



The Association of British Drivers

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Press Release – ABD London Region

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Congestion Charging Shown to be a Failure

The Association of British Drivers (ABD) hails the publication by Transport for London (TfL) about the truth of congestion charging. The latest Annual Monitoring Report from TfL shows that this unnecessary and unreasonable tax has not resulted in any benefit in terms of congestion on the roads of London. Indeed although they claim traffic levels are down, they had to admit that "*congestion rises back to pre-charging levels*".

They suggest that much of this can be accounted for by road works, and in particular in the Western Extension by a major redevelopment at the Scotch House Corner junction, but the ABD suggests that this is nonsense. Road works are a continuing fact of life to road users in London and have been for many years – indeed there were complaints in the year before the Congestion Charge was introduced that the large number of road works at that time would distort analysis of any improvements in traffic flows in the following years.

In reality the Congestion Charge (which should be called a Congestion Tax because that is what it is) was never likely to have a major impact on traffic volumes, and all that has happened is that a few fast moving private vehicles have been replaced by slow moving buses and taxis, which obstruct other traffic. That is the main reason why Congestion Charging has not worked.

We agree with Mayor Boris Johnson who said the London Congestion Charge is "*a blunt instrument*". But we think it should be simply scrapped rather than fiddled with.

Western Extension Even More Obviously a Failure

The report also says "*Recent results have returned congestion values that are similar to pre-extension levels, indicating that the western extension is currently experiencing no material congestion relief*".

Instead of it taking 5 years to demonstrate how ineffective congestion pricing schemes are as with the central zone, this was shown within one year in the western extension. Even bus speeds and reliability within the Western Extension have stayed the same or got worse, as is true for the central zone also.

Campaign to Scrap the Western Extension

The ABD will be launching a major campaign to advocate the total scrapping of the Western Extension during the consultation period recently announced by the Mayor. The Western Extension was not wanted by residents of the area and has had numerous detrimental impacts on business and community activities. We welcome the Mayor's commitment to consult the public again on this matter.

No Environmental Benefits

The TfL report also says "*no clear scheme impacts from either the original central or western extension zones can therefore be discerned*" in ambient outdoor air quality. It's a myth that congestion charge schemes generate any environmental benefits but car haters continue to promote this agenda.

The ABD will continue to campaign against all road pricing and congestion charging schemes, and we would like to see the London scheme totally abandoned. This was part of a strategy developed by the former Mayor which included reallocation of road space from one type of road user to another which treated private car users as second class citizens. His strategy to solve London's transport problems has been totally discredited by the latest report.

For further information, please contact:

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A copy of the TfL Press Release and a link to the full "Sixth Annual Monitoring Report" can be seen at www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/media/newscentre/8948.aspx

About The Association of British Drivers (ABD)

The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Association is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web site at www.abd.org.uk