



The Association of British Drivers

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Press Release – ABD London Region

For immediate release
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Don't Be Fooled by the Consultation on the Western Extension of the London Congestion Charge

The new consultation on the Western Extension of the London Congestion Charge was launched today by the Mayor, Boris Johnson. There was a commitment in his manifesto to re-examine this scheme following the failure of the previous Mayor to take any notice of public opinion in his consultation.

But unfortunately the new Consultation Leaflet is a typical example of documents emanating from Transport for London (TfL), and grossly misleads the public about the success of the scheme.

In summary the scheme has not met its original objectives. It has not reduced congestion in the extended zone, and neither has it improved air quality so there are no environmental benefits.

Mr Livingstone claimed it would reduce congestion by 10-20% in his original press release. But this has not turned out to be the case. The recent Sixth Annual Monitoring report from TfL said: "*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*"

Grossly Misleading Consultation Document

The new consultation continues to propagate myths about the success of the scheme. It says "*It is clear that without the Western Extension in place, congestion would be worse*". The ABD says there is simply no evidence to support this statement and we believe it is in essence a lie.

It also says "*it has helped to reduce vehicle emissions*" but again there is no evidence to support this. In reality TfL have said in the Sixth Annual Monitoring Report that as regards ambient air quality that "*no clear scheme impacts from either the original central or western extension zones can therefore be discerned*". It's simply wrong to claim that congestion charge schemes generate any environmental benefits but car haters continue to promote this agenda.

The reduction in "net revenue" of £70m that they claim is in our view a figment of their imagination. We believe the surplus of income over expenditure for the Western Extension is more like £15m so scrapping it would not reduce income by the amount claimed.

In addition it suggests that the Western Extension has had no obvious impacts on business and the economy which flies in the face of commonly reported facts.

Wording of Response Questions Biased

Even the wording of the response form on the Consultation Leaflet is designed to obtain a biased response with Option 2 containing a reminder that residents would lose their discount, while the Option 1 response does not remind people they would continue to pay the charge. And the proposed option of a 100% discount for residents seems to be simply a bribe to residents of the zone to retain it.

Campaign to Scrap the Western Extension

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. We therefore suggest that the first stage would be to scrap the Western Extension and urge everyone to respond to this consultation and vote for Option 2 (to Remove the Western Extension).

The ABD has launched a campaign to ensure a good turn out on this consultation and we are working with the West London Residents Association who have mounted a long campaign against this nonsensical tax to ensure that the views of the public are heard.

We welcome the Mayor's commitment to listen to the public on this issue, but our motto is "**SCRAP THE TAX**".

For further information, please contact:

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For more information go to this page of the ABD London web site:
www.freedomfordrivers.org/WesternCon.htm

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 sites at www.freedomfordrivers.org

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