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Abolish the Congestion Charge

Chris Prior for the London Assembly

"Use your vote, have your say"

THE BEGINNING OF THE END OR THE END OF THE BEGINNING?

15 April 2008

Immediate Release

"The vote on 1 May 2008 is crucial to determining the future of congestion charging and road pricing in the UK," says Chris Prior, the Abolish the Congestion Charge candidate in the London wide Assembly elections.

"A large vote to abolish the charge in London will kill plans to introduce it elsewhere. If Boris Johnson is successful, it could spur him to scrap it outright rather than embark on a doomed attempt to reform it. On the other hand, a low vote will encourage its spread in London and other cities. I urge all those who oppose this failed idea to take this precious opportunity to have their voice heard and vote to abolish it on 1 May.

Democracy counts in a way that polls and surveys don't. Despite promises, Mr Livingstone ignored the results of his own consultation exercises to introduce the charge and extend it in 2007. Edinburgh was given the opportunity to vote in 2005 and 75% rejected the scheme. London has the charge and Edinburgh does not.

With all the established parties now supporting the charge in some form, it is vital that the millions who object to congestion charging turn out and use their vote.

A vote to abolish the charge is not a vote in favour of congestion, quite the reverse. It is a demand for real solutions to this real problem, rather than half baked schemes that just make matters worse."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The congestion charge is an unfair tax, it costs over £5.50 of every £8 to administer and it simply doesn't work.
2. According to Transport for London's own reports, traffic speeds inside the Zone are slower than before the congestion charge was introduced, congestion has actually increased by nearly 25% on the edges of the Zone and there has been no measurable improvement in air quality.
3. As shown in Transport for London's Statement of Accounts 2006/07, of the £250m raised from congestion charging only £90m was available to spend on improving public transport. If, however, the set up costs of congestion charging are included, then the congestion charge has generated virtually no new money since its introduction in 2003.

Media contacts:

Chris Prior 020 7993 8661

chrisprior@stopcc.com

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