

FFDF London News

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Editorial

Next month is when London goes to the polls to elect a new Mayor and a new London Assembly. We cover most of the Mayoral candidates on page 13.

I have been covering transport issues in London since the directly elected London Mayor was first installed in the year 2000. We first had the car hating Ken Livingstone, then the cycle enthusiast Boris Johnson and lately the incompetent Sadiq Khan. Mr Khan has used scaremongering over air pollution to raise millions of pounds in taxes from road users. The result of these three regimes has been a degradation of the road network with more traffic congestion, and limited improvements in public transport. The finances of TfL were put on a knife edge and hence caused a major deficit when the Covid epidemic hit.

Road users have been paying a lot more in taxes already from the Congestion Charge (a.k.a. tax) and the ULEZ tax. And they will be paying even more soon with the expansion of the ULEZ if Khan is re-elected.

The Mayor has very wide dictatorial powers and Transport for London (TfL) who develop his policies is an unaccountable body stuffed full of public transport enthusiasts ever since Ken Livingstone was in power.

When TfL depends on income from bus and tube fares, it is irrational that they should have control of the road network in London and be able to impose taxes on road users. They have no interest in improving the road network and reducing congestion but would prefer to force people onto public transport.

This situation will only change if a Mayor is elected who wishes to have a revolution. That person is certainly not Sadiq Khan so my recommendation is “vote for anyone than Khan”.

As regards the other candidates, there are certainly some who would scrap Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and the ULEZ expansion. But it’s your choice so please make sure you vote if you live in London!

Roger Lawson
(Editor)



Quotes of the Month

“They don’t even want bollards with keys as it takes too long. When it comes to strokes or heart attacks, every second counts”..... Emergency Service Worker on LTNs - see Page 4.

“Five minutes probably doesn’t seem long to whoever came up with the idea of the barriers, but to a London Ambulance Service (LAS) crew trying to get to a cardiac arrest patient and give that first shock, it slashes our chances of a viable resuscitation”..... Letter to Private Eye. See P.4



More Changes at Bank

The City of London Corporation have been working assiduously to remove all traffic from London's streets in the last few years regardless of the impact on residents, businesses and visitors. Bank Junction has already been subjected to severe restrictions on all vehicles except buses and cycles, thus effectively closing this key junction in the centre of the City. Even taxis have been excluded much to the annoyance of taxi drivers. The Corporation are now proposing to go a step further and close more of the roads, even to buses. The latest changes include the following:

- The closure of Threadneedle Street to motor vehicles that runs along the south of the Bank of England.



- The closure of Queen Victoria Street between Bucklersbury and Bank Junction for motor vehicles, except those vehicles exiting Walbrook in a westbound direction.

- Closing Princes Street except for buses and cycles northbound; and except as a route for servicing to Cornhill in a southbound direction.

It includes proposals for widening pavements around the junction which the road closures will enable (artist's impression above). Bus routes will also have to be changed.

For more details and to respond to a public consultation go here: <https://tinyurl.com/5h5hmwvf>



Comment: It was certainly the case that Bank Junction was a problem on two grounds: 1) the volume of pedestrians using the junction with the station being enlarged when pavements are very narrow (at least until the recent epidemic); and 2) as regards road safety with frequent casualties including fatalities. The complex nature of the junction with many buses passing through it and high pedestrian traffic were partly to blame.

It therefore was not unreasonable to look at simplifying the junction to enable more pedestrian space and improve the environment. However, the removal of all traffic was very damaging to the road network in the City of London, and has caused traffic to simply move to other roads with additional congestion.

The latest changes do not improve matters but will make things worse. For example if Threadneedle Street is to be closed it should also be closed to cyclists to avoid conflicts with pedestrians.

Please respond to the public consultation if you have an interest in these roads.

Why LTNs are Failing

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) are still spreading over London but opposition to them is growing. Some have even been removed or substantially reduced already due to local opposition. It's worth reviewing why they have failed or generated such opposition, and why they are even being installed in the first place.

The support for LTNs comes from a desire to reduce traffic, particularly on residential streets. This is promoted by their supporters as a way to reduce air pollution and to tackle climate change.

A number of London councils have declared "climate emergencies" which they say justifies an attack on the use of vehicles, particularly internal combustion driven ones. But this has extended to halting the use of all vehicles which it is argued will reduce traffic accidents, enable children to play in the streets and encourage people to walk and cycle, thereby making us healthier and live longer. Even those who own vehicles (about 50% of London households own a car) would like to see less traffic as high traffic levels cause congestion and hence extended journey times.

Continued on next page.



Why LTNs are Failing (Cont.)

Many residents who own cars want to drive via the shortest and least congested routes possible but don't want folks from adjacent neighbourhoods driving down their street.

There are undoubtedly good arguments for encouraging healthy life styles not just for your personal benefit but because it reduces the cost of the NHS which we all pay for out of taxes. However the introduction of LTNs as a solution to excessive traffic has followed the law of unintended consequences. Firstly they tend to simply redistribute traffic from minor roads onto surrounding major roads.

This writer certainly has no objection to such measures which remove traffic to other roads as long as the needs of the disabled are taken into account.

Although overall vehicle ownership and traffic volumes have actually not been rising in London in the last few years, the closure of roads, the addition of cycle and bus lanes, and other measures such as removal of gyratories, more traffic lights with reduced timings and more pedestrian crossings have resulted in more congestion. The growth of ride hailing apps such as Uber have also contributed to more congestion in some parts of the capital.

The population of London has been rising rapidly, encouraged by Mayors of all political complexions. This has put more pressure on transport and on housing provision.

Those roads become more congested and as the traffic is slow moving or stationary, it creates more air pollution for residents of those roads, not less.

LTNs do not reduce the demand for travel. They might encourage the use of walking or cycling by the healthy and young cohort of the population but there is very little evidence of a significant change in the habits of existing car drivers. In other words, the claimed "modal shift" generated by "modal filters" and such like is frequently a mirage. The traffic does not "evaporate" as claimed but gets redistributed or delayed as circuitous routes are taken. The elderly and disabled are particularly disadvantaged as they may be unable to walk or cycle far, if at all. But their needs

Even public transport has become heavily congested while buses are delayed and become less attractive to use because of the traffic congestion. The rise of deliveries of internet orders by LGVs has also increased markedly leading to higher use of minor roads which has also been supported by the use of Satnavs.

What can actually be done that would really reduce traffic in London and cut air pollution? Here are some more realistic ideas:

Reducing air pollution by obstructing traffic (a typical focus of LTNs) simply does not work. The solution is to produce vehicles that generate less pollution. In fact this is well on the way to being achieved by Government regulation and taxation, and by improved diesel/petrol engines.

are frequently ignored by council planners who tend to be young and unsympathetic – indeed the Equalities Act which protects minorities is often not properly considered.

Of course it does depend to some extent on how well designed is an LTN. It has been long standing practice to close some minor roads to avoid excessive traffic which should be on major roads. At least that is the theory but in London even major roads are commonly roads on which people live in apartments, i.e. they are residential roads also.

Other roads such as major shopping "high streets" have been pedestrianised to the advantage of shoppers and retailers.



Follow the Blog

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

<https://freedomfordrivers.blog/>

To get the latest news as it appears, follow the blog.

Reducing the population of London would relieve the problem of traffic congestion, public transport congestion and housing insufficiency. Why does no politician advocate it?

Investing in expanding and improving the road network would also help while putting in LTNs does the opposite.

Note that none of those measures will actually do anything about climate change, whether you believe in man-made global warming or not.



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Why LTNs are Failing (Cont.)

The contribution of road transport to CO2 emissions globally is only 18% and is falling while emissions from aircraft and shipping are rising. Meanwhile other sources such as home/office heating, industrial processes and construction are very big contributors. These emissions do of course directly relate to population levels so that's another reason for reducing the population.

But global emissions are dominated by the big and populous countries such as the USA, China, India and Russia. The UK only contributes about 1%. So when local councillors such as Councillor Scott in Croydon suggest we are all doomed

unless we cut vehicle use, he needs to go tell it to Joe Biden et al.

The UK is already focussed on achieving net-zero carbon emissions and is well ahead of other countries in that objective. But whether it is economically practical to achieve that, or wise to even aim for it, has yet to be confirmed. But it is certainly the case that putting in LTNs in local boroughs will have absolutely no impact on the outcome.

Regrettably many local councillors seem to think they got elected to save the world rather than sticking to their job of listening to their local electorate and improving their borough by practical steps. Even central Government politicians have fallen into this trap, hence the encouragement with funding from Grant Shapps, Transport Minister, for LTNs.

In the meantime all LTNs are doing is creating enormous inconvenience for many of London's residents to no purpose. It's like a religion where supporters of LTNs claim benefits which are unproven but they think all you need to do is believe in them and the world will be a better place. No it will not be.

Roger Lawson

Times Covers Delays to Emergency Services

The Times newspaper covered the delays to fire services caused by the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) on 29/3/2021.



They reported that slowed emergency responses caused by traffic calming have jumped by more than one third in London boroughs. The article suggested that frontline workers were concerned that management was ignoring the problem due to political pressure. The Times notes that one serving officer, who asked not to be named, said: "The bosses are controlled by Sadiq Khan and don't want to upset him as he controls the budget". Another quote supplied was "They don't even want bollards with keys as it takes too long. When it comes to strokes or heart attacks, every second counts."

Many examples of delays to ambulances, police and fire service vehicles caused by road closures, road narrowing by cycle lanes and modal filters have been reported across London.

The following letter from a paramedic was recently published in Private Eye.

Dead-end roads

Sir,

I saw the cartoon (Rotten Boroughs, Eye 1538) depicting "low traffic neighbourhood" barriers in Ealing preventing ambulance crews from getting to jobs. These are now pan-London and in Lewisham and Crystal Palace have caused severe delays getting to cardiac arrest calls.

On a recent job we were literally at the end of a street adjoining the road the cardiac arrest was on. Due to the barricade we had to take an almost five-minute detour around the side streets before we found our way to the address.



Five minutes probably doesn't seem long to whoever came up with the idea of the barriers, but to a London Ambulance Service (LAS) crew trying to get to a cardiac arrest patient and give that first shock, it slashes our chances of a viable resuscitation.

Continued on next page.



Delays to Emergency Services (Cont.)

In this case the patient did not survive.

We're not able to call attention to the issue because our internal problem-reporting software only allows us to report equipment or personnel failures within LAS; there is no way for us to quantify the number of fatal delays caused by the council's arbitrary road closures and no structure in place for us to report this. With the huge spike in Covid-related cardiac arrest calls we've seen in the past few months, these barricades are literally killing patients. Private Eye is the first publication I've seen so much as mention it.

PARAMEDIC (name supplied), London.

<END>

Residents who live within LTNs may have quieter roads but they need to bear in mind that their lives will be threatened if they suffer a medical emergency.

Clearly the "modal filters" used in so many LTN schemes are not advisable such as those used in Lee Green. Such objections may be why Councils are now installing camera systems to close roads instead. But that just creates complaints about the number of PCNs generated through inadvertent mistakes.

It is very obvious that the supporters of LTN schemes are ignoring the clear evidence of the impact on emergency services.



roads around schools to traffic at pick-up and drop-off times has reduced polluting nitrogen dioxide levels by up to 23%". He has also issued a press release saying the same thing and giving more details – see below.

But the study on which this claim is based was only launched in September 2020 so the period covered is one where traffic was much reduced due to the pandemic and when schools were closed. It is hardly likely to be representative of the normal conditions.

The press release also claims that School Streets are popular with parents but those affected by the road closures who do not have children were not included in the survey.

The Mayor even claims that "18% of parents are driving to school less during the pandemic, helping to clean up London's air". That's surely hardly surprising as the schools have been closed!

This looks like a good example of selecting the statistics and the surveyed population that suit your argument while ignoring the bigger picture and the truth.

School Streets are allegedly so popular that Lewisham Council have introduced road closures on roads where there are no schools under the name of School Streets, simply to stop people driving through the Lee Green LTN area. The Council seems to think they can fool people into supporting the LTN by such dubious sophistry.



Lies, Damn Lies, Statistics and School Streets

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, has claimed in a tweet that "closing



Mayor's Press Release: <https://tinyurl.com/yemm3ejh>

LTNs Force Vehicles into Poorer Roads

A good article in the Times on Saturday 13/2/2020 reported on how Low Traffic Neighbourhoods resulted in vehicles being directed into streets where poorer people live. Traffic is diverted onto boundary roads which already have high traffic levels and where residents often live in low-cost housing such as flats.

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LTNs and Poorer Roads

To quote from the article: “The figures will fuel concerns that the policy of sectioning off certain areas of cities to through traffic is dividing communities and disproportionately benefiting middle-class homeowners.

Residents who live on the edge of the zones say their lives have been blighted by increased traffic, pollution and noise. They point out that many of the cycling and environmental activists who have campaigned for LTNs live in areas that have benefited from the schemes at the expense of their neighbours.

Ediz Mevlit, a bus traffic controller from Enfield who has become a campaigner against low traffic neighbourhoods, said:

 Their justification is that it will improve the ability to socially distance. But does it really make the streets safer?

To answer that question, I decided to walk along two streets that have been closed. Admittedly, when I left home at 6.45pm it was not completely dark, but it was close enough as I didn't want to be out much later.

Walking down Burnt Ash Hill it was reassuringly busy and crossing over the South Circular and down to the shops where the lights from the shop fronts allowed me to make out the colour of the jacket worn by the man in front of me allowed me a measure of confidence. This changed when I turned left into Holme Lacey Road.

At the road closed sign, I turned into Dallinger Road.

‘Our local LTN is in the more affluent part and it is pushing traffic on to the surrounding roads that are less affluent. These policies have completely advantaged the wealthier people where I live including a senior figure in one of London’s main cycling groups. I find it absolutely disgusting’.

The Safety of LTN Roads

Have Lewisham’s Road Closures Made Our Streets a Predators’ Paradise?

There has been much debate of late about the safety of women when walking the streets of London. The following article is written by a resident of Lewisham and gives her views on the subject and the impact of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods:

The further I walked along this road the quieter it became as the traffic noise decreased almost to nothing. From the start of this road to the end just one car passed me and the family travelling in it parked up and went into their house. Further along, a woman was collecting her child from the minder. She got into her car but had to turn around in the road so would not be driving past me. Just one cyclist rode by. I emerged and turned right onto Manor Lane and then right onto Holme Lacey Road. By now, the light had faded, and it was fully dark. No vehicles passed me there. I was happy to get back to the bright lights of Burnt Ash Road.

When I was doing the walk, catching the virus was the last thing on my mind.

Over the course of my 40 years spent living on Burnt Ash Hill, I have walked home from the train station or the bus stop after a night out many, many times.

Advice to women who are walking home alone recommends that they should try to stick to well lit, busy streets. In this regard, I count myself lucky to live where I do because there is always traffic. This may well give a false sense of security because not every driver will stop if they see an incident happening in the street but there is always the hope that the approach of a car will deter or at least disturb a potential attacker and may lead to someone intervening to prevent something bad happening. But what is it like to walk at night on the roads that have been closed by Lewisham Council on the pretext of the Covid pandemic?



 I was more concerned with getting out of the closed roads in one piece. I would not want to do this walk, alone, after catching the last train home.

Of course, the flip side of living on Burnt Ash Hill is that when lockdown finishes these road closures will once again lead to queues of traffic outside my front door for three to four hours a day. It is not the virus that will kill me now that I have had the jab. It is the toxic air that is created by the traffic jams. In the meantime, potential predators seem to have been given a helping hand for which I am sure they are extremely grateful.

Christine Warwicker



High Court Hearing on JRs and Camden Road Closures

An initial hearing of the legal challenge by several groups over road closures in London took place in the High Court on the 12th of February as part of the judicial review process. According to a report on social media, the hearing by Justice Tim Kerr gave permission for the Lambeth, Hounslow and one of the two Hackney cases to proceed.

The other Hackney case was dismissed as out of time (there are strict limits on the time allowed for filing judicial reviews). A case filed by the group OneEaling was withdrawn because the council filed new

Experimental Traffic Orders to replace older ones. This is what that group had to say about this:

Ealing Council shamefully side steps High Court hearing but contributes towards our legal costs.

The decision has been reached NOT to attend court today. We were left with little choice as Ealing Council sought to side step the proceedings by replacing the old ETOs with new ETOs.

On Wednesday, Ealing wrote to our judge advising that the hearing should not go ahead because they had made new ETOs that day, meaning the old ETOs that we challenged would cease to be in operation as of 17th February. This would mean us battling in court over ETOs due to expire in 5 days after the preliminary hearing.

This was truly a blatant attempt to sidestep the court case and being held to account for the clear deficiencies in the original ETOs. They claimed that new ETOs were needed because there were 'substantial changes' to the original ETOs, specifically, adding of ANPR cameras and allowing Blue Badge holders access to their own LTNs. These changes clearly did not need new ETOs, as they had already swapped out bollards for cameras in some of the LTNs with no amendments to the existing ETOs.

We took legal advice and it was clear that going to court today faced with this new situation was pointless.

Ealing continued their disgraceful shirking of responsibilities right up until yesterday by telling the court that we needed to request a



hearing for our costs and they would respond at a later date. In the end, having pushed Ealing, we demanded that our legal costs were met and they agreed to cover a substantial amount in the region of our legal costs incurred to date.

To be clear, whilst not the day in court we wanted we see, this was an acknowledgement they got the ETOs wrong. One only had to look at the new ETOs to see all the changes they have made (whilst not enough) stem from issues we have raised.

The decision to vacate the hearing today was not taken lightly. We are as disappointed as you are to be denied the chance to have the evidence heard and Ealing held to account.

However, just so we are clear, this is NOT the end of the road for the legal process.

We appreciate that whilst securing our legal costs is a positive step, this does not get us to where we want to be with the removal of all LTNs. Hence we are reviewing the new ETOs with a view to what further action should be taken. We are already mobilised with a great legal team in place and believe that there are still significant issues with the schemes. They are still unsafe, discriminatory and do not achieve their objectives”.

Note that Rook Irwin Sweeney LLP were the solicitors instructed on the Lambeth and Hackney cases – see <https://tinyurl.com/4bc4fd8f>

Camden Schemes

A cycle lane scheme for Haverstock Hill appears to have been halted but it is unclear whether it has been abandoned or is simply being reconsidered.

There is wider opposition to LTN schemes in Camden and a legal fund has been created to oppose them.

See Camden legal fund: <https://gofund.me/ba5156b1> for more details.

Please support it.





The London Borough of Greenwich are proposing to close a number of roads in the Westcombe Park and Maze Hill area to form a new Low Traffic Neighbourhood. This is the area to the east of Greenwich Park – they have already closed roads to the west. See map left of the proposed closures.

Some of the closures will be “modal filters” (i.e. via bollards) such as on Maze Hill and Vanbrugh Hill which will be particularly inconvenient as these are key north/south roads between the A2 and Trafalgar and Woolwich roads. More traffic will be forced onto the main roads which are already heavily congested.

Greenwich LTN and Opposition to Enfield “Regime”

to get feedback (and a badly designed set of questions at that), but that is not a proper way to do public consultation. This is some of what we have said before about that system:

The system is not an unbiased platform in that typically it is used to promote what a Council is planning to do – and that means after decisions have already been made to implement schemes.

It also has the problem that unlike a conventional public consultation only people who are internet enabled, and are even aware of the platform, can respond. This excludes a large number of people such as the elderly who are not internet connected or don't spend much time on it. So it tends to be dominated by young activists and those active in local politics, i.e. the comments on it are unrepresentative of the wider population.

Indeed information received from Lewisham Council about their feedback on the Lee Green LTN said that they received 9,200 comments but they were from only 3,490 respondents.

Many of the comments are repetitive and there is no attempt to stop duplicate comments so the system can be exploited by organised activist groups such as cyclists.

Wildly inaccurate comments can also be made on the platform with no “rebuttal” possible – you can only “Agree” with comments, not “Disagree” with them and you cannot comment further in response. Clearly there are many people commenting who are not directly affected, and those that are affected just give very polarised comments. The comments are not helpful in determining a sensible compromise to meet the needs of the majority.

The Council is using a Commonplace web site



In summary, Commonplace is a system that can be used by Councils to claim they are “listening” to residents when in reality it is not a fair and honest way to collect the views of all residents. It is not an alternative to a proper public consultation and is more designed to promote the views of scheme promoters than collect unbiased information.

But I would encourage anyone affected by this scheme in Greenwich to post their comments anyway – go to: <https://tinyurl.com/4z5xh4tu>

Enfield LTNs

There is strong opposition to the LTNs in Enfield. A report on Guido Fawkes web site says the following:

Continued on next page.



Enfield LTNs (Cont.)

“The leader of loony left Enfield Council has reported the opposition to the police for calling her regime a regime”. Apparently a tweet said that the Conservative Councillors had repeatedly called Enfield Council a ‘regime’ – insults with islamaphobic undertones it was claimed.

Guido Fawkes suggests this is regular political language and that the complainant, Nesil Caslikan, is a complete idiot. This writer agrees with Guido. When there is a deficit in democracy, as there is in Enfield and many other Labour controlled boroughs, then calling it a “regime” is very appropriate.

Horn Park and Weigall Road

LTN in Greenwich/Lewisham

In addition to the Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) schemes in other parts of the London Borough of Greenwich mentioned above, they are now proposing a scheme in the Horn Park Lane and Weigall Road area.

This will include closures of Weigall Road, Abergeldie Road and Westhorne Avenue using cameras and will significantly affect residents of the triangle of roads between the South Circular and the A20.

That is particularly so as Lewisham Council have already closed Upwood Road.

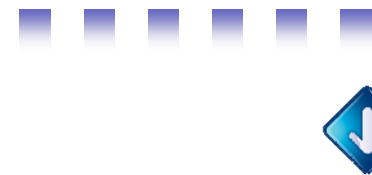
This scheme is being imposed with an Experimental Traffic Order and you can find more details plus a map on this

Commonplace web site where you can post your comments: <https://tinyurl.com/k86pckrt>

This scheme will cause many residents to take long circuitous routes and create problems for delivery drivers and other service providers. It is completely unnecessary as the volume of traffic on these roads has never been very high.

It is important for residents of the Borough of Greenwich who are opposed to these proposals to send in objections.

Send them directly to the Council, and also send them to your local councillors. You can look them up here: <https://tinyurl.com/jbb5puke>



FOI Request Ignored

How Many Objections has Lewisham Council Received to the LTNs? They Claim Not to Know.

How many objections has the London Borough of Lewisham received to the road closures and other aspects of the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the borough? Nobody knows apparently.

We submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOI) request in early November in which we asked for the numbers and have finally received a response. That's way past the legal limit for responses for which they have apologised.

But they now claim they have no information on the subject. I consider their response to be disgraceful.

I specifically worded my request so that they could give estimates of the number of objections if exact figures were not available. But it is clearly a nonsense when the Council invites people to send comments to traffic@lewisham.gov.uk about the LTNs but does not record how many of the comments received are objections. Even if not recorded at the time there is nothing stopping them from reviewing past comments received by council officers and councillors. The number of objections received is clearly vital information when the Council is considering the impact of the

Temporary Traffic Orders used to implement the LTNs and I simply do not believe that the Council has no information on this subject.

Roger Lawson

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Our Twitter handle is **@Drivers_London**

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



In reality it is a scheme that favours cyclists when very few of them use this road, while disadvantaging vehicle users.

The former two-way road, which is a key route between Beckenham Junction and Bromley town centre, has now been

reduced to a one-way street westbound so as to make way for a cycle lane (see latest photo above). Vehicles wanting to go east from Beckenham now have to use Bromley Road. Residents of Albemarle Road and adjacent roads now have tortuous and longer routes to many destinations, or to get to their properties.

This was a road that worked well before the changes and there is no justification for the proposals which are in essence a waste of money.

However the introduction of traffic lights on the Westgate Road Bridge and removal of the bus lane before Shortlands may make sense.

The London Borough of Bromley has run a public consultation on the scheme even though traffic volumes have not returned to normal. You can see the consultation questions and the resulting report here:

<https://tinyurl.com/23k67p3j>

Respondents in the local catchment area answered as follows: Continue trial with amendments - 227; Revert to pre-trial arrangements - 161; No preference - 12. This is hardly conclusive.

But at least Bromley Council did spend money on doing a consultation which is more than many London Councils have been doing of late. As it is still an “experimental” scheme a final decision will be taken later.



Albemarle Road, Bromley

Another Unnecessary Covid Scheme

Albemarle Road in Bromley is one of those roads where an experimental traffic scheme has been introduced using the Covid-19 pandemic as an excuse and for which funding has been provided accordingly.



Transport Minister Grant Shapps has announced “A better deal for bus users”. He claims “fill a double-decker with motorists and it’s possible to remove 75 cars from the road”.

That is clearly not true on most roads because it does not take into account the density of such traffic. Very few roads see nose to tail bus traffic with full buses that would maximise the volume of people carried.

Most bus lanes actually carry less people than they would if they were left to carry all traffic because the frequency of buses is low and passenger loading is also low.

Bus traffic has been falling across the UK for some years – for example passenger numbers were down by over 6% in 2018/19. See Reference 1 below. The only part of the country where bus journeys have been rising (until the recent decline caused by the Covid epidemic) is London which accounts for over 50% of all bus journeys. London buses are massively subsidised and congestion on other public transport services such as the underground and on the roads has encouraged usage.



A Better Deal for Bus Users, Or Is It?

Better Deal for Bus Users (Cont.)

The use of concessionary fares such as the Freedom Pass in London has also promoted bus use at the expense of rising local taxes to pay for them.

Why do people in the rest of the country choose to own and drive cars when a bus would be cheaper? Because buses are not door-to-door services and you have to fit in with their schedules rather than pick your own travel times. Also anyone who uses buses will have experienced the problem of standing in the cold and rain for the next bus only to find it never turns up because it's been cancelled.

How does Grant Shapps aim to make buses more attractive? By developing a National Bus

Strategy and giving hand-outs to bus operators (or "grant funding" as it is euphemistically called).

He also intends to ensure that buses are given priority in new road schemes (i.e. more bus lanes). The Government will be providing taxpayers money to fund such schemes.

The Government will also provide more funding to assist the purchase of all-electric or hybrid buses so as to improve air quality. This is a positive move as diesel buses are still a major contributor to air pollution, particularly in London and other major cities. While cars have got much cleaner in recent years, buses have not with too many old diesels still in use.

A summary of what is proposed is as follows:

- National Bus Strategy focussed on passenger priorities.

- Review of £250 million bus service operators grant to ensure it supports the environment and improved passenger journeys.

- Over £20 million investment in bus priority measures in the West Midlands.

- All new road investments receiving government funding to explicitly address bus priority measures to improve bus journey times and reliability.

- Refreshing the government's guidance to local authorities to provide up to date advice on prioritising those vehicles which can carry the most people.

- Investing up to £50 million to deliver Britain's first all-electric bus town or city.

- Improving information for bus passengers through new digital services and at bus stops.



- Challenging industry to deliver a campaign to attract people to buses

- Incentivising multi-operator ticketing with lower fares.

- Trialling new 'superbus' network approach to deliver low fare, high frequency services and funding 4-year pilot of a lower fare network in Cornwall.

- Ambition for all buses to accept contactless payment for passenger convenience.

- £30 million extra bus funding to be paid direct to local authorities to enable them to improve current bus services or restore lost services.

- £20 million to support demand responsive services in rural and suburban areas.

But it's worth pointing out that the level of investment and subsidies is still quite trivial in comparison with that spent on rail services (for example £106 billion on building HS2 alone).

Grant Shapps' announcement looks like a canard to win political support in some areas rather than something that will have a real impact. Bus users will continue to be the poor relations of other public transport users, and this writer does not see it encouraging people to get out of their cars and onto buses.

Spending money on bus priority measures rather than improving the road network for all vehicle users is simply a mistake. In summary this looks like another misconceived policy from Grant Shapps' Department rather like the recent encouragement of LTNs.

Ref. 1: Bus Statistics: <https://tinyurl.com/4rdy9t7y>

Ref. 2: Shapps' Announcement: <https://tinyurl.com/45bhapcy>





Profits from Parking

Parking profits continue to rise in London

The news blog MyLondon have reported on the continued rise in the profits made by London Councils from car parking. They report that in 2018/19 the profits were £454.4 million. That compares with about £300 million that we reported in 2010 (see <https://tinyurl.com/yznpt6hu>).

Councils are legally not supposed to make profits from on-street parking but that law is widely ignored.

However they can from off-street parking – this is one reason why Westminster is the top earning borough in London with profits of £58 million as they own or operate a number of off-street car parks. But other high earning inner London boroughs have no such excuse.

With council budgets under pressure, increasing parking revenue is seen as an easy way to generate more income. Hence the increases in charges being made by such means as introducing emission-based parking charges and extending CPZs (Controlled Parking Zones).

For example, Lewisham has the stated intention to have the whole borough covered by CPZs. This is what Councillor Sophie McGeevor said recently on twitter: “Any surplus from parking revenue is completely absorbed by concessionary fares for public transport.

This year we’ve committed to roll our borough wide CPZs. Increased income should mean we can reinvest in cycle hangers & public realm. Totally get that cheap safe storage is key”. Clearly she thinks that permit parking charges are a source of income when legally they are only supposed to cover administration and enforcement costs.

Any surplus from parking charges is supposed to be spent on transport provision but it is typically currently used mainly to subsidise the Freedom Pass and other Concessionary Fare Charges that TfL passes onto local boroughs. But why should vehicle owners be paying for public transport fares rather than the general population?

Want to find out how much your local borough is making from parking charges? Use this template letter to do so: <https://tinyurl.com/6h9n99kz>



Blackwall Tunnel Fire

A car caught fire in the Blackwall Tunnel northbound on 9/4/2021. Both tunnels were closed and gridlock spread over a wide area of South-East London as a result.

The Tunnel was quickly repaired but this is not the first time a vehicle fire has occurred in the tunnels. It shows how important it is to build the Silvertown Tunnel as there are few alternative routes to cope with current volumes of traffic.

The older tunnels such as the northbound Blackwall Tunnel and the Rotherhithe Tunnel are known to be very dangerous and vulnerable to fires as they have no escape routes and limited fire prevention/control measures. It’s symptomatic of the ageing and archaic Thames River crossings in London that these tunnels are still in use.

Hammersmith Bridge is also closed and needs repair. Under investment in London’s road infrastructure by recent Mayors is the cause. They have preferred to spend money on grandiose rail/underground projects.

Is the Police Bill Disproportionate?

After the events over the weekend in Bristol, which effectively degenerated into a riot with several police officers injured, it’s worth considering the issues raised.

Continued on next page.



Police Bill (Cont.)

The demonstrations under the banner "Kill the Bill" (a very provocative phrase as Bill is often used as a name for the police), were aimed at stopping the passage of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill through Parliament. This is a long and complex piece of legislation but you can read a summary of it by the BBC here: <https://tinyurl.com/m3mx48hx>

Apart from the fact that the Bristol demonstrations were a clear breach of the Covid regulations re public gatherings, this legislation to tighten up the rules around public demonstrations was surely long overdue. In fact after the campaigns by Extinction Rebellion which closed bridges across the Thames in London in 2018, I wrote to Cressida Dick (head of the Metropolitan Police)

on the issue. This is some of what I said: "These [demonstrations] have caused very considerable disruption to traffic which the police have done nothing about apparently. Obstructing the public highway is an offence, as presumably you are well aware, so why are the police not intervening to stop these demonstrations?"

I got a long and complex reply effectively saying the current state of the law made it difficult to halt these events. The new legislation is clearly aimed at giving the police clearer powers which is surely to be welcomed.

I don't think anyone objects to peaceful demonstrations that enable protestors to bring issues to the attention of the public. But when they obstruct traffic, close roads, or otherwise harass people going about their normal business then it is time to step in to stop them.
Roger Lawson

Towing Away of Vehicles Was Illegal

The Daily Mail has reported that for many years the removal (towing away) of vehicles as part of parking enforcement operations was not covered by legislation. They say: "An incredible legal gaffe could result in millions of motorists launching appeals against parking penalties handed out over the past 30 years.

Enforcement powers relied on by police and local authorities were accidentally deleted from the statute book, the Mail can reveal today. Powers to charge motorists for removing and impounding vehicles were introduced in 1984 but were 'inadvertently removed due to a drafting error' in 1991 – and no one noticed until now".



Some London boroughs such as Hackney and Camden (Hackney towed away 14,673 vehicles from 2011 to 2015 alone) were very active in using this procedure.

As someone who suffered from this pernicious practice in circa 2005 – towed away for slightly overstaying in a parking bay – I have sent the London Borough of Camden a letter requesting a refund of the several hundreds of pounds in charges. I will advise any result in due course.

This practice has been abandoned by most councils except for extreme situations such as causing an obstruction, but it was always a very dubious procedure. In my case the tow company also caused damage to my vehicle which they denied doing.

See <https://tinyurl.com/yye78uf8> for the Mail article.

Roger Lawson



London Elections – Runners and Riders

We have elections for the position of London Mayor in May, plus elections for the London Assembly. In addition there are a few bye-elections in the local boroughs although the main elections for those are not until 2022 so you won't be able to get rid of those councillors who support the LTNs until then. The main candidates for Mayor and their parties are as follows (in alphabetic order):

BAILEY Shaun, Conservative Party Candidate

BALAYEV Kam, Renew

BERRY Sian, Green Party

BROWN Valerie, The Burning Pink Party

Continued on next page.



London Elections (Cont.)

CORBYN Piers, Let London Live

FOX Laurence, The Reclaim Party

GAMMONS Peter, UKIP

HEWISON Richard, Rejoin

HUDSON Vanessa, Animal Welfare Party

KELLEHER Steve, Social Democratic Party

KHAN Sadiq, Labour Party

KURTEN David, Heritage Party

LONDON Farah, Independent

OBUNGE Nims, Independent

PORRITT Luisa, Liberal Democrats

REID Mandu, Vote Women's Equality Party

ROSE Brian, London Real Party

Sadiq Khan is well ahead of Shaun Bailey in the opinion polls with other candidates not appearing to have much chance of winning at this point in time. The BBC has been saying that only candidates from the main parties have ever won the Mayoral election but they are forgetting that Ken Livingstone won the position after standing as an independent. He only later rejoined the Labour Party. You should also bear in mind that the Mayoral vote is a primary/secondary vote system.

You get to choose two candidates and your secondary vote will be counted if your first choice does not get an overall majority. This means you can vote for "less popular" candidates as a first choice without detracting from backing the one you expect to have a chance of winning.

I will cover the policies of the main candidates as published in their manifestos as regards transport issues only. I have omitted those candidates for which I could not find any details of their manifestos or policies related to transport.

Shaun Bailey – He aims for a transport network fit for a global city by restoring order to Transport for London's finances so we protect the services Londoners rely on. To achieve this he plans to introduce corporate sponsorship on the tube, and retain the concessionary fares for the under 16s and over 60s. This will also enable him to scrap the proposed rise in Council tax arising from the Mayor's precept. He will use revenues from the ULEZ to replace old buses with zero-emission buses. Cutting harmful emissions by 17%. And Shaun will provide an interest-free loan to every black cab driver so they can switch to elec-



tric cabs (he claims this is equivalent of taking one million diesel cars off London's roads).

Shaun will set up a London Infrastructure Bank. This will be kept in public hands, attracting money from a mixture of private and public sources. The Bank will be used to fund long-term transport projects. Like repairs to Hammer-smith Bridge and Crossrail 2.

He will also reverse the congestion charge hike, scrap the ULEZ extension and the proposed outer London road tax. He also says he will listen to Londoners and suspend every single unwanted LTN.

Kam Balayev – I was unable to find a detail manifesto but he says he will "Revise the congestion charge and freeze fares on

TfL" (the latter is of course one reason why Khan's policies have resulted in TfL's financial difficulties).

Sian Berry – She would "Reduce traffic and cancel the Silvertown Road Tunnel, investing instead in healthy streets, walking, cycling, better buses and new public transport links".

She would expand the ULEZ scheme to cover the whole of London and also introduce a road pricing plan.

She will cancel road projects and introduce a workplace parking levy. Plus there will be more funding for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Clearly a candidate not likely to be popular with our readers!

Valerie Brown – She would scrap the position of Mayor and replace it with "citizen assemblies", i.e. the undemocratic system of selecting people in a way other than by a simple vote. Not a candidate to be seriously considered I suggest.

Piers Corbyn – He recently sent me this email: "I am a candidate for Mayor of London and as you may have noticed I am totally opposed to the ULEZ extension. I also agree with all (or almost all as far as I can see) your other policies. If Mayor - and this is truly possible, we are finding massive support - I would also review the existing ULEZ for which I cannot see justification.

Continued on next page.



London Elections (Cont.)

An important issue is extra journey lengths of people from outside zones for avoidance. This increases pollution. I've read your superb document on ULEZ extension". He certainly seems to be a candidate worth considering therefore.

Laurence Fox – He plans to “GET LONDON MOVING”. He proposes free tubes and buses for six months (but the cost and how he might pay for that is unclear) and to scrap all Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and unnecessary cycle lanes. He proposes to scrap “lock-downs” and would put up statues to London’s heroes and heroines – not tear them down. Clearly a “populist” candidate, but has he

got any experience of managing a large organisation?

Peter Gammons – He says: “I want to get London moving again. There are over 2 million miles of unused tunnels, streets, and chambers beneath London. This abandoned network was secretly built by the Ministry of Defence, Post Office, and BT”.

He also says: “As mayor, I will put a stop to Khan’s war on motorists. I am passionate about supporting London’s taxi drivers and will launch a full review into reopening roads which Khan has closed. Park Lane is one such road that needs urgent review. I’m tired of hypocrites like Sadiq Khan trying to make everybody walk or cycle whilst he swans around London in a £300,000 five litre Range Rover. Whereas Khan is tearing up trees to build new bicycle lanes, I am proposing a new tree-planting initiative. This is a strategy supported by ecologists for combating CO2

emission. I want to convert these disused spaces into walkways, safe cycle lanes, and create the world’s first underground ‘Pod’ transport system. This ambitious project will speed up the city and clear up London’s congestion – an issue that consecutive Conservative and Labour administrations have failed to solve”. Certainly some interesting ideas from this candidate.

Richard Hewison – Campaigning on a platform to rejoin the EU over which the Mayor has no say so surely a vote for him would be wasted.

Vanessa Hudson – She is primarily a single-issue candidate focussed on animal welfare but she does say that she would: “Incentivise public transport use, demand increased funding from Government to ensure affordability, reliability & safety – improving air quality”.



Steve Kelleher – He would introduce free public transport for people in the three years running up to their 25th birthday to help start new businesses and the search for work. He will introduce a 'London Citizen Card' for those who have lived in the capital for five years consecutively - entitling them to benefits such as occasional free tube travel. Other policies are not clear, perhaps because he seems to have changed party recently.

Sadiq Khan – His main points are: “Continuing to invest in public transport to ensure it is safe, affordable and reliable, keeping fares as low as possible, working to put TfL on a sound, sustainable financial footing after the pandemic, and supporting a

revolution in walking and cycling”.

His manifesto of over 100 pages is mainly a celebration of his alleged achievements in the role of Mayor and you can expect more of the same no doubt.

But this writer has frequently criticised his management of the finances of TfL and I am opposed to the ULEZ scheme, particularly the extension to the North/South Circular which he clearly intends to proceed with. The Mayor’s Transport strategy as previously adopted has resulted in an enormous waste of money and a degradation of the transport network in London (see <https://tinyurl.com/cm9my88> for more information).

On LTNs, he has this to say: “Last year, TfL and the London boroughs rapidly rolled out measures to make our streets safer for walking, cycling, and social distancing, such as low-traffic neighbourhoods. Most of these schemes are temporary and implemented under emergency Government guidance.

I will work with London boroughs to ensure communities and stakeholder groups are properly consulted on these schemes, refining them where necessary, and making them permanent where they are successful”.

Continued on next page.



London Elections (Cont.)

He also says “Building on the introduction of the 24/7 bus lanes trial last year, I will undertake a programme of bus priority schemes, improving reliability of the bus network across the city”. So clearly he plans for more bus lanes.

He will push forward with the Healthy Streets agenda with more funding for cycle lanes, cycle parking and the Santander scheme. He will continue to support the innovative use of timed changes to streets across the capital through ‘School Streets’, ‘Summer Streeteries’ and ‘Lunchtime Streets’ — supporting the return of the hospitality sector. Play Streets in residential areas will be important in helping tackle isolation, improving mental

economy as the COVID pandemic retreats”. She would “reverse the road restrictions and remove LTNs, plus bring back high street parking. She has been actively campaigning against LTNs in some of the boroughs.

She would abolish time travel restrictions for Freedom Pass Holders and introduce a QR code plate on all bicycles to identify riders and cycle owners for control of traffic offences plus make helmets with a QR code mandatory. In effect she has a number of interesting ideas. It’s worth reading her manifesto as she is one of the more credible independent candidates.

Luisa Porritt – She would introduce road pricing and scrap the Silvertown Tunnel. But I am not

health in our communities. He will explore options for future car-free days in central London.

On road safety he will continue with his Vision Zero Plan despite the fact that it has failed to have a significant impact on the loss of life and injuries. He will accelerate the roll out of 20mph speed limits on the TfL road network and improve the safety of the most dangerous junctions, including a programme of new pedestrian crossings at those junctions currently lacking them.

His solution to the problem of TfL’s finances is to introduce an outer London tax for those who drive into London from outside (which they won’t get a vote on of course), to ask the Government for more money and to have Vehicle Excise Duty given to him.

David Kurten – He wants to Get London Moving. Policies include: “Remove pop-up cycle lanes and road blockages.

sure how much she knows about it as she alleged recently that it will be a motorway which is surely not true. The recent closure of the Blackwall Tunnel due to a car fire which brought gridlock to a wide area of London demonstrated the need for additional Thames crossings.

She says: “Drivers would be charged based on much they drive, how much pollution they create - with fair exemptions and discounts for special needs and work use. This will clean up our air and raise funds for our public transport network in a fairer way than the congestion charge”.

Brian Rose – He would scrap the Congestion Charge and his manifesto says this: “Ensure that Transport For London (TfL) is

No more LTNs. Stop ULEZ and Congestion Charge expansion”. He also says: “UNBLOCK OUR ROADS. Remove Khan’s pop-up cycle lanes and traffic barriers. No more cycle superhighways on trunk routes. End road blockages between neighbourhoods. Unblock the Embankment. Build the Silvertown tunnel” and “END THE WAR ON MOTORISTS. Scrap evening and weekend congestion charging. No ULEZ or congestion charge expansion. No LEZ charge increases. No pay-as-you-go road pricing”.

He would also scrap HS2 but complete Crossrail. He is a founder member of the Heritage Party that believes in “free speech and liberty, traditional family values, national sovereignty, and financial responsibility”.

Farah London - She will introduce 100 days of free travel across London “as an important first step to reinvigorate the city’s



managed in a fiscally responsible manner by avoiding further government bailouts due to historic poor financial management; Build a transportation system of the future that promises to lead the world in technology, customer experience, and environmental friendly practices to deliver a world-class transportation service to all citizens.

This will be accomplished by leveraging the innovation, expertise, and accountability of the private sector with the long-term planning that only the public sector can provide; Freeze fare increases for children, vulnerable groups, the elderly and disabled;

Continued on next page.



London Elections (Cont.)

Remove the physical friction that prohibits unimpeded movement in the capital by abolishing all restricted access for taxis to major carriageways, removing pedestrian social distancing barricades and rethinking empty cycle lanes by proposing mixed use zones to allow the traffic flow of both cars and cycles”.

Comment: he might have wider appeal if he does not appear in photographs wearing a pin-striped suit.

Conclusion: How to select the right candidate(s) to choose for tactical voting? I would suggest the following approach:

Ignore the race, gender or party of the candidates – just focus on

their policies and their past track records and experience. The Mayor of London has a massive budget so preferably the chosen candidate should have both political and business experience. Otherwise simply look at their manifestos and decide whether you can trust them to implement the policies you like.

As regards the London Assembly elections, there seem to be few details available on individual manifestos but presumably they will follow their party’s policies as declared for the Mayoral role.

More details may be available nearer the date of the elections (the 6th of May). But bear in mind that regrettably the London Assembly has minimal power to control the Mayor who acts as a dictator.

But do make sure you vote!

Roger Lawson

Tories Abandoning London?

There was a good article in the Telegraph by Allister Heath recently about the Tories abysmal showing in London politics. This is some of what he said under the headline “The Tories have abandoned Sadiq Khan’s London to a doom-spiral of permanent decline”:

“The reality is that while the Tories will happily take your tax money, they won’t lift a finger to help you. They prefer to help Khan: refusing to criticise the Met Police’s deplorable performance, which the mayor is ultimately responsible for; handing over billions for Transport for London, chaired by the mayor, without seizing genuine control; and promoting Low Traffic Neighbourhoods”.



Change of Name and Addresses

As you are probably aware, I have been writing and publishing this newsletter for many years to highlight the irrational attacks on car drivers by the Mayor of London and many London boroughs. The latest manifestation of this is the promotion of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs). We would all like less traffic congestion and less air pollution but LTNs are not the way to achieve it.

This note is to advise you that because of a difference of opinion on policy and the inter-

perate and ill-judged posts by the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) on social media I am no longer associated with that organisation.

My activities will now be done under the banner of “Freedom for Drivers Foundation” and this newsletter has been rebranded accordingly.

As a result the email addresses of rwl@abd.org.uk and rl2019@abd.org.uk no longer work and you should use this web page to contact me:

<https://tinyurl.com/33wdfp9e>

Web and other addresses unchanged.

The web site address of www.freedomfordrivers.org and phone number, postal address,

blog account (<https://freedomfordrivers.blog/>) and twitter account (@drivers_london) have not changed.

You can read about our latest activity and comments on transport and traffic news in London on our blog.

IMPORTANT: If you wish to be removed from our mailing list please click on the unsubscribe link in the emails we send out. You are in our mailing list as a result of some contact on past campaigns or specific registrations but if you no longer have an interest in roads policies, please opt out.

Roger Lawson

**Registering to Receive This Newsletter**

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 us 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 Freedom for Drivers Foundation (FFDF)

The Freedom for Drivers Foundation (FFDF) is an 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 road tolls. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. More information on the FFDF is available from our web site at www.freedomfordrivers.org

Contact and Publisher Information

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