
Secretariat memorandum

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PC168

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Congestion Charge and ULEZ report

1. Purpose of this report

To provide information on London's Congestion, Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and Low Emission Zone (LEZ) charges

- i. Background
- ii. Information grid
- iii. Map of the current ULEZ/congestion charge zone and future ULEZ zone
- iv. Samples from casework

2. Equalities and inclusion implications

There are no specific implications arising from this report.

3. Legal powers

Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider – and, where it appears to it to be desirable, to make representations with respect to – any matter affecting the services and facilities provided by TfL which relate to transport (other than freight) and which have been the subject of representations made to it by or on behalf of users of those services and facilities. Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon it in respect of representations received from users or potential users of railway passenger services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area.

4. Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications for London TravelWatch arising from this report.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the committee receives this report for information.

i. Background

Congestion Charge

London launched the biggest congestion charge seen in any world city, on 17 February 2003. The London's Reconnections website stated in 2018 that the London Congestion Charge had been successful at reducing traffic which is now nearly a quarter lower than it was before the scheme started.

In 2017, the London Assembly Transport Committee made a number of recommendations to broaden the scope of the congestion charge scheme. London TravelWatch will draw on these in any work it does on road pricing in the future.

ULEZ

On 8 April 2019 the Mayor of London launched the ULEZ scheme to help improve the health of Londoners by clearing the city's toxic air. The geographic area of the Zone is currently the same as the Congestion Charge Zone (see map on page 5). On 25 October 2021, the ULEZ scheme will extend to the north and south circular roads. The London Assembly report that throughout April 2019 the compliance rate with the ULEZ standards was around 74% in a 24 hour period. It goes on to say that there were 9,400 fewer of the more polluting vehicles seen in the Zone on an average day.

LEZ

This charge began in 2008 for large, commercially operated diesel vehicles like buses, lorries and coaches. It was established to encourage the most polluting heavy diesel vehicles driving in London to become cleaner.

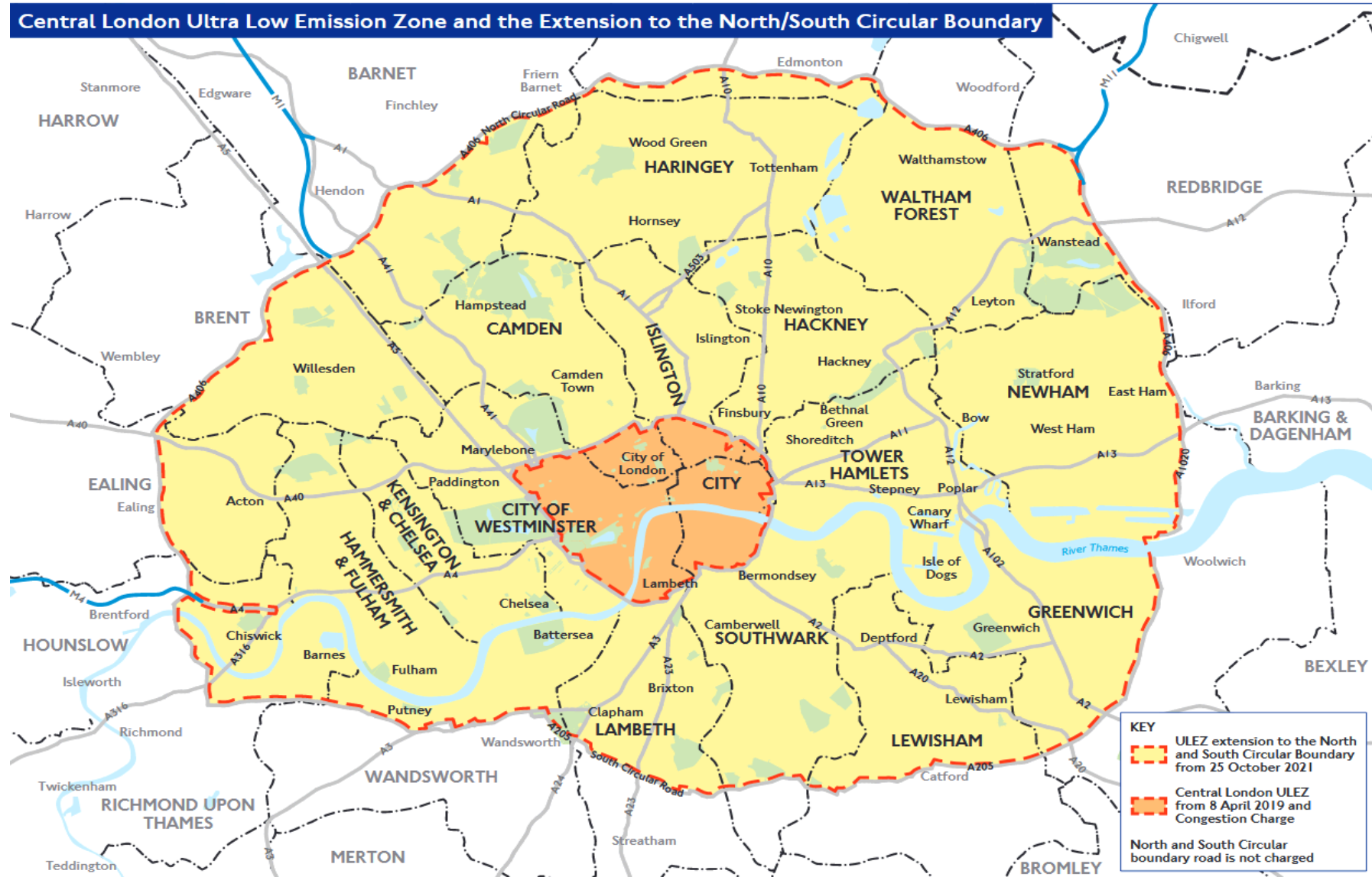
ii. Congestion charge and ULEZ information grid

	Congestion charge	ULEZ
What geographical area is covered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of central London including • East to Whitechapel • South beyond the Imperial War Museum and across almost to Vauxhall • West to Westminster and Marylebone • North to British Museum 	As congestion charge
What are the times of operation?	Congestion Charge operates 07.00-18.00 Monday to Friday	24 hours a day, everyday
Are they the same charge?	The Congestion Charge and ULEZ are completely separate charges	
What is the undiscounted charge?	£11.50	£12.50 for cars, smaller vans, motorbikes and other lighter vehicles £100 for lorries, buses, coaches and other heavier vehicles
Who must pay?	Everyone unless you have a specific discount or exemption	Those with cars which do not meet the required standards.
How can I find out?	TfL website has a post code search to check if any part of the journey is within the congestion Zone	TfL website has a simple 'check your registration' option on their website which will state if the car meets the required standard and a post code checker to see if any part of the journey is within the ULEZ.

<p>Can I get a discount?</p>	<p>You must pay the Congestion Charge if your car is not registered as exempt at the DVLA (the exemption list is small).</p> <p>TfL do offer some discounts and exemptions but these must be applied for and until a decision is made, paid for at the normal rate.</p>	<p>There is a list of exempted vehicle types or those that may be eligible for a discount. The list is comprehensive.</p>
<p>Will there be any changes in the geographical area?</p>	<p>London TravelWatch has not been made aware of any changes.</p>	<p>Yes in 25 October 2021 expansion from central London to the boundary of the North and South /Circular Road</p>
<p>There is another scheme in operation called the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) which operates to encourage the most polluting heavy diesel vehicles driving in London to become cleaner. The LEZ covers most of Greater London and is in operation 24 hours a day, every day of the year.</p> <p>The LEZ is separate from the ULEZ which is now in place in central London and road users can check postcodes and eligibility on the LEZ website.</p>		

iii. Current ULEZ and future extension zone

Central London Ultra Low Emission Zone and the Extension to the North/South Circular Boundary



iv. Sample of casework received

Ms E was in receipt of a penalty for an unpaid Congestion Charge but does not live, work or drive in London. The picture in the penalty notice was of a large white van and Ms E's vehicle is a small car. Ms E wrote to TfL giving evidence of her car and registration from the DVLA and TfL's own website. TfL did not respond and the penalty increased so Ms E contacted London TravelWatch.

Outcome: Penalty was cancelled immediately and an apology was sent from TfL to Ms E.

Due to road closures on the day of a cycle event in London, Mr G was re-routed by officials over Tower Bridge as they could not give him a route which avoided the ULEZ charge. Mr G paid the ULEZ charge but felt that it was unfair because he was not given a different route option. He complained to TfL but they refused to refund him so Mr G appealed to London TravelWatch.

Outcome: TfL advised London TravelWatch that because of the event and the traffic diversions, car drivers should not have been charged if they went into the ULEZ. They said that Mr G should have been told this by officials and also when he complained. TfL refunded the charge with an apology.

Mrs P lives outside London and was aware of and had paid the Congestion Charge before travelling. But she was not aware of the ULEZ charge until she'd received a letter from TfL stating that as the daily standard charge had not been paid the cost had increased. She complained to TfL as she wanted to pay the standard charge as she was not aware of the ULEZ and did not think it was fair she had to pay the increased costs. TfL refused because most congestion payment pages on their website also mention the ULEZ charge and advised of the significant number of road signs around the Zone. Mrs P approached London TravelWatch for help.

Outcome: TfL would not reduce the costs because of the amount of road signage about ULEZ. London TravelWatch have asked that all online Congestion Charge payment options were checked to ensure that the ULEZ charge was mentioned to advise car users, unfamiliar with London, of all the road pricing charges they may incur. However, other websites, such as Visit London, do not give information on all London's road pricing schemes on one page.