

In This Issue (Special Election Issue)

- **Mayoral Candidates Policies**
- **A.B.D. Information and Contacts**

Editorial

This edition of our newsletter is a special one to inform people about the transport policies of the London Mayoral candidates. It contains an extract from our recently issued bi-monthly newsletter which we distribute to members.

Don't forget to study the candidate's policies and cast your vote on May 1st. This is a real opportunity for Londoners to have a decisive say in the future of London over the next few years.

Do you want more of Livingstone's presidential, one might even say "dictatorial", style or a different leader with a vigorous London Assembly? Now is the time to get who you want to lead us in the future.

More information about the Association of British Drivers is available from our web sites at www.freedomfordrivers.org (for the London Region) and www.abd.org.uk (for national information).

Roger Lawson, Editor

Mayoral Candidates Policies

With the London Mayoral elections looming in May, it's worthwhile to ponder on the main candidates for this election and their transport policies. The following is a brief summary:

Ken Livingstone (Labour)



As head of the Transport for London (TfL) board, Mr Livingstone clearly supports the existing policies for transport and those policies would continue if he was re-elected. So for example TfL consider the London Congestion Charge to be a success, despite evidence to the contrary, and will persevere with it.

There has been much debate in the press about whether Mr Livingstone would put in place congestion charge schemes for other parts of London – for example some of the regional centres. He continues to deny having any specific plans in that regard. One such area that has been discussed is Greenwich, and although he has ruled out a wide area scheme he has said it is up to the local council to consider any smaller scheme if they wished.

But his general silence on this issue contrasts with the known policies published by TfL which will undoubtedly be progressed if Mr Livingstone is re-elected. For example these are some quotations published by the GLA Transport Committee in the recent "Driving Change" document about TfL's policies:

"TfL considers demand management programmes have the potential to contribute in the short-term to contain some localised congestion".

"TfL advocates national road user charging applied London-wide, alongside higher charges for more polluting vehicles in order to incentivise behavioural and modal shift, and influence people to use more

fuel-efficient and less polluting vehicles. TfL considers road user charging to be economically efficient as it enables effective allocation of road space and so maximises value from the existing network”.

"Smart measures to influence behaviour and achieve emissions-reduction targets will be followed by the introduction of a national road user charging scheme across London".

"road user charging extended to other congestion hot spots across Greater London, for example, town centre”.

"more sophisticated congestion charging across the capital, with a variable rate to tackle congestion at peak times, underpinned by intelligent transport systems technologies”.

Along with the practical trials of wider area road pricing systems they have undertaken, these policies clearly suggest that the Mayor and his government are in favour of more extensive congestion charging and road pricing schemes, even though they are not specifically declared in Mr Livingstone’s manifesto.

The Mayor’s other transport policies included in his manifesto are:

- An extension of the Freedom Pass concession for elderly and disabled people so they can use it 24 hours a day (currently excludes morning rush hours).
- Implementation of the £25 congestion charge for more polluting vehicles (although as we have pointed out this will have no significant environmental benefit).
- More investment in public transport including improved bus services, the building of Crossrail, tube modernisation and improved overground rail services. But his manifesto is short on specifics here.
- A 20 mph zone across the whole of London, with few exceptions.

In essence Mr Livingstone relies on his track record including a significant shift from private cars to public transport, cycling and walking in the last few years – driven by his draconian policies against the people he hates and subsidies paid for by London taxpayers and central

Government. Nobody doubts that there are more buses on the roads of London, and more freeloaders riding them, but whether this is a rational economic policy is another matter.

Boris Johnson (Conservative)



Mr Johnson’s manifesto is more detailed and can be read in full on his web site at: www.backboris.com

His policies include tackling congestion by ensuring traffic flows by rephasing traffic lights, cracking down on people who dig up the roads and allowing motorcycles into bus lanes. He believes this is the best way to reduce emissions and would scrap the planned £25 congestion charge.

He would also reintroduce the Blackwall Tunnel tidal flow system and oppose increases in the Dartford crossing tolls.

As regards the London Congestion Charge he would undertake a new consultation on the Western extension and act on the result (this almost certainly means it would be scrapped of course). Otherwise he would reform the Charge by making it easier to pay and by using an automatic “account-based” system with direct debits. This would of course do away with the massive numbers of penalties paid and potentially fatally undermine the economics of the system. He also suggests the system used in Stockholm is much better and wants to reduce the administration cost very substantially (he claims it consumes 65% of the revenue which may be an under estimate).

Other proposals are for more orbital bus routes, and the invention of a new “Routemaster” that would have conductors and run on “green” fuel. These would replace the hated “bendy” buses that would be sold off to some other suckers. Mr Livingstone has questioned the economic viability of these ideas. Mr Johnson is of course keen on promoting cycling, as are all the main candidates, so he promises a cycle hire scheme as in Paris, and lots more secure cycle parking.

Brian Paddick (Liberal/Democrat)



Mr Paddick would scrap the £25 congestion charge and the Western extension, but he is proposing a £10 charge for everyone who drives into the Greater London area from outside. So any of your

country cousins would get charged every time they visited you in London. And people commuting from outside the London area into the outer fringes would also pay it. It is difficult to see the logic in this when most of those trips may not have any impact on the major congestion hot spots within London at all.

Otherwise like Mr Johnson he would reform the operation of the Congestion Charge system (he likes the Oslo version) to reduce the administration cost. He also likes rephrasing of traffic lights and limits on road works.

He is keen to promote cycling and walking (including the provision of “walking timetables at bus, tube and train stops” – whatever they are).

In summary, a few new detailed ideas, but no revolutionary changes, and clearly this is not a policy area that Mr Paddick has a great grip on, his background being in the police force of course, so tackling crime is a prime theme.

Gerald Batten (UKIP)

Mr Batten would definitely scrap the London congestion charge. His web site is at: www.batten4londonmayor.com/transport.html (note though that I had difficulty accessing it when others do not for some unknown reason).

Other Candidates

Note that other candidates who were going to stand for Mayor and who definitely would scrap the charge or phase it out – Chris Prior of Stop the Congestion Charging Party and Damien Hockney of One London – have apparently decided to drop out and stand for the Assembly instead.

With little chance of success and limited funding, that is probably a sensible move. Note that Chris Prior did of course speak at one of the ABD London members meetings and Damien Hockney was going to speak at one but had to drop out on the day – see his internet web site for more information:

<http://onelondonweb.blogspot.com> . Note that both these candidates are now standing for the London Assembly so you can still vote for them in that role.

There are of course quite a number of other candidates standing, but they have little hope of gaining significant votes (for example the BNP candidate wishes to abolish both the congestion zone and speed cameras). A complete list of all the Mayoral and London Assembly candidates including their key policies and links to their own web sites is given on this web site:

www.londonelects.org.uk. Or if you want some more populist style reporting go to the Evening Standard’s web site at:

www.thisislondon.co.uk:80/standard-mayor

Only Livingstone or Johnson seem to have much chance of winning and are running fairly close in the polls with Johnson in more or less of a lead at the time of writing.

Mud slinging has commenced between the two with allegations of dirty tricks by Johnson and Livingstone having to confess he had produced five different children by three different “partners” to avoid it leaking out. (*Editor: I knew Livingstone wanted to expand the population of London from reading his “London Plan” but I didn’t realise he intended to accomplish it single handed*).

How to Vote? – Tactics are the Key

This publication is not going to advise you who to vote for – we are a strictly apolitical organisation and never back any one political party. But if you are dissatisfied with the attacks on car owners, the poor quality of public transport, the congestion on main line and underground trains, the wasteful economics of current transport policies and the current Mayor’s dictatorial style of leadership then clearly you should vote for “anyone but Ken”.

Because of the second transferable vote system in use for the Mayoral election, you have the ability to vote for your favourite candidate as first choice.

But if you wish to ensure the defeat of Mr Livingstone, then you probably need to use your “second choice” vote for the candidate most likely to beat him – namely Mr Johnson. Or as one of the candidates said, for your second choice vote you should vote for the candidate with a chance of winning who you least dislike.

Don't forget to choose the best candidates for the Greater London Assembly – they do have some power, and there is more variety of choice there. Do look at the policies of the people you are voting for (and bear in mind that the Green Party have been able to exercise significant influence on Livingstone's policies due to their two Assembly seats in the last few years despite a very low share of the vote so your choice is important here also).

But whatever you do make sure you vote. This election is likely to be closer than in past years and turn-out is all important bearing in mind the general low level in London elections.

About The Association of British Drivers (ABD)

The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Association is a “not for profit” voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web site at www.abd.org.uk

Contact Information

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A.B.D. London Region Co-ordinator and Editor: Roger Lawson (Tel: 020-8467-2686, fax: 020-8295-0378, Email: roger.lawson@btclick.com). Contact the above for information on the aims and objectives of the A.B.D. or for membership information (membership costs £25.00 per annum if paid by cheque, debit or credit card; or £20.00 if paid by standing order (however there is an additional charge of £5 if you wish to receive the ABD national newsletter on paper rather than electronically). The A.B.D. would be happy to advise or assist anyone who is concerned about any traffic, transport or road safety issues in London. Complimentary subscriptions to this newsletter are available on request to elected politicians or those with a professional interest in transport matters.

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