

The Greater London Transport Newsletter

Some arguments for stopping the extension of London's uLEZ zone.

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It'll Cost You £27.50 Daily to Drive inside North & South Circular from 25th October

The mayor's office has announced the ultra Low Emission Zone (uLEZ) will be expanded from 25 October 2021 to include up to south and north circular roads (A205 and A406).



This unwanted expansion will bisect Lewisham and Greenwich boroughs. Residents living in one half of the boroughs' driving a vehicle not meeting environmental demands will be charged £12.50 per day to cross into the other half. The mayor's congestion charge of £15 will be levied on top if you dare travel inside inner London.

uLEZ was introduced to help clean up London's most polluted air. London's air pollution is contributed to, but not solely caused by traffic diesel engine (exhaust particulates) and petrol engine exhaust fumes (nitrous oxide and carbon monoxide).

Traffic fumes are only one contributor to London's air pollution. Others are domestic and commercial heating systems, wood burning, and illegal open combustion such as bonfires. In the name of clean air, some right-

eous councils have already been out on patrol around the traditional November 5th Guy Fawkes bonfire night in search of "illegal" bonfires.

Prior to 2019, surveys proved air pollution was a health risk to residents living close by key traffic routes. These key routes had been introduced and enhanced by local borough councils, the London County Council (LCC), and the Greater London Council (GLC). And now the Greater London Authority (GLA). Transport for London (TfL) is charged with enforcing maximum allowed vehicle emissions' levels.

According to GLA figures, upwards of 10 percent of Londoners live on these main roads. These 800,000 tend to be poor and more likely to be social or private housing tenants. So those residents living close-by key

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Air Pollution a Danger to Health Known Since Early 1950's

routes in the uLEZ zone are being penalised, not only to their health but also as drivers in their pockets by these council-protected key routes.

Traffic-caused air pollution has directly resulted from successive failures of London's traffic management policies. They've forced through traffic onto these artificially joined-together collections of previously separate residential roads. Instead of allowing traffic flow to filter through all available road space.

It's not as if London councils didn't know that air pollution causes illness and shortens life. The 1956

Clean Air Act was passed as a result of the severe 1953 smogs.

Reductions to life expectancy due to hydrocarbon air pollution were most recently identified by a King's College study in 2010. GLA admits that early deaths have decreased since that time. But wrongly attributes this solely to the introduction of uLEZ. Advances in engine and exhaust technology, and drivers' switching to plug-in hybrid or plug-in electric only vehicles have all played a part.

You can Convert to Electric but it costs around £20,000

Conversions of classic cars to electric are possible as the popular TV series *Vintage Voltage* show (Quest TV). But cost around £20,000. Conversions featured in the first series were: Land Rover Defender 110, Chesil Speedster, BMW 2002, a Photon motorbike, and a Ferrari 308 GTS. Their Lancia Fulvia conversion -- carrying a 288kg battery load -- gives an electric range of 120 miles.

<https://www.electricclassiccars.co.uk/>



This Tragedy could've been Avoided

The December 2020 coroner's inquest into the death of nine-year-old Ella Addo-Kissi-Debrah shows just one sad effect of all this traffic "management". H.M. Assistant Coroner for inner south London, Philip Barlow concluded that Ella died from acute respiratory failure, asthma and "air pollution exposure". This was the first time that a Coroner had found air pollution a contributory cause of illness and death. The finding will have far-reaching consequences "for other people and other cases" acknowledged the Coroner. What the Coroner didn't mention, nor did any of the reportage, was that the child was under medical care and known to Lewisham council's social services as a severe asthma sufferer. But still allocated a home adjacent to the south circular A205 high pollution-density key route.

Ella's family had to campaign for seven years after her death in 2013 to even get the inquest. Along the way they had to instigate proceedings to quash the original verdict of the Court that had not investigated the issue of air pollution. Ella's mother is standing as the Green party candidate for Greenwich & Lewisham in the forthcoming (2021) GLA and mayor for London elections.

UK's breaches of air quality legislation have given rise to three sets of proceedings by ClientEarth, resulting in Court orders quashing national Air Quality Plans and requiring urgent corrective action.

Key Routes Protected and Enhanced by Councils

Key routes had been developed and enhanced since the '70s to cope with London's traffic increase -- a product of London's encouraged economic growth. The UK Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 identified a number of pollutants that can harm human health and the environment: sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), lead, benzene, carbon monoxide (CO), benzo(a)pyrene, and ozone (O₃).

The GLA has concentrated its enforcement effort on levels of vehicle particulate matter that predominantly come from diesel engines. And nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

uLEZ started on 8 April 2019. It currently operates in the existing central London congestion charge zone 24 hours a day, every day of the year. To drive in the uLEZ zone, your car must meet strict emission standards read automatically from your DVLA-stored vehicle V5 log book record. Or pay a charge currently £12.50 per day. Euro4 and Euro6 for diesels are the GLA's current minimum standard to avoid a "polluters' fine".

Euro 3 became mandatory for all motorcycles newly manufactured in 2007;

Euro 4 became mandatory for all new cars in 2005, and light vans in 2006;

Euro 6 became mandatory for all new heavy duty engines for goods vehicles and buses from January 2014, September 2015 for cars and light vans, and September 2016 for larger vans up to and including 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight.

Congestion Charge is £15 extra

The uLEZ charge is in addition to the mayor's central London congestion charge that's levied 7am to 10pm, every day of the year except Christmas Day. That daily charge is £15. Or £17.50 if paid within three days of you transgressing into inner London.

During the first bout of Covid-19 pandemic the congestion charge was not enforced to help those key workers needing to commute to work due to the mayor simultaneously cutting London Transport services. The reduction in public transport had the effect of forcing remaining passengers closer together so they no longer could maintain social distancing. Life, the world, the universe didn't stop because of

there being no congestion charge. But it was re-introduced during the second Covid lock-down.

The mayor's increase in congestion charge hours and days -- which used to be 7am to 6.30pm excluding Sundays -- means inner London had become a near commuter-free zone during the pandemic -- virtually all commuter traffic stopped with only service vehicles, high value-carrying goods vehicles, and the affluent driving in the zone during zone times.

Introduced to control traditional Monday to Friday twice-daily rush hours, this charge now penalises drivers when there's a much-reduced rush hour on Saturdays and none at all on Sundays. £27.50 in total to visit relatives resident in inner London on a Sunday. Plus possible borough parking charges too? This is the motorist being ripped off.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused many businesses to evaluate whether running a central London office is really necessary. Working from home forced the use of digital technology on many office workers with teleconferencing and web-sales now the norm rather than the exception. As familiarity with the technology increases, commuting will become the exception rather than the norm causing a permanent reduction in rush hour traffic and overall rush hour-generated air pollution.

John Lewis partnership reports a shift from high street store purchasing to online. Prior to the pandemic on-line accounted for 40 percent of sales, it now accounts for 70 percent. Waitrose supermarket stores has seen a online leap from 5 to 40 percent.

Pay Your Fine. Or go to Jail!

Harsh fines by a penalty charge notice (PCN) system are exacted from drivers who flout either of the zones. A complex system of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras plus manual CCTV operators catch "offenders".

Doubling and even trebling of the fine is commonplace with some non-payers even being arrested where an order has been issued for contempt of court for non-payment but not satisfied.

What could've started out as a motorist's few minutes wrongly entering a zone can end up with bailiffs knocking on your door demanding to take your property to satisfy the GLA's debt.

Mayor Attacks the Disabled

Blue Badge holders are exempted from the congestion charge but must have registered with (TfL) before entering the congestion charge zone. Blue Badge holders are not exempted from uLEZ. Only if their vehicle is registered with the DVLA as a disabled's vehicle are they then exempt. Or driving a GLA emissions' approved vehicle. Only those disabled in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP), or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement (WPM) may apply for their car to become a DVLA-recognised disabled vehicle. They are also exempt from DVLA's vehicle license tax.

Financial Apartheid

The GLA demands to see the colour of your money to allow you to drive in its uLEZ or congestion charge zones. If you're a jobbing contractor or just out to see relatives then you have to pay up. These zones do not affect the well-off. They are effectively exempt by reason of their relative wealth. A £27.50 total daily charge is nothing to them. Others just shrug it off as a tax deductible legitimate business expense.

Avoiding Getting Charged

Quite complex avoidance schemes have evolved for those needing to car commute in the zones. Registration of a vehicle inside the zone or at a fake address to avoid PCNs has become common. The zones' resident discount scheme was abolished for new applications as of 1st August 2020.

This writer worked for a few years as a PC and photocopier mobile technician in the late '90s -- working in the City for a service company based in Waterloo and then self-employed: "I couldn't have carried out my trade without my own car, a cavernous Citroen CX Famiale Estate. Were I to start up being self-employed again nowadays it'd cost me £15 per day at least. A plug-in electric-only car within my budget just couldn't carry a bulky heavy office photocopier plus all my tools and spare parts. Even if I did have the money to buy one."

Many regular commuters needing their car for work have found drive-arounds to avoid the zones: those involve residential roads that previously had no commuter traffic. They do now. With a corresponding decrease in air quality and an increase in congestion where there was little or none before. Many drivers park up just outside of the zone to avoid a charge if close to zone hours. Adding to residents' pollution outside of the congestion zone.

As with all schemes of this nature, exemptions grow depending on the lobbying power of the group. Diplomatic, Government, and Royal Household vehicles are exempt, as were vehicles servicing the four main utilities: electricity, gas, water, and telecomms. Emergency service vehicles are exempt. Local borough council vehicles (including mayors' limousines) too were exempt as were road contractor's vehicles, and inevitably the zones' enforcement cameras' and network service fleet. (*see following note for vehicles now banned from 1st March*)

The Rush to Electric and Scrapage Schemes

Previous Government-supported scrapage schemes became a hidden way of supporting the new car industry. It was wasteful as it caused more pollution by artificially generating more demand for new cars than there would otherwise have been had old cars just been allowed to die gracefully.

More pollution was caused by those old cars being scrapped before their natural end of life -- old fluids leached into natural watercourses and drainage systems, and used tyres gave a disposal problem. Or were re-sold on again with the safety risk that a part-worn tyre gives.

The previous 2010 scrapage scheme was allocated £400 million by central Government. Buyers were given £2,000 off (£1,000 from the Government and £1,000 from the manufacturer) for scrapping a vehicle aged 10 years or older. That scrapage discount was made only against the full retail price of a new vehicle. Nearly 400,000 cars were scrapped under the scheme in 10 months.

The scheme was open to abuse with qualifying vehicles declared as having been scrapped and thus claiming a payment toward a new vehicle instead finding their way onto overseas markets. Or being

re-identified by cloning the vehicle identification number (VIN) plate from another genuinely scrapped vehicle and registration number.

Government currently offers a plug-in electric-only car grant of up to £3,000 for anyone buying a vehicle that has a zero-emission range of at least 70 miles and costs less than £50,000.

A fully electric car within price reach of the average motorist does not have the range, performance, and load carrying capacity of its fossil-fueled equivalent. A hybrid car is a better proposition but is up to 30 percent more expensive. There are now no government incentives for plug-in (electric with fossil fuel) hybrid vehicles. Petrol or diesel-powered only new cars are still price competitive, offer greater range, meet today's higher emissions' standards, and so still vie for new car buyers' attention.

As far as light vans (up to 3½ tonnes) are concerned -- the much needed tool of the independent traveling plumber, decorator, or PC service technician -- Ford's latest Transit plug-in hybrid only offers a 35-mile maximum range on electric. But 350 miles on combined petrol and battery power.

Today's manufacturer-offered scrappage scheme is nothing of the sort. It's a trade-in come-on allowance of up to around £3,000 available only against full retail price of a new car. There is no guarantee that your old traded in car will actually be scrapped unless taken in part exchange under the government's current scheme for a fully electric non-hybrid vehicle.

Gas & Hydrogen Fuel Cell

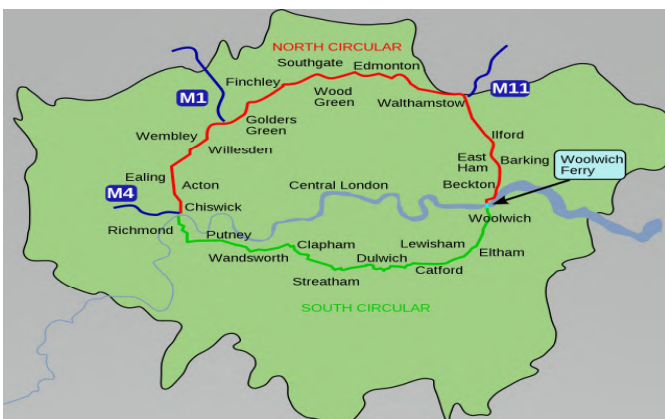
Licensed taxicabs that have converted their engines to "bi-fuel", usually liquefied petroleum gas (LPG, also known as Autogas) are exempted. But diesel cabs must have re-fitted their taxi with an up-rated Euro6-meeting engine first.

There's been increased interest in hydrogen fuel cell technology. But unfortunately there's only one filling station offering liquid hydrogen with the approved pump and filling nozzle in greater London. It's in Hendon.

The private motorist that's converted to LPG is not so blessed despite a petrol engine's conversion to LPG's 11 percent reduction in NOx and virtual elimination of carbon monoxide exhaust output. TfL has refused to move on this, insisting those converted vehicles' V5 logbook must show the Euro4 (diesel Euro6) standard is met or exceeded.

It's possible to have a car's emissions checked by a Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) approved individual vehicle approval (IVA) test station. But they are geared up to test heavy goods vehicles (HGV) with a price to match: a basic passenger vehicle (M1) test costs £256.77 inc VAT.

TfL will not recognise licensed LPG-converters' workshop test certificates. Nor the emissions' test carried out at an annual MOT. If TfL can recognise LPG licensed taxis then they can recognise private motorists' converting their own cars out of their own pocket. They make a contribution toward reducing air pollution without the environmental pollution scrappage causes. It's trite to say "scrap your car if it doesn't meet today's standards" as the mayor does.



Charging Points

Excellent work has been done by some borough councils providing charge points for electric vehicles. But given the reduced range and time needed for a full re-charge (usually overnight from a domestic source) a plug-in fully electric car is not an option for anything more than shopping, short commuting, and local trips. And an owner with a garage. So a charge point convenient to your home is needed.

Public access roadside charging points have become a target for vandals and car thieves, causing increased local council surveillance costs.

Enforcing uLEZ and Congestion Charges

For their own security enforcement cameras have had to be installed so far away from areas they watch that more sophisticated cameras and tall mounting towers are now needed. Despite armoured precautions, some drivers caught by TfL and local council's CCTV have taken militant action: cutting cables, digitally hacking into the cameras' communication's network or hub, or otherwise destroying the equipment some see as tools of an Orwellian nightmare state watching them. All this extra expense, when any surpluses generated from each scheme was to have been spent on local improvements, has put a drain on council finances.

It's Not All Gloom

Fire, police and ambulance vehicles are now more likely to meet their response time targets. Target response times prior to the pandemic for an Immediate ("I" grade) call had to be increased from 12 to 15 minutes, with Standard ("S") grade calls at one hour due to congestion, and road closures.

The cut in numbers of active Police Officers on the beat during the years of austerity also affected the decision to increase the I-grade target response time. The closing of Safer Neighbourhood Teams London-wide means that often crime cannot now be stopped

before it happens due to learned-in-advance intel. PCSO numbers have fallen so their more humdrum duties have again had to be carried out by fully qualified Police officers.

Fire services complain of width restrictions. Ambulance services complain about speed bumps. All complain about road closures.

Examples of an "I" grade call are: where a crime is being reported as in progress, suspects still at the scene, or a life-threatening or life-changing incident.

Street wide law enforcement is now much enhanced with CCTV operators able to monitor thoroughfares, calling for an immediate emergency service response when a situation requires. They can track suspects making off directing Police in real time.

Conservative candidate for Mayor of London Shaun Bailey says:

"I will make our streets safer — by hiring 8,000 more Police and re-opening 38 police stations.

"As for the uLEZ, I'm fully opposed to expanding it — and will reverse any expansion on day one as mayor.

At a time when people are struggling to make ends meet, we shouldn't raise the cost of living. Instead, I'll introduce a fleet of zero-emission buses — so we clean up our air without taxing Londoners more.

"I am also opposed to Sadiq's congestion charges' increase. After this Covid pandemic, we should support those who will power London's recovery — not punish them with higher taxes.

"So as mayor, I'll reverse Sadiq Khan's congestion charge hike, stop the expansion of uLEZ and scrap his Boundary outer London tax."

It Gets Even Worse

In addition to the uLEZ area increase on 25th October to the north and south circulars directly affecting Greenwich and Lewisham's residents, the mayor has proposed a boundary tax that is now being evaluated. This would penalise all vehicles not registered within London £3.50 for low emission-meeting or £5.50 for non-uLEZ compliant vehicles as they cross the border into London created by the M25.

The mayor seems to be unaware that some parts of the M25 are not within greater London at all. And so he .

has no powers for those parts of the M25 solely in neighbouring counties

Welcome to the £100 “fine”

A new LEZ scheme came into force on 1st March that charges all vehicles of 3.5 tonne and above £100 per day if they are not compliant. It applies to the existing inner uLEZ zone area.

A three month "grace period" is granted to non-LEZ compliant vehicles provided they have registered with a Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme (CVRAS) contractor to have additional filters, an updated engine, or other emissions-reduction enhancements.

Buses, coaches, and refuse vehicles are included in the scheme whether operated municipally or not. No more "grace periods" will be offered as from 28th February next year.

Complacently CVRAS adds: "Due to the cost of a retrofit exhaust after-treatment system and complexity to fit within passenger vehicles, retrofit will most likely be an uneconomically viable option for most vehicle owners.

“Purchasing a second hand Euro4 petrol car could be the most economical solution to comply with uLEZ, a Clean Air Zone (CAZ), or the Low Emission Zone (LEZ).”

CVRAS avoids saying that the mayor has already allowed LPG-fitted black cabs an uLEZ exemption.

This "sell and get a Euro4 or 6 meeting car" glib message just passes the buck to someone else living outside of the LEZ or uLEZ buying the second-hand car. Or causes a hike in non-monitored pollution from scrapping a car before its end of life as seen during the ill-fated 2010 scrappage scheme.

As of 15th March, UK's first CAZ started in Bath operated by Bath & North East Somerset Council (Bathnes). The daily charge is £9 for most vehicles, £100 for the most polluting. In a note of realism Bathnes does not charge private cars (M1 category) regardless of emissions. The council is under Liberal-Democrat control.

The Current Situation

London's population is set to top 9¼ million in this year's (2021) census. That's a growth rate on the last (2011) figures of 3.1 percent. Then outer London had some 5 million residents with inner London boroughs at 3¼ million.

The mayor's intense advertising campaign on London-wide media admits that four out of five vehicles entering the current uLEZ zone meet the mayor's emissions' laws. So the overall effect of these increases in uLEZ area and congestion charge zone hours will be minimal. It's just GLA's attempt to raise more revenue using the motorist as a cash cow.

Propaganda challenge

The advertising campaign advising of the uLEZ expansion has been challenged by objection to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) given that Conservative candidate for London mayor Shaun Bailey says he'll scrap the extension if elected. So the advertised 25th October increase in uLEZ area will only happen if the current Labour mayor and GLA is re-elected on May 6th.

Shaun Bailey describes these local radio and press adverts as "insidious", the propaganda part of Labour's war against the motorist. In three to five years time any vehicle not meeting the minimum petrol Euro4 (diesel Euro6) standard will have reached its natural end of life. Most will have been scrapped by then.

This is political propaganda paid for by London council taxpayers already stung by a GLA precept hike of 9½ percent for next year. The Bank of England predicts inflation for next year to be just 2.4 percent.

Paying the Covid Bill

The need for economic activity in London to return and increase is vital -- the Covid pandemic has plunged public finances nationally into a £400 billion deficit with £350bn directly attributable to Covid.

National debt is now said to be £2.1 trillion -- equivalent to 93 percent of UK's gross domestic product. Interest payments on our national debt now total £2 billion a month.

Without the often-ridiculed years of austerity painfully enforced against continued carping criticism from those who caused it in response to the 2008 world banking crisis, a lower UK credit standing in the world would have inhibited UK's public sector borrowing requirement leading toward higher interest rates and more invasive loan conditions demanded from the world's market lenders. The UK's world credit rating is still good.

The faster we can repair public finances and reduce national debt the greater will be UK's competitive edge against other industrialised countries. The earlier this mammoth task is started the earlier the better off we'll all be. The race is on!

The War Against the Motorist

Conservative opposition lobbying at the GLA has caused the mayor to back track from his original proposals: Historic vehicles (those currently built in 1981 or before) are exempted from uLEZ -- so allowing the traditional London to Brighton vintage car run to start in central London.

Support vehicles, refreshment vans and the like will still have to pay the congestion charge, and uLEZ charge if not meeting emissions' limits. Those thinking of driving into central London to see these beautiful machines from a bygone era actually still on the road will be similarly penalised. All will still have to pay the congestion charge.

The 1981 or before manufacturing date stops many classic car owners resident inside uLEZ and it's proposed extension from being punished by the mayor for their hobby.

These innocent hobbyists' attention to engine and exhaust detail during restoration can lead to the vehicle being saved from environment-damaging scrapping. And a significant reduction in their emissions.

Licensed taxis that have converted to bi-fuel (usually LPG) are also now excused the vengeful uLEZ tax.

A Brief History of Time... How We Ended Up Here

The north and south circular roads were previously a collection of residential streets cobbled together as a temporary measure by the old Greater London Council as proposed in its original Greater London Development Plan.

This temporary measure was designed to alleviate the worst of inner London's through traffic crossing the Thames: A1 down through Cricklewood - Edgware Road - Hyde Park - Victoria - Waterloo;

M11 - A406 - Newham - Tower Hamlets - Woolwich Ferry (or Blackwall or Rotherhithe tunnels) - Woolwich (or Eltham) - Catford and southward.

East-west through routes were similarly affected such as the M4 corridor that ended up at Westminster via Earls Court. And the A2 - Blackheath - Deptford - Old Kent Road - Waterloo routes.

This north and south circular roads' temporary measure was expected to last only while the inner and outer motorway boxes (actually planned as dual carriage ways) were constructed.

It was Boris Johnson as conservative mayor of London who shut down the ridiculous M4 bus-only lane that caused so much delay to traffic from Heathrow and beyond (M4).

At rush hours, those routes became solid and regularly seized up. Those seize ups were not resolved, particularly through Earls Court and on to Millbank and Westminster simply by further slowing the flow. But pollution was increased as those same vehicles spent more time in those residential and shopping streets further back along the route.

Prior to the pandemic snarl-ups on this and other previously free-flowing through routes had again-become more and more frequent.

Faced with solving the dilemma of increased growth producing more traffic, it's hard to understand how reducing available road space provides the increased traffic flow needed.

The GLC's plan proposed an inner and outer "motorway box" system of designated roads that

would've removed many of the congestion points plus providing residents much needed relief from through traffic. Labour term residential streets most used by commuters as "rat runs" in their usual vindictive class war-inspired manner.

Once the Greater London Development Plan had been agreed by the affected boroughs -- it took several years -- the GLC changed political control from Conservative to Labour, but those affected local boroughs had elected different administrations meantime. The GLC's Modified Greater London Development Plan took account of the further changes demanded by the boroughs. It became statute with part funding by central Government through a GLC Money Bill that could not be opposed.

All this municipal to-ing and fro-ing over the best part of 10 years had the effect of bringing tube and much needed over ground train extensions to a halt meantime. The Victoria Line extension to the GLC's new council house development at Thamesmead became the Jubilee Line extension then the Docklands Light Railway to Lewisham only. And Cross Rail's final plans (now the Elizabeth Line Woolwich Dockyard and Abbey Wood from Heathrow and Reading) were also affected.

This municipal planning madness together with controls on public borrowing also bought a halt to progressing development of the 12 square miles of London's derelict docklands.

Docklands itself was a victim of Labour-controlled inner London boroughs objecting particularly to the "housing mix". Had they had their way the area would've become one vast municipal housing estate. We'd seen this before with the first stages of Thamesmead's Stalag Luft-like construction cramming in 130 habitable rooms to the acre. That development became the backdrop to that

The Luvvies get a Role

A spoof 1989 feature film GLC: The Carnage Continues starred Robby Coltraine as Charles Bronson portraying GLC leader Ken Livingstone, Jennifer Saunders played Brigitte Neilson (in role as the Ice Maiden) as Margaret Thatcher. And Leslie Phillips played previous GLC leader Sir Horace Cutler. Kate Bush wrote and performed the instru-

equally desolate and morbid film Clockwork Orange. Many London boroughs nominated Thamesmead and Ferrier (another GLC high-density estate in south-east London) to house their most socially problematic tenants -- shown as unemployable punk drugged-up outcasts in the film. Ferrier and some parts of Thamesmead had to be demolished only some 35 years after construction.

Directly affected Labour boroughs sat with the GLC on the Docklands Joint Development Committee -- just when new public investment was needed to bring London's economy out of recession after national strikes and the three-day week.

By this time constituency London Labour parties had been well and truly infiltrated by the hard left: international socialists and Trotskyites with their *Socialist Worker* and more widely distributed *Militant* newspapers.

Both entryist groups had taken over London constituency Labour parties and so controlled who was selected as borough council and GLC candidates. They're still at it today -- Continuity warring inside CLPs with MPs and councillors being de-selected causing by-elections. What better way to hobble capitalism and growth than to disable transport?

Government supported the Modified Greater London Development Plan by continuing its own plans for the "London Orbital Ring Road" (M25) with many feeder roads to it from the affected outer London boroughs so linking the planned outer motorway box to the M25.

Led by an affable old duffer that owed his position to the hard left -- Labour called a halt to strategic road development during the 1973 GLC election campaign -- just the strategic job that the Greater London Council (as successor to the old London County Council) was set up to do.

Traditionally, GLC election results reflected voter's opposition to the party in power nationally with detailed GLC election manifestos being largely ignored by voters and the London press.

London chapels of the National Union of Journalists had also been taken over by the hard left.

mental score and theme song.

Filmed largely on location inside County Hall — it's now a successful hotel and conference centre generating profit and taxes for the exchequer. And business rates for the severely under-privileged inner London borough of Lambeth. The film was surrounded by controversy with many union-card-waving actors and crew not getting paid. The GLC was abolished by the Thatcher government in March 1986.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxVBL8cgKIw>

1973's GLC election was won by Labour that by then was promoting "clause 4 part 4": the nationalisation of the banks, financial institutions, and the top 200 FTSE companies. Many of those companies had been forward planning to enter new up-to-date premises with good transport links in the Docklands development. Competitors in other financial institutions around the world were similarly modernising and eyeing London's world-leading markets' position with envy.

London Labour's 1973 election slogan of "homes before roads" portrayed the GLC's buying up of property for the inner and outer motorway boxes as heartlessly making people homeless. Local media fell on this as headline making -- hardly a day went by without a local television or radio programme being broadcast showing *Militant* and *Socialist Worker* demonstrations in support of their comrades.

The 1977 GLC election was a 64 to 28-seat success for the conservatives led by a former leader of Harrow Borough Council and then Middlesex County Council.

Pressed several times during the campaign whether his administration would revive the motorway box proposals — only some 93 more properties were needed to be "safeguarded" to

The war against the motorist is an attempt to isolate motorists as an identifiable group. And then paint them as environmental vandals.

- cycle-only lanes compete for space in existing road area -- many now separated by dividing kerbs or poles. Otherwise motorists are again fined if they dare place a wheel into these green-

complete the much reduced purchase programme -- he made it quite clear that 1973's GLC election had been won by Labour with the promise that the inner and outer London motorway box proposals would be scrapped. He was not going to revive those plans and would instead "homestead" the properties bought so far.

Over the intervening years these properties -- many bought through compulsory purchase -- had been boarded up and left empty to rot waiting demolition. Many had been squatted in with much further political protest and media coverage when squatters' time came to be evicted by bailiffs. Squatters' rights groups campaigned for changes in the law, and achieved some success in the courts. At higher levels the judiciary were mindful of public opinion.

Desperate to get rid of the already compulsorily-purchased houses, the last year of that Labour administration saw the most derelict properties being given away on a first come first served basis. This writer appeared in a 1977 edition of *The London Programme* showing how council compiled so-called "homeless" lists were largely works of fiction. I was offered one of these freehold derelict boarded up houses for free simply by queuing up outside County Hall for one.

The only parts of the outer box ever built were the Westway over Edgware Road in Paddington. And approaches to Blackwall Tunnel in Bow.

All this wasted effort -- and wasted £millions by local and the strategic regional authority charged with producing a transport system for London that would support economic growth necessary to bring London out of recession -- had the effect of more and more vehicles competing for the same existing road space. Through London speeds fell to a 12mph average with an inevitable increase in pollution levels.

Congestion? Then Cut the Roadspace!

Councils' answer has always been to reduce the amount of road space available by borough and GLA-inspired initiatives, ever keeping an eye out for any short-term electoral advantage:

painted lanes. Again all monitored by CCTV enforced by a PCN system.

Cycling is actively encouraged as a healthy alternative to the car. Yet it involves the cyclist deeply inhaling lungfulls of vehicle exhaust hydrocarbons before they've had a chance of being diluted into the surrounding air;

- bus only lanes that have changing hours and days of operation designed to catch the unsuspecting motorist into a fine enforced by CCTV and PCNs.

Some have become a honey trap where junction left-turning traffic can't do so because a bus lane is stopping entry to that side of an approach;

- Box junctions' "no entry until your exit is clear" yellow hatched boxes have become easy fine generators too as traffic turning into a box junction can leave another car stranded still in the in the box but now unable to exit;

- sick council anti-road speed campaign posters pretending to have been scrawled in crayon by a toddler reading "kill your speed, not a child";

- 20 mph speed limits -- again enforced by speed cameras and the PCN system. These operate on the false premise that "speed kills". No it doesn't. Misuse of speed kills.

The drop from a 30 mph speed limit to 20 produces no reduction at all in the *number* of road traffic accident injuries. These 20mph speed limits cause most vehicles to drop a gear thus increasing engine revolutions for that slower speed thus increasing pollution as miles per gallon falls.

Looking to the Future

There are approximately 200,000 businesses with around 2,000,000 employees in inner London. 56% of private sector jobs in the greater London area are located in inner London.

Significant commuting — outer London to inner London, and from outside greater London.

It's against this challenging political and environmental backdrop that a new Greater London Authority and mayor will have to operate. If economic growth is continued to be sought as an economic model then London will need increased

Locally the latest manifestation of this twisted logic is the eastern tip of Blackheath Park B212 Prince of Wales Road now under a 20mph speed limit. It has the green space of Blackheath either side with clear visibility either side.

Years previously the local council had closed a useful feeder road allowing access to the A2 from Blackheath village turning it into a cycle-only lane.

And made a no right turn onto the A2. So A2 and Blackwall tunnel-seeking traffic from Blackheath has to make a one-mile detour west to the nearest A2 roundabout and back. More congestion producing more pollution.

- resident's parking schemes designed to penalise residents by ever increasing resident parking permit charges based on V5 log book-listed vehicle cubic capacity.

My Maserati 4.2 litre meets Euro4 but now costs £250 a year to park outside my own home -- up from £160 last year. And up from a £10 "it's only an administration charge" permit charge when the scheme was first introduced in the 1970s. My road tax is up by £30 this year to £600.

- traffic "calming" measures: road humps and bumps, enforced one way measures, and steel posts restricting vehicle widths to 6'6" that imply the normal motorist innocently calmly needing to get to point A from point B is somehow frantic;

- one way systems that leave the non-local motorist hopelessly lost driving round and round an unfamiliar area without incurring a penalty charge. The hapless stranger can only hope of eventually arriving at a needed destination;

- And finally and the most stupid of all: closing roads altogether forcing traffic onto already congested adjacent roads further decreasing through speeds and increasing air pollution on those adjacent roads. These low traffic neighbourhoods (LTN) have swallowed up a £500 million central government allowance that should have assisted councils to get traffic moving again. Instead, its been used by councils to isolate parts of their politically-marginal favorite wards from traffic. Thus forcing that traffic onto adjacent non-protected roads.

traffic capacity to provide for that growth.

Since Brexit when former London mayor Boris Johnson negotiated a trade deal with the EU on an “oven-ready” nil tariff basis, trade deals worth £900 billion have been successfully negotiated.

UK is set to join the Comprehensive & Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a trade agreement between Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.

All transport methods within the 610 square miles of the 32 London boroughs must be considered.

Some affected boroughs will object to any radical far-reaching proposals like the ill-fated motorway box proposals of the past. Or London will again be cast into the dark pit of the '70s when boroughs politically pitted themselves against the GLC, the GLC was then abolished, and now the GLA is pitting itself against government. Long drawn out legal proceedings are set to follow. And another over 10-year period of stagnation will damage UK's post Covid recovery.

National unemployment has reached a five-year high of 1.7 million. London must pull itself together into a post-Covid recovery dash. That means economic growth. And that means more efficient transport infrastructure capable of handling the increased traffic that growth needs.

Some new road investment is needed, and some radical management of existing roads to ease commuter access and reduce pollution each of us is now having to endure. London will just have to again learn to live with motorists. Not to municipally punish them.

The expansion of uLEZ will increase journey times and air pollution for many as existing strategic Thames crossings become no-go areas for those unable to afford to go electric or trade up to a Euro4 or Euro6 car. Most will still be fined by the congestion charge. These inner London Thames crossings will become out of bounds: Rotherhithe Tunnel, London Bridge, and Waterloo Bridge.

Freight has adjusted to the M25 corridors with government expansions to capacity continuing. There will be radical environmentalists who will win the airwaves with predictions of death and Armageddon due to increased pollution. After all, to *Channel 4 News* that's good copy. <cue: Kathy Newman wiping away a feigned tear> But with non-Euro4 (diesel Euro6) meeting vehicles destined for scrap in three to five years their remaining environmental effect is minimal now and reducing in the future.

Full speed 24 hours a day seven days a week development of the Lower Thames Crossing at Thurrock must have all the resources it needs planned and set aside in programme now.

Increasing cross-Thames through traffic capacity to the ports is vital to meet the needs of projected increased growth. Currently the appeals' procedure with judicial review is not yet complete. Opening is not expected until 2027 or 2028. That planning process needs to be fast tracked with fair compensation paid to affected local residents.

As the GLA's expensive advertising campaign admits: "four out of five vehicles [in the uLEZ zone] already meet the standard". So any further contribution to reducing air pollution from uLEZ or increasing its area to the north and south circular roads can now only be minimal.

“We will stop issuing fixed penalty notices due to complexities and the unintended impact on surrounding streets.” says the council. LBC's 'phone in programme fielded contributors from as far away as Edinburgh complaining that these schemes just push the LTN-banned traffic onto neighbouring roads and so increasing congestion and pollution there.

++STOP PRESS++STOP PRESS++STOP
Labour controlled Harrow Borough Council have cancelled four low traffic neighbourhoods and three cycle