

Freepost RLUA-CUHG-JGKL
Comngestion Charging
Western Extension Consultation
Chiswick Gate
598-608 Chiswick High Road
London W4 5RT

7 July 2005

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Dear Sir

Proposed western extension to the Central London Congestion Charging Scheme: Public consultation

The London Transport Users Committee considered the proposal to extend the central area congestion charging zone at its Streets and Surface Transport Subcommittee meeting on 28 June. We are grateful for the attendance and assistance of Transport for London on this occasion.

The Committee has previously supported the central area scheme and the principle of a western extension.

The Committee continues to support the scheme, but offers the following comments for consideration.

The Committee is opposed to the reduction in operational hours of the scheme from 6:30 to 6:00pm. The proposal will have the effect of increasing traffic congestion in the evening peak. This will be to the detriment of the majority of travellers especially those travelling home at this time and in particular bus passengers.

Members have supported a two zone cellular scheme and remain un-persuaded that it will be too complicated for motorists to understand. A single zone will lessen the benefits of congestion reduction in the existing central area. However, members were persuaded of the practical, organisational and contractual problems setting up a two-zone scheme. We therefore request that this aspect of the scheme be reviewed when the operator's contract falls for renewal. We understand this will be in 2009.

Members wished further consideration to be given to the impact of the free routes within the zone, i.e. the A40 in the west and Vauxhall Bridge to Marble Arch. In particular members are concerned about congestion and traffic flow on Vauxhall Bridge Road. Members noted that this is already a congested section of the road network. Making this the main free route through central London may well result in more congestion, causing delays to a number of bus routes.

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If this proves to be the case then consideration should be given to increasing the capacity of the through routes by designating roads such as Chelsea Bridge and Buckingham Palace Road as alternative free through routes or giving more priority to buses on these roads so as to ensure they are protected from the effects of congestion.

Yours sincerely

Vincent Stops
Senior Research Officer