

FFDF News

Freedom for Drivers Foundation Newsletter

Click on any index item below to go directly to the article in a digital edition.

In this Edition

[ULEZ Expansion](#)

[ULEZ Expansion Cost](#)

[Mayor's False Claims](#)

[Euston Road Changes](#)

[School Streets in Bromley](#)

[Energy Security Bill](#)

[Grant Shapps for PM?](#)

[Train Strikes](#)

[Census Results](#)

[Road Safety Investigation](#)

Editorial

The Conservative Party are in the middle of selecting a new leader and hence a new Prime Minister as I write this.

The remaining candidates are Richi Sunak and Liz Truss. What are their views on transport policy? The details are unclear although both of them support maintaining the government's legally binding goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. That means that any relaxation of the ban on new diesel or petrol vehicles after 2030 is unlikely. The only exception is that sales of hybrid cars will be permitted until 2035.

Neither candidate is likely to give the electorate a say in the net zero policy even though it is likely to be both very difficult to achieve and economically damaging.

Even if you accept that global warming is caused by CO2 emissions, the UK contribution is relatively small in comparison with countries such as China, India, Russia and the USA. We are simply exporting pollution to other countries by clamping down on CO2 emissions in the UK.

In the last couple of weeks the temperature nudged 40 degrees C in the leafy Chislehurst suburbs and I cancelled a trip into the City on the worst day which was probably a wise move. TfL even advised people to stop travelling. I can see that the use of air conditioned cars will rise if these conditions persist or become more regular. I am not convinced they will however. The older one gets, the more extreme weather conditions you tend to meet because they are in essence random events.

Separating the random variations from the underlying trend is not easy despite the media blaming all extreme weather events on fossil fuels.

I am all in favour of reducing the use of fossil fuels, particularly coal, but in reality building electric vehicles and wind turbines both consume large amounts of energy which cannot easily be generated other than from fossil fuels. At the same time we worry about energy security (see article on page 5).

There should be no knee-jerk reaction to media clamour over global warming.

Roger Lawson
(Editor)



Quotes of the Month

"£200m could buy 500 electric buses or fund hundreds of low-traffic school streets".....Nick Rogers, London Assembly Member on ULEZ expansion cost—see page 2.

"Londoners should not have to pay road tax if capital adopts 'smart' road user charging".....Sadiq Khan to the London Assembly.



See the last page for publisher and contact information.

ULEZ Expansion

Opposition to the expansion of the ULEZ scheme to the whole of London is growing. A new petition has been raised against it on change.org. Please sign it here:

<https://chnq.it/wCC249NWK8>

Sadiq Khan has claimed that “the greatest number of deaths attributable to toxic air are in outer London boroughs”. This is a false claim with no evidence to support it. There may be more deaths from respiratory disease in outer London but that is because there are more elderly people living in outer London boroughs. There is no connection to air pollution as boroughs such as Bromley have cleaner air than central London boroughs.



The Mayor claims that the ULEZ expansion will also “tackle the climate emergency” and “reduce congestion”. How exactly? He does not explain.

In reality the Mayor is using false statistics to justify imposing more taxes on vehicle owners and targeting the small minority of people who drive older vehicles. They can typically ill-afford to upgrade their vehicles.

The Mayor even concedes that “the dominant proportion of road transport emissions are now non-exhaust emissions including tyre and brake wear along with road wear and resuspension of particles as vehicles travel on roads...”. You can therefore anticipate that after older vehicles there will be new taxes soon to deter all vehicle usage. You have been warned!

See <https://tinyurl.com/368wu2vt> for what the Mayor and TfL are saying. Please do respond to the consultation.

The deadline for responses is the 29th July so do respond quickly.

ULEZ Expansion Cost

The expansion of the ULEZ scheme to the whole of London will cost



£200 million according to a report in the Evening Standard. Based on FOI Act requests, they report that this is required mainly to pay for the extra cameras and does not include the cost of a scrap-page scheme which has been promised. Neither does it include the cost imposed on London residents who would need to change their vehicles.

As many as 40,000 vehicles would need to be changed so that's potentially many more millions of pounds imposed on a proportion of the population with very little benefit.

Nick Rogers, a Tory member of the London Assembly, is quoted as saying “£200m could buy 500 electric buses or fund hundreds of low-traffic “school streets”.

This is yet another example of the reckless expenditure by Mayor Sadiq Khan and TfL. When you are running out of

money (as TfL is), you need to stop spending it. TfL might get more income in the short term from non-compliant vehicles paying the charge or from fines on those who don't pay, but that would likely soon disappear as people changed their vehicles.

Another recent example of gross waste was the disclosure that almost 600 TfL staff earn more than £100,000. The financial management of TfL is clearly out of control. TfL pays such high salaries that it sucks in traffic engineers and management from London boroughs and outside London thus denuding them of valuable expertise.

TfL needs to be removed from the control of the Mayor, and a public transport authority (which is what TfL is) should not have control of the roads used by private vehicles.

As we have said before, major reform of the governance and control of TfL is required.

Evening Standard article: <https://tinyurl.com/2auebdbr>

The public consultation on expansion of the ULEZ is still open so please respond to it here if you have not already done so:
<https://tinyurl.com/38c4x94y>

Roger Lawson



Mayor Falsely Claims ULEZ has Improved Air in London

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has issued a press release and a report claiming that the air in London is a lot cleaner after the last expansion of the ULEZ.

For example, it is suggested that NO2 concentrations alongside roads in inner London are estimated to be 20 per cent lower than they would have been without the ULEZ and its expansion.

This is no doubt an attempt to justify a further expansion to the whole of London which is still open to public consultation. However if you read the detailed report it is not at all clear why air quality in some locations has

improved, however much it is to be welcomed.

Other factors that may have affected the figures have been ignored. For example the report says this: "The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic ("the pandemic") and individual, regional and national responses to address it, mean that 2020 and 2021 have been different from previous years. This is particularly so for travel and transport as people reacted to lockdown measures and wider concerns about the pandemic by changing their work and travel habits. The pandemic impacted traffic volumes in London in 2020 and 2021, with central London being especially affected. This will in turn have impacted pollution levels across the city. In July 2021 most lockdown restrictions were formally lifted, and much of the economy has now returned to near normal levels of activity.

However, central London traffic levels are still not back to pre-pandemic levels".

It is also worth noting that as vehicles get replaced or upgraded, newer ones tend to be a lot cleaner. There is a natural turnover of vehicles and newer ones are cleaner plus people have been avoiding buying diesel vehicles whose numbers registered in London have fallen. Many people and businesses are also now buying electric vehicles and not just to avoid paying a ULEZ charge.

Another big change is that more London buses are now ULEZ compliant and HGVs have also been replaced with cleaner vehicles. These have had big impacts on air pollution in London along main roads.

But all these changes have not justified the ULEZ expansion and the



costs imposed on car and van drivers. Neither do they justify further expansion of the ULEZ which will cost TfL many millions of pounds to implement and cost some drivers a great deal also. If you have not already responded to the public consultation, please do so now.

TfL cannot afford to spend the money on expanding the ULEZ as they are already desperately short of money so why do they want to do it? Probably because it will give them the capability to introduce a London-wide road charging system using the cameras that will be installed.

TfL Report:
<https://tinyurl.com/mrzsv5ek>



Euston Road

Transport for London (TfL) are changing the Euston Road scheme. This scheme which introduced a cycle lane has caused terrible traffic congestion on what is one of the key arterial roads in London particularly for east/west traffic. To quote from TfL:

"We have decided to make significant alterations to the scheme, including reinstating the bus lane and the removal of the temporary eastbound cycle lane. We will, however, retain some elements of the scheme.

As London gets busier our monitoring has identified significant increases to bus journey times along Euston Road, resulting in delays to bus passengers. We are also seeing increased traffic congestion on Euston Road.

Reinstating the bus lane on Euston Road should help to reduce the delays currently experienced. As road space will be required for HS2 works, it will not be possible to maintain a cycle lane here.

We will shortly remove the cycle lane and reinstate the eastbound bus and traffic lane along Euston Road. We are currently planning a construction programme for the works which we expect to take place later in the summer, although we will write to local businesses and residents to confirm the extent of works and dates when confirmed".

Comment: All they seem concerned about is bus journey times when this scheme degraded the road network for all vehicle users and was yet another damaging and ill-conceived road scheme in London.

School Streets in Bromley

Bromley Council published a report on their review of “School Streets” prior to consideration by the Portfolio Holder and Environment PDS Committee on the 21st June. It makes for interesting reading.

School Streets are ones where roads are closed, particularly during school opening and closing times. They typically ban non-residents in the interests of reducing air pollution and improving road safety for children plus to encourage them to walk or cycle to school but such schemes are often controversial. One result is often simply to move traffic and parking to nearby roads while obstructing delivery drivers and other legitimate visitors.

Bromley introduced a number of School Streets in 2020 including at Hayes Primary School. Only two of these temporary schemes are still running due to lack of commitment to cover the cost of marshalling which is labour intensive.

There is a cost of £2,000 for setting up a new School Street for signs, barriers and traffic orders. Funding came from TfL but it is uncertain whether that would be available in future. Other boroughs have used ANPR systems to enforce School Streets but this is not Bromley Council’s policy due to the high cost (£25,000 per camera plus annual cost of £5,000).

The Council’s report mentions several incidents of altercations between drivers and the marshals while a survey of parents at Hayes Primary School



elicited a mix of responses. Some supported it but there were also a large number of objections.



Some 40% objected to the scheme being made permanent. If you read the detailed comments in the council’s report it is clear that School Streets are a divisive proposition.

The report’s main final recommendation to the Portfolio Holder was that “School Streets are not actively rolled out across the borough, due primarily to resource implications but also the negative impact on some parents and on some nearby residents”. However schools currently operating them may continue given certain conditions.

Comment: This seemed an eminently wise recommendation which was accepted. Oh but why don’t other London councils follow that approach instead of spouting the dogma about the benefits of School Streets when there are clearly many down-sides?

There is some evidence that School Streets might reduce air pollution levels outside schools but as with LTNs they might simply have moved the traffic and pollution to other roads or to other times of day. The negative impacts do not justify School Streets in most locations.

The full council report can be obtained from here: <https://tinyurl.com/ypdferdm> (see agenda item 12f).

Attempts to Undermine Democratic Processes in Bromley over School Streets

School Streets are liked by some people but heartily disliked by others.

On the 15th July there was another attempt by a concerted political campaign of Labour and LibDem sympathisers, and supported by newly -elected Chislehurst councillors, to attack

the Conservative administrations policy on School Streets in Bromley. A special “call-in” meeting of the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee was held to review the adopted policy with many questions being submitted by the public to it.

This is what Councillor Nicholas Bennett had to say in response to one question: “The committee discussed, at some length, the matter at its meeting on June 21st. Two opposition parties have abused, in my view, the ‘call in’ procedure to have a second meeting on the subject by either misunderstanding or wilfully misrepresenting the amended recommendations by the PDS Committee, which I accepted in full. It has been further exacerbated by a politically motivated campaign to flood the agenda with 41 very similar questions again based on a false premise.



School Streets (Cont.)

These questions have taken up the valuable time of senior staff when they could be engaged in more productive work. I have referred the matter to the Constitution Working Party with a view to tightening the rules on 'call ins' and on questions to meetings called to do with 'call ins'.

Comment: Clearly there is a difference of opinion on the merits of School Streets among the public and councillors. But a decision was taken and a policy adopted in the normal manner. I suggest such Streets can only be appropriate in limited circumstances, and where both immediate local residents and the wider community supports them, and there is good and specific justification on cost/benefit grounds.

Public highways need to be kept open at all times for vehicles if only to ensure that disabled

would it not be good to get back to some normality as opposed to the recent dramas?

The new Bill aims to:

- Boost Britain's energy independence and security.
- Attract private investment, reindustrialise our economy and create jobs through new clean technologies, as well as protect consumers.
- Introduce new powers to help prevent disruption to fuel supply because of industrial action, malicious protests and on grounds of national security (**Comment:** surely to be welcomed).

It includes new powers which will enable the extension of the energy price cap beyond 2023,

people who rely on them can use the roads. The use of cameras to enforce School Streets is also to be opposed as we already have too many cameras infringing privacy and they should not be used to raise income for councils as has been happening in other London boroughs such as Lewisham, Hackney, Islington and Croydon (typically those one might classify as being "anti-car").

It is most unfortunate that those members of the public in Bromley who support School Streets are ignoring the rules on Council meetings and hence attempting to undermine the democratic process. They are also misrepresenting the Council's policy in that Bromley has not ruled out the use of School Streets altogether.

When an issue is contentious, it should not be decided by who shouts loudest but on rational analysis of the issues. The Council's policy decision was not unreasonable.

shielding millions of customers across the country from being charged "unfair" prices as they call it. Or to put it another way – to protect consumers from the real world of market prices and hence making it uneconomic for some companies to operate in this sector. This is surely not a very "conservative" approach! There are better ways to subsidise household fuel bills.

The clear objective is to reduce reliance on imported oil and gas and encourage offshore wind farms, nuclear power generation and other infrastructure that we need to achieve carbon reductions although the growth of nuclear is still at a snail's pace. It is certainly worth reading the document on the Bill's contents and the associated British Energy Security Strategy mentioned in it.

To see a report on the questions posed at the Council meeting and the responses, go here: <https://tinyurl.com/mr32pwy5>

From the questions posed it would seem some people believe School Streets will solve the problem of child obesity, tackle air pollution issues (if any) and reduce road casualties. There is little evidence to support any of these statements. If parents want to have healthier children they should stop feeding them junk foods, stop driving them to school and give them some education about how to stay safe.

Roger Lawson

Energy Security Bill

The Government has introduced the Energy Security Bill into Parliament. It is good to see that the Government continues to function after the recent political upheavals, but



But will any new Government back-track on the net zero commitment which has made for some very expensive (the public do not know how expensive) policies as regards motor transport.

Let us hope that any new Prime Minister does not get the job by promising more tax cuts. It's clear that Government expenditure is rising by commitments in the Energy Security Bill for example and in many other areas when what is really needed is reducing the amount of our wealth that is spent by the Government. In the last couple of years we have had a quasi-socialist economy with more willingness to interfere in the economy by the Government. . What the country really needs is a period of stability under a competent leader who everyone can support. Roger Lawson

Grant Shapps for Prime Minister?

Transport Minister Grant Shapps announced his candidacy for the position of Prime Minister but his challenge did not last long.

Perhaps that was not surprising as Shapps has a very poor record as Transport Minister. Among his negative contributions has been the promotion of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) to tackle the Covid epidemic – a totally misconceived policy and implemented without local consultations; support for HS2 – an enormous white elephant; a rewrite of the Highway Code which makes some people more equal than others on the road; a £2 billion investment in cycling and walking to promote “active travel” and “behaviour change” and he keeps bailing out TfL

(Transport for London) allowing Sadiq Khan to continue to run an uneconomic service instead of reforming it. His response to the national rail strikes has also been to line up for a fight with the unions while committing £1 billion to “modernisation” of the railways; basically throwing more money at an uneconomic and outdated transport technology.

Meanwhile the road transport network gets ever more congested and drivers pay ever more in taxes and road charges such as in CAZ and ULEZ schemes.

But what of the other candidates? A number wish to cut taxes. A laudable policy but to be able to do that without increasing public borrowing means a reduction in public expenditure. None seem to be promising that (for example Shapps wants to spend considerably more on defence).

We would all like a cut in the price of diesel/petrol which might

help to stimulate the economy as high prices impact the delivery of goods and services. But most of the increase of late has come from the market price of oil not from taxes (Fuel Duty rates have actually been reduced recently).

Rishi Sunak seems to be one of the few candidates who is wisely not promising hand-outs to the electorate if he gets the job.

But no doubt we will learn more about the other candidates over the next few weeks. As in previous Conservative Party elections, it may be a case of who avoids the most gaffs and who is least disliked by MPs that wins the day.

Boris Johnson only got the job because he seemed likely to break the deadlock over Brexit but there should surely be no rush to appoint a replacement.



Train Strikes – What’s It All About?

The national rail strikes have been incredibly inconvenient for those who rely on trains to get to work or for essential trips such as visits to hospitals. In London the strike has also extended to the London Underground. Commuters have been badly affected although the ability to work from home (WFH) has softened the blow and reduced the impact.

Why are RMT union members striking? It’s partly that they want a pay increase to offset the impact of inflation. But it’s also about whether rail management have the power to decide on jobs and working practices. For example, they wish to block any forced redundancies such as the

closing of ticket offices. In London they are even intervening over the outsourcing of the contract for underground cleaning by TfL.

It should be a business decision as to whether ticket offices should be closed. There are now generally alternative ways to buy tickets although a few people might be inconvenienced. But if it saves money then management need to decide on a commercial basis whether to close offices.

National Rail Chief Executive Andrew Haines said: “We cannot expect to take more than our fair share of public funds, and so we must modernise our industry to put it on a sound financial footing for the future. Failure to modernise will only lead to industry decline and more job losses in the long run.”

Continued on next page.

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Train Strikes (Cont.)

In reality the national railways have lost money for the last 100 years and have been massively subsidised by the Government (i.e. by you and me from our taxes). It's exactly the same in London. With reduced passengers on all services due to the Covid epidemic and more WFH all rail services need to cut their costs to get revenue and costs more into balance.

The rail system is an enormously labour-intensive operation to maintain the track and signalling. Railways are also enormously expensive to build – just look at the cost of HS2 or Crossrail (about £100 billion and £19 billion respectively) – both projects are late and over budget.

The big problem is that railways use old technology and are

operated using archaic working practices. The rail unions are trying to protect their pay, their jobs and working practices which is simply unjustifiable. They need to accept that passengers have alternatives and if they are unwilling to use the railways as much as they used to do then management has to retrench.

The unions need to face up to reality or they will go the way of the dinosaurs (like the coal miners did when faced with the Government being unwilling to subsidise perpetual losses).

But the core of the problem is a confrontational approach from both sides. There should be a consensus about how to run the railways profitably for the benefit of both the owners and the workers.

Roger Lawson



Census Results – A Problem the Government is Ignoring

On 28/6/2022 the Office of National Statistics released the first results from the 2021 Census in the UK. The population of England and Wales rose to 59.6 million which is an increase of 6.3% since the last census 10 years ago.

This substantial change which directly affects our quality of life was barely covered in the national media.

More people means more stress on housing provision, more vehicles on our roads and a bigger demand for health services.



That is particularly so as the population has aged – there are more older people and they are living longer. Some of the age increase can be blamed on baby boomers growing old.

The population increase has been concentrated in London and the South-East but older people have tended to move out of London being replaced by young immigrants (not just from overseas but from within the UK). The census data might also have been distorted as people tended to move out of central London boroughs to the country during the pandemic.

England now has the highest population density of all major European countries.

One major impact of more population is degradation of the environment – more air pollution and more waste.

Here's a good quote from Sir David Attenborough that is very relevant: "All our environmental problems become easier to solve with fewer people, and harder – and ultimately impossible – to solve with ever more people".

What is the Government doing to try and tackle this problem? In essence very little apart from rather feebly trying to restrict immigration. The birth rate is forecast to fall, but there is as yet no sign of any reduction in the population growth.

A growing population might mean a healthy economy but the shortage of housing, particularly in the South-East, has been a major factor in political unrest while the elderly are facing problems in getting medical treatment as the NHS is overstretched to cope.

The Government is being distracted by many other issues at present in a reactive fashion. Such problems as food and energy security would not be a problem if the UK population was reduced.

Likewise the growth of population, particularly in London and the South-East, has put great stress on the road network.

Population growth has zoomed ahead of road capacity which has barely changed in the last few years. This is a recipe for more traffic congestion.

The Government surely needs to be less reactive to short-term problems and look at the longer-term issue of excessive population growth.



New Road Safety Investigation Branch

The Government has announced the formation of a new Road Safety Investigation Branch (RSIB) to investigate road accidents and advise on how to improve road safety.

This has been called for by the RAC Foundation and others for a long time to match the success of the Air Accidents Investigation Branch.

At present road accidents are investigated by the police primarily to identify any culpability. As a result, drivers involved tend to clam up and refuse to give evidence in case they are identified as being to blame.

The new RSIB will not identify blame or liability but will anyone

providing evidence to it be excluded from consideration of criminal or civil liability? It is not clear at present.

In principle the new body is to be welcomed but there is still the problem that any evidence it produces may be ignored as it is at present. For example the lack of effectiveness of 20 MPH signed only speed limits is well documented in a DfT report but local councils still promote them as a road safety measure. Dogma from the ignorant overrides the evidence.

See DfT announcement for more information:

<https://tinyurl.com/45ucrutm>

Comment: Photograph below is of an accident on Chislehurst Commons where there have been numerous accidents in the last twenty years at the white spot roundabout.

Several solutions have been tried such as improved signage and yet the accidents persist.

It appears that drivers do not see vehicles coming from the right or do not even recognise that there is a roundabout present. Is that because they have defective eyesight or their vision is blocked by the A Pillar on a vehicle?

It might be helpful to have some investigation of such roundabouts to see if this is a consistent problem.

But in this case the solution is clear. The roads over the commons need to be reconfigured so as to remove the roundabout. But that would cost a great deal of money and probably raise objections from the Commons Trustees.

Sometimes there have to be compromises because of cost/benefit decisions.





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Address Changes

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

About the Freedom for Drivers Foundation (FFDF)

The Freedom for Drivers Foundation (FFDF) is an 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 road tolls. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. More information on the FFDF is available from our web site at www.freedomfordrivers.org

Contact and Publisher Information

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