

FFDF London News

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Editorial

The battles over Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) in London continue. It is very clear that when independent surveys are done, most of the public are opposed to the road closures. But some borough Councils are deferring full public consultations using the Covid pandemic as an excuse. It's just possible they are unwilling to face up to reality and hope that people's views will change over time. But I don't think they will.

When a journey that used to take just a few minutes now takes up to an hour, they are not going to change their minds.

And that applies whether they are driving a car, using a taxi, or taking a bus as all vehicles are being delayed.

The response from those who wish to remove all vehicles is that people can walk or cycle but that's impractical for the elderly or disabled. London has always been a City for the young as jobs and the social life attracts them. But there is still a very sizeable proportion of both the elderly and disabled.

It is morally wrong to discriminate against them, and legally wrong under the Equality Act. But Councils are often ignoring their obligations. The real culprit in this affair is central Government led by Grant Shapps, Transport Minister. They changed the regulations to permit road closures to be made easily (and without public consultation) and also provided the funding to support them.

Democracy has been undermined by these measures and respect for politicians (both MPs and local Councillors) in many parts of London has reached a new low. Mayor Sadiq Khan is also losing popularity despite his desperate efforts to keep TfL afloat and blaming all his woes on the Government and the pandemic.

I think in a few years time, people will see the last year as a turning point in the fortunes of London. Many have learnt that you don't need to commute to a job in the City and there is little reason to live here. But it need not have been so.

Roger Lawson
(Editor)



Quotes of the Month

"London's 'Streetspace' scheme was 'seriously flawed' and 'took advantage of the pandemic' to push through 'radical' and permanent changes to London's roads"Justice Lang in the High Court. See page 2.

"An overwhelming number, 61% of residents, voted for the removal of the LTN scheme entirely. However, I understand that Croydon Council is looking at implementing ANPR cameras instead. This is not what local residents voted for."Ellie Reeves M.P. See pages 3/4.



Streetspace Plan Overturned in the High Court

There has been an important judgement in the High Court after a Judicial Review was launched by taxi drivers. They challenged the blocking of Bishopsgate in the City of London (the A10) to taxi drivers by the use of a “bus gate”. Mrs Justice Lang declared the Traffic Order used was unlawful. This is the press release issued by the High Court on the judgement:



– The Streetspace for London Plan and associated Guidance failed to recognise the distinct status of taxis as an important form of accessible public transport,

– The Streetspace Plan, associated Guidance and A10 Bishopsgate Traffic Order breached licensed taxi drivers legitimate expectation to be allowed to use bus lanes to ply for hire effectively across London,

– There was a failure to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the 2010 Equality Act and account for needs of passengers with protected characteristics,



– The Mayor and TfL took advantage of the pandemic to push through “radical changes”.

– The decisions were not a rational response to the issues which arose as a result of the COVID.

cycle lanes without prior public consultation across many parts of London. It was very clear that this had nothing to do with the pandemic at all but was simply being used to bring in such measures quickly and without consultation.

summer day, the level of air pollution was such as to noticeably affect my lungs. But the main cause was clearly the long queue of almost stationary diesel buses on the road. To ban all vehicles except buses was totally irrational.

<END>

The Court has now ordered that the Streetspace Plan, Interim Guidance to Boroughs and the A10 Bishopsgate Traffic Order be quashed following the judgement. Justice Lang called the measures an “ill-considered response” to the pandemic including radical changes and it was clear that “the Mayor and TfL intended these schemes would become permanent, once the temporary orders expired”.

Although this judgement specifically relates to the challenge by taxi drivers it could have wider implications as similar legal challenges are being mounted for several LTNs. The failure to properly recognise the needs of the disadvantaged under the Equality Act is particularly significant, and the failure to give due regard to the network management duty imposed by section 16 of the 2004 Traffic Management Act. It seems likely that Mayor Khan will appeal this judgement, using taxpayers’ money to do so of course.

Bishopsgate is a very important route for traffic to access parts of the City now that Bank junction has been closed.

The judicial review was submitted on behalf of the UNITED TRADE ACTION GROUP LIMITED and the LICENSED TAXI DRIVERS ASSOCIATION LIMITED, and their solicitors were Chiltern Law.

Roger Lawson

For more information, see:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6kprpbz>

Comment: The Streetspace Plan was used by TfL to introduce numerous road closures including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and such measures as

It’s worth saying that the last time I walked down Bishopsgate before the pandemic hit on a hot



Legal Actions Against LTNs Escalating

There are as many as 10 separate legal actions being pursued by London residents against Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs). There will be an initial hearing in the High Court on the 12th February to decide how the cases should be dealt with.

The grounds for each legal challenge may vary from borough to borough depending on the actions of the local council. But the possible grounds for a legal challenge may include the following:

Roads can be closed by the use of Traffic Orders but there needs

there may well be successful challenges against LTNs introduced using Streetspace funding from TfL.

For lists of the funds being raised for legal action, and other campaign groups in London, go here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y56sq8ha>

Please give generously!

LTNs Are Not Popular

The promised survey of residents that was planned to take place in December in Lewisham has been abandoned. It will now be combined with a full public consultation in March, so residents of the borough will have to put up with current road closures for many more months.

to be reasonable justification for such closures and time given for objections. There are also several Acts of Parliament that might be relevant. For example:

– The Road Traffic Act 1984 which contains this sentence (in Section 122): “It shall be the duty of the Greater London Council and of every other local authority upon whom functions are conferred by or under this Act, so to exercise the functions conferred on them by this Act to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic....”. Road closures aimed simply at reducing traffic appear to be ignoring that duty.

– The Traffic Management Act 2004 which puts a duty on local traffic authorities to manage their road network to make sure

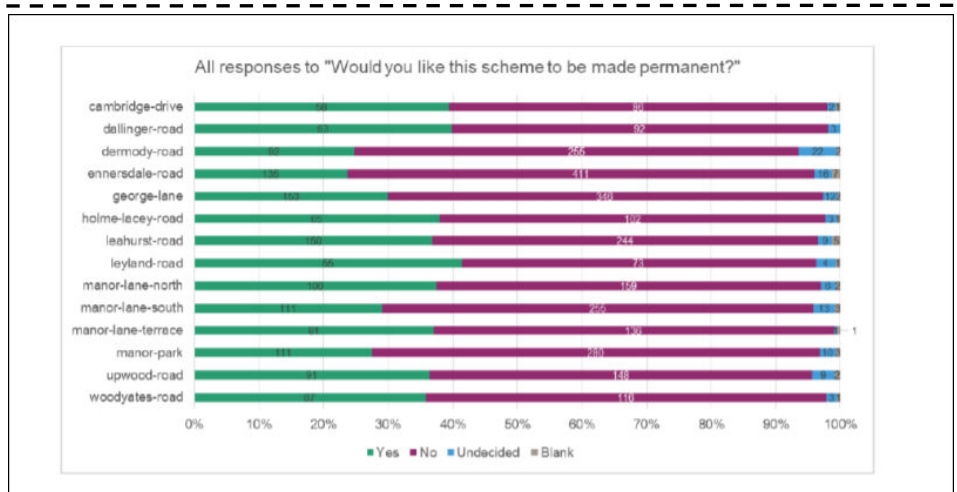
that traffic can move freely. Again this duty is being ignored.

– The Equalities Act 2010 which restricts discrimination against people with disabilities or based on age when road closure proposals negatively impact those sections of the community.

There is also the issue of the lack of public consultations on many of the road closures to date, or they have been done in an incomplete and biased manner.

Alternatively some of the road closures have been simply irrational, or have been progressed without the correct procedures being followed by councils.

The recent successful action by black cab drivers against the Bishopsgate road closure showed how



But Lewisham Council have published a lot of information recently on Commonplace about the data they have collected so far including the opinions posted on Commonplace. For the voluminous data, see: <https://tinyurl.com/y6rtfxf8>

The chart above shows that there is clearly a large majority of residents who do not wish the LTN scheme to be made permanent.

So much for the claims that LTNs are popular with residents!

Roger Lawson

Follow the Blog

The FFDF London region has a blog where many of the articles herein first appeared. It is present here: <https://abdondon.wordpress.com/> To get the latest news as it appears, follow the blog.

LTNs Are Collapsing

LTNs are collapsing under public and legal pressure. Croydon is the latest (photo of opposition demo to the right).

Several Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) schemes have been abandoned and the latest one to collapse has been that in the Crystal Palace and South Norwood area of Croydon.

This is what local MP Ellie Reeves said in a letter to the Council after a consultation was undertaken:

“The consultation outcome is now known and the results are set out below:

- 26% in favour of changing the scheme to ANPR

- 15% in favour of retaining the existing scheme

- 61% in favour of removing the scheme entirely



An overwhelming number, 61% of residents, voted for the removal of the scheme entirely. However, I understand that Croydon Council is looking at implementing ANPR cameras instead. This is not what local residents voted for. This is not what local residents want. There was a high turnout of 25.29% of residents responding, it is important to note that traffic scheme consultation would usually expect a 10-15% response rate. I am surprised that the Council's report has

implied a higher turnout was needed for the results of the consultation to be carried out as expressed by local people who have to live with the decisions they have voted for”.

Yes the Council will be removing the existing scheme almost immediately but they are proposing to bring in an ANPR (i.e. camera enforced) scheme to replace it. Such a scheme will provide exemptions to local residents and other selected groups.



They also need to take some legal advice after the recent High Court judgement on the Mayor's Streetspace plans.

This is what one local resident said about such a proposal: “Where do you draw the line with the permit? Each case looks fair on its own, but you end up with so many permits you might as well not bother”. The FFDF totally agrees with that view. We are opposed to permit schemes or timed road closures. They are very expensive to operate and camera enforcement just enables the local council to generate enormous amounts of money in fines through accidental infringements.

In Lewisham over a million pounds has been extracted in this way in a few weeks. Above is a picture of a signed bus gate enforced by ANPR in Manor Park



which shows how confusing the signs can be. The “No Entry” sign in theory stops buses going through making it the shortest bus lane on record.

The opposition to fines in Lewisham, where many people have

collected tens of them racking up thousands of pounds in fines, has resulted in multiple appeals to the London Tribunal.

Continued on next page.



LTNs Are Collapsing (Cont.)

Surprisingly it is reported that many appeals to the London Tribunal have been upheld.

The quote on the previous page from a local resident in Croydon comes from a publication I shall call "Insidious Croydon" as they always make abusive comments about the ABD. This publication suggests that the local campaign against the LTN in Croydon called "Open Our Roads" is backed by the ABD and that the Council has caved in to motoring lobby groups. This is simply wrong. The ABD made a token donation to Open Our Roads, as we have done to other anti-LTN groups in London. But they have no influence over the Croydon campaign which was created and run by local residents. It's the

ordinary vehicle owners in Croydon (and the neighbouring borough of Bromley whose residents have also been badly affected by the scheme) who hate the road closures and the traffic congestion they have created.

Open Our Roads is still pursuing legal action on the Croydon scheme.

The conclusion is obvious. The majority of local residents oppose LTN schemes where they have been imposed. And that includes people who do not even own vehicles. If it was not for central Government and the Mayor of London encouraging and financing such schemes, using the Covid-19 epidemic as an excuse, they would never have been adopted. Bear that in mind the next time you vote.



Needless to point out that as the Mayor paid for this study it is hardly surprising that he got the answers he wanted.

The Mayor's press release claims that 4,000 Londoners "died due to the impact of toxic air in 2019". This is nonsense. They make these claims based on estimates and by converting life expectancy forecasts into deaths which is scientifically and mathematically incorrect. But only one death has ever been partly attributed to air pollution (see later article).

The report also actually states that the "losses of life years involve about 0.5% of total life years lived" and attributes that to "anthropogenic" air pollution (i.e. from human activity").

But it is impossible to remove all such air pollution or even a large proportion.

The report even suggests that those who live in outer London boroughs (such as the Editor's Bromley) suffer more "attributable" deaths because they have an older population even though they have lower air pollution levels. It also ignores the fact that life expectancy in central London boroughs with high air pollution is actually higher.

Telegraph Article: <https://tinyurl.com/3npqcdwe>



Pollution in LTN Rose

The Daily Telegraph has run a couple of interesting articles on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) recently. The first one (see below for link to the article) reports that NO2 levels fell substantially in Wandsworth after an LTN was removed. The air pollution increased on main roads where traffic congestion increased, often grinding to a halt during rush hours. There were also problems with access by emergency services to the LTNs. The article also lists the 31 councils who have removed, modified or cancelled green roads initiatives.

Incidentally the Mayor of London has published a new report from Imperial College that says his policies will increase life expectancy.



Nigel Farage's Pledge

The second Telegraph article was on the commitment by Nigel Farage and his Reform Party (formerly the Brexit Party) to field candidates who oppose local politicians ("any and everyone") who support the madness of the Government's green transport revolution.

Mr Farage is quoted as saying: "If measures to improve the environment really are necessary, they can only be introduced sensibly and with proper consultation, not sneaked through cynically under the guise of the pandemic".

Continued on next page.



Nigel Farage (Cont.)

Comment: The FFDF would certainly agree with that. The Reform Party might gain a lot of supporters in Labour controlled London boroughs such as Lewisham, Lambeth, Croydon and others where LTNs have proved to be deeply unpopular. Such boroughs were seen as good targets for the Brexit Party in the past as the concerns of many working-class voters have been ignored by the new socialist elite.

Emergency Service Access Problems

The nearest available ambulance is dispatched to a 999 call so we do not profile emergency access routes like the LFB because any crew from across London can be dispatched if they are nearest and this might not be a local crew.

Any delay in response to an address behind closures could be detrimental to patient safety and cause serious harm, injury or even death to a patient due to the ambulance response being delayed.

Consideration also needs to be given to the wider health and social care providers who will need access to addresses and are on tight schedules. Patient transport ambulance picking patients up for chemotherapy or dialysis appointments, district and community healthcare teams and social care carers will all be

Access problems due to LTNs have been reported by the London Ambulance Service

The second Telegraph article also mentions a Freedom of Information Act request handled by the Borough of Greenwich (see link below). It

includes these comments from the London Ambulance Service:

“The London Ambulance Service (LAS) cannot support any scheme that involves the closure of a road to traffic using static bollards, lockable bollards, coffin bollards, gates or physical barriers like planters. The main reason for this is our vehicles do not carry any form GERDA or FB

delayed by having to navigate additional road closures and restrictions leading to delayed care, welfare issues, humanitarian concerns and potential for emergency admission as a result of delays. In addition missed clinical appointments has a detrimental effect on service delivery and patient flow through the NHS system. Consideration of exemptions for these staff through restrictions would also need to be given.

Although the LAS does support the need to ensure social distancing this cannot be at the detriment of patients calling 999, but currently the use of any kind of bollards/gate/planter to close road is not acceptable”.

Clearly the “modal filters” used in so many LTN schemes are not advisable, such as that blocking access to an ambulance in Lee



keys to access these obstacles and delays can be detrimental to patient safety.

Existing schemes already create us problems and gates and bollards are not generally routinely maintained pan London and are difficult to unlock anyway.



Green (photo above). 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.

FOI Link:
<https://tinyurl.com/1mu1weh9>

Ella Kissi-Debrah Inquest

The Coroner on the reopened inquest into the death of Ella Kissi-Debrah in Lewisham some years ago has delivered a verdict that says air pollution "made a material contribution" to her death.

Continued on next page.



Inquest (Cont.)

This decision has been long awaited, and indeed campaigned for, by those opposed to air pollution, particularly from vehicles.

Was the verdict surprising? I suggest not because it is well known that high air pollution can trigger and exacerbate asthma attacks, particularly in those sensitive to such events.

Ella Kissi-Debrah lived about 30 metres from the South Circular (A205) in Lewisham. This is a road that is often congested and is one of the few roads around the south of London and hence is used by many HGVs, buses and numerous other vehicles. Air pollution is obviously very high as a result along the road and no doubt nearby. The coroner's verdict that air pollution contributed to the child's death is not

unreasonable. But Ella Kissi-Debrah seems to have had a long history of health problems that compounded her difficulties. Using this death as grounds for generalisations on the effects of air pollution on the population would not be wise.

This is a road that has not been fit for purpose for at least 50 years. This writer has been avoiding it for that length of time ever since I have lived in South-East London. There has been an abject failure by bodies such as TfL and the boroughs through which the road runs (including Lewisham) to improve the road and tackle the congestion which is a prime cause of the high air pollution.

Whether air pollution generally in London is a major threat to public health at its current levels is another matter altogether, however much campaigners on this

issue promote the coroner's verdict. With vehicles getting cleaner, while air pollution from other sources has been rising in London, simplistic analysis would be wrong. People have actually been living longer in general but it still makes sense to tackle the worse air pollution hot-spots.

Unfortunately Lewisham Council have actually made matters worse on the South Circular by closing roads under the banner of "Low Traffic Neighbourhoods". This has diverted traffic from side roads onto the main roads including the South Circular, making it even more clogged up for most of the day. Ms Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, Ella's mother, has complained about these actions and was quoted in the Times as saying "lots and lots of people live in these roads that are already gridlocked. And lots of children that live in these areas have



respiratory issues. Is it morally right to add more traffic to those roads? We have to ask that question".

In conclusion, as someone who has suffered from asthma in the past, let me say that cleaning up the worst locations on London's roads for air pollution should be a high priority. Asthma is very unpleasant even in mild forms, and although treatments have improved in recent years, deaths from asthma can exceed 1,000 in a year in the UK.

There are several ways to reduce air pollution in high locations but certainly one of them is to ensure that roads have adequate capacity for the demand imposed on them.

Postscript: The Coroner's verdict was widely misreported, including the BBC saying that air pollu-

tion was "the cause of her death" on TV News, implying it was the sole cause. The Coroner actually said that he intended to record "air pollution exposure" as a third cause of death in addition to acute respiratory failure and severe asthma. But he did criticise the authorities for failing to take action on excessive air pollution. Sadiq Khan made his usual political point by blaming his predecessor for lack of action on air pollution, but one might just as well blame Ken Livingstone and the Government before the GLA was formed because the problems on the South Circular go back many years.

Roger Lawson



Turning London into a Ghetto

We have covered the disastrous mismanagement of the finances of Transport for London (TfL) in several previous editions. That came home to roost when the coronavirus epidemic reduced people's inclination to use public transport thus reducing TfL's income and resulting in the need for Government bail-outs. The latest wheeze by Mayor Sadiq Khan to fix his financial difficulties is the proposal to charge anyone who drives into London from outside a tax of £3.50 per day (or £5.50 for more polluting vehicles).

Continued on next page.



London into a Ghetto (Cont.)

The whole of the Greater London Authority (GLA) area, which is that within the M25, would be subject to the “charge” (i.e. tax) so yet again we have the situation that those who have to pay the tax are not represented because they have no say in who gets elected as Mayor of London. This is totally undemocratic.

There are estimated to be 1.3 million journeys into London from outside each week which are mainly into the outer suburbs. It would seem the Mayor is keen to turn London into a ghetto of cyclists & public transport users.

The proposed Greater London “boundary charge” will be the subject of a feasibility study and later public consultation before it can go ahead. It will clearly require permission from central Government. You can read more about this and other proposals to fund TfL in the “Financial Sustainability Plan” – see: <https://tinyurl.com/1r7kccx7>

Although some reductions in bus services are proposed to save money, TfL are also proposing to go into commercial property development so as to generate more income. It was of course the speculation in commercial property development that got the London Borough of Croydon into such major financial difficulty that they have effectively become insolvent. Perhaps this is not such a wise idea after all?

An interesting chart from the Plan is this one:

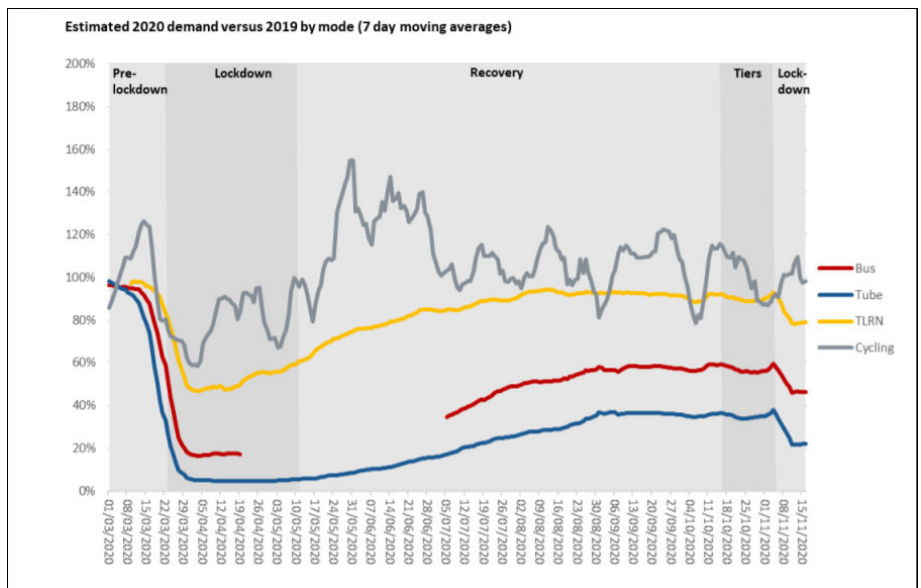
Even with the new tax which might raise £250 million per year, it won't solve the financial difficulties of TfL. It's still likely to need another bailout from the Government of another £3 billion.

There was an interesting article in the Daily Telegraph recently that reported that the UK population is “in the biggest fall since the Second World War”. The over-population of our crowded island, particularly in London and the South-East, has been one of my major concerns for some years. This has led to congested transport systems and a major shortage of homes.

The population reduction is not because of deaths from Covid-19 which have only risen slightly above the normal levels but an “unprecedented exodus of

foreign-born workers” resulting in a fall of 1.3 million in 2020. The largest fall was in London where it may have been 700,000. The article also suggests there is likely to be a “baby bust” as couples delay starting a family which might push the birth rate to its lowest on record according to estimates from PWC.

Such a reduction in the population of London will have negative consequences for the economy in general and particularly for the finances of TfL so the proposals for more taxes and Government bail-outs may only be a short-term fix to TfL's financial difficulties. They still have not faced up to the issue that the public transport network needs to be downsized to match the demand.



It shows how underground train usage has been reduced to a small fraction of former levels by the pandemic and bus usage is not much better. Traffic levels are also below normal and cycling rose during the summer but has since fallen back to previous levels. There is no cycling revolution in London as some people claim.

The Plan also suggests that with the demand for active travel growing “to capitalise on enthusiasm during lockdown we should invest in reallocating road space from private cars in a way that allows for mixed use”. So it looks like we still see even more money wasted on cycle lanes and worse gridlock in London.

Continued on next page.



London into a Ghetto (Cont.)

The Plan also proposes Road User Charging as a way to finance the Mayor's Transport Strategy. In other words, this is likely to be another way to raise taxes on Londoners.

In total, these proposals will hasten the destruction of London's economy and encourage even more people to leave London to live elsewhere. Certainly anyone reading the Plan will get the urge to do so.

Roger Lawson

Tax Rises from the Mayor of London

Many readers will have received a letter from Shaun Bailey. No it was not a personal Xmas card from the Conservative Party candidate for Mayor. It was a note about the current Mayor's proposals to raise the Council Tax Precept that all Londoners pay to fund his operations. This is some of what the note says:

IF YOU DO NOT TAKE ACTION, YOUR MAYORAL COUNCIL TAX WILL RISE BY 21.2%

The Mayor of London levies a tax called the Mayoral Precept. Every household in London pays this tax as part of their council tax bill.

This tax is bundled together with your local council tax. And the Mayor's portion is set to rise by 21.2%.

To stop this tax rise, you must take action. Please visit www.stopkhanstaxhike.com

Sadiq Khan has already raised your mayoral council tax by 20.3% since 2016. But now he's planning to raise it even further — in order to pay for his waste at TfL.

Over the last four years, he accumulated £9.56 billion in wasteful spending at Transport for London.

£159 million on free travel for friends of TfL staff. £828 million on pension overpayments. £5.25 billion on Crossrail delays.

Now TfL is on its second bailout. And in the second bailout's settlement letter, Sadiq Khan revealed that he's planning to pass the cost on to Londoners with a rise in council tax.

<END>

That's not the only way the Mayor is planning to raise taxes. He is proposing to raise as much as £500 million every year by charging



anyone who drives into Greater London from outside the metropolis—see previous article.

Mr Khan argues that public transport users subsidise road maintenance in the capital as some of that expenditure comes from public transport fares. But bus users should certainly contribute to road maintenance surely?

In addition he is ignoring the fact that technically most of London's roads are maintained by local boroughs. In fact he is simplifying the issues of where the money comes from because much of it comes from central Government.

The impact on outer London boroughs, and those who live in the wider South-East, of such a tax could be devastating. There

are three groups of people who would be badly affected: 1) Those who drive into London for employment (not many do so to central London, but those who work in the outer London boroughs often do so); 2) those who drive into outer London Tube or Rail stations to park as part of their commute ("rail heading" as it is called); and 3) those who drive into outer London "town" centres such as Orpington and Bromley for shopping. Many service providers to businesses in London also visit from outside such as plumbers, accountants, etc.

It really is time that central Government takes over the government of London and the management of its finances as Sadiq Khan has made a

complete hash of it. The latest proposals are yet another feeble excuse for money grabbing.

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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.



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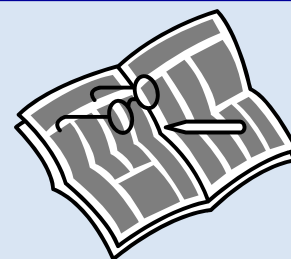
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Contact and Publisher Information

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