



Abolish the Congestion Charge

Chris Prior for the London Assembly

"Use your vote, have your say"

A CHANCE FOR LABOUR VOTERS TO PROTEST

22 April 2008

Immediate Release

"The congestion charge is an unfair, regressive tax that should be abolished," says Chris Prior, the Abolish the Congestion Charge candidate in the London wide Assembly elections.

"Labour should not be taxing low earners proportionately more than the rich. It is fundamentally wrong that a nurse has to pay the same as a millionaire. Added to this, fines for forgetting to pay are excessively punitive for those on low incomes.

It is ironic that Ken Livingstone was one of the harshest critics of Margaret Thatcher's poll tax, a measure that was also presented as a "charge". The congestion charge is as unfair as the despised "Community Charge."

I believe Labour should be cutting taxes for the lower paid, not increasing them.

This election gives Labour voters a chance to protest. A high level of support for abolishing the congestion charge will make the government think twice about extending congestion charging to other cities and introducing road pricing which will also discriminate against the lower paid. It may also encourage the government to cut unfair taxes in other areas.

Londoners already pay £15bn more in tax than they receive in public services. It is time to give them better value by cutting taxes and delivering much better public transport that will dramatically cut congestion and pollution"

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. The congestion charge 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 roads in inner London just outside the Zone and there has been no measurable improvement in air quality.

Media contacts:

Chris Prior 020 7993 8661
chrisprior@stopcc.com

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