

Planning & Transportation Department

Director: Carl Powell

This matter is being dealt with by:

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My ref: **pt/pol/sd/640.4**

Your ref:

Date: **19 October 2001**

Transport for London
Congestion Charging Scheme Order
Consultation
Freepost LON17507
London SW1H 0YZ

Dear Dr. Dix / Mr. Murray-Clark

Proposed Congestion Charging Scheme for Central London

I am writing in response to the consultation on the Congestion Charging Scheme Order Consultation.

A report was considered by the Cabinet on 15 October and Members agreed a response. The main points of the response are set out in the Conclusion section below. Further comments follow that and more details are given in Appendix 1.

Conclusion

Consultation to date has been fundamentally flawed. Information promised in parallel with the consultation has either been inadequate or provided extremely late. The City Council has had insufficient detail and insufficient time to comment properly on the scheme. While the Council welcomes the extension of the consultation period until 22 October, the absence of detail means that the closing date is largely immaterial and the Mayor's proposals are premature. Much more detail is required to be able to draw meaningful conclusions from this work and, if such detail were to be made available, the City Council would need sufficient time to commission any studies and analyse and report on them.

The City Council notes that the forecast traffic reductions in the central charging zone are based on assumptions about changes in driver behaviour that are as yet untested. It also notes that all other conclusions about the impact and effectiveness of the scheme depend on these forecasts. Given the potential scale of the impact of congestion charging it believes that these forecasts require independent scrutiny.

The Mayor should withdraw the proposals or at least postpone them until such time as further detailed study has been undertaken which demonstrates that the City Council's concerns have been overcome and the details of the methodology and results of the further studies have been made available. The Mayor himself states, in paragraph 5.7 of his Transport Strategy, that there is a "present crisis" in London's transport system. The proposals should not be reintroduced until this "crisis" has been tackled through increased

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investment in public transport facilities, particularly rail, and existing alternative traffic reduction strategies, such as extending controlled parking, improved bus priority, improved enforcement and lane rental, have been given an opportunity to bed in and prove their worth

The City Council and others still have a number of serious concerns over the Mayor's proposals. If the Mayor is not willing to withdraw his proposals, the Council believes as a matter of natural justice that a Public Inquiry into the scheme should be held. The concerns over the way the consultation has been carried out and the absence of adequate supporting detail add to the case for an Inquiry. The Council considers it imperative that a Public Inquiry into both the principle and the detail of the congestion charging scheme proposals, to be conducted by an independent person appointed by the Mayor, should be held if the Mayor does not agree that the proposals should be withdrawn.

It notes also that Guidance for local authorities issued in August 2001 by the Development Department of the Scottish Executive prescribes a consultation procedure for road user charging proposals which requires a two-stage consultation procedure. The first stage covers the principle of road user charging and the second stage the detail. This second stage includes a mandatory provision for a Public Inquiry. The City Council can see no reason why this process should not be followed in London

The City Council's Objection to the Mayor's Proposals

The City Council objects to the Mayor's proposals to implement congestion charging in Central London. In particular this is because :-

- the City Council's view is that, if the Mayor decides to pursue congestion charging, it is essential that adequate increases in public transport capacity and reliability are provided in advance or at the same time as the introduction of new restraint powers. It does not consider that the proposals currently being put forward, which involve only buses in the short term, will achieve enough, particularly given that the Mayor himself has stated that there is presently a crisis in London's transport
- congestion charging is untested in this country and to use central London as a pilot could pose a significant number of risks to its social, economic and environmental well-being. It is considered more appropriate that the technology should be piloted in a regional centre where the consequences and scale of any operational problem would be of a lesser impact and any remedial measures could be more easily implemented
- the zoning adopted will cut through both residential and business communities and "penalise" some residents/business for being on the wrong side of the zone and thereby distort competition as to the costs of running a business and attracting custom

The Consultations on the Proposals have been Inadequate

There has never been a proper consultation exercise with Londoners on the principle of the Mayor's congestion charging proposals. The only discussion of the principle was buried within the consultation on the draft Transport Strategy and, where a consultation has been held specifically on the principle of such a scheme, such as was undertaken by the City Council in October/November 2000, the Mayor appears to have ignored the results - which

showed that 56% of respondents were opposed to road user charging in principle while only 38% were in favour.

The City Council has been advised that information on traffic modelling and on traffic management would be provided in parallel with the consultation exercise. The traffic modelling information was provided some three weeks after the start of the consultation exercise and was found to be lacking in detail. Preliminary proposals for traffic management measures were eventually provided on 11 October – after the close of the formal consultation period.

This means that the City Council has had insufficient information and insufficient time to consider properly the effects of the scheme on Westminster.

Objections to Details of the Proposals

Whilst the City Council objects to the proposals, if the Mayor nevertheless decides to go ahead :-

- motorcyclists should be charged, albeit at a lower rate than cars, to reflect the safety concerns of increased motorcycling and their relatively poor record on emissions;
- tourist coaches and sightseeing tours should not receive a discount;
- the Mayor should introduce measures to ensure that licensed minicabs are given the same concessions as taxis;
- the 100% discount should be extended to dual fuel vehicles;
- the scheme for allowing 100% discount to disabled blue badge holders resident in Greater London is inappropriate and will lead to widespread abuse. The Mayor should therefore introduce alternative measures;
- residents eligible for the 90% discount should not be penalised simply for moving their cars after 7 am from a form of legal overnight parking (such as single yellow line or a metered bay) to a residents' bay;
- residents eligible for the 90% discount should be able to purchase a single day's permit rather than the proposed minimum of 5 consecutive days;
- residents of Westminster outside the central zone should be eligible for the 90% discount;
- if for any reason the above is not acceptable, residents of Westminster outside the central zone but within pre-existing parking zones which cross the charging boundary should be eligible for the 90% discount.

Comments on Documents Accompanying the Scheme Order

Detailed comments are included in Appendix 1 to this letter.

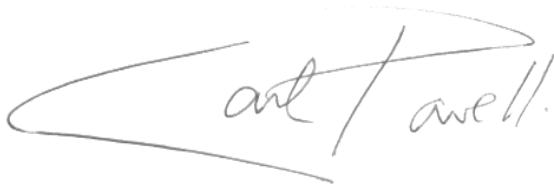
Peter Brett Associates' Report "Mayor's Congestion Charging Proposals – Final Report"

The City Council commissioned this report in April 2001 following its concern over the earlier versions of the Mayor's proposal to implement a congestion charging scheme in central London. The report draws attention to crucial disadvantages and major uncertainties in the scheme and clear gaps in the Mayor's analysis of his scheme and the Cabinet agreed that a copy of the report should be forwarded to the Mayor/Transport for London for comment. A copy is attached.

Whilst it is recognised that some points outlined in the Brett report have been superseded by further work that Transport for London has undertaken, it is felt that the main points still apply.

In conclusion, I hope you find the above response constructive and I look forward to receiving your response to the points outlined above and in the Brett report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "C" that loops around the first part of the name.

CARL POWELL
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

APPENDIX 1

City of Westminster

Congestion Charging Scheme Order - Detailed Objections and Comments

Given the number of serious concerns the City Council has over the Mayor's proposals, and that the Mayor has failed to address many of them, the City Council calls for the Mayor to withdraw his proposals for congestion charging in central London, or at the very least to hold a Public Inquiry into the proposals.

1. The City Council's Objection to the Mayor's Proposals

1.1 The City Council's objection to the Mayor's proposals to introduce a congestion charging scheme in central London was outlined in a report to a Special Meeting of the Transportation and Highways Committee on 10 August 2000. This said that :-

The City Council is opposed to congestion charging. Its view is that if the Mayor decides to pursue congestion charging or workplace parking charges:

- (a) it is considered essential that adequate increases in public transport capacity and reliability are provided in advance or at the same time as the introduction of new restraint powers; and*
- (b) if (a) is addressed, the Council will wish to carefully consider the details of a charging scheme with particular regard to concerns on boundary issues, technology, enforcement, pricing, exemptions, townscape, residents and local businesses. Such measures should be accompanied by hypothecation of the surplus revenue from these measures to allow improvements to be made to other forms of transport and to pursue transport related initiatives to improve air quality, such as vehicle emissions testing.*
- (c) congestion charging is untested in this country and to use central London as a pilot could pose a significant number of risks to its ongoing competitiveness. It is considered more appropriate that the technology should be piloted in a regional centre where the consequences and scale of any operational problem would be of a lesser impact and any remedial measures could be more easily implemented.*

There is concern about the congestion charging scheme proposed for central London at the time of writing because :-

- there is no evidence that there will be a reduction in congestion*
- it will damage the quality of life of residents and local businesses*
- congestion charging will do very little to achieve improvement in air quality*
- it will set neighbour on neighbour as a result of the zoning adopted and force residents and key workers out of the charged area*
- any zoning adopted will cut through both residential and business*

communities and "penalise" some residents/business for being on the wrong side of the zone and thereby distort competition as to costs of running a business and attracting custom

- *it would bring pressure to bear on the Inner Ring Road and those streets immediately outside the charging zone*
- *it will have an adverse impact on the City Council's road hierarchy, which seeks to ensure that traffic is carried on the most appropriate roads and routes*
- *there are worries over the impact on City Council provided services (e.g. cleansing vehicles, meals on wheels, social workers)*
- *there are other ways of reducing traffic congestion which would address the points above*

- 1.2 The Council's objection was reaffirmed by the Transportation & Highways Committee on 23 January 2001, and subsequently in the response to the Mayor's draft Transport Strategy.
- 1.3 Successive versions of the congestion charging proposals have not changed the essential nature of the scheme. It is therefore considered that the above arguments are still valid and they are therefore repeated as the core element of the City Council's objection to the Mayor's latest consultation.
- 1.4 The consultation material does not mention that income from the scheme is only guaranteed for ten years. It is considered that many of those who have indicated support for the scheme see the expenditure of its income on transport-related schemes as a major benefit. In ten years' time, drivers could well be faced with a situation in which they still have to pay to enter the Central Zone, but the money they pay goes straight to a central Government fund and has no direct benefit to London.

2. *The Consultations on the Proposals have been Inadequate*

- 2.1 The City Council has previously voiced concerns, which are repeated here, that there has never been a proper consultation exercise with Londoners on the principle of the Mayor's congestion charging proposals. The only discussion of the principle was buried within the consultation on the draft Transport Strategy and, where a consultation has been held specifically on the principle of such a scheme, such as was undertaken by the City Council in October/November 2000 (which showed that 56% of respondents were opposed to road user charging in principle while only 38% were in favour) the Mayor appears to have ignored the results.
- 2.2 In respect of the current consultation, Westminster officers have continually pressed officials of Transport for London to provide details of their traffic modelling and details of the traffic management measures they are proposing to undertake in order to ameliorate some of the adverse effects of the proposals. Whilst Transport for London indicated that these details would be available by the end of July, the City Council did not receive any such details until 10 August (in a document entitled "Proposed Central London Congestion Charging Scheme – Modelling of traffic and transport effects"), which is considered far too late to be able to undertake any meaningful analysis by the end of September. As a result of correspondence on this matter, the response date for Westminster and for a small number of other bodies has been deferred to 22 October. The City Council welcomes this decision.

“Modelling of traffic and transport effects”

- 2.3 The information in “Modelling of traffic and transport effects” falls far short of what had been expected. Details of the modelling include only a fairly broad description of what has been undertaken, some of the assumptions made and a not very detailed presentation of the results.
- 2.4 This contrasts sharply with the sort of detailed information that Transport for London would require from the City Council to justify a scheme that might affect one of the roads on the Transport for London Road Network, or indeed the information that the City Council would require to be associated with a planning application from the developer of a major scheme. This is illustrated by the proposal to widen Edgware Road, between Newcastle Place and Church Street, in association with the development of the “West End Green” site. Detailed traffic modelling has been undertaken by the developer and checked by both the City Council’s consultants and Transport for London’s consultants, who have had free access not just to the results of the tests but to the material that was input to the models.
- 2.5 Clearly, the Mayor’s proposals for congestion charging in central London will have a far more wide ranging effect on traffic and transportation in London than a scheme to widen a short section of Edgware Road, yet the local authorities whose areas are involved are being kept very much at arm’s length.
- 2.6 Detailed comments on “Proposed Central London Congestion Charging Scheme – Modelling of traffic and transport effects” are outlined in Section 4.

Traffic Management Proposals

- 2.7 At the time of writing, no information on local traffic management proposals had been received. It is known that TfL has a consultant’s study in preparation and that the London Borough of Wandsworth and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea have received consultants’ reports covering their areas, although indications from officers in these boroughs are that the reports are disappointingly short of detail.
- 2.8 It is of considerable concern to the City Council that TfL officers are now suggesting that it was never the intention to link traffic management issues with the scheme order consultation. In support of this suggestion, TfL cite remarks purportedly made by the Managing Director of Street Management at a meeting with boroughs on 20 June, and a subsequent officer meeting held at TfL offices on 17 July. The 20 June meeting was attended by the Director of Planning and Transportation and another senior officer of the Council, and the 17 July meeting by two senior officers.
- 2.9 Borough representatives attending the 20 June meeting were refused copies of the presentation material. However, informal notes of both meetings and the recollections of the Westminster officers present indicate that, although it was clearly stated the traffic management measures would not be included within the scheme order itself, it was nevertheless intended to issue material to boroughs in parallel with the scheme order consultation. An e-mail from TfL officers dated 8 August clearly indicates that TfL had expected to provide information to Westminster before that date.

The Scheme Exhibition

- 2.10 The scheme order consultation included an exhibition. Westminster officers attended this on its opening day at Central Hall and noted that the displayed drawings showing forecast changes in orbital traffic were noticeable different from those published in the

documents issued with the scheme order. An explanation of this discrepancy has been sought from TfL officers but had not been forthcoming at the time of writing. Without an explanation the basis of the public consultation process is prejudiced.

3. *Objections to Details of the Proposals*

The Scheme Order

3.1 The comments set out below relate to a situation in which congestion charging is implemented and should not in any way be taken as detracting from the City Council's opposition to the scheme.

3.2 The changes to the scheme since it was presented in the Mayor's draft Transport Strategy in January mainly relate to eligibility for exemption or discount within the charging regime.

Exemption - motorcycles

3.3 The Mayor had previously proposed that motorcycles and some military vehicles should be exempt from charging and that remains the case. However, the case for allowing motorcycles to be exempt appears to be based on the fact that it is difficult to enforce against them as they have no front number plate, rather than on anything to do with transport policy or their effect on congestion or air quality. This is a flaw in the scheme which the Mayor should seek to address.

3.4 The safety record of motorcycles is poor and in environmental terms they are not as "green" as cycling, walking or public transport. In fact, in terms of overall emissions, studies have shown that the technology used in motorcycle engines has lagged behind that used in cars and that they are often worse for the environment than cars (particularly where cars are carrying several passengers).

3.5 In terms of reducing congestion, motorcycles could provide a useful means, if car drivers were to switch to motorcycling and provided any roadspace thus released was not taken up by extra cars (which might be considered an unlikely scenario in central London). However, if public transport users were to switch to motorcycling, congestion could worsen. The City Council therefore objects to the proposals in respect of motorcycles. The Council believes that an element of restraint should apply to motorcycles and it is recommended that, should congestion charging proceed, motorcyclists should be charged, but at a lower rate than cars.

Vehicles receiving 100% discount

3.6 The draft Transport Strategy suggested that emergency vehicles, London buses, taxis, borough operational vehicles and some NHS vehicles should be eligible for a 100% discount. This list now includes Royal Mail vehicles which is to be welcomed.

Coaches and sightseeing tours

3.7 The list has also been extended from London Buses to all public service vehicles with more than seventeen seats. Whilst there may be a case for some commuter and express bus and coach services which complement the public transport networks to receive such a discount, the City Council does not feel that tourist coaches and Round London Sightseeing Tours should receive a discount. The Council therefore objects to the proposals as they apply to tourist coaches and Round London Sightseeing Tours.

Taxis and minicabs

3.8 Minicabs provide a service which is similar to many of the services provided by taxis, often at times and in places where taxis fail to provide an adequate service. The City Council therefore believes that licensed minicabs should get the same concessions as taxis, and we object to the proposals in respect of taxis. The Mayor should also ensure that measures are put in place to ensure that taxis, which are amongst some of the most polluting vehicles, clean up their emissions.

Borough operational vehicles

3.9 Whilst the continued inclusion of borough operational vehicles is to be welcomed, the Scheme Order has restricted the meaning of this to vehicles used in street cleaning, road maintenance, waste collection, waste disposal, the maintenance of parks and open spaces, mobile libraries, dog wardens, pest control, meals on wheels, parking enforcement or schools transport. It does not therefore include community transport for the elderly and infirm, youth services, licensing and environmental enforcement, internal postal services and official pool cars. The City Council has approximately sixty vehicles engaged in such work and would therefore face a bill of some £78,000 more p.a. to cover these vehicles.

3.10 Transport for London has stated that it intends to set an upper limit on the number of qualifying vehicles. A consultation has been undertaken with affected boroughs on likely numbers but at the time of writing there is no indication of what this upper limit might be. The City Council could also be faced with a bill of £1,260 p.a. for each vehicle above the upper limit. Furthermore the discount does not include the vehicles of Councillors or of officers who have been granted an essential car user allowance because they have a genuine need to use a vehicle as part of their work, all of which would be reclaimed for business trips (although those resident within the Central Zone would qualify for a 90% discount).

3.11 The City Council feels that all essential local authority vehicles should receive a 100% discount and should not be subject of an arbitrary upper limit. The Council therefore objects to the proposals in respect of borough operational vehicles.

Dual fuel vehicles

3.12 The availability of vehicles that run solely on Liquefied Petroleum Gas is severely limited. Most such vehicles are also capable of running on petrol ("dual fuel"), in order to overcome the problem that LPG is not freely available. Anyone with a dual fuel vehicle will almost certainly use LPG whenever possible because of the large price differential between LPG and petrol. To exclude LPG dual fuel vehicles from exemptions will seriously undermine the work of the boroughs and the Energy Saving Trust over the past 3 or more years in promoting this fuel as a key policy to improve air quality in central London. (The congestion charging area is the most polluted area in the UK). LPG dual fuel is the only viable alternative fuel for most motorists at present, most particularly for small vans which would otherwise be diesel - the most polluting fuel. The City Council therefore objects that the 100% discount does not extend to dual fuel vehicles.

Disabled residents

3.13 With regard to the disabled, the Mayor had previously proposed a "Silver Badge" scheme aimed specifically at providing a 100% discount to London disabled residents. This has been abandoned in favour of using the existing Blue Badge coupled with proof of residence in Greater London. Given that there are already concerns that the Blue badge

system is the subject of wide ranging abuse and that a 100% discount to the congestion charging scheme can only increase the level of abuse, the City Council objects that alternative proposals have been abandoned.

90% discount for residents

3.14 As previously proposed, residents of the Central Zone will receive a 90% discount. Residents will not be liable for the charge if they remain parked in a resident's parking bay. However, residents who park on meter bays or single yellow lines at night and move to a residents' bay after 7 am will be liable to pay the charge. In addition, the 90% discount rate will only be available for a minimum of five consecutive days. In practice this means that residents of the central zone who use their cars least (i.e. less than once a day) and therefore cause least congestion and pollution, will in practice receive a discount of less than 90% and possibly as little as 50%. Residents should not be penalised for moving their cars to a legal parking bay during the day and should be able to pay the discounted rate by the day. The City Council objects to the absence of a daily 90% discounted rate for residents.

3.15 The order states that TfL will require to be satisfied by the production of evidence that the vehicle is kept for the exclusive use of the resident and members of the resident's household residing at the same address. TfL officers have indicated that Westminster's resident parking permit criteria will be used as a model for this and that possession of a Westminster (or Camden) parking permit by a resident of the central Zone will be a "passport" to a 90% discount. This is welcomed by the City Council.

Westminster residents outside the central zone

3.16 There are no discounts for residents outside the Central Zone, however close they live to it. This will give rise to significant problems in Westminster where very many people live outside the zone but use services such as schools, shops, surgeries, etc. within the zone. In many cases they may actually undertake longer journeys by car to visit shops and other services that are further away from home, but outside the Central Zone, to avoid paying a £5 charge. The City Council therefore feels that all of its residents should be eligible for the 90% discount, or at the very least, that residents outside the central zone, but within pre-existing parking zones which cross the charging boundary, should be eligible for the 90% discount.

3.17 The City Council objects to the absence of a 90% discounted rate for residents of Westminster who live outside the Central Zone.

Boundary anomalies

3.18 The exact positioning of the boundary gives rise to a specific problem for residents who live in those small areas of Respark Zone F which are immediately outside the Central Zone. These include the triangle bounded by Marylebone Road/Old Marylebone Road/Edgware Road, and the squares bounded by MacFarren Place/York Terrace East/Upper Harley Street and Marylebone Road/Baker Street/York Street/Gloucester Place. For example if a resident of Bickenhall Street (which is outside the Central Zone) cannot find a residents' parking bay in Bickenhall Street or the north side of York Street, where can they park? Not in the remainder of F zone, as they would incur a £5 charge and not in B Zone, because they would not have the relevant permit. There may also be similar problems in Victoria, where the boundary between Respark Zones A and D does not correspond with the Central Zone boundary. These problems would not arise if all Westminster residents were to be eligible for a 90% discount.

3.18 Transport for London has suggested that these anomalies are a problem for the City Council to resolve. However, if it is not accepted that all Westminster residents should be eligible for a 90% discount, it would be more sensible if the Mayor were to treat residents affected by Respark boundary anomalies as if they lived within the Central Zone, and offer them the 90% discount.

3.19 The City Council therefore objects to the proposals on the grounds that they unfairly discriminate against residents of areas affected by Respark boundary anomalies.

4. Comments on Documents Accompanying the Scheme Order

4.1 The Scheme Order is accompanied by several background documents. These include :-

- (1) Interim guidance from the Mayor of London to Transport for London on the procedures for introducing a congestion charging scheme within Greater London
- (2) Scheme Order Notice
- (3) Statement of Reasons for making the Scheme Order
- (4) Statement of the general nature and effect of the proposed congestion charging scheme for central London
- (5) Explanatory notes – The Greater London (Central Zone) Congestion Charging Order 2001
- (6) Map of proposed Central Zone (where charges would apply)
- (7) Traffic management statement
- (8) How improvements in London's transport will complement the congestion charging scheme
- (9) How the congestion charging scheme supports the Mayor's strategies for London
- (10) Monitoring the impacts of the scheme
- (11) Public information leaflet

It is not felt necessary to comment on all these documents, some of which are routine or administrative. Relevant comments are given below.

“Statement of Reasons”

4.2 With regard to the Statement of Reasons ((4) above), this states a number of things that the scheme “will” do. These conclusions are based on a highly selective interpretation of the results: for example at the scheme exhibition a plan showed no change to traffic levels in Westminster outside the Central Zone, but this figure masked predicted reductions in radial traffic coupled with increases in orbital traffic. There are no guarantees over what the scheme might or might not achieve and the statement should therefore be rewritten in terms that set out what it might do or what the Mayor intends it will do. For example, it is claimed that it will reduce congestion both inside and outside the Central Zone, but there can be no guarantee that the results of the modelling work that Transport for London has undertaken will turn out to be accurate.

4.3 It is also claimed that the scheme will “take advantage of the extensive public transport serving central London” with no mention of the problem that sections of this network, particularly the Underground, are already overcrowded to dangerously high levels, which a transfer of passenger from car can only exacerbate, and which the

proposed scheme makes no attempt to tackle in the short term. In fact paragraph 5.7 of the Mayor's own Transport Strategy refers to "the present crisis in its (London's) transport system" which it says has been caused by under-investment.

- 4.4 The statement claims also that the scheme "will benefit business efficiency generally". The benefits or otherwise to business are unknown. An optimistic view might be that the scheme will reduce congestion in central London which will aid the operation of central London business, but there is no evidence, even from the Mayor or Transport for London, that the scheme will have any benefit to businesses in inner or outer London. There are also bound to be adverse effects at the boundaries of the scheme where businesses within the boundary will have to cover the extra costs associated with deliveries, whereas those outside will not.

"Explanatory Notes"

- 4.5 Document (5) refers to monitoring, but is disappointing in that it gives no details of what monitoring is intended: neither has Transport for London discussed the issue in detail with the boroughs or made any attempt to tie its programme of counts in with any counts that the boroughs are already undertaking. Also, the counts began in spring 2001. The City Council's view is that the "before" situation should be seen as that immediately before the scheme is introduced, i.e. with the City Council's Vauxhall Bridge Road and Buckingham Palace Road schemes fully in place and after having had time to settle down. It is this situation that Transport for London will need to compare the scheme against, not the situation that existed in spring 2001.

"How improvements in London's transport will complement the congestion charging scheme"

- 4.6 Document (8) refers in section 2 to traffic management measures that Transport for London intends to introduce prior to the scheme, but gives very little in the way of detail. In Westminster, it refers only to bus lanes in Wilton Road (though officers have yet to see the details of these proposals), and World Squares. It lists a range of concerns that have been expressed by stakeholders, but fails to include any measures to address these concerns.

- 4.7 Section 6 of document (8) goes on to outline several schemes that Transport for London is proposing around the Inner Ring Road, to enable it cope with the extra pressures as traffic seeks to divert around the Central Zone. In Westminster this includes improvements to pedestrian facilities at traffic signals along Edgware Road. The document includes no proposals to protect residents of adjacent streets just outside the Inner Ring Road from the effects of diverted traffic. Transport for London does say that it intends to identify further measures in conjunction with the boroughs, but there is relatively little time left between now and the beginning of 2003 in which to design, consult on and implement measures.

- 4.8 The question of traffic management is also dealt with at paragraphs 2.7 to 2.9 above.

"How the congestion charging scheme supports the Mayor's strategies for London"

- 4.9 Document (9) gives some insight into the likely effects of the scheme, but goes into very little detail. As is mentioned in paragraph 2.2 above, details of the results of Transport for London's traffic modelling were not received until 10 August and a

detailed examination of this data would be necessary to come to any conclusions about the data outlined in document (9).

“Monitoring the impacts of the scheme”

4.10 Document (10) sets out the monitoring proposals. In general the monitoring that is proposed seems comprehensive, although it has not been discussed in detail with the City Council or other local authorities. However, the main point about monitoring is that it is not clear what the scheme is trying to achieve, so it will be difficult for anyone to say whether it has or has not been successful. The scheme has no targets as such. There is a list of expectations, for example it is expected that the scheme will reduce traffic in central London by 10 – 15%, but there is no such target for the scheme. Therefore, if it reduces traffic by 5% has it failed? The Mayor needs to set targets for the scheme and the monitoring should be about whether or not it has achieved those targets.

4.11 Monitoring commenced in the spring of 2001. As is mentioned in paragraph 4.5, the City Council should make it clear that the “before” situation should be seen as that immediately before the scheme is introduced.

“Proposed Central London Congestion Charging Scheme – Modelling of traffic and transport effects”

4.12 This document does not form part of the formal scheme order consultation, but was received separately on 10 August. Paragraph 14 of this document states that modelling work has been based on demands that broadly correspond to 2000/01 levels of activity and states that the likely changes in transport activity by the time the scheme begins to operate, scheduled for early 2003, are not considered significant.

4.13 However, the City Council’s schemes in Vauxhall Bridge Road and Buckingham Palace Road will be fully implemented before early 2003 and will have caused significant changes to traffic levels on the Inner Ring Road, as will planned works at King’s Cross. It is therefore vitally important that these schemes are taken into account in modelling the “existing” situation.

4.14 These schemes were designed, *inter alia*, to reduce traffic levels on the Belgrave Road corridor and on Eccleston Street / Eaton Square / Hobart Place and to have these removed from the Inner Ring Road and excluded from the Transport for London Road Network. It is vitally important to the City Council and the residents of Pimlico and Belgravia that the congestion charging scheme should not cause traffic increases on the Inner Ring Road such that traffic removed from the Belgrave Road corridor and Eccleston Street / Eaton Square / Hobart Place is simply replaced by traffic that would previously have travelled through central London. It is not possible to determine from any of the material that has been provided for the City Council (or indeed the local residents) to assess what it is predicted will happen on any of these streets because the material is not nearly detailed enough.

4.15 Paragraph 33 illustrates that very little consideration has been given to the scheme’s long-term effects. Whilst it is accepted that the short-term effects are difficult to predict and therefore that the long-term effects even would be more difficult, it must be recognised that in ten year’s time the revenue from the scheme could be diverted to purposes other than transport. This would severely restrict the ability of the scheme to fund any measures that rely on on-going subsidy or sustained capital investment.

- 4.16 Paragraph 39 mentions mode switch from car to public transport. There is no evidence that Transport for London has given any consideration to a switch to motorcycles, bicycles, taxis or walking.
- 4.17 Paragraph 40 suggests that very little work has been undertaken on the likely situation before 7.00 am or after 7.00 pm, and suggests that “further studies are envisaged on this issue”. This illustrates the unrealistic timetable that the Mayor has set for the implementation of this scheme. There has not been enough time to study all the effects of the scheme. The Mayor is advertising his intention to implement the scheme at the same time as Transport for London is admitting that it still requires further work to understand the possible effects.
- 4.18 Paragraph 46 states that for the purposes of the “SALT” model, taxis, cars and vans are all grouped together as one category. The reason for this is not explained. Given that the effect of the congestion charging scheme on taxis will be completely different from that on cars, as they will not have to pay the charges, and that taxis are so numerous in central London, this does not make sense.
- 4.19 Paragraph 47 refers to the 56 x 56 APRIL model zone system, but the document makes no attempt to explain what this is.
- 4.20 Paragraph 67 states that Transport for London feels that the LTS model may be projecting too much traffic on the Inner Ring Road. It has therefore used “a more precautionary projection” instead. It is not clear why Transport for London is saying this. Without any further explanation it appears that, when the model has not showed what Transport for London wanted it to show it has ignored the result and used another.
- 4.21 Paragraph 69 refers to flows on the Inner Ring Road. The public exhibition of the proposals showed a plan which suggested that flows in the Westminster section of the Inner Ring Road would increase by only 2%, but orbital movements in the western sector as a whole would increase by between 5 and 7%. This contrasts with Figure 1 of the document entitled “How the congestion charging scheme supports the Mayor’s strategies for London”, which does not give a figure for the Inner Ring Road itself but says that orbital movements in the western sector as a whole would increase by only 1% (7.00 – 10.00 am).
- 4.22 Paragraph 71 refers again to the fact that the SALT model has modelled taxis, cars and vans in the same way. Transport for London has therefore assumed that, because taxis will continue to enter the charging zone, the model is exaggerating the transfer to the Inner Ring Road. But it would clearly be preferable if the model were to be set up in such a way as it were to model taxis, cars and vans separately, rather than to model them together then guess what the results should have been.
- 4.23 Paragraph 80 says that 200 additional buses might carry 10,000 additional passengers. This is purely hypothetical and assumes that Transport for London could find the necessary vehicles and staff by early 2003 as well as the necessary garage space in which to keep them when not in use.
- 4.24 On 11th September the City Council received copy of a memorandum prepared by TfL’s Managing Director of Surface Transport which sets out, service by service, how bus services might be enhanced to meet TfL’s forecasts of additional demand for

bus travel. However, this document does not deal with issues of procurement, staff recruitment or garaging.

- 4.25 Appendix 1 sets out a number of schemes that are in the pipeline, or at least have been assumed in the modelling. These include traffic calming in the Pimlico area, but no details are given as to what assumptions Transport for London has made or indeed what this scheme is.
- 4.26 Appendix 6 gives some results from the modelling. For example, it predicts that in the morning peak hour, orbital two way movements crossing radial screenlines to the west of the central area are expected to increase by 3 and 5%. No details of these figures are given. For example what road links make up the screenline? If 3 – 5% is an average figure for all of these links, what is the least and what is the most affected?
- 4.27 Appendix 6 also presents some results from the LTS public transport model. This concludes that between 12,000 and 18,000 car drivers will change mode to public transport and has attempted to predict the split between rail, underground and bus (as mentioned before no attempt has been made to allocate car drivers to taxis, motorcycles, bicycles or walking). It is not clear from the document how the figures have been arrived at. For example if, instead of driving in from the west a commuter decides to get a train into Paddington, then a bus, it is not clear whether that commuter would be classed as a rail or bus passenger.
- 4.28 Finally with regard to modelling, no results have been presented of any modelling of the impact on air pollution on the area outside the Central Zone. This does not square with the fact that the Low Emission Zone feasibility study that the Mayor has asked for is required to consider its relationship with congestion charging, and its economic impact, whereas work on the congestion charging scheme, has not correspondingly, been required to look at air quality. All boroughs now need to look at the impact of any road scheme on air quality under their local air quality management requirements. The Mayor is not exempt from this.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The City Council has not yet received the details it requires to comment properly on the scheme. While the Council welcomes the extension of the consultation period until 22 October, the absence of detail means that the closing date is largely immaterial and the Mayor's proposals are premature. Much more detail is required to be able to draw meaningful conclusions from this work and, if such detail were to be made available, the City Council would need sufficient time to commission any studies and analyse and report on them.
- 5.2 The Mayor should withdraw the proposals or at least postpone them until such time as further detailed study has been undertaken which demonstrates that the City Council's concerns have been overcome and the details of the methodology and results of the further studies have been made available. The Mayor himself states, in paragraph 5.7 of his Transport Strategy, that there is a "present crisis" in London's transport system. The proposals should not be reintroduced until this "crisis" has been tackled through increased investment in public transport facilities, particularly rail, and alternative traffic reduction strategies, such as extending controlled parking,

improved bus priority, improved enforcement and lane rental, have been tried and tested.

- 5.3 The City Council and others still have a number of serious concerns over the Mayor's proposals. If the Mayor is not willing to withdraw his proposals, the Council believes as a matter of natural justice that a Public Inquiry into the scheme should be held. The concerns over the way the consultation has been carried out and the absence of adequate supporting detail add to the case for an Inquiry.

MAYOR'S CONGESTION CHARGING PROPOSALS:

APPENDIX 2

A CRITIQUE BY PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES

INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by the City of Westminster from Peter Brett Associates following the Council's increasing concern over the Mayor's specific proposals to implement a Congestion Charging Scheme for Central London. The report does not address the question of whether road pricing is appropriate for London but examines the potential effects of the Mayor's current proposals as well as a range of possible alternative strategies.

This summary by Council officials highlights some selected key points from the report.

Why the proposals are important to Westminster

The City of Westminster stands to be significantly affected by the Mayor's proposals. Some 35% of the proposed charging area is in Westminster – more than the next two Boroughs combined. Westminster is split by the proposals with 35% of the City's area falling within the proposed zone. This is second only to the City of London (entirely within the zone) and three times as much as the next Borough – Islington at 14%. The Mayor's proposals are particularly targeted at the volume of through traffic in Central London. 18% of traffic on main roads in Central Westminster is on journeys which both start and finish outside the Inner Ring Road.

THE CRITIQUE

Will the scheme achieve its core objective?

The Mayor's proposal for a flat rate charge of £5 per day (with some discounts) is likely only to provide marginal benefits in the centre of London. There is no particular deterrent, having paid the charge, to travelling at peak congestion times or to making further use of the vehicle during the day. Indeed, drivers may well make additional trips to get 'value for money' and any benefits are likely to be quickly absorbed by traffic expanding to fill the newly-available road space. At best the scheme may tend to lead to the phenomenon of 'peak hour concentration' with traffic reductions in adjacent-to-peak periods as individuals take any opportunity to use their vehicle at the time most convenient to their own circumstances.

These marginal benefits will be offset by more congestion on the Inner Ring Road (which in Westminster includes Marylebone Road, Edgware Road, Park Lane, Grosvenor Place and Vauxhall Bridge Road), with forecasts by TfL of up to 20% more orbital traffic in peak periods. Congestion problems on these roads are already acute and have been so for many years. Yet Transport for London is currently promoting projects on these roads, unrelated to congestion charging, which will make the congestion worse.

Road safety

It is suggested that congestion charging could result in a reduction of 2-3% in road accidents across Greater London. Whilst any improvement in safety must be supported, the forecast level of savings may well be optimistic, for the following reasons.

- Any increase in cycling and walking must result in more people being exposed to potentially greater risk. In 1999 these modes contributed to 35% of all road casualties in Inner London.
- Powered two wheelers (motorcycles) will be exempted from the charge. These vehicles represent only about 1% of all road trips entering Central London between 07.00 and 10.00 but contribute 22% of road casualties in inner London.
- Forecast speed increases of 10-15% on roads within the controlled area should be viewed with concern as accidents and their severity both increase with speed.
- Displacement of trips to the Inner Ring Road will increase congestion and potential conflict at complex junctions which may well impinge on accident rates
- Congested alternatives may cause drivers to seek inappropriate routes giving rise to displaced accidents.

Enforcement

The Mayor places a welcome increased emphasis on bus lane and parking enforcement. However, Police and Borough resources may be considerably stretched by this initiative. A failure to tackle this issue may seriously undermine the benefits from past and future investment in bus services across London. Such a failure would also undermine the potential for a successful outcome from the overall charging scheme.

The public transport gap

The Mayor's figures suggest that 20% of car journeys terminating in the controlled area during the morning peak will transfer to public transport. These figures indicate a potential transfer of between 15,000 and 30,000 trips to the public transport system. Yet the London Bus Initiative aims to provide for only a 5-7½% increase in bus patronage, or 3,500 - 5,000 trips, leaving potentially a serious public transport shortfall of 10,000 or more.

Relatively little is proposed in the short term to deal with this gap through improvements to rail and underground services. Indeed, considerable disruption may arise in the next few years as a result of extensive rebuilding works at main line stations such as Paddington, Kings Cross, Victoria and Waterloo. Major rail proposals such as Crossrail, Thameslink 2000, and Hackney-SW London are some time away although commitment is now strengthening considerably towards these and to "intermediate mode" projects such as Cross River Transit.

Surface and Underground rail will remain congested

If the proposals do indeed displace car-borne trips onto bus and rail services, the transfer of longer-distance car trips to rail and underground will impact most heavily on Inner London residents as services will tend to be full as they near the centre. This may well require travellers within London currently using rail and tube to focus on bus services instead. This apparent 'shuffle' in modes appears to be accepted as a likely outcome by TfL.

Equality

Inevitably a flat rate charge as proposed will produce social inequality. The better off will be in a position to absorb the cost and often may have access to free private parking in the workplace. There will also be a degree of social injustice for residents on one side of the boundary who would need to pay the full charge whilst just across the road residents are eligible for 90% discount. There will be many cases of residents living just inside the zone who travel outwards but are entitled to maximum discount as well as residents just outside who need to travel into the area at full cost.

Overseas vehicles

Vehicles registered overseas may be effectively exempted as a result of the difficulties of recouping any penalty charges.

Implementation and administration

An additional level of bureaucracy will be needed (£50M to set up and £50M per annum to operate) just to manage, enforce and adjudicate proposals which may well prove highly controversial. There will also be a one-off cost of £150M for associated traffic management and transport measures.

CONCLUSIONS

From the Mayor's standpoint, the principal merits of the current proposals appear to be speed of implementation and a potential revenue stream of £190M per annum to fund transport infrastructure improvements.

Many questions remain to be answered by TfL surrounding the fundamental issue of just how successfully London's overall transport systems would operate in the short term following introduction of the current charging proposals. It seems that the scheme will be introduced before there can be substantive capacity improvements to alternative routes for displaced traffic and, crucially, to improved rail, underground and bus services.

A breathing space

The present charging proposals are therefore considered premature, and a review by TfL is recommended to include alternative ways forward. A 'breathing space' is strongly recommended to enable all of these issues to be debated openly and positively with stakeholders to ensure that only the best solutions for London are taken forward.

There is nevertheless a strong argument in support of the Mayor's overall approach to transport in the capital – one of providing a high quality, effective public transport infrastructure where bus, underground and rail services provide efficient seamless alternatives to the car. Much remains to be achieved in this vein, and it is considered sensible to pursue these policies – supported by effective management of parking, road works, network operations etc. – to monitor just what is achievable before progressing with relatively expensive and potentially controversial charging schemes. This approach, if pursued rigorously, could well provide results, which are comparable to or better than the relatively marginal outcomes predicted from the current charging proposals

Other approaches to funding

If this approach continues to identify a funding gap for this much needed improvement of the transport system then this breathing space could also be used positively to consider the pros and cons of other potentially less bureaucratic ways in which this gap could potentially be bridged. Some possibilities include: -

- A bigger share of existing funds raised in London.
- PFI/PPP initiatives for identified projects.
- additional specific ringfenced direct charges on London businesses and residents.
- tourist taxes
- revenues from workplace parking charges, enforcement, parking and road works charges.

Monitoring

Irrespective of final decisions on the way forward, it is essential that objective goals are set by TfL with progress towards these measured year on year. This will enable all stakeholders to engage fully in the decision making process over time and to judge the effectiveness of past decisions and investment.

A WAY FORWARD

The Brett report suggests that the following strategy could be usefully adopted as a pragmatic way forward:-

- Review the charging proposals and their implementation programme against the practicalities and timescales for capacity improvements to diversion routes and alternative public transport modes and the need to sustain an effective overall transport system throughout London
- Pursue a wider integrated transport strategy which seeks to bring forward, as quickly as possible, a balanced approach to capacity improvements from rail, underground and other intermediate modes, bus, walking, cycling as well as general traffic on appropriate key routes.
- Pursue initiatives to enhance the above through maintenance, enforcement and more effective road works co-ordination.
- Promote Green Travel Plans across London.
- Progress initiatives to control use of the parking stock across London.
- Promote a consistent and sustainable approach to transport across London through Land Use Planning initiatives.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the above measures across London against a series of short and longer term targets.
- Review the need for a charging scheme in the light of this objective monitoring.
- Review progress towards longer term transport goals and infrastructure investment targets on an annual basis.
- Identify the likelihood of funding gaps, examine the range of options for bridging these gaps and pursue any preferred solutions.
- Establish principal stakeholder groups to lobby for and progress preferred solutions to London's transport needs.