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Abolish the Congestion Charge

Chris Prior for the London Assembly

"Use your vote, have your say"

ABOLISHING THE CHARGE WOULD CUT CONGESTION

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Immediate Release

"Perverse though it will seem, abolishing the congestion charge would cut congestion," says Chris Prior, the Abolish the Congestion Charge candidate in the London wide Assembly elections. "The plain fact is that the congestion charge simply doesn't work.

Despite the scaremongering, there is absolutely no evidence to support the spectre of gridlock, if the charge were to go. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that across the capital traffic would flow better.

Transport for London's own data shows that the congestion charge has had virtually no impact on the volume of traffic entering central London in the morning peak period.

During the rest of day, abolishing the charge would reduce congestion on the boundaries of the charging zone and on the main roads in inner London. Traffic that currently takes detours to avoid entering the zone, would be able to take more direct and shorter routes. Abolishing the charge would make better use of available road space, a result that could be enhanced by reversing many of TfL's congestion causing "initiatives" such as the re-phasing of traffic lights.

The reality is that congestion is a London wide issue that requires London wide solutions. It is a bit like a balloon, if you artificially attempt to reduce in one area, it grows in another. We need to think about what happens beyond the congestion charging zone as well as within it. Eight of the ten most congested areas in London are outside the current zone.

To cut congestion and emissions successfully we must work to reduce traffic levels across the whole city, not just one relatively small part. The congestion charge is part of the problem, not the solution. The answer is to transform public transport; to attract people out of their cars by making it more affordable, flexible and responsive. People want choice rather than charges.

Every year, Londoners pay £15bn more in tax than they receive in public services. We need to invest more of this money to give London the twenty-first century transport system it needs and deserves."

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. Traffic entering the congestion charge zone - Transport of London's "Congestion Charge – Impacts Monitoring – Fifth Annual Report: June 2007" page 22.

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