

FFDF News

Freedom for Drivers Foundation Newsletter

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

In this Edition

Making London Transport More Sustainable

Mayor Pleads, Now Threatens

Congestion Tax Changes and London Most Congested City

Travel in London Report

Sadiq Khan's Budget

Sadiq Khan's Plan

More Cycling?

Bromley Road Safety Record

New Deputy Transport Mayor

Legal Challenge Rejected

Slowing London Down

Lewisham LTN Decision

News Wrap Up

Traffic Calming Delays

Tottenham Court Road Consultation

Bishopsgate Road Closure

Letter to M.P.

Range Anxiety Solved?

See the last page for publisher and contact information.

Editorial

This edition of our newsletter focuses on the problems of London and specifically on the financial problems of the Mayor. Transport for London (TfL) is in a perilous financial position and continues to lose money.

Will commuters return to central London in their hundreds of thousands on buses and tube trains? Or will the preference for working from home continue? I suspect the latter.

Commuting into London involving hours of wasted time never did make sense when electronic communications provide a viable alternative. By using products such as Zoom and Teams physical meetings are no longer necessary and everyone has got used to using them.

The Mayor and TfL have to accept the new reality and adapt their business to the new normal accordingly.

The only remaining reason for physical meetings is that they are better for social interactions.

Our Prime Minister has obviously realised this by the number of unwise "parties" he has been having at No. 10 Downing Street.

The need for close physical contact seems to be an innate desire in many people and has become obvious during the Covid-19 pandemic. But while new strains of the virus are still very prevalent, some restraint would be preferable.

Part of Sadiq Khan's plans to solve his financial problems in the long-term is the introduction of road pricing in London. I fear that with more electric vehicles on our roads cutting into Government tax income from diesel/petrol this may have to come to pass sooner or later.

I would not be opposed to that so long as the total tax take does not go up. But in London Sadiq Khan needs to focus more on a balanced budget to solve his problems, not look at raising more taxes.

Roger Lawson
(Editor)



Quotes of the Month

"Do you think Lewisham residents will be encouraged to vote for your party, even in national elections, when confronted with such high-handed, bigoted and blinkered attitude on the part of the Council?"..... Letter to Lewisham M.P. Janet Daby from Philip Jolly—see page 13.

"The Government is still refusing to properly fund TfL and Ministers are effectively holding London to ransom, threatening to withhold all emergency funding unless even more significant additional revenue is raised from Londoners for TfL".....Mayor Sadiq Khan pleads for more money—see page 2.



Making London Transport More Sustainable

The battle over funding for London's Transport goes on. At the time of writing the government has granted a paltry 7-day extension of funds to TfL while demanding Mayor Sadiq Khan comes up with alternative proposals for how he will generate an extra £500m - £1bn a year to fund his apparently unsustainable transport system. This while at the same time the Government is encouraging people to work from home again, significantly reducing public transport usage once more.

In granting this 7-day extension it's interesting to note the plans proposed by Khan, which the government rightly rejected. These were:

- A return of VED paid by London car owners to TfL.

- A Greater London Boundary Charge, charging motorists who come from outside London into it £3.50 a day.

- A levy on deliveries made for online purchases, targeting delivery drivers.



Other ideas still on the table include raising the Congestion Charge and ULEZ tax rates. The latter would be after the recently expanded zone failed to raise the income anticipated. Khan may speak of how it has reduced the number of polluting vehicles, but you do not introduce a new tax without

planning on it raising substantially more revenue in the future.

What do all the above have in common? They are all targeting private motor vehicles – the car and delivery vans. Khan's message is crystal clear: he wants to raise money



from drivers rather than tackle the basic problem that public transport users in London do not pay for the cost of the services that are provided. It's unsustainable.

Fundamental reform is needed to make transport in London more sustainable. Only then will Sadiq Khan need to stop asking the Government for more bail-outs.

Mayor Pleads, But Now Threatens

First London Mayor Sadiq Khan pleads with the Government for more money to fund Transport for London in their financial crisis. But with the Government reluctant to concede without a clear picture on future budgets, now he has turned to threatening the public.

He has announced that he plans to increase his share of council tax by £20 per year to support TfL and phase out the over 60+ Oyster card. This will presumably not affect the over 65 Freedom Pass. Fares on the network are planned to increase by inflation plus one per cent next year which will be an over 5% increase.

In addition he plans to scrap Travelcards making the network paperless – contactless bank, credit cards or Oyster cards can be used instead if you have one. Also tube journeys on the Piccadilly line to Heathrow will be charged at a premium rate.

Comment: As usual the Mayor blames the Government for forcing him to make these changes which is primarily the result of his own financial mismanagement.

But these changes are not unreasonable. If Londoners wish to

have their public transport subsidised then it is not unfair to put it on Council Tax rather than introduce new taxes such as the ULEZ. The latter imposes charges on people who may not use public transport. Increasing charges to everyone in London as most will use public transport to some extent is fairer and scrapping the 60+ Oyster Card is not unreasonable. The 60+ card was never justified but was just a bribe to win electoral favour when most people could afford to pay the normal fares.

Increasing fares by inflation and more also makes sense as clearly at present fares paid do not cover the cost of running the TfL network.

But we still do not have a clear picture of how the Mayor is going to make TfL financially sustainable.

Roger Lawson



Congestion Tax Changes

Higher Congestion Charge Stays, But Hours Cut

In June 2020 the London Congestion Charge (a.k.a. tax) was increased from £11.50 to £15.00 and the hours of coverage were extended. This was stated to be a temporary increase to cope with the Covid epidemic which was expected to lead to more people using private vehicles,

will be 07:00-18:00 on weekdays and 12:00-18:00 on weekends and Bank Holidays.

There was a public consultation on the proposed changes although only 9,680 responses were received when there are 2.6 million cars registered in London. Clearly most people affected did not know about it.

The consultation did not ask simple questions about whether people supported the proposals or not. Our comment that the proposals lacked any evidence base to support them were reported however.

But the consultation report claimed that the Congestion Charge was successful in reducing congestion which is simply not true. This is a blatant lie repeatedly made by TfL. See our analysis on this page: <https://tinyurl.com/2p4kunuh>

when in fact traffic has reduced as more people worked from home.

Now the Mayor has announced more changes which are:

Phase 1 (from 20 December 2021)

The charge level will stay at £15. The 90 per cent residents' discount will be re-opened for all eligible residents to register for the discount.

The delayed payment charge will be £17.50 and the deadline will be extended to three days after the day of travel.

The Auto Pay and Fleet Auto Pay discount will be removed – that means an additional £1 payable for those registered with Auto Pay (a high proportion of payers).

There has been little published data on traffic journey times in recent years, for reasons you can guess, but the experience of most drivers suggests it has got worse not better.

Comment: The Congestion Charge has always been about taxing London's motorists to raise money for the Mayor and TfL to spend money on subsidising uneconomic public transport and on their bloated empire. These changes may mean that TfL will make over £100 million more in taxation if the higher Congestion Charge is retained.

You cannot tackle traffic congestion by charging because the unsatisfied demand for private transport is so high that people will pay almost anything for it and any road space released is soon filled up by new entrants. During the pandemic that is even more the case.

Roger Lawson

The reimbursement arrangements that were introduced as part of the temporary changes will be retained or adapted to ensure that people most vulnerable to infection from epidemics and pandemics will continue to be protected.

This will also facilitate essential trips made by NHS staff in times of exceptional or extraordinary circumstances including for commuting purposes – see <https://tinyurl.com/4ptuv6ea> for details.

The ability for residents to pay by App or online for multiple consecutive charging days will be removed.

Phase 2 (from 21 February 2022)

The operating hours for the Congestion Charge



London Most Congested City

A report by traffic information supplier Inrix says London has become the most congested city in the world. Its drivers are losing an average of 148 hours per year sitting in traffic.

Inrix's blamed a lot of the problem on cycle lanes which have made congestion worse. That is certainly true in London where the expenditure on cycle lanes and LTNs has been very counter-productive.

Comment: The result in London is a direct consequence of the defective Mayor's Transport Strategy which has encouraged cycling when that remains a minority interest. Public transport has been massively subsidised while the road network has been corrupted by dogmatic policies.

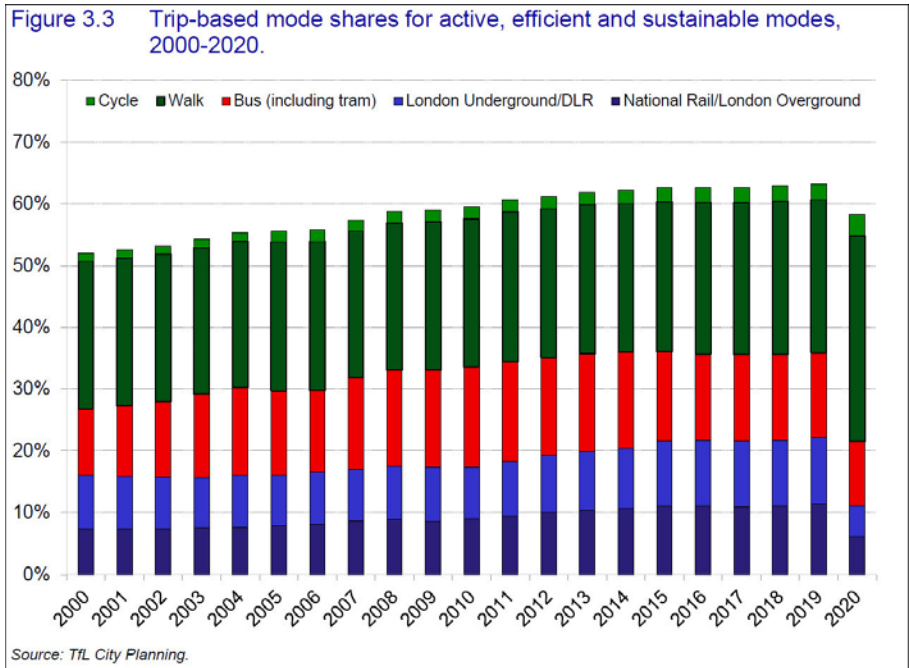
Travel in London Report

Mayor's Objectives Not Met

Before Christmas Transport for London (TfL) published its 14th Report on Travel in London. It's basically a collection of data on transport trends in the capital. At 263 pages I'll only provide a brief summary of some of the key points here (full report available on the web).

Pandemic Impact

The Report includes data showing the impact of the pandemic. By November 2021 the demand for public transport overall was down to around 70% from pre-pandemic levels. London Underground was 65% and bus demand was about 75%. But road traffic only reduced to about 95% as people chose to



avoid using public transport by using private transport (i.e. cars or PHVs) or walking.

Walking actually increased substantially and cycling did increase but mainly for leisure cycling at

weekends. Weekday peak commuter travel is not recovering rapidly as there is more working from home, and this is particularly noticeable in central London.



Mode Share

The mode share proportion since 2000 is shown in the above chart. You can see that despite the encouragement for cycling in recent years and particularly by the LTNs of late, cycling has remained a very small proportion and any increase during the pandemic was mainly for leisure.

To quote from page 11 of the Report: "The overall active, efficient and sustainable mode share for travel in 2020 is estimated at 58.3 per cent, compared to 63.2 per cent in 2019". That includes walking, cycling and public transport use, although why public transport should be considered "sustainable" is not clear. But clearly the effect of the pandemic has been to frustrate the Mayor's objective to get us all out of our cars and increase "sustainable travel" modes to 80% by 2041.

In fact, the active travel mode objective of 20 minutes per day (walking/cycling) for 70% of the population has instead fallen to 35% in the latest quarter probably due to less activity by those working from home.

Air Pollution

The Report contains some data on air pollution some of which comes from road and other transport of course. But it shows how air pollution has been substantially reducing in the last few years. One interesting comment in the Report is that "The Mayor's Transport Strategy set a target for London to be a zero carbon city by 2050. However, the Mayor has recently called for this to be brought forward to 2030, recognising the importance of the climate change emergency we face". That's news to me. So a diesel/petrol car bought this year might be banned in eight years time if the Mayor has his way!

London's Population

The good news is that limited data suggests the population of London has decreased with significant reductions in international inward migration. The pandemic has deterred international travel while Londoners have moved out to homes in the country and there may have been some "excess deaths" from the pandemic.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

The Report comments on the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) on page 123 but the data reported is very selective and biased. They conclude with this statement: "In summary, LTNs have a wide range of different and interconnected impacts but the evidence suggests that these are largely positive...".

Continued on next page.



Travel in London (Cont.)

TfL intends to continue to conduct further research for a complete and thorough evaluation of LTN impacts. It seems they have not yet accepted that the majority of residents do not support LTNs as is clear from recent surveys and public consultations in local boroughs.

Traffic Congestion

A section of the Report covers traffic congestion (pages 143 on). It reports that over the last decade “A slow but generally consistent trend of reducing traffic volumes in central and inner London...”; “Traffic volumes in outer London have, however, grown over this period; and “Generally lower car traffic, higher freight traffic, particularly LGVs, and dramatic changes to the numbers of private hire vehicles”.

But this comment shows the impact of the Mayor’s policies: “Continued reductions to the effective capacity of London’s roads, generally reflecting other Mayoral priorities such as reducing road danger, requiring enhanced operational management of the road network”. Yes as we all know, London has become more congested in the last few years due to damaging policies.

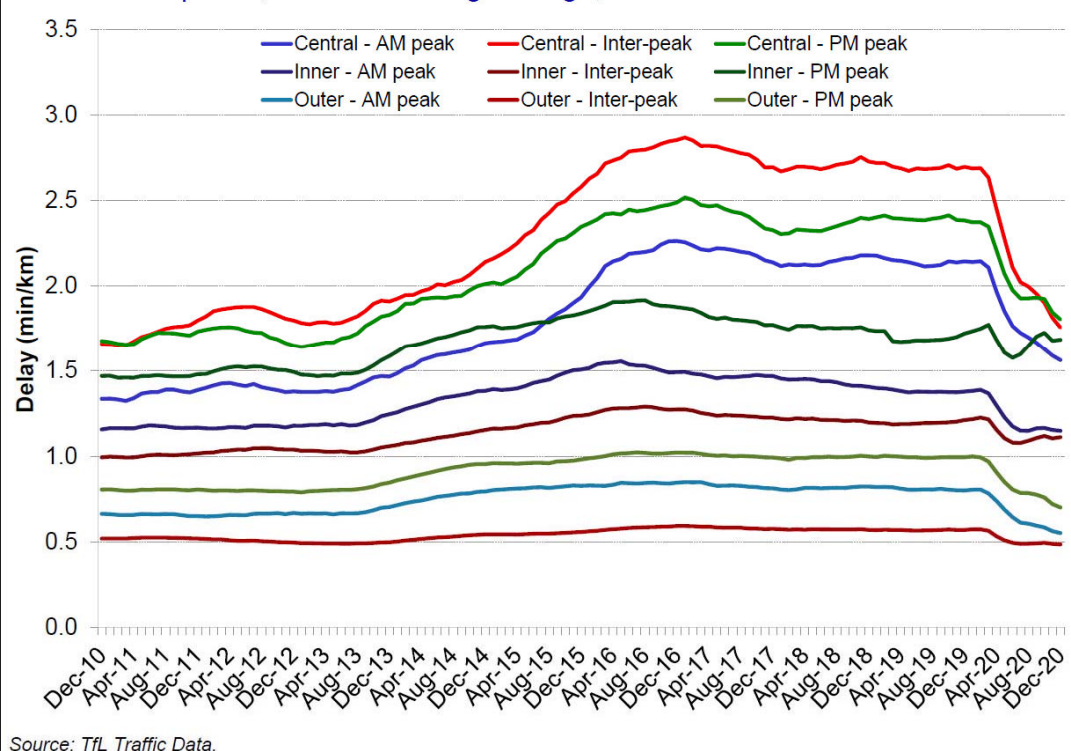
There has been an allegation widely reported that traffic on minor roads in London has increased substantially in recent years but the Report contradicts that. It says: “Notably, the volume estimates for London’s major roads remained broadly unchanged, and there was no evidence of an (observed) increasing year-on-year trend in minor road traffic from available independent data over the preceding decade”. It seems the claimed increase might have been an aberration based on misleading statistical data.

How do you measure traffic congestion? One way is by traffic speed but that can be misleading. The best way is to look at “excess delay” which compares actual travel time versus that under “free-flow” conditions. The Report actually shows some data on this which is the first for some time to my knowledge. The chart below shows congestion worsening from 2010 and particularly in the period 2015-2019, but a big improvement thereafter as travel generally was reduced due to the pandemic. But it is still worse than ten years ago!

In conclusion, the Travel in London Report does contain some very interesting data, albeit distorted by the pandemic as travel patterns and volume changed. But it shows how defective has been the Mayor’s Transport Strategy as people have resisted change to modes while road capacity has been reduced.

Roger Lawson

Figure 7.15 Average excess delay on TfL’s Network of Interest, by area and time period, 12-month rolling average, 2010-2020.



Source: TfL Traffic Data.

Sadiq Khan's Budget

Mayor Cuts Bus Services but Plans for Road User Charging

Sadiq Khan has published his proposed Mayor's Budget for 2022-23 which covers support for Transport for London and other services in the capital.

His foreword says this: "At the time of writing, London is in the grip of a serious crisis. Our city has more COVID-19 infections than any other UK region, we are seeing an explosive and alarming rise in the number of Omicron cases, and our NHS and other public services are being placed under immense strain because of staff absences caused by sickness and the need for key workers to self-isolate. The government is also still refusing to properly fund London's public

services, particularly Transport for London, the Met police and the London Fire Brigade. It's against this extremely challenging backdrop that I'm having to take a series of tough decisions to ensure that the progress we have made towards building a fairer, greener, safer and more prosperous London is built upon, rather than put at risk. The pandemic is the only reason TfL is facing a financial crisis".

The last sentence is a lie and he yet again blames the Government for his own financial mismanagement over the past several years that meant that TfL had no financial resilience to meet the unexpected impact of the Covid epidemic.

The Mayor goes on to say "However, as a condition for the emergency short-term funding, the government is forcing us to raise additional revenue in London through measures, like

council tax, that will unfairly punish Londoners for the government making our transport network so dependent on fares income".

Why should not Londoners pay for the transport network they use? Either in fares or council tax (preferably the former)? Basically he is begging the Government to fund TfL rather than getting Londoners to pay while TfL continues to run uneconomic services instead of adapting its business to meet the new market conditions.

Sadiq Khan's foreword is a classic example of him blaming the Government for his problems. We need less politicking and more constructive and practical steps to get TfL back on an even keel.

I'll pick out just a few interesting points from the budget document:



The budgets anticipate a reduction in bus services of 18% by 2024-25.

Road pricing is definitely anticipated. It says on page 56: "In addition, further to the requirements of the 1 June 2021 funding agreement, the budget assumes a widening of road user charging schemes in later years to deliver the Mayor's transport policies, subject to a full impact assessment, consultation as appropriate, and decision-making processes. The implementation costs have not at this stage been included as discussions are still ongoing".

The Mayor talks about cost reductions in TfL but in reality the total operating expenditure rises from the expected £6.8 billion in 2021-22 to £7.5 billion next year. The deficit between operating income and expenditure in TfL remains high at £1.35 billion in

2022-23 and is still £638 million in the following year. That ignores the capital expenditure and other items making the total "financing requirement" of £2.1 billion for next year. See page 95 of the budget document for the breakdown. Clearly the Mayor is expecting the Government to come up with the cash to finance these deficits which is surely unreasonable.

Expected income next year from the Congestion Charge, LEZ and ULEZ schemes is £754 million which just shows how much money is being taken out of the London economy and from the pockets of Londoners to support the Mayor's grandiose plans. This is a charge on Londoners for which there is no countervailing financial benefit.

The proposed adjusted basic amount of council tax is £396 for a Band D property (an increase

of £32 over 2021-22). Yet again the Mayor is increasing his council tax precept at more than inflation when the general population is facing major cost of living increases from food and energy bills. Normally such a large increase would require a public referendum but the Mayor is apparently asking the Government to waive that requirement.

Summary and comment: This is a typical socialist "spend, spend, spend" budget where instead of cutting the cloth to what he can afford the Mayor wants to continue spending regardless of economic and market conditions. The budget should be reconsidered and brought more into line with reality.

Please make sure you submit your own comments on the budget by sending an email to GLAbudget@london.gov.uk

Sadiq Khan's Plan

In the preceding article we have pointed out that the Mayor's Budget document spelled out that road pricing in London was definitely anticipated. His budgets for future years depend on it. It became clearer what he is planning when both the BBC and London Evening Standard provided more details of the Mayor's plan.

His proposals include a small daily charge on everyone who drives in London – perhaps £2. He claims this is required based on a report commissioned by City Hall that found that a 27% reduction in London's car traffic was required by 2030 to meet net-zero ambitions. He has the powers to introduce this but he is also considering a London entry charge for anyone who drives in from outside.

A boundary charge (of perhaps £3.5 per day) would require Government consent when they don't currently favour it.

Longer term, by the end of the decade, he would like to introduce a pay-per-mile system although the technology to do that is not yet available.

In the meantime it looks very likely that he will extend the ULEZ to the whole of London.

The Mayor has said "I have got to make sure there is a disincentive to drive your car, particularly if it is petrol or diesel, when there are alternatives, like public transport".

Yes he would like to force everyone to use public transport which of course he has a financial incentive to advocate. It's yet another reason to take TfL out of the control of the Mayor.

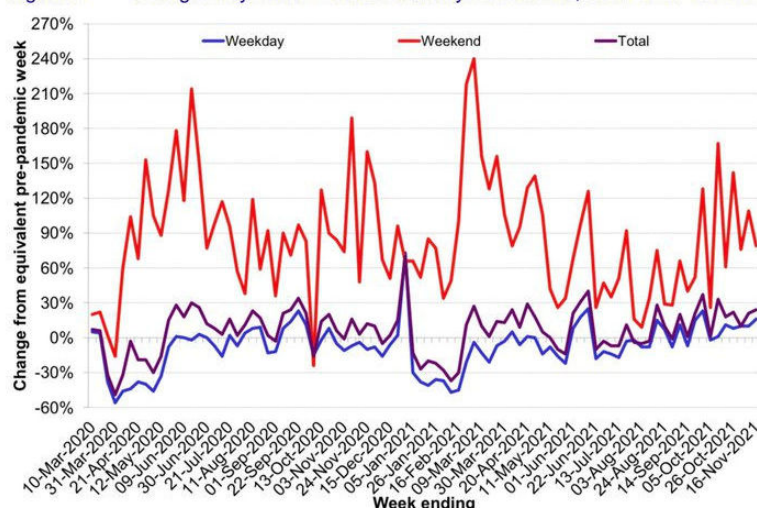
The justification for these measures is to tackle air pollution and defeat climate change. It certainly won't do the latter.

Improving air quality is something the Freedom for Drivers Foundation supports but there needs to be a clear cost/benefit and the measures our national Government have been taking have been by far the most effective to reduce air pollution. You cannot limit air pollution in a small area when it comes from many sources and a lot blows in from other areas.

London's measures introduced by Sadiq Khan have been enormously financially damaging with very little benefit. He postures about saving the world while spending your money badly.



Figure 2 Change in cycle flow on automatic cycle counters, 2020-2021 vs 2019.



Source: TfL Network Performance.

More Cycling?

The above chart shows that during the pandemic leisure cycling increased but overall cycling volumes remained unchanged.

Follow us on Twitter

To get the latest news and comment on traffic and transport issues in London and the UK, you can follow us on Twitter.

Our Twitter handle is **@Drivers_London**

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

This was despite numerous exhortations to do so and measures to encourage it. Cycling actually fell along with other travel modes. Clearly cycling as a regular mode of travel did not prove any more popular despite claims to the contrary.

Bromley Road Safety Record Beats Most Others

The London Borough of Bromley publishes a newsletter for residents. The latest edition contains a very interesting article comparing the road safety record of Bromley with other south-east London boroughs. The table above was included in the article.

It is particularly noticeable how much better Bromley has been at improving road safety than adjacent boroughs such as Lewisham or Croydon. The borough of Croydon spent millions of pounds on wide-area

KSI Casualty rate per billion vehicle miles 2020 compared with 2010			
	2010	2020	% change
London	248	161	-35
1 Bexley	155	74	-53
3 Bromley	184	95	-48
7 Greenwich	233	129	-45
10 Southwark	498	295	-41
14 Lambeth	517	337	-35
15 Lewisham	343	225	-35
31 Croydon	211	184	-13

In 2020 Bromley reduced KSIs from 107 to 77 which may only be partly explained by the reduction in traffic from epidemic lockdowns.

Keep up the good work Bromley!

But boroughs such as Lewisham and Croydon are driven by dogma which undermines a lot of sensible road safety improvements.

Will they ever learn? Perhaps only when more intelligent councillors are elected and more reliance is placed on expert officer opinions with adequate budgets.

Roger Lawson

20 mph speed limits, clearly with minimal impact when they could have spent it on more targeted measures.

Likewise Lewisham imposed 20 limits across the whole borough but have lagged behind in reducing casualties. Both councils have been putting in a lot of speed humps.



New Deputy Transport Mayor

London's Deputy Mayor for Transport, Heidi Alexander, has resigned. Her replacement is Seb Dance (photo above) who was formerly a Member of the European Parliament representing the Labour Party.

What experience or qualifications does he have to take on this job, such as previous knowledge or work in the transport sector?

None so far as I can find although I have asked him (no response was received). So just as Heidi Alexander was appointed when she had no relevant experience, we have another Labour Party politician who is going to have to learn from scratch about the problems of TfL and London's transport systems when the systems are in crisis.

I guess he did need another job but the Major should not be appointing his pals and political friends to responsible positions in this way.

TfL have enough problems without amateurs getting involved.

Roger Lawson

Legal Challenge Rejected

Another challenge to an Experimental Traffic Order used to implement an LTN in Hackney, brought on behalf of a disabled child, has been rejected by the High Court. This was not a judicial review but using provisions in the Road Traffic Regulation Act.

The challenge was based on increased journey times which breached the Equality Act, the failure to consult properly and that the Traffic Order was unjustified. But all the grounds were rejected.

Comment: This case demonstrates how difficult it is to challenge Experimental Traffic Orders which only have limited duration and which were supported by Government Guidance when the pandemic arose.

For a fuller report see <https://tinyurl.com/2d9dch9c>

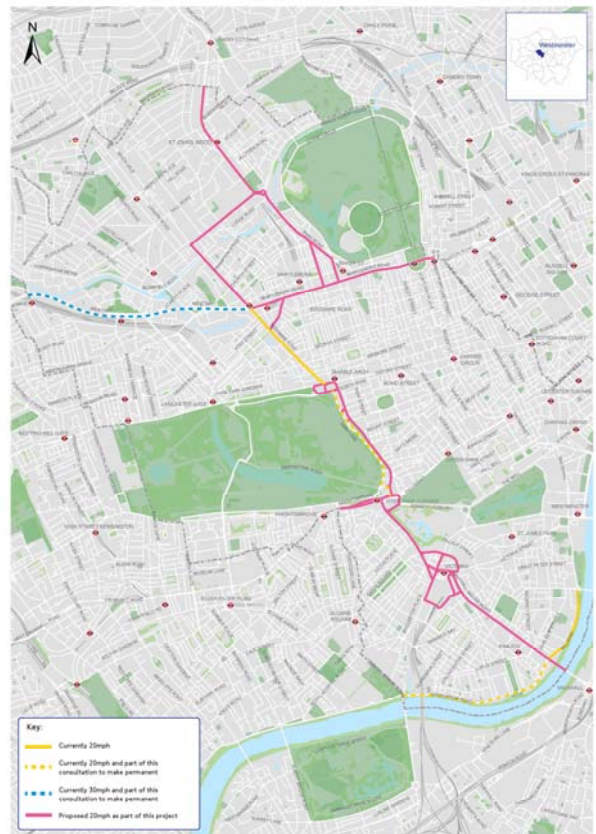
Slowing London Down With a Fake Consultation

You thought traffic in London was slow enough? Well Transport for London (TfL) have now published their report on the “consultation” into the permanent reduction of the speed limit on the Westway to 30mph, Park Lane (Northbound) to 20mph, and 13km of other routes in Westminster to 20mph. That includes on the Marylebone Road, Vauxhall Bridge Road and Edgware Road between the A40 and St. John’s Wood Road (see map to the right).

Needless to say, they’re planning on going ahead with it. But did you even know about this consultation? This writer certainly did not and the number of responses from the public was only 224 which surely suggests it was not widely known.

Comment: These are some of the main roads in central London and are vital to maintenance of an efficient road network. It is inconceivable that users of these roads would support such a change. It’s yet another example of TfL attempting to halt all use of motor vehicles and deter people from driving in London by making it inconvenient and frustrating.

It’s also a great example of how TfL does fake consultations with no publicity and done in mid-summer when many people are on holiday.



Lewisham LTN Decision

On 12/1/2022 Lewisham Council’s Mayor and Cabinet Committee decided to make the Lee Green LTN permanent.

While other London boroughs are removing their LTNs due to residents’ objections, Lewisham is sticking to its dogmatic approach that an LTN is good for you. That’s despite all the evidence to the contrary and the majority of responses to their public consultation opposing retention.

Councillor Codd led the debate and gave the primary reason for retention by saying “we are facing a climate emergency” and that was reiterated by other

speakers. Unfortunately the actions of Lewisham Council will have no impact whatsoever on global climate change. There is also no evidence that the LTN has reduced CO2 emissions, reduced other air pollution or actually encouraged more walking or cycling as travel data has been disrupted by the Covid epidemic.

There was a good speech by Rosamund Kissi-Debrah whose daughter died following an asthma attack exacerbated by the air pollution near the South Circular. But she was ignored. Air pollution on the South Circular (A205) has worsened as a result of the LTN as traffic cannot now avoid the jams on the A205. Rosamund threatened the Council with a judicial review if they did not back down but to no avail.

Comment: as a former sufferer from asthma, I personally think the Council’s attitude is despicable. They may have removed traffic from some roads but they have made other areas much worse. This is not social justice.

In summary the Committee have decided to make the LTN permanent when the evidence was unclear and there was a majority of residents opposed to retaining it. It’s both irrational and a corruption of democracy.

In addition they seem to be ignoring the legal requirement to publish a Permanent Traffic Order (PTO) and allow 21 days for objections before it is implemented.

Continued on next page.



Lewisham LTN (Cont.)

There is a need for a formal consultation process in the case of Permanent Traffic Orders and the use of Temporary Traffic Orders preceding as happened in Lewisham does not exclude that requirement.

The vote to make the LTN permanent was unanimous by the Committee and apart from possible objections to the PTO or legal actions, the only certain way to get the council to reconsider is to change some of the councillors at the upcoming elections in May.

The LibDems spelled out the problem in a recent note which was headlined: "There is no democracy in Lewisham's one-party state". See <https://tinyurl.com/kxfybuac> It's well worth reading.

They might provide some significant opposition to the dominance of the Labour Party in Lewisham. Other parties that might put up opposition are the Conservatives who have opposed the LTN, and the Reform Party are looking for local election candidates based on an email recently received.

We certainly need people to step forward to oppose the one-party state that exists in Lewisham where a few people decide policies and everyone else is ignored.

We will be giving recommendations at a later date on who Lewisham residents should vote for subject to sight of their manifestos first and their views on the LTN.

Postscript: Interesting that the minutes of the meeting which have now been issued are not an accurate representation of what was said in the meeting.

Roger Lawson

This was one letter received after the Lewisham Announcement (one of many):

Hi Roger, Terribly sad news on the permanent feature of the LTN's. Thank you for the way you have fought for those not within the LTN's/within but against.

I took the decision to move our family from Florence Road, SE14 last summer, which I'd lived in for over 20 years, down to Cornwall, partly because of the increased traffic.

My daughter was born in September 2019 and therefore had very early exposure to all the increased traffic because of the LTN's. I took the opinion that Lewisham would not change and it is a classic policy mistake which will only be seen 10 years or so down the track. I couldn't wait that long, nor fight against deaf ears - the easiest option was to move, which is not an option for others.
Andy H.

News Wrap Up

This article covers the news items that have appeared in the last couple of weeks that will be of interest to drivers:

Cycle Licensing. The Government has rejected a petition to introduce identification for cycle and e-scooter riders – in effect a licensing system. This was signed by over 10,000 people amid growing concerns about the behaviour of cyclists, particularly in major cities such as London, and the illegal use of e-scooters. The Government thinks it would be too expensive and licensing would deter cycling.

Comment: This is an example of where more signatures might have been obtained, and a more positive response from the Gov-

ernment, if the petition had been more carefully worded. Other countries have introduced registration systems for cyclists in the past but often abandoned them subsequently because of the high costs of administration. But an on-line registration system might be very low cost. There should be no qualification or ability test system, but the capability to identify cyclists after involvement in an accident is important.

Bus Lanes in London.

Transport for London (TfL) have announced that the conversion of bus lanes to operate 24 hours per day has been made permanent. They say that this change that was introduced on some routes recently has improved bus journey times.



Comment: Of course the recent reduction in bus journey times might have been down to overall traffic reduction as more people worked from home and avoided shopping during the epidemic. Bus lanes are discriminatory in that they favour one transport mode over another for no good reason and do not maximise the use of road space. The photograph from the TfL Press Release above shows how underutilised are many bus lanes.

Driver Distraction. There is growing concern about the number of accidents caused by driver distraction. This is not just people using their mobile phones to call or send/receive text messages but using other in-car devices such as satnav systems.

An extreme example is the ability of passengers to use touch-screen displays in Tesla vehicles for “gameplay” which is now being investigated by US safety body NHTSA.

Comment: As in-car electronic devices have proliferated and more control options have been provided, driving has become more complex over recent years and inexperienced drivers are the most easily distracted. This certainly requires some investigation because “failed to notice” is a big cause of accidents according to police reports. It may be worth considering whether satnav and infotainment systems should be controllable only when a vehicle is stationary.

ABD Ejected. The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) has been thrown out of PACTS (the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety) apparently due to the issue of an injudicious tweet. The ABD claims this is down to pressure from “anonymous extreme cycling lobby trolls” but that is a typical unwise comment from ABD Directors and was one reason why your editor tried to get some changes made in the ABD and we are no longer connected with them.

PACTS may be an ineffective organisation in promoting transport safety with poor leadership but association with the extremists at the ABD is becoming something no responsible organisation wishes to be linked to.

Car Insurance Costs. One positive change in the New Year for car drivers is that insurers will no longer be able to charge a different rate for new customers to old ones. So renewals should not

automatically rise as they have done in the past.

Comment: This should ensure that we do not have to waste time looking at alternative quotes to avoid being stiffed by insurers reliance on our apathy. However despite Willis Towers Watson claiming that insurance rates are at a six year low, my quote to renew insurance was increased by 7% this week. That's despite my 22 years of no claims bonus and nothing of significance otherwise in recent years. I will be shopping around for an alternative quote. I expected my insurance to fall as I have been driving less in the last two years due to the pandemic and that is generally true of the wider population so accidents have fallen. Postscript: I got an alternative insurance quotation and managed to cut the cost by £99 from the proposed renewal cost so switched to Saga who I have used in the past. A most efficient on-line quotation system. The moral is that it still pays to shop around.



Croydon Streetspace Schemes and Governance. The London Borough of Croydon is pushing ahead with its Streetspace schemes despite very strong local opposition. But Croydon residents have also voted to move to a directly elected Mayor which shows the dissatisfaction with the way the borough has been run recently.

Comment: I am not sure this will make a big difference. In Lewisham who have a directly elected Mayor we still see extreme and unwise policies being promoted by the Mayor.

Traffic Calming Delays

A report in the Daily Telegraph has covered the increasing delays to fire engines due to traffic calming measures. That includes the impact of LTNs. To quote from the report: “Analysis of the latest data published by the London Fire Brigade show firefighters experienced slowed response times 3,035 times, equivalent to 253 each month, due to “traffic calming” measures”.

Hackney and Lambeth boroughs were the most badly affected with increases of 66% and 92% in such incidents.



Such events are regularly reported to us and on social media so it is not surprising that the data now shows the problem, although the Fire Brigade say they are still meeting their response targets.





Tottenham Court Road Consultation

The London Borough of Camden has issued a consultation on the changes they have made to roads in the Tottenham Court Road area (see link below).

That included changing Tottenham Court Road to two-way traffic; restricting areas of Tottenham Court Road to buses and cycling only between 8am – 7pm Mondays to Saturdays; adding new segregated cycle lanes on Gower Street / Bloomsbury Street and many other changes.

This has effectively made the area inaccessible to almost all vehicles and made life exceedingly difficult as a result for people who need to visit the area on business. It's been enormously damaging as Tottenham Court Road was a key part of the London road network.

One might accept that improvements to the roads were necessary but the result is an extreme anti-vehicle outcome which was unnecessary.

Please respond to the consultation and tell Camden what you think.

Camden Consultation:
<https://tinyurl.com/2p8b7zuf>

Bishopsgate Road Closure

Give Your Views

Transport for London (TfL) have opened a new consultation on the Streetspace Scheme they installed on Bishopsgate in the City of London. This comprises the closure of the road (which is the A10) to all but buses and cyclists during most of the day – see map below.

This road is a key part of the road network in central London and its closure has created many problems, particularly for taxi drivers.

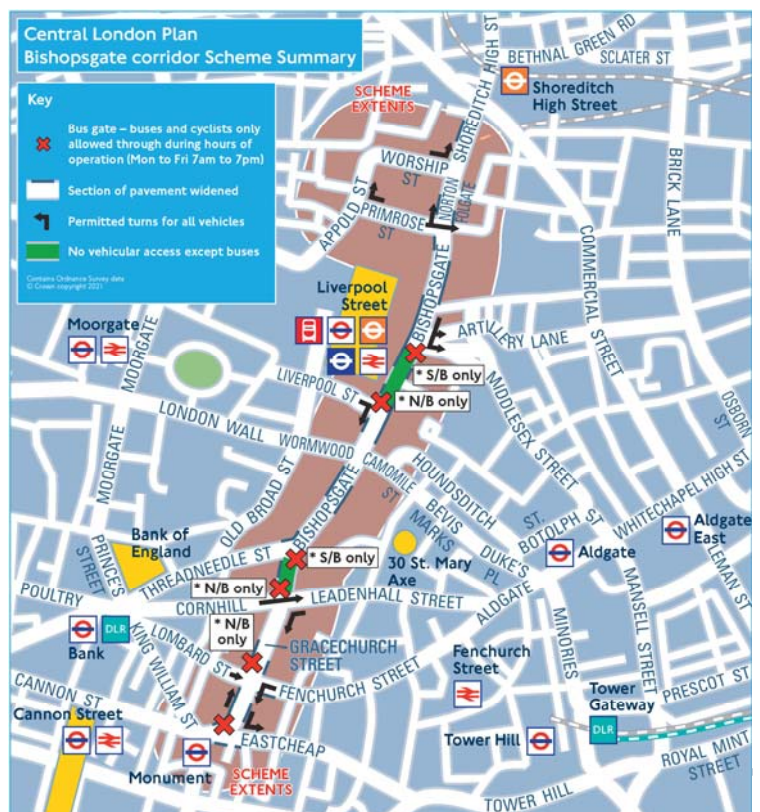
But it has damaged the whole road network by creating extra congestion in the area.

This scheme was subject to a legal challenge by UTAG and they won the case in the High Court but last August TfL won an appeal against the judgement.



TfL have decided to retain the scheme on an experimental basis partly because traffic patterns in London are hugely variable at the moment. The new consultation will last for six months.

Please give them your comments here:
<https://tinyurl.com/57acu8cr>



Follow the Blog

The FFDF 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.

Letter to M.P.

Dear Ms Daby,

I live in SE12, Lee, and receive the newsletter below. As far as I am aware, Mr Roger Lawson gives an accurate picture of developments in the Borough of Lewisham with regard to transport, and the Council's transport policy.

More specifically, the imposition of the LTN on a large part of the Borough has had significantly negative consequences for residents and local businesses, with more congestion and more pollution along the main roads (including unprecedented tail-backs between where I live and Grove Park railway station). What the LTN has done is displace the pollution and the traffic, not reduce it, and it has been used as a revenue-raising scheme. I believe this would be obvious to a 15-year-old studying GCSE Geography.

The Council has been pursuing this policy without paying hardly any attention to the wishes of local residents, who have been complaining about this hare-brained scheme for a long time. Consultations have been organised but they have been, by and large, a caricature of what a transparent and democratic process ought to be. Finally, the actual benefits of the LTN are not clear at all and are not scientifically proven.

We are dealing with dogma and arrogance, here, in local government. Lewisham Council is Labour-dominated, as you will know. This policy is extremely unpopular. It is going to cost your party many votes in the next elections, rest assured of this. What sort of image does it project? Is that what you think the Labour Party should be about? Do you think Lewisham residents will be encouraged to vote for your party, even in national elections, when confronted with such high-handed, bigoted and blinkered

attitude on the part of the Council?

Labour, in Lewisham, operate with undisguised contempt for local residents, with an Orwellian logic as to what constitutes legitimate policy that is disconnected from the facts. This is utterly unacceptable. They behave as if they knew best and were totally unaccountable.

Something has to change. I suggest you have a word with them: they have lost any common sense. Labour in Lewisham is not serving the interests of local people: Labour is literally oppressing local people and making their lives more difficult in the midst of a pandemic!

I wonder how you feel about this. [By the way, I rely on walking and public transport; I do not own a car; I do not drive.]

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

Best regards, Philip Jolly

Range Anxiety Solved?

One of the concerns of purchasers of electric vehicles is that the range on a single charge is limited so they might run out of power before getting to their destination. This is known as "range anxiety". With a typical practical range of 200 miles or less for cheaper electric car models, they do not match the distance achievable on a single tank of diesel or petrol.

A Tesla Model 3 Long Range claims a range of 370 miles but at £47,000 list price it's out of the affordability of many people even if running costs might be lower than a diesel/petrol vehicle.

Longer ranges require bigger electric batteries and that makes the vehicle expensive.

But recent announcements suggest that in few years' time the range of electric vehicles will be enormously improved.

Mercedes have released a concept car named Vision EQXX that has a range of 1,000 km (625 miles) using a relatively small battery. They achieve this partly by making the vehicle very lightweight with a low drag coefficient but the battery and motor system are also improved.

Tesla have promoted a modified Model S with a new battery that is able to travel 1,200 km (750 miles) on a single charge. That's more than even diesel/petrol vehicles with large capacity fuel tanks.

The new battery is named "Gemini" which in production will be based on LFP (Lithium Iron Phosphate, also known as LiFePo4).

These vehicles and batteries may be a few years away from volume production but you can see the way the trend is progressing. With fast charging times and more extended charging networks, many of the objections to electric vehicles will disappear.

Already for most people who can charge their electric vehicles overnight at home, the ranges provided on low-cost cars are sufficient for most daily purposes. While their running costs are lower and taxation benefits make them overall a better buy.



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 email address. 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

This Newsletter is published by the Freedom for Drivers Foundation, PO Box 62, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5YB and is distributed free of charge to registered supporters and to anyone else who has an interest in traffic and transport issues. All material contained herein is Copyright of the FFDF or of the respective authors and may only be reproduced with permission. Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author of the article or that of the Editor which do not necessarily represent the official policies of the FFDF.

The FFDF also publishes a blog which can be found here: <https://freedomfordrivers.blog/> or you can follow us on Twitter here: https://twitter.com/Drivers_London

FFDF Director and Newsletter Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8295-0378). Use the web site Contact Page here to contact: www.freedomfordrivers.org/Contact.htm . The FFDF would be happy to advise or assist anyone who is concerned about any traffic, transport or road safety issues in London or elsewhere in the UK. Complimentary subscriptions to this newsletter are available on request to anyone with an interest in transport matters. Our internet web address is: www.freedomfordrivers.org . This newsletter is supplied in electronic form which can be displayed and printed via the free Adobe Acrobat Reader. Past copies of our newsletters can be obtained from the www.freedomfordrivers.org web site or by contacting the publisher.

