

# The Failure of London's Congestion Charge Scheme Aug 2008

Comments on the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Impacts Monitoring Report on C-Charging by TfL

Prepared by G Taylor PhD BSc MICE MIMechE MIET

Summary.

1. London's present camera based ANPR congestion zone charging system has failed in its main purpose of reducing congestion.

This is true in both the original central charge zone and in the Western Extension. In both, congestion is back to pre-charge levels.

2. Londoners are now paying a tax of £268Mpa for no benefit to their journey time or journey time reliability.
3. The cause of failure in the original central zone is due to three main factors :-
  - (a) re-allocation of road space to other uses.
  - (b) the increasing number of non-paying vehicles entering the zone, over 40% and rising.
  - (c) significant numbers of the 58,000 residents of the Western Extension (WEZ), who have a 90% charge discount, driving into the central zone for 80p.

4. Despite TfL assertions there has never been significant day long congestion in the WEZ. The reported reversion to pre-charge levels of congestion is not unexpected.

5. TfL figures show that the operation of the Western Extension (07/08) brought in revenue of £54M at a high cost of £41M. This gives a cost/revenue ratio of 76%

Ie over three quarters of revenue went on running the system. An even worse figure than the 49% cost/revenue figure for the previous years running of the central zone alone.

The high cost/revenue % ratio for the WEZ indicates a high risk of financial failure.

6. One reason for the failure of the WEZ is that 59% of vehicles entering the WEZ during charging hours do not pay the charge. (Table 2.9 p38 6<sup>th</sup> AMR)
7. Since charging started in WEZ there has been no improvement in bus service running times or passenger waiting time reliability.
8. In the WEZ increased bus capacity has not been matched by increased passenger demand. Numbers carried per bus has fallen.