

# ABD London News

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## Editorial

A number of articles in this edition demonstrate the power of the cycling lobby in London. They have achieved

major increases in travel times in London for road vehicles mainly in the name of road safety and the need to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to cyclists. Indeed their lobbying is now so influential that even one cyclist's death in London achieves major prominence in BBC TV news programmes.

But in reality there are a lot more fatal accidents to pedestrians and car users than cyclists which barely get a mention.

In 2013, the last full year for which figures are available at the time of writing, there were 14 fatal accidents to cyclists in London, but 65 to pedestrians. There were 25 deaths of car users and 22 to motorcyclists. The total injury accidents to car users were also more than double those to cyclists.

So on the basis that money should be spent where it can be most effective in reducing road accidents and injuries, it is not at all clear why cyclists should be getting such preferential treatment.

Perhaps a little more thought and publicity should be given to all the other tragic accidents that take place in London. And more thought should be given to the design of Superhighways because the rush to implement them has resulted in some very poor and unsafe configurations.

It is often claimed by the advocates of wide-area 20 mph schemes that it will have little practical impact on residents and the police would be unlikely to enforce an unreasonable limit, partly because the technology has not been certified to do so and partly because they do not have the resources. The experience in Islington just shows that this is not the case—see the article on page 5. If a 20-mph limit is introduced you will in due course be forced to adhere to it, whether it is reasonable for the road conditions or not.

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## Quotes of the Month

*“Astonished the scheme is going ahead given economic disbenefits of £200m”.....* Stephen Glaister of the RAC Foundation on the East-West Cycle Superhighway—see pages 2 and 3.

*“It is a shame that Boris and his advisors prefer the grand gesture to bothering with the numbers”.....* Paul Withrington of Transport Watch on the science of air pollution and policies in London—see page 6.



## Go-Ahead for East-West and Other Cycle Superhighways

Boris Johnson has given the go ahead for the East-West Cycle Superhighway that will run along the Embankment, despite many objections from taxi drivers, many businesses and business groups, local boroughs including the City of London and of course, the Alliance of British Drivers.

See the News section of our web site for our original comments on the proposals at:

[www.freedomfordrivers.org/News.htm](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/News.htm)

But there have been some amendments made to the plans to reduce the additional delays



on the travel time from Limehouse Link to Hyde Park Corner from 16 minutes to just over 6 minutes. One change has been to increase the originally proposed two lanes to three at pinchpoints such as Tower Hill, Blackfriars Underpass and near Temple Station (it's currently 4 lanes of course).

With a slight narrowing of the segregated cycle track at certain points, this will mean two lanes are retained along all the west-bound route. But the east bound route is also heavily congested, particularly in the evening rush hour and that is going to become very much worse.



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The plans to "hold back" traffic by signal changes and other means from these roads will also still take place, thus affecting a wider area.

The Transport for London board have also now approved the East-West Cycle Superhighway. The web site Politics.co.uk revealed some of the discussions on the matter that took place in the board meeting. Here's some of it:

Sir John Armit, Chairman of the National Express Group, said that cyclists had only themselves to blame for fatal collisions on the roads. To quote: "I would say the biggest danger to London cyclists on the roads in London are actually themselves".

He also said "*The way in which many, many, many of them ride one is surprised that in fact the number of accidents is not far larger because it is an entirely different way of cycling to which you see in many other cities*". In addition he said that he did not take the result of the TfL consultation seriously, which indicated a majority in support of the scheme, because "*Without knowing where somebody is coming from when they respond to an opinion poll then it is pretty difficult to take on board the support or non-support for a scheme.*"

Other board members from the Canary Wharf Group and taxi drivers also opposed the scheme.

But Peter Hendy then reported that another cyclist had died in a collision with a coach, so the proposal was passed.

**Comment:** The behaviour of cyclists in London is certainly exceptionally bad, and in reality the consultation result was probably obtained by promotion of it by cyclist groups and by dubious repeated submissions from the same people (it is very difficult to avoid fraudulent behaviour in on-line surveys). I would certainly dispute that the outcome of the consultation and the board's decision is a fair representation of public opinion on this scheme.

Note that TfL are doing further consultations on the changes and the details of the route.



The Lancaster Gate, Hyde Park, St. James Park, Green Park and Victoria Embankment to Northumberland Avenue sections have been substantially changed. Go here to see the latest plans and to submit your opinions on them before the 29th March:

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/cycling/east-west-phase-2>

**Comment:** The Freight Transport Association called the announcement "Rushing into delays" which well sums up the speed of implementation of these proposals without proper consideration at the behest of the Mayor before he leaves office, and the likely outcome. It is extremely disappointing that the Major has succumbed to cyclists vociferous promotion of this scheme which will have a very damaging impact on the road network in London.

A judicial review has been threatened by some interested parties and it is to be hoped that this will be pursued. It would certainly get the Editor's support.

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Bus operations have a disbenefit of minus £5 million and although health and safety show positive figures they are swamped by the minus £37 million from traffic delays.

They don't even include the reduced "ambience" for motorists and goods vehicle drivers stuck in traffic jams.

Stephen Glaister of the RAC Foundation said he was astonished the scheme is going ahead given economic disbenefits of £200m. The other superhighways are also questionable depending on whether you believe the "ambience" improvement.

## How Much is "Ambience" Worth?

### The Economics of the East-West Cycle Superhighway

The East-West Cycle Superhighway has a range of benefits and disbenefits. Some people will gain (mainly cyclists) while others will lose out (motorists from traffic delays, and even bus passengers and pedestrians).

There is of course a way of combining all these different advantages and disadvantages as with any other major transport scheme which is to calculate the Net Present Value (NPV), or Cost/Benefit ratio. This also gives a good measure of whether it is sensible to invest in a scheme, in comparison with investing in something else instead.

They don't say how that is measured or valued but it offsets the negative impact of increased journey times.

**Comment:** In the view of this writer, this scheme smacks of irrationality and of course these figures were not provided before the scheme went to public consultation so no informed responses to the consultation were possible. A stitch-up by TfL management and by Boris Johnson in essence. As I already said to him, I won't be voting for him ever again based on his promotion of this scheme.

Well what is the NPV of this Superhighway? It was given in the report to the TfL Board before they made a decision to proceed and is present here:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/board-20140205-part-1-item06-cycling-vision-portfolio.pdf>

Note that the financial budget for all the Cycle Superhighways that was approved is £162 million which is of course a very substantial sum.

You can see the NPV (or Benefit to Cost Ratio, BCR, as the report calls it) on page 65. This shows that although there are positive overall benefits over 30 years for the other cycle superhighways, the East-West one has a negative value of minus £200 million. And that's even after valuing the improved "ambience" for pedestrians at £14 million, improved ambience to cyclists of £8.2 million, improved ambience to "others" of £5 million and reduced absenteeism at £1.2 million.



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His ambitions on the national political scene may not be as good as he thinks if others take the same view.

But it also demonstrates the power of the cycling lobby in London who are well organised and well-funded. See the London Cycling Campaign web site for more background information.

It is incidentally a good example of a political organisation and partisan pressure group masquerading as a registered charity.





## More Speed Cameras Everywhere

The new **Hadecs3** speed cameras on the south eastern part of the M25 were installed immediately after the road was upgraded. They are not painted yellow and their small size conceals them from motorists, contrary to previous guidelines for speed cameras laid down by the Department for Transport. As they are being used to enforce the 70-mph limit when most drivers think that the speed limit on most motorways should be raised to 80, you can see why drivers are unhappy with being prosecuted for being slightly over the speed limit by the use of these cameras.

Transport Minister John Hayes has apparently ordered a review of these cameras including how they are signed. He thinks it is important that they are identifiable. But the Labour Shadow transport secretary Michael Dugher said that all fixed speed cameras should only be at accident blackspots and be painted yellow and suggested that if he obtained power they would have to be removed as not meeting those criteria. This will no doubt be a popular election platform for his party. Readers of this newsletter are encouraged to write to their Member of Parliament on this subject.

The cost of these cameras is high, while there is very little good evidence that speed cameras actually have any significant impact on reducing road casualties.

It looks like life is deliberately being made more difficult for motorists and these cameras are being used to raise money from fines. Speed cameras are continuing to proliferate, there is no democratic control of this industry and there has been no public consultation on the use of these devices. The ABD would like to see a different approach altogether and we call for these cameras to be removed.

### London Cameras

Local Transport Today (LTT) has covered the argument between Idris Francis, a long standing campaigner against speed cameras, and Transport for London (TfL) in a recent edition. TfL has consistently made claims for large reductions in KSIs where cameras were installed.



But those figures usually ignore the influence of factors such as regression to the mean and trend.

In a response to Leon Daniels of TfL, LTT said that Francis presented a graph, plotting the decline in reported fatal and serious injuries across London and at camera sites. He said *“As you can see there has been no meaningful difference between the rate at which KSI fell at your [camera] sites and the rate at which they fell elsewhere,”* and *“what is more, your senior officials have been fully aware of that at least since September, yet did nothing to block your ludicrous plan to spend tens of millions of more pounds of taxpayers’ money to achieve nothing at all.”*

## Chelsea Bridge to Embankment – A New Kind of Junction

Transport for London have invented a new junction layout to enable cyclists to turn right by first going left and then waiting. Not only will this cause delays as they already admit, but it will surely be dangerous. This is what the Editor said in response to a public consultation (available here if you wish to make your own comments: <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/chelsea-bridge>):

“This is one of daftest proposals I have seen in a long time. The proposed road layout will be exceedingly confusing for anyone

who is not familiar with the junction – and yes there are people who drive in London who don’t know the roads unbelievable as you seem to think it is.

Apart from the delay to east-bound traffic, it will be positively dangerous as cyclists potentially are turning right in front of traffic on exiting from Chelsea Bridge.

Please reconsider!”

This seems to be yet another attempt to favour cyclists over other traffic in the name of safety. But safe this will not be as even cyclists may not understand it and are likely to ignore the new layout. You have until the 20th March to respond to the consultation.



## Increasing Journey Times: London Wall and Bow Roundabouts

The Museum of London Roundabout at the western end of London Wall in the City had a road safety scheme installed a few weeks ago. The Museum blocked sight lines across the roundabout and traffic speed was quite high making it difficult particularly for cyclists to negotiate it safely. The solution: reduce the two entry lanes to one on all entry roads this reducing the roundabout to one lane from two and enabling a lane for cyclists to be introduced.

Another example is the proposals for Bow Roundabout - a junction of the A12 Blackwall Tunnel Northern Approach, A11 Bow Road and A118 High Street Stratford. This interchange sits below the A118 Bow Flyover, and above the River Lea. It is now proposed to improve pedestrian access across the junction with considerable changes to the junction and the introduction of a light controlled pedestrian crossing. Journey times for some motorists and bus passengers to cross the junction might increase by as long as two minutes and cyclists might suffer an extra minute also.

The ABD has objected to these proposals by responding to the public consultation. You may care to do the same.

Unfortunately the result of this "experimental" scheme has been to create long queues of traffic westbound on London Wall, particularly in the mornings - as can be seen from the photograph. At peak times it could take 11 minutes to go from Moorgate to the London Wall roundabout.

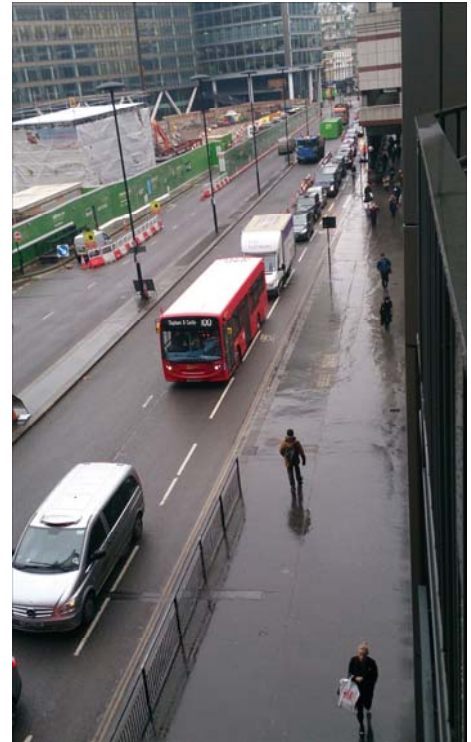
The City of London Corporation have produced a report on this which you can find on the internet and they are proposing to revert the London Wall entry to the roundabout to two lanes which they hope will fix the problem. We will see in due course, but in the meantime I have sent in a complaint to the Corporation.

This is of course a classic example of changes to road infrastructure in the name of road safety, particularly reductions in road space, road narrowing and reas-

It seems odd to even be consulting on this matter because according to a report in LTT, Transport for London are considering a proposal that would remove the flyover and roundabout altogether (the roundabout has of course been the scene of a number of accidents to cyclists but these proposals do not seem to be about cycle safety).

## 20 Mph Enforcement

Islington now has a 20 m.p.h. limit on all roads under its control. This now includes all main roads (formerly it was just residential ones) but excluding TfL controlled ones like the A1 Holloway Road. This is perceived by most residents to be nothing more than anti-car



signing space to cyclists which increases travel time for motorists very substantially.



gesture politics on the part of Islington council.

This borough-wide restriction has now been in force for about a year. The police have said it is an unnaturally slow speed on main roads and they have not got the time or resources to enforce it. According to one local resident, on the main roads it is widely disregarded, not just by private motorists, but by buses, police cars not on response calls, council vehicles etc. However, the police have recently been pushed into giving this Islington council policy some teeth, namely by the one Green councillor.

They are now setting up the odd speed trap with hand-held radar guns. One person was caught doing 27 m.p.h. on her way into work, incurring a £100 fine and three points on her licence.

## London Boroughs to Target Diesel Cars

Not only will diesel car drivers be targeted by the planned Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in central London, they will also find they are paying more to park on their local streets. The boroughs of Islington and Hackney are proposing higher permit parking charges for diesel vehicles - an extra £50 in Hackney and an extra £96 in Islington where they already have an emission based scale of charges. Islington is of course notoriously anti-car in all of its policies and this will impact 9,000 users of diesel vehicles in the borough.

Those who are unhappy should perhaps bear in mind that the Labour Party is currently in control of the Council but that has not always been so, with a long period of no overall control or other parties being dominant.

Indeed Islington Council have a very useful web page that tells you how you can stand for election which is usually a good way to get the attention of existing councillors - it is here:

[www.islington.gov.uk/involved/involvedvoting/electionhow/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.islington.gov.uk/involved/involvedvoting/electionhow/Pages/default.aspx)

Those who live in other boroughs should perhaps start to examine the stance of their local councillors on such matters so you know how to vote at election time.

Democracy does have an impact if you take the time to use it.

In the case of diesel cars, people were encouraged to buy them by Government policies because they generally emitted lower amounts of CO2 and have better fuel consumption. Car manufacturers have focussed on producing diesel vehicles with some having very high proportions - for example 90% of Volvos, 81% of BMWs and it's difficult to buy a petrol Jaguar in the UK apart from the very top of the range models. Now there is an about-face as it has come to be realised that they are typically worse for other emissions such as nitrogen oxides and particulates. But should diesel vehicle owners have to suffer from this historic mistake by past Governments?



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Paul Withrington of Transport Watch made a spirited attack on the policies of TfL and Boris Johnson in an article in Local Transport Today (LTT). He pointed out that the science behind the claims for deaths from air pollution was dubious in the extreme.

To reduce such claimed deaths it is suggested all man-made particulates need to be removed, but only about one-tenth of such particulates are from road traffic. He said the "computation and assumptions underlying the data are opaque" and also claimed that based on some research papers it is probable that particulates have no effect on lifespan whatsoever.

He closed by saying the present attack on diesel vehicles is "junk science" and that "it is a shame that Boris and his advisors prefer the grand gesture to bothering with the numbers".

**Editor's Comments:** I believe this is fair comment because whenever I have looked at the relationship between air pollution and health or longevity, the science has been very opaque.

We are in great danger of spending an enormous amount of money on fixing a problem where the true cost might be quite small.

I am all in favour of reducing air pollution in London which can be personally sensed on bad days.

But the focus on vehicles, and even more so on diesel cars when modern ones can be relatively clean, without tackling vigorously all the other sources of pollution is simply wrong.



## Increased Parking Charges

Bromley Council are proposing to increase parking charges across the borough from April this year. Many other London councils are taking the same approach to solve their budget crises and help pay for the Freedom Passes of residents and other transport programmes. The price increases in Bromley will be very substantial. The average increase for both on-street and off-street parking (in Borough owned car parks) will be over 20%. For example, in Chislehurst on-street charges will rise from 70p to 80p per hour and off-street car parks will rise from 40p to 50p per hour.

The justification for these increases given in a report to councillors included the need to compensate for inflation since the last increase in April 2012 and that the impact of charges on demand for parking would be minimal.

On the first point, inflation measured by the C.P.I. index is less than 5% between April 2012 to the current date and inflation is continuing to fall - indeed it might actually be zero or negative in the next few months. So an increase of 20% in car parking charges is totally unjustifiable on that basis. The argument that increasing charges will have minimal impact on demand is very questionable, is not justified by experience elsewhere and in academic reports on this subject.

In reality, this proposal is about raising money to fund other council budgets. Any surplus from parking (on-street or off-street) can be applied to other council programmes and now that the council is under severe financial pressure because of reductions in central Government funding, they are looking for parking charges to fill the gap.

But raising money from on-street parking deliberately to raise revenue is illegal, and increasing charges might actually reduce council revenue rather than increase it.

Increases in parking charges will affect retailers and other businesses that rely on attracting customers to Bromley shopping centres.



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It is also unreasonable to increase charges by over 20% in a period of low inflation and when many people have not seen increases in their income anywhere near that in recent years.

However after representations were made by the Chislehurst Society (your Editor is on their Committee), Councillor Colin Smith who is the Environment Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was no intention to further review parking charges again "ahead of 2019", i.e. there will be no further increases assuming that the Conservatives retain control of the council.

The Chislehurst Society decided not to pursue the complaint further on that basis and bearing in mind the other mitigating facts.

For example permit parking charges are not increasing and Bromley parking charges are often lower than in other London boroughs.

**Editor's Comment:** I still question whether the increases in on-street parking charges are legal, based on the Barnet and Camden judgements. In reality they appear to be aimed at revenue raising. The argument put by Council officers is that it was necessary to keep off-street and on-street charges in alignment but I am not sure that would stand up to legal scrutiny as an excuse.

But there may be more justification in pursuing this issue in other London boroughs who are much more blatant in raising charges and have not been challenged.



## Follow the Blog

As mentioned in our last Newsletter, the ABD London region now has a blog so many of the articles herein first appeared there. The address is:

<https://abdondon.wordpress.com/>

Please take a look at it and post your comments on the articles there (or of course send an email to the editor). Note that articles on topical news will be posted there first although they will still continue to be summarised in this newsletter.

You can register to "follow" the blog so you get notified of any new articles as soon as they appear.

Contributed articles to the blog or this newsletter are also welcomed.





## Registering to Receive This Newsletter

This newsletter is free of charge and is sent approximately bi-monthly to anyone who cares to request a copy. It is sent via email (as a link to a web page from which you can download it). To register for a free copy simply go to this web page: [www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org/Newsletters.htm) and fill out the box to be added to our mailing list.

## Address Changes

Don't forget to notify the ABD of any change of postal or email addresses. You may otherwise miss out on future copies of this newsletter without noticing that they are no longer being delivered.

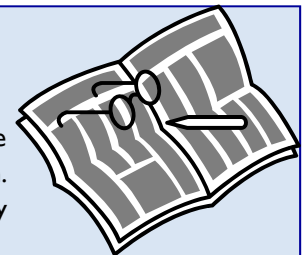
## About the Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers was formed from a merger of the Association of British Drivers and the Drivers Alliance. 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 Alliance 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](http://www.abd.org.uk)

Local London Contacts	Contact Person	Borough	E-Mail
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This Newsletter is published by the London Region of the Alliance of British (A.B.D.), PO Box 62, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5YB and is distributed free of charge to ABD Members in the London area and to anyone else who has an interest in traffic and transport issues in London. All material contained herein is Copyright of the A.B.D. or of the respective authors and may only be reproduced with permission. Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author of the article or that of the Editor which do not necessarily represent the official policies of the A.B.D. The ABD London Region also publishes a blog which can be found here: <https://abdlondon.wordpress.com/>



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