

# FFDF London News

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## Editorial

After a disappointing outcome in the election for the Mayor of London, which I comment on in pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter, it is surely time to reconsider the democratic structure of London.

Sadiq Khan is pushing ahead with the same agenda that has been damaging the transport structure in London and seems unable to manage the finances of TfL competently. That is despite the fact that he squeaked into power on the second round with 55% of those who voted, but with a voter turn-out of only 41% that means he only got 23% of the electorate to vote for him!

But the outcome is that he is effectively a dictator as he has absolute power over many aspects of life in London and control of a very large budget.

The London Assembly is totally ineffective in controlling the Mayor and making him accountable not just for the travails of TfL but on other issues such as crime and housing.

Directly elected Mayors which are present in some London boroughs such as in Lewisham, Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets are similarly a problem in that they can easily force through policies with little democratic input (their support of LTNs against the views of the population is one example).

Voter turnout in local borough elections is also a problem (only 36% in one Lewisham ward in the May elections).

The London Mayoral election was also undermined by the large number of candidates giving the incumbent Mayor a strong position in terms of public awareness. And he used his Mayoral position to promote the merits of what he had been doing for the last four years. Just look at the Tweets issued by the "Mayor of London" to see his self-congratulatory messages.

London surely needs democratic reform in a big way.

Roger Lawson  
(Editor)



## Quotes of the Month

*"Our roads should be limited to blue light services, to electricians, to plumbers, to commercial drivers, to taxis, to those that need to use our roads - delivery drivers and so forth - rather than individuals that could be walking, cycling and using public transport".....Sadiq Khan. See page 3.*

*"Great British Railways marks a new era in the history of our railways"..... Grant Shapps. See page 7.*

*At last we have a deal for TfL — but we need a longer-term settlement"....Andy Byford. See page 9.*





That's a most disappointing outcome for anyone who understands how his transport policies have damaged the capital. His main contender, Shaun Bailey, did better than expected and did manage to achieve 35% of the votes on the first round versus Khan's 40%. But on

the second round it was 55% for Khan to 44% for Bailey.

The multiplicity of candidates and parties certainly helped Sadiq Khan to get re-elected, although his majority was reduced from the 2016 election. On the first round, all the votes for other than the two leading candidates totalled 625,000 whereas Khan got only 1,014,000 (that's only 120,000 more than Bailey).

The reallocation of votes in the second round were more in favour of Khan and hence the outcome.

The turn-out was low at only 41%.

The Conservatives did well at the national level, with a good win in Hartlepool, but that was not significantly translated into improvements in London. The Government's handling of the pandemic crisis seems to have been appreciated with Boris Johnson's handling of the Brexit negotiations being also supported.

But London was different. Why is that? The Conservatives certainly lost popularity in London over the Brexit issue with a large number of EU nationals now in London, who could vote unlike in the Parliamentary elections.



## Comments on Election Results

Since our last newsletter, Sadiq Khan has been re-elected as the Mayor of London (photo above— Copyright Greater London Authority).

Was Shaun Bailey a good candidate and did he put forward attractive policies? I am not sure he had the impact needed to overcome an incumbent Mayor although he was better than Zac Goldsmith who was the last Conservative contender.

London has become a very polarised city in socio-economic terms with large numbers of immigrants many of whom rely to some extent on social security handouts or are in low-paid jobs.

There has also been a high level of unemployment in recent months because of the epidemic which might have been a major concern and housing continues to be a problem for many (Sadiq Khan's promotion of rent controls may have been politically appealing if not very practical and with long term negative consequences if implemented).

Political organisation and the use of social media also seemed to be stronger in the Labour Party with Sadiq Khan using his position as Mayor to promote himself in the media.

How did the parties fare in the few local Council bye-elections in London (the main ones are not until next year)? It's interesting to look at the four bye-elections in Lewisham where concerns about the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) might have had an impact.

In Bellingham, Catford South, New Cross and Sydenham the percentage support for the incumbent Labour Party all fell – from 66% in 2018 in Bellingham to 55% this year for example. But that was not enough to change the dominance of Labour. We still have one party in control.

It was not clear that local issues were a major concern or that the electorate were influenced by them.

But the inability to do much local campaigning may have had an impact and more concern about other matters such as crime and housing than local transport, traffic congestion and air pollution may have had an impact. The general apathy about local politics also hindered a rational choice – for example turnout of voters in Bellingham was only 36%!

Even the confusing voting arrangements might also have had an impact with three different votes – for the Mayor, for London Assembly Members and for local Councillors not helping.

*Continued in next page.*



## Election Results (Cont.)

The encouragement of postal voting, particularly by Sadiq Khan, might also have influenced the vote as it is easier to commit vote fraud that way, i.e. submit a vote on behalf of someone else or “coach” people how to complete the forms.

In conclusion, and as someone who has been voting for the last 50 years, it’s worth saying that the quality of candidates and their policies seems to be dropping. Who would ever have guessed that unimpressive individuals such as Sadiq Khan or Nicola Sturgeon could ever become leaders in London or Scotland?

They have both pursued very divisive politics in the apparent desire to stay in power rather than advocate what is good for the people and country as a whole.

Perhaps the problem is that few people wish to get involved in politics nowadays and those with talent avoid it.

There is just too much back-biting and personal abuse in politics.

Roger Lawson

## The Mayor’s Priorities

The new Mayor spelled out his priorities in a tweet that said this:

Okay—here’s the plan:

- Create + protect jobs
- Help businesses grow
- Tackle the climate crisis
- Build new homes
- Invest in policing
- Create opportunities for young people
- Celebrate diversity
- Root out inequality
- Deliver an amazing Euro2020

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These are all fine words, but rather like the Government’s policies as outlined in the Queen’s Speech, rather short on detail. It also contains phrases like “celebrate diversity” that are not just meaningless, but do not lead to specific actions or budget allocations.



Many people would argue that there is too much diversity in London and that leads to social incoherence, and why should the Mayor be spending time or money on celebrating it anyway? We all know that the population of London is now very diverse and we have all come to accept that. So what is there to celebrate?

One big issue is certainly the comment that he plans to “Tackle the Climate Crisis”. Is there one? If you look at many London boroughs who have introduced Low Traffic Neighbourhoods they have justified this on the basis of tackling climate change. They argue that it is important to cut emissions from vehicles when doing so will have minimal impact on the climate. Climate may be influenced by man-made emissions (although some dispute that) but cutting vehicle emissions in London will have a negligible influence.

Emissions in London come from many different sources and directly relate to the population of London and their requirements for buildings, heating and transport. The Mayor’s policies imply more businesses, more buildings to accommodate them, more homes for the workers and more infrastructure to support them so this is all contradictory.

Only if the Mayor adopted a policy of reducing the population of London while providing more infrastructure – particularly in terms of transport – would the environment be improved.

The Mayor also gave his priorities in articles in the Times and the Independent. He vows to press ahead with controversial plans to get Londoners out of their cars. He said to the Independent that we “need to make sure we don’t go from one health crisis of Covid, to another one – even worse – of air quality”.

Of course this makes for good political banter but it is untrue that air pollution is a major health crisis. It is certainly worth improving what air pollution there is in London as it might tackle some health issues but it has been steadily improving for years and years in most areas.

Sadiq Khan said this in the article: “Our roads should be limited to blue light services, to electricians, to plumbers, to commercial drivers, to taxis, to those that need to use our roads - delivery drivers and so forth - rather than individuals that could be walking, cycling and using public transport”. So it seems those who wish to drive their family to their friends or relatives elsewhere in the country should be banned from using London’s roads. And doing a week’s shopping and carrying it home or visiting doctors should also be banned it seems.

## New York

It's interesting to look at another major city which has similar transport problems. A heavily congested road network and a public transport system in deficit. Just like the impact of the Covid epidemic on the budgets of Transport for London, New York is facing a major problem.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) budget (which covers the subway and some bus services and is equivalent to TfL in London) is projecting a deficit of \$16 billion for the period 2020 to 2024, even after major cuts in services.

New York is planning to introduce congestion charging to cut traffic and of course generate some income for the MTA – as much as \$15 billion by charging

\$10 to \$15 dollars per day for those entering Manhattan. But the adjacent state of New Jersey, from which many people commute into New York City, is threatening retaliation. Senator Laguna and Assemblyman Tully are developing legislation that would impose tolls on non-residents driving between New Jersey and New York. Mr Tully said “We should not be used to fund the MTA”.

This is equivalent to Essex or Kent imposing a tax on Londoners who drive into their counties if Sadiq Khan imposed a toll on those who drive into London from outside the M25 – as he has proposed. This is surely a very good response to such a threat!



County Councils that border the M25 should surely be asking the Government for such legislation, or asking the Government to stop taxation without representation.

### Follow the Blog

The FFDF London region has a blog where many of the articles herein first appeared. It is present here:

<https://freedomfordrivers.blog/>

To get the latest news as it appears, follow the blog.



## Pushing Ahead with the Expanded ULEZ

As expected, Sadiq Khan is pushing ahead with expanding the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to the North/South

Circular in October. Signs warning of entering into the zone are already being put up (see above).

Mr Khan has issued a press release announcing this. He claims to have a mandate from Londoners to put environment and climate policies at the heart of his second term despite the fact that only a minority of Londoners actually voted for him.

He claims his policies will “improve London’s air and halt the climate emergency”. The former is not true and the latter is a figment of his imagination.

What he does spell out though is that 100,000 car owners, 35,000 van owners and 3,000 HGVs will be affected although the AA estimates the total number of motorists affected at more like 350,000.

Owners of cars will have to pay £12.50 per day and most are still blissfully unaware of the impact this will have on them. But it will raise as much as £1 billion per annum in the next few years. The financial gain is what is driving this new taxation, not the environmental benefit.

The claims about the improvements in London’s air quality from the existing ULEZ zone are erroneous. It has improved because of national regulations on vehicle emissions and the change to the vehicle fleet as older vehicles are replaced. The recent changes have been solely down to the fact that with Covid epidemic lockdowns in place, the number of vehicles on the road of all kinds has been much reduced.

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## Expanded ULEZ (Cont.)

Such “environmental” taxes and the demand by Government that we all move to electric vehicles are likely to make the ownership of private cars something for the rich alone in future. Carlos Tavares, the leader of Stellantis (they own Alfa Romeo, Chrysler, Citroën, Dodge, Fiat, Jeep, Lancia, Maserati, Opel, Peugeot and Vauxhall brands) said recently that “The brutality with which change is imposed on this industry is an understatement.

It’s completely top down and completely brutal. How do we protect freedom of mobility to the middle classes that may not be able to afford to buy €35,000 battery electric vehicles where today for the same conventional product they pay half for it?”

on the battery problem and how it might be solved by the development of solid-state batteries. It suggested batteries will be available to give a 700km range for cars, although it’s probably a few years away before they could be put into mass production.

With improved batteries, giving longer range and an improved charging infrastructure around the country, one can see that by 2030 there may be no good reason for most people to worry about having to buy an electric vehicle although those with no off-road parking may still face problems as kerb-side charging is still an issue.

Buses in London are still a major contributor to air pollution and although the Mayor has made promises about the increased

In effect, private mobility may become something only available to the wealthy with everyone else having to use public transport or cycle. Is that a world you wish to live in?

## Electric Cars, Buses and Trucks – Problems Remain

Electric cars are rapidly becoming more viable, both economically and practically, for many vehicle users. They can surely be helpful in cleaning up London’s air which needs improving because there are still hot spots of air pollution in the metropolis. The Freedom for Drivers Foundation is fully supportive of the Government’s encouragement of electric vehicles although we see

use of electric or hybrid buses, particularly in central London, those promises are slow in realisation. It will not be until 2037 that all 9,200 buses across London will be zero emission. The Mayor and TfL are also betting on the use of hydrogen.

HGVs and LGVs are another major source of pollution. LGVs (vans) are available in electric form but do not yet seem very popular, probably because of the price. An electric Ford Transit (E-Transit) won’t even be available before 2022.

HGVs have also been a problem because of the limited loads they can carry and the need for frequent recharging. But UK Bakery company Warburtons have recently announced the acquisition of its first 16 tonne

potential problems with the banning of the sale of all new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars in 2030. That now includes a ban on many hybrid vehicles which can be a good compromise for those who have no off-road parking (and hence cannot easily plug in their vehicles) or do long journeys to remote parts of the country.

2030 is of course a long time away and the range of electric cars may be very different then, and the cost much lower, which are the two things that put off many people from buying them at present.

Batteries need improving to extend the range of vehicles and reduce recharging time. But this can probably only be done to a limited extent with Lithium-ion batteries, the predominant technology in use at present.

There was a good article published by the Financial Times recently



electric truck, a Renault Trucks D Z.E. The vehicle has been given Warburtons orange livery with the slogan “Our electric trucks are the best thing since sliced bread” on the side.

It will be used to operate out of its Enfield bakery and can cover up to 150 kilometres on a single charge. It can carry around six tonnes of bread and bakery products to multiple locations across London.

One can see that the market for new electric vehicles of all kinds is rapidly changing. They are becoming more viable for many people and for many applications.

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## Electric Cars (Cont.)

With used IC vehicles being available for many years and the market for second-hand electric vehicles developing, there seems to be no reason to oppose the Government's policies in principle. However, there are particular problems in London due to the pace of change and the ULEZ implementation. Those who own older vehicles, particularly diesel ones, will need to buy a newer vehicle come October 2021 or pay £12.50 per day if they live within the South Circular. For retired people, this could be a major if not impossible burden when they are often people who rely on their cars to get around. Tradespeople who use older vans also face the same problem.

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in lock-down, my vehicle would have lasted several more years. This retrospective legislation to penalise vehicles that were compliant with all emissions regulations when purchased is somewhat annoying to say the least.

If you live inside the North/South Circular you will have a difficult choice to make come October. Either buy a new compliant vehicle or trade-in for a second-hand one that is. You might consider an electric or hybrid vehicle for example.

But there are some other options. I happened to read an article published by Motoring Research recently on "What is a historic vehicle?" which intrigued me. Historic vehicles are those more than 40 years old. Such vehicles (except those used for commercial purposes) are exempt from

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has not considered the plight of such people and how their problems could be relieved.

The basic issue is the application of rules about the taxation of vehicles retrospectively, i.e. to vehicles that were legal to drive anywhere when they were purchased. This is morally wrong.

It would not hamper the general move to lower emissions to give such users some relief.

## Avoiding Road Taxes

With Sadiq Khan being re-elected many Londoners are going to be faced with an expanded ULEZ scheme in October. That means £12.50 per day for every day you use non-

the ULEZ and are also exempt from road tax (Vehicle Excise Duty).

In theory you could buy a restored classic car for a reasonable price and save a lot in tax. But you need to pick the vehicle carefully. Most "popular" cars more than 40 years old are likely to be full of rust and have very high mileages so they won't be good buys. Classic cars such as E-Type Jaguars might be attractive but are now very expensive if well preserved. But there are other Jaguar models such as early XJs or 2.4 models that would be more practical. Parts would be readily available but maintenance costs might be high.

Having run some ancient and decrepit vehicles when I was younger, I am not particularly recommending this approach

compliant vehicles within the North/South Circular. Perhaps you think that your vehicle will be compliant because it's relatively new, but that is not the case for diesel cars. Petrol cars sold after 2005 are generally compliant but diesel cars that are not Euro-6 standard (registered since September 2015 mostly) are not.

You can check the taxes you pay in Congestion Charges and ULEZ charges in London for your current vehicle here:

<https://tinyurl.com/4e6dzn3p>

Personally I made the mistake of buying a diesel car in 2013 after the Government chose to exhort people to purchase them to cut CO2 emissions and car manufacturers such as Jaguar dropped most of their petrol models. With me doing relatively low mileage in recent years, and hardly any in the last year while we have been




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unless you are keen on classic cars and don't need to use a vehicle every day.

It's always amusing to watch the TV programme Bangers and Cash available on some channels. It's very clear that the cost of restoring a beat-up vehicle is never recouped so buy a fully restored vehicle if you want a classic. And be careful on your choice. Vehicles that were unreliable and expensive to maintain when new will not have changed. While some models such as Jaguar E-Types are way too expensive for the average person.

But there is another option which is to move to a ULEZ compliant vehicle that is not brand new.

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### Avoiding Road Taxes (Cont.)

The car I owned before my current one was a Jaguar XJ8 registered in 2006 with a petrol V8 engine and that is ULEZ compliant. See photograph right. This had an aluminium body so shouldn't rust and you can pick up a good one for £12,000. This was a superb and spacious vehicle with all mod-cons. Perhaps I should simply go back in time and buy another? Or one can buy a low mileage Bentley Continental of a similar age for £25,000.

If you want to go for something smaller and cheaper, look at Japanese cars which are generally reliable and Japan retained the love of petrol versus diesel. How about a one-owner Lexus GS 450H (a hybrid power train)



with 66,000 miles on the clock for £7,500 advertised on AutoTrader if you want a luxury vehicle with a gesture to environmental soundness?

There are certainly some interesting and good quality vehicles that would enable you to avoid

paying Sadiq Khan's tax every day – at least for the present.

Remember the ULEZ tax is about raising money for the Mayor's public transport empire, not about improving air quality where it will have minimal impact.

Roger Lawson

### Great British Railways Plan

#### – But Will It Be Great?

The Government has published the Williams Review of proposals for how Britain's railways should be reformed. The existing franchise system for the train operating companies with a separate company managing the tracks which was introduced in the 1990s has proved to be a dismal failure.

Network Rail went bust and although the franchise services have been improved in some regards, the recent collapse in ridership due to the Covid epidemic has meant the Government had to step in to keep franchises afloat.

The franchise system was also exceedingly complex with horrendously complicated contracts to supposedly provide the right incentives to train operators. It did not stop arguments over who was to blame for delays to services. But the Government (i.e. you and me via taxation) ended up providing even bigger subsidies and in ways that were not that obvious.

Train delays are common. The report says that one third of trains were late in 2019/20 and this has barely improved in the past five years.

Now the Williams-Shapps Plan is proposing a brave new world of Government control. Grant Shapps, the Transport Secretary, said: "Great British Railways marks a new era in the history of our railways.

It will become a single familiar brand with a bold new vision for passengers – of punctual services, simpler tickets, and a modern and green railway that meets the needs of the nation."

That sounds remarkably like the old British Rail does it not?

New flexible season tickets are promised that will help those who are now only commuting into offices a few days per week and simpler and less confusing tickets are foretold. Paper tickets will disappear and there will be a new app to enable easy booking (this will compete with companies such as Trainline on the web).

Train operating franchises will be replaced by "Passenger Service Contacts". It is not clear how that is different though.

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## British Railways (Cont.)

More fine words from the report are: "Under single national leadership, our railways will be more agile: able to react quicker, spot opportunities, make common-sense choices, and use the kind of operational flexibilities normal in most organisations, but difficult or impossible in the current contractual spider's web".

One claim is that Great British Railways will make the railways more efficient, long the complaint of those who have looked at the finances of the system.

Comment: There is certainly a desire for change as the existing franchise system and separate

But the essential problem is that the cost of operating trains is high when passenger usage is concentrated into a few hours per day while the public expects a service 18 hours per day or longer. Another problem is that the cost of building and maintaining the tracks and signalling is enormously expensive in comparison with roads.

For example, according to articles in the Guardian (a keen supporter of railways), the cost per mile of building a motorway is £30 million per mile. Does that sound high? But the cost of a new railway such as HS2 is £307 million per mile!

Railways are old technology that intrinsically require expensive track and expensive signalling systems to maintain safety. If a train breaks down or signals fail the whole network is disrupted while this rarely causes a problem on roads.



rail track maintenance system was clearly inefficient. Rail passengers still do not pay for the real costs of running the trains

and building/maintaining the tracks except on heavily used commuter lines in the London area.



The breakdown of one vehicle on a road makes little impact and traffic actually flows through broken traffic lights quite easily while they are easier to repair.

Changing a rail timetable normally takes 9 months apparently and there have been some big problems as a result in the past. For example in 2019 Northern Rail missed more than a quarter of a million stops allegedly after a botched timetable change and generated thousands of customer complaints. You don't hear of such problems with bus services which are intrinsically more flexible.

How will Great British Railways affect services in London, where commuter surface rail lines are operated by separate companies at present. This is what the Williams report says: "In London and the South East, a new strategic partnership will be established to support housing, economic growth and the environment

across the highly interconnected transport network in that part of the country. This will bring together Great British Railways, TfL and local authorities and businesses to coordinate timetabling and investments and to provide a consistent passenger experience in areas such as accessibility, ticketing and communications". Sounds wonderful does it not, but the devil is surely in the detail.

Ultimately the Government will still be in control of the railways under this plan, so it's effectively a renationalisation under a different name. That may please some but no nationalised industry has ever been an economic success or pleased their customers. I foretell disappointment.

You can read the full Williams report, which is a panegyric to the future of rail travel in the country here:

<https://tinyurl.com/3rhcd8e5>



## London Transport Commissioner and Mayor's Special Pleading

The Evening Standard has published an article by London's Transport Commissioner, Andy Byford (see Reference 1). In it he welcomes the £1 billion in Government funding to keep Transport for London (TfL) running for another few months.

But like Sadiq Khan's press release over the deal (see Reference 2), it complains about the lack of a "long-term settlement". The Mayor even called it "yet another sticking plaster". They do not seem to understand that the basic problem is that they are

looking for taxpayers (i.e. you and me as represented by the Government) to fund an uneconomic business called Transport for London.

Andy Byford does spell out where some of the money will go which includes this:

"And it means we can continue with innovative and creative schemes to decarbonise transport by 2030 and to clean-up London's air through the expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone, further electrifying the bus fleet, promoting active travel — including more Santander cycles — and improving road safety".

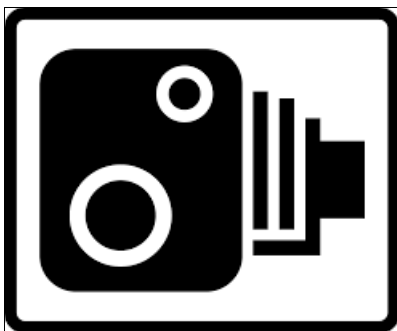
In other words, they are spending taxpayers' money to expand the ULEZ (a very ineffective scheme on a cost/benefit analysis) and provide more cycles. Clearly the approach seems to be to spend their way out of trouble in the socialist paradise of London.

The Mayor says that TfL only needs emergency funding from the Government because the Covid epidemic cut fare income by 90%. That might have been true in the short term and over a few weeks but the details do not seem to have been disclosed. Usage of public transport is fast recovering so this may be only a temporary problem and the financial problems of TfL are a long-standing failure to run a prudent budget that takes into account not just operating costs but capital expenditure and financing costs in addition.

Regrettably the Mayor is acting like the animal that bites the hand that feeds it with his attacks on the Government.

Reference 1: Evening Standard article: <https://tinyurl.com/2fc4vtut>

Reference 2: Mayor of London Press Release: <https://tinyurl.com/82uwfr38>



## Millions Collected in Fines from LTNs

The Times has reported that drivers have racked up £14 million in fines in London in just a few months by driving into Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs).

Cameras were introduced to stop people driving through "bus gates" or into these zones instead of using physical barriers as the latter prevent emergency vehicles from accessing the roads.

The penalty for driving through the cameras is £130 and many people have collected PCNs because they have not noticed the signs. An extreme example given by the Times is that of Ivan Izkowitz who collected 58 fines totalling £7,500 after temporarily leaving home to help his wife in Lewisham.

But there are many other examples reported to us of people collecting fines about which they are very angry. Roads which were previously opened and

regularly used catch people out, particularly as satnav systems have often not been updated to take account of the closure.

The £14 million total was collected in just 10 London boroughs and Lewisham obtained more than any other borough. Lewisham and other boroughs are of course keen to extract more money from motorists to help with their budget problems, but there is no justification for this behaviour.

The road closures should be removed as the Covid pandemic does not justify them and they have many other negative consequences.

Times article: <https://tinyurl.com/b8u2hyzb>



## Biggin Hill Airport Pushes for Changes

Biggin Hill Airport lies within the Borough of Bromley. The local council owns the airport and has leased it to Biggin Hill Airport Ltd (BHAL) for use essentially for private flying and “general aviation”, i.e. not for scheduled commercial flights. But BHAL have long desired to expand activities at the airport to make it more profitable. Local residents have objected to any expansion because there is housing under the flight paths and noise complaints are common.

BHAL have now applied for a variation of the lease to permit scheduled and non-scheduled commercial flights...including by accepting “individual farepaying passengers...”, although limits on the number of flights will remain and BHAL say the number of flights will not significantly change. If the council rejects the request to vary the lease, BHAL will appeal to the Upper Tribunal.

A local group called Flightpath Watch is active in opposing changes to the airport that might increase noise. There are also concerns about poor road access to the airport. Few people desire to turn Biggin Hill into another major London airport.

You can read the full details and likely council response here: <https://tinyurl.com/jsaxubr4> . Local residents who are concerned should make representations to the council or their local councillors on this matter.

Comment: The case for changing the lease as desired by BHAL appears unjustified although some change may be acceptable. But it is not totally clear why BHAL requires the proposed change. We recommend opposition unless the case for change is made more evident.

## Crossing Lights at Red

Transport for London (TfL) have announced their latest attack on vehicle users. A number of light-controlled pedestrian crossings are being changed so that they are permanently set at red for vehicles.



Pedestrians will see a permanent green signal until a vehicle approaches when it might then change to red. But how soon? And won't it encourage drivers to ignore the red lights they see when there is obviously no pedestrian waiting to cross?

This change will be made to 18 pedestrian crossings, initially in Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hounslow, Richmond and Hillingdon. The justification is that locations of high pedestrian flow require such a change.

## Electric Boris Bikes

Santander is to extend their sponsorship of TfL's flagship cycle hire scheme until 2025 and

the scheme's first e-bikes will be rolled out in summer next year. It will be expanded to cover new parts of the city and there will be a permanent discount for NHS staff. There were a record number of hires in the past year.

What are the finances of the Santander bike hire scheme and what are Santander contributing? The TfL press release is remarkably silent on the costs and income. But this is what Wikipedia say on the figures for 2016: “TfL funded a net £3.6 million to the scheme in the 2016/17 period during which ~10 million bikes were hired, this equates to 16.9% of the scheme's operating costs being funded by subsidy and this is on par with TfL's operating costs as a whole”. It appears that TfL are therefore massively sub-

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To get the latest news and comment on traffic and transport issues in London, you can follow us on Twitter.

Our Twitter handle is **@Drivers\_London**

Any new FFDF London blog posts are notified by Twitter and you can of course respond with your own comments.

sidising the scheme and Santander are simply paying for the advertising of their name. Expanding the scheme will drive TfL even further into deficit however worthy it might be to get more people cycling.

## **E-Scooters Trial**

TfL have also announced that a trial of E-Scooters will commence in London on the 7th June. The operators will be Dott, Lime and Tier. They will be limited to 12.5 mph, must have lights and audible warning signals.

They will only be allowed to be used on roads and in cycleways, which is the only legal use permitted for any e-scooter but this law is of course regularly ignored by e-cycle users and the police do not have the resources to enforce the law. So they are regularly ridden on pavements.

They are also regularly abandoned on pavements which causes problems for disabled people.

Comment: E-Scooters are positively dangerous to pedestrians

when ridden on pavements, and are also dangerous to the e-scooter riders as they are less conspicuous to drivers of vehicles than cyclists.

We will await the outcome of the trials but from the evidence seen to date they do not appear to be safe.

All pedestrians who see cyclists or e-scooter riders on the pavement should tell them to get off, and stand in their way until they do. They might then get the message!

## **The Danger of Encouraging Cycling**

There is a very good article which has been published by an organisation named "Single File" on the dangers of encouraging cycling. It suggests London is

about to have an explosion in cycling deaths as more cyclists on the roads mean more deaths of cyclists.

It also demolishes the myth that Holland has made cycling both safe and popular. Holland has more than twice the number of fatal cycling deaths than the UK despite the fact that they have many more segregated cycle lanes. The article also points out that getting more people to cycle will not solve London's traffic congestion problems.

One good quotation from the article is this: "When you reallocate limited road space on a 24x7 basis for bicycles, the problem you introduce is this – in London only one in 50 road users are cyclists, and that's only during peak hour.

The rest of the time that precious road space becomes woefully underused".

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## **Speed Awareness Courses to be Made Legal?**

One of the aspects of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill that is currently going through Parliament and which has largely gone unreported is Section 67 which covers education courses as an alternative to prosecution for motoring offences.

We have pointed out previously that the offer of speed awareness courses was likely to be illegal. It's a perversion of justice to waive prosecution on payment of a sum of money, and there is no

evidence that attending such a course has any impact on road safety. See Reference below for a web site that gives a full explanation.

The new Bill does at least bring the use of such courses into law and allows the Secretary of State to regulate them. However it permits the police to set a fee that is higher than the cost of providing the course. Any such excess must be used for the purpose of promoting road safety, but that does include the provision of more speed cameras and police to operate them.

So the gravy train of the industry of speed enforcement will continue, if not expand even further.

In conclusion, this will remain a dubious practice, with money driving the schemes not road safety.

Reference:

<https://www.speed-awareness.org/>

## **Surveys Against LTNs**

The Daily Telegraph has published an analysis of the 10 consultations on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) that local councils have reported to date. Three quarters of the people consulted over LTNs and cycle lanes opposed them.

*Continued on next page.*



## Surveys Against LTNs (Cont.)

The councils reporting their survey results include Harrow (82% opposed) and Windsor + Maidenhead (89% opposed). One exception was Bromley though with 64% supporting but their schemes are very limited in scope.

The newspaper also reported that one in three councils have axed, modified or reduced their active travel schemes. They also quote Tony Devenish, Conservative London Assembly Members as saying: "My Government is at fault to some extent, because they gave councils the power not to publicly consult for up to 18 months. You can't just do these things to people. There has been absolute outcry from the Great British public - and that's why so

many councils have had to U-turn".

But some Councils such as Lewisham have avoided doing public consultations despite promising to do them, or they keep moving the goalposts by changing the nature of the road closures (for example by changing them to "School Streets" or by reissuing Traffic Orders to avoid legal challenges).

Comment: Such public surveys show that the general public (even those who don't own a car but rely on public transport such as buses), are opposed to the obstruction of our roads. Roads are essential for the movement of people and goods.

## In Praise of the Car

John Redwood, M.P., has spelled out the advantages of

cars in a good article on his blog (see link below). He says: "Acquiring your first vehicle is a major advance in your personal freedom. Yet today government, Councils and better off greens from the security of their homes in major cities lecture the rest of us on the wickedness of the car. The better off Green city dweller can rely more on the tube or mass transit and has the money for taxis when needed. The aim is to get people out of car ownership or to reduce their use of the car, and in the meantime to cow people into keeping quiet about their reliance on this flexible and most popular form of transport".

He explains at length why cars are more practical and economic for most of the journeys which he takes. A number of good comments have been added. I hope Grant Shapps reads the article.

Link to Redwood Article: <https://tinyurl.com/cchhcurc>

## Harrow Scraps LTNs

The London Borough of Harrow is to remove cycle lanes and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) after a formal review and public consultation.

LTNs in the Headstone South, Francis Rd and Vaughan Rd schemes were opposed by between 65% and 80% of respondents to a public consultation. The Council also claimed they increased congestion, increased air pollution and delayed emergency services.

This is what the Leader of Harrow Council Graham Henson said:

"It is clear from the statutory consultation undertaken over the past six months that there is little support for the cycle lanes and low traffic neighbourhoods implemented as part of the national initiative.

And so, the decision to remove these experimental schemes is the right one for Harrow - we will keep residents informed about when this will take place.

We have listened to and understand residents' concerns about how the schemes were implemented. Going forward the council will do things differently - engaging with our residents to shape projects before they are implemented.

We have some difficult decisions ahead of us to make our streets

safer for all road users and reach our Climate Emergency pledge to lower emissions in the borough and be carbon neutral by 2030 but we will approach this challenge together in partnership with our residents". Note that the Council is still persisting with their plans for School Streets.

Comment: Harrow Council is Labour controlled but by a slim majority over the Conservatives. It is remarkable how quickly the above decision was taken and it seems clear that the public opposition to the schemes had a big impact on the views of Councillors. It is good that Councillors did pay attention to the views of their electorate unlike in other London boroughs where dogma has overridden common sense.



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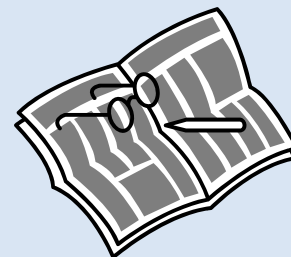
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### About the Freedom for Drivers Foundation (FFDF)

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](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org)

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