

Full Council – 20 November 2023

Conservative Group Motion

Expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) – Don't Punish Brent Drivers

This Council notes that:

1. On 4th March 2022 the Mayor of London announced his plan to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from its current boundary of the North and South Circular Roads to cover almost all of Greater London. Despite the best efforts of Londoners, the Mayor of London (Sadiq Khan) pushed through and expanded the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) on 29th August 2023 to all cover the whole of London.
2. Whilst the ULEZ was originally introduced covering the same area and with the same boundaries as the Congestion Charge Zone it was expanded on 25th October 2021 by 18 times its original size to its previous boundaries before the further expansion on 29th August 2023. The ramifications of this significant change are being felt in outer London Boroughs with the full extent still to be assessed. It goes without saying that the Mayor of London is on an anti-car rampage and won't be satisfied until we are "all out of cars"!
3. The expansion of ULEZ means that those with non-compliant vehicles are paying £12.50 per day to drive within the ULEZ. Residents are being forced to pay more to get to work, attend hospital appointments, visit friends and family and are not being able to take advantage of local businesses and high streets. This is costing jobs with essential workers such as doctors, nurses, care workers, teachers who rely on their vehicles also affected, especially those working nights who rely on use of their cars. ULEZ is damaging the social fabric of our local area, and many businesses have been forced to locate elsewhere or plan to close.
4. The ULEZ is a regressive tax, as the less well-off are disproportionately penalised. The expansion has also meant many more areas with poor public transport have been included within the zone which is fundamentally unfair as those residents unable to afford to keep or replace their car are being forced to rely on inadequate levels of public transport.
5. It is disappointing, but not at all surprising, that the Mayor of London has left a black hole in TfL's finances and the Labour Mayor now expects millions of families to foot the bill with an exorbitant £12.50 daily charge.

6. Drivers have paid an estimated £52 million in levies and fines in the first month of the ULEZ expansion. £52 million paid out of the pockets of the poorest Londoners is a disgrace with the scheme nothing more than a tax and money making scheme and nothing to do with protecting environment.
7. During his time in office as Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has accumulated enough air miles to fly around the world fourteen times. He even chose to fly to Argentina for a hybrid meeting. All this whilst charging Londoners more and more to use their cars! That can't be right.
8. The science behind the expansion and other anti-pollution measures more generally is a case of pay your money, pick your scientist. Sadiq Khan has pointed towards figures suggesting ULEZ reduced Nitrous Oxide levels by more than a quarter in its first six months but a team at Imperial College. London looked at the data and suggested they fell by just 3%. Lies, damn lies, and emissions statistics.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan's suggestion that a majority of voters back his crusade to tackle air pollution and that backing ULEZ places him on "the right side of history" and might work as a long-term strategy, is a fantasy.

As a result of the concerns highlighted this Council believes that:

1. Measures such as ULEZ which have been backed by the Labour leadership nationally, push up the cost of living in Brent by imposing taxes and charges on residents who rely on motor vehicles without providing them with realistic alternatives should continue to be opposed.
2. The £400 million set aside by the Mayor of London for the expansion of ULEZ and related projects would have been better spent on measures that would have a more positive impact on residents in Brent and across London such as
 - a faster upgrade to a zero-emission bus fleet.
 - increasing the roll out of rapid electric vehicle charging points.
 - encouraging more freight consolidation schemes.
 - bringing back the previous Boiler Cashback Scheme to encourage Londoners to upgrade their boilers to reduce household emissions.
 - financing a generous scrappage scheme to support Londoners in replacing their non-compliant vehicles.

Therefore, this Council resolves to call on the Leader of the Council to write to the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan outlining the concerns set out within the motion and crippling impact of the ULEZ tax on residents in Brent.

Councillor Jayanti Patel
Queensbury Ward