quite wide. For example, the map available from the link below shows the catchment area for Coopers School in Chislehurst (London Borough of Bromley Secondary School): . For those who know the area, that means that children come from as far afield as Mottingham, Swanley and Orpington, i.e. several miles distant. Walking would be impractical, and even cycling would be difficult due to steep hills, so only buses or car use (if they don’t live near a bus route) would be an option for many children.

Coopers School Catchment Area: <https://www.schoolguide.co.uk/schools/coopers-school-chislehurst>

The School Run (Cont.)

The result is daily congestion around that school during school term times, particularly as there are several other schools in the same area including some private schools whose catchment areas could be even larger.

Even primary schools seem to be generating more school run trips as the parents focus on getting their children into what they consider the best schools regardless of distance to travel.

How to solve the school run problem? Some local councils are now looking at road closures during school opening/closing times to deter the use of cars and encourage the children to walk or cycle. Road safety benefits are also suggested. The Borough of Croydon have already experimented with such a scheme for

six months at 3 schools. The access restrictions were enforced by ANPR cameras with £130 fines for infringement. Local residents within the boundary could obtain a permit. Croydon council has now decided to make the scheme permanent despite many objections from residents (some live within the boundary).

One aspect of this that might have contributed to this decision apparently is the fact that ANPR camera enforcement of parking outside schools is no longer permitted. But in London Councils can still use ANPR for "moving traffic offences" so they have chosen to use that tactic instead to prevent temporary parking.

The justification for the scheme in Croydon was that it would reduce air pollution and encourage more healthy life styles but there was no evidence of the air pollution being a problem (no measures were taken), and it is exceedingly unlikely that exclud-

ing vehicles from a very small area for very limited times of the day would have any impact on air quality. No evidence on road safety benefits was provided. Such schemes just cause vehicle users to park further away outside the boundary causing wider parking problems, or they turn-up and park earlier. It causes major problems for delivery drivers, or other visitors to homes within the boundary as drivers are often not aware of the scheme.

One of the Croydon primary schools in the scheme has actually issued more than 200 permits to staff and "special cases" (those where parents can plead hardship), which has rather defeated the objective of the scheme.

The London Borough of Greenwich is also considering such a scheme for eight schools according to an article in the Newsshopper local paper.



The article suggested the access restriction would even be imposed by rising bollards.

Such schemes are spreading across the country. Solihull is another example of an experimental scheme which was put in without consultation. One local councillor said they did not consult first because they thought people would object!

Another area considering using such a scheme is Cambridge County Council where one councillor has put it forward. Again this is was primarily on spurious environmental grounds. The writer of this article spoke on BBC Radio Cambridge on the subject and I suggested that such policies emanate mainly

from car haters and that no evidence is provided on the environmental or other benefits.

There is another motivation for such schemes which is money (just like the closure of Bank Junction in the City of London). In Croydon, some 2,000 fines were issued in six months, which is likely to generate hundreds of thousands of pounds per year of additional income to the council.

The school run and the congestion it causes is of major concern to many people but this writer does not support road closures of this nature. They just obstruct and corrupt the road network.

In Croydon local activist Peter Morgan claims the council have

acted illegally by not taking notice of objections and failing to meet their obligations under the Traffic Management Act. He is asking the Secretary of State to block the councils move.

The Alliance of British Drivers opposes road closure schemes of all kinds on the grounds that they create major inconvenience for many people, rarely provide any claimed benefits and particularly so when they are used as money making schemes by councils to exploit unwary motorists.

But if you have other solutions to the congestion caused by school run drivers, that are more practical and less unreasonable, then please let us know. R.W.L.

Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) Letters

The following is a letter from David Tarsh on the proposed 20 mph speed limit for main roads:

Mayor's Strategy Seeks Gridlock

Dear Sir

The Mayor's plan, announced today, to reduce speed limits to 20 mph on every Transport for London (TfL) managed road is a flawed strategy that will just increase gridlock and criminalise safe drivers.

It is based solely on the mantra or reducing speed without looking carefully at the cause of accidents.

For example, no speed limit will stop many common accidents – e.g: large vehicles knocking over cyclists they don't see when turning left or cyclists riding dangerously or pedestrians stepping in to the path of a bike on the edge of a traffic jam.

What the 20 mph limit will do is criminalise perfectly safe drivers, which is grossly unjust and will further congest the traffic, which is pure incompetence because traffic which should flow won't flow.

Official statistics (available from the DfT)) reveal that that in the majority of London boroughs, traffic, as measured by vehicle miles driven is on a long-term decline. For example, traffic in Westminster in 2017 was 22% less than it was in 2000. However, the speeds on the roads are ever slower! With less traffic, average speeds should increase and journey times should shorten but that's not

happening. Why? The reason for the increased congestion is due to the mismanagement of the traffic. And who is responsible? TfL and the Mayor!

Sadly, London's transport policy is characterised by dogma and discrimination. The new cycle super highways are emblematic of this. They take large chunks of precious road space from all road users and give it exclusively to cyclists, who represent less than 3% of road users. That is not fair and it is stupid because, not surprisingly, the rest of the traffic is gridlocked and at most times of the day, the cycle highways are empty. Furthermore, they are not even promoting cycling! In Westminster in 2017, there were fewer cyclists than in 2015.

The Mayor and TfL seem to have forgotten that the roads are crucial to the proper functioning of London and its economy.



Whilst nobody wants to see road accidents, promoting crawling traffic, criminalising safe drivers and gridlock are not signs of success, particularly when traffic volumes are falling. A more thoughtful approach is required than cutting speed limits. <END>

MTS Campaign Responses

The following are some of the recent responses to the ABD's campaign against the MTS, which is continuing of course:

"Unfortunately we have constructed a world for ourselves that requires car use by a large proportion of the population. Out of town supermarkets and retail outlets realistically cannot be accessed except by car for

instance. Your local electrician or plumber cannot carry all his tools on the bus, and anyway there probably isn't a direct bus route to his next customer. Maybe in the distant future we will all be travelling around in spaceships and cars will be long gone, but in the meantime they are an essential tool for an awful lot of people and with these plans it seems that as usual it will be the poorest motorists who can least afford it who will suffer the most.....C.R.

It's a blatant attack on motorists of all kinds and I have no idea how disabled people will be able to cope with their everyday needs. Does the Mayor think that people working in London can rely on London transport whilst the fares are going up and up

and above all weekend social events such as seeing your family members will suffer enormous problems. All in all, I conclude that this proposal is ill conceived and will have no effect other than causing adverse impacts on our daily lives. It must be rejected....A.G.

As someone who has a back problem that limits the distance I can walk, I find these proposals scary. These proposals, if implemented, would have serious detrimental consequences. For many people their quality of life would be badly affected.....K.A.





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

Address Changes

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

About the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers (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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