

Response to review of the Congestion Charge

I am writing on behalf of the London Forum of Amenity & Civic Societies to respond to this consultation. These comments have been discussed and agreed at the relevant committee of the Forum.

We welcome the change in hours and recognise the need to raise the charge in the face of the financial predicament that the pandemic has caused. We think that the weekend hours reflect the times when competition for road space is greatest, and that the need to support the night-time economy justifies an earlier finish time than 8 p.m..

However, we were disappointed at the modest nature of the proposals. We believe there is an urgent need for a system of charging that better reflects the extent of congestion, which is sensitive to distance travelled, time of day, impact on bus services, level of demand for road space, perhaps even space occupied by the vehicle. In other words, a system of road pricing. We are particularly concerned at the lack of a distance related charge; it is inherently unfair that someone congesting the roads for a few minutes should pay the same as someone causing delays to others over more than an hour. We would also suggest that the Mayor might examine the impact of private non-residential parking and put forward measures for addressing its adverse impact on congestion.

There is also a need to review the geographical extent of the congestion zone. When the previous Mayor abolished the western extension the cost to TfL was estimated at £70m. per annum (2009 prices). Given the need to reduce reliance on funding from fares we are surprised that restoring the western area, preferably as a separate zone so as not to encourage car commuting between West London and the City, has not been put forward.

Andrew Bosi
Lead transport member