



## ***LONDON CONGESTION CHARGING SCHEME***

### **March 2004**

- The Mayor of London has published a short consultation document proposing an extension to the existing central London congestion charging zone. This note provides an overview of the proposals and seeks comment and views from members.
- The changes are being introduced following the assessment that the initial scheme had been successful in reducing congestion, traffic delays and in raising money for public transport. The Mayor is keen to extend these benefits to other parts of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, as these areas suffer from higher levels of congestion throughout the day.

### ***Proposed Changes to the Scheme***

- The current congestion charging zone extends from Tower Bridge in the East to Park Lane in the West, with the Marylebone Road forming the northern boundary. It is proposed to extend this zone westwards to be broadly bounded by Harrow Road and Scrubs Lane, the West Cross Route and Earls Court one-way system and Chelsea Embankment. Travel along these roads would not be covered by the charge.
- An alternative boundary of the West London railway line and River Thames has been suggested but is not believed to have support within the Mayor's office or Transport for London. The main difference between the two defined extension areas would be that travel on the West Cross Route, Earls Court one-way system and Embankment would incur a charge.
- The extension is expected to reduce the amount of traffic entering the zone by 5-10% and congestion by 10-20%. However, there would be an increase in traffic in the existing central zone of 1-2%. The extension would be expected to raise an additional £10 million a year.

### ***Issues for Consultation***

- Views are sought on whether the scheme should be extended as proposed and which boundaries should be used to define the western extension.
- The extension would see the current Western Boundary of Edgware Road – Park Lane – Grosvenor Place – Vauxhall Bridge Road being absorbed into the zone. Currently travel along this stretch does not incur a charge and the consultation document asks whether this should be maintained if the scheme is extended.
- Although all other elements of the scheme are to remain the same, views are invited on any aspect of its operation and this provides scope for maintaining lobbying activity to restrict the charge to domestic vehicles or peak hour periods.

### ***Next Steps***



- An extension to the scheme will require an amendment to the Transport Strategy which can only be taken forward after the forthcoming elections in June 2004. If the Mayor decided to proceed at that point, a further consultation exercise would be carried out on the detailed scheme operations. The earliest the scheme could be introduced would be 2006.

#### ***ALMR Action***

- The *ALMR* was actively involved in the consultation exercise carried out by the Mayor in advance of the introduction of the initial scheme and part of the business lobby which secured a lower charge for delivery vehicles.
- Our key message at this stage was to highlight the likely increase in delivery and other business costs. We recommended that the scheme only apply at rush hour peak periods with a discount for commercial vehicles attached to a premises within the charging zone.
- Since then we have supported Westminster Licensees Association in their engagement with Westminster City Council and Greater London Authority in assessing the effect of the scheme on retailers. This dual route should be used to respond to this consultation.
- These points can be reiterated as part of the consultation response but it would be helpful if this could be backed up with actual information on the effect of the existing scheme.

#### ***Members' Input***

- The *ALMR* is contacting all members with outlets in the current congestion charging zone and the proposed new Western Extension. The *ALMR* will oppose the extension in principle. Views are sought on the specific proposals highlighted overleaf.
- In addition, if any member is able to provide information in increases in delivery charges since February 2003 or decline in trade as a result of the congestion charge, this would be helpful.