

Transport Committee investigation on The Future of Road User Charging: Written evidence drawn from identified ‘templates’

In 2022-23 the London Assembly Transport Committee carried out an investigation into the future of road user charging in London. The Committee conducted a Call for Evidence as part of this investigation, which ran from 9 February 2023 to 10 March 2023. The Committee received over 3,300 responses to its Call for Evidence from organisations and individuals and would like to thank those who took the time to respond.

The Committee aims to publish the evidence it receives as part of its investigations, including responses to calls for evidence. The large majority of responses are published here alongside the Committee’s report. The Committee has taken a careful approach to categorising responses for publication: it has not included responses that were exact duplicates, that asked to remain confidential, that were not directly relevant to the subject of the investigation, or that were deemed abusive or contained offensive or potentially distressing references. In addition, redactions have been made where data protection considerations apply. However, all submissions, whether published or not, have been read carefully and were taken into account in putting together the report.

A number of responses from individuals followed a similar template, and the Committee identified seven different templates in total. All responses that followed a template were categorised as evidence. However, only one response from each of the seven different templates is being published due to the volume received and the similar nature of each response. This document contains the seven different templates responses, numbered one to seven.

Responses were all given a reference number, and responses from individuals that are published have been anonymised and are referred to via the reference number. Published responses do not appear in the order of the reference numbers, and not all reference numbers are published due to them being duplicates, template responses, or for the other reasons defined above.

Due to the volume of responses received the evidence from individuals has been split into separate documents for publication for administration purposes. The order each piece of written evidence appears is random and responses from individuals have not been grouped together in any substantive way. Submissions from organisations have also been published alongside the response reference number and the organisation’s name.

Some personally identifiable information has been redacted for publication.

Views expressed in the written evidence published here represent the opinions of the respondents rather than those of the London Assembly.

Template 1

The Committee received 423 responses that included similar wording to the following:

1. Do the current road user charging systems in London require reform?

No. We have the ULEZ which has already impacted people enough. What we need now is NO MORE CHARGING MOTORISTS TO GO ABOUT THEIR DAY. People are stressed and poor thanks to the state of the economy and the impact of the last few years. We need LESS regulation and monitoring. Let the people recover.

2. How might smarter road user charging differ from the current daily charges for driving applied in London?

Instead of proposing new systems, adjust the old systems. EG the daily charge stops at midnight, meaning someone who is visiting between 10pm and 2am pays twice. Fix that first.

3. How might charges for driving in London be varied for different types of journeys, such as travelling for work, caring responsibilities or essential services?

You should not have to pay extra whether you are travelling for work, for caring or for essential services. We already pay fuel duty, which is a cost per mile as you pay more if you drive more. We don't need any more road charging systems, people are already on their knees.

4. What strategies and targets could smarter road user charging support? Why don't we look at the health and happiness of the nation instead of spurious targets?

5. What technology could be used to support smarter road user charging? Human beings want LESS technology intruding in their lives, not more.

6. How could smarter road user charging assist with tackling current challenges such as traffic, air pollution and climate change?

The ULEZ is already doing this. The people don't want any more. We are taxed via VED on emissions, electric cars have been incentivised, enough is enough.

7. Are road user charging schemes best set up at a city or regional level, or as a national system, and what benefits or difficulties would you expect with either approach?

We already have a road user charging at a national level, it's called ROAD TAX and FUEL DUTY. We do not need any more. Why not reduce the road tax on older vehicles that have been around for many years and have paid their own carbon dues by remaining in use instead of being replaced by another brand new car (most of the carbon in cars is in the BUILD).

8. If smarter road user charging is introduced, which charges or taxes should it replace and how should the current taxes and charges be changed?

It shouldn't. The people writing this report should focus on the health of the nation, not on more ways to price people out of driving their cars and visiting family.

9. What discounts and exemptions would you like to see for any new smarter road charging scheme, for example to help disabled people, those on low incomes, those who need to drive for work, or people who live in areas with low levels of public transport?

We the people do not want a road charging scheme. Especially when it is sold to us by the likes of Sadiq Khan, who is currently promoting a ULEZ expansion whilst taking his dog for a walk in a 3 car convoy, one of which does 13 miles per gallon. Less hypocrisy, more understanding, please.

10. If the Government were interested in a national distance-based road user

charging scheme, would London be a sensible place for a trial?

No. Nowhere is a sensible place for a trial. This is starting to look like a work of dystopian fiction. Let the people be free.

11. If distance-based road user charging was introduced, do you think Londoners who drive should pay less in total for vehicle or driving-based charges, the same, or more than they do currently?

They would all pay more. It would cost many, many people dearly.

12. Mayors and local authorities currently have powers to introduce new road charging schemes. Do you think anything further is required beyond an electoral mandate for these bodies to use those powers (for example a local referendum)?

All of these new schemes should be put to a public vote like any good democratic country would do - anything else is the work of a dictatorship.

13. How are other cities and countries working on similar smarter road user charging ideas faring, and what alternatives are they looking at for achieving similar policy goals?

Firstly, we the people did not have a say on the policy goals. Give the people the chance to vote on the policy, then give us the chance to vote on the road charging scheme. Anything else is a dictatorship

[The Committee also received several more emails that used some of the same wording, but added substantial changes. These are published among the individual submissions.]

Template 2

The Committee received 551 responses that included similar wording to the following:

To whom it may concern,

Please find my responses to your questions below:

1. Do the current road user charging systems in London require reform?

The Human Rights Act 1998 mandates respect for everyone's private and family life, home, and correspondence. The imposition of road charging would infringe on this right by necessitating the surveillance of individuals' movements and the collection and storage of personal data that may be employed for other purposes. Moreover, we have the right to free movement, and being charged to use our roads would violate that right. Additionally, the existing road tax and fuel duty system are already geared towards addressing environmental concerns, and adding another layer of charges would disproportionately impact those on lower incomes, who may not have access to other means of transportation. Therefore, I believe that all road user charging systems, both in London and nationwide, should be eliminated.

2. How might smarter road user charging differ from the current daily charges for

driving applied in London?

Smarter road user charging could differ from the current daily charges for driving in London in that it may be based on distance rather than a flat daily fee. However, this approach could be problematic from an equality standpoint as it would disproportionately affect commuters and those residing in regions with insufficient public transportation options. Additionally, it may violate the Equality Act 2010, which mandates that public bodies consider the impact of their policies on people with protected characteristics such as disabilities or those on lower incomes.

3. How might charges for driving in London be varied for different types of journeys, such as travelling for work, caring responsibilities or essential services?

Varying charges for different types of journeys, such as work-related, caring responsibilities, or essential services, may also be problematic from an equality standpoint. It may result in discrimination against those who have to travel longer or more frequently, such as those residing in remote areas or those who need to travel for work. Furthermore, it may unfairly impact those with disabilities or caring responsibilities who may have to make more frequent trips. Finally, without significant intrusion into individuals' private lives, it would be difficult for the government to know what type of trips one is taking. It would also be difficult and costly to implement, requiring significant investment in technology and infrastructure, and would likely result in administrative and enforcement expenses that would be passed on to taxpayers.

4. What strategies and targets could smarter road user charging support?

Smarter road user charging may not serve the people's best interests. It could also have unintended consequences, such as drivers seeking alternative routes to avoid the charges, thereby increasing traffic congestion in other areas or encouraging the use of older, more polluting vehicles that are exempt from the charges.

5. What technology could be used to support smarter road user charging?

As I disagree with the notion of smarter road user charging, I am inclined to say none. Whatever would be required would be at a substantial cost to the taxpayer. The better option would be to scrap all charges, allowing people to use their technology such as satnavs to find the quickest and easiest route, avoiding traffic, and thereby reducing the time spent on the road.

6. How could smarter road user charging assist with tackling current challenges such as traffic, air pollution and climate change?

Evidence has shown that such schemes have a negligible effect on air quality but have a significant impact on people. Most individuals do not favour these schemes, and in a democratic society, the people should have the final say.

7. Are road user charging schemes best set up at a city or regional level, or as a national system, and what benefits or difficulties would you expect with either approach?

As someone who opposes road user charges, I don't believe they should be set up at any level - city, regional, or national. Road user charges are unfair and discriminatory, and they punish people for exercising their right to drive. They also place a disproportionate burden on low-income individuals and those who rely on cars for work or accessibility reasons.

At a city or regional level, road user charges can be particularly problematic as they create disparities between different areas. It could also create confusion for drivers who are unsure about which areas they will be charged to drive in.

At a national level, road user charges would be an overreach of government authority and would further burden individuals who are already paying for road infrastructure through existing taxes like fuel duty and road tax.

Ultimately, road user charges are an infringement on our fundamental right to move freely and should not be implemented at any level.

8. If smarter road user charging is introduced, which charges or taxes should it replace and how should the current taxes and charges be changed?

It is my view that the current system of road tax and fuel duty is the most suitable to be maintained. Unlike smarter road user charging, the current system is not discriminatory, as previously discussed.

9. What discounts and exemptions would you like to see for any new smarter road charging scheme, for example to help disabled people, those on low incomes, those who need to drive for work, or people who live in areas with low levels of public transport?

In my opinion, the implementation of a new smarter road charging scheme is unnecessary, and therefore, I do not think any discounts or exemptions are necessary at this time.

10. If the Government were interested in a national distance-based road user charging scheme, would London be a sensible place for a trial?

In my opinion, the implementation of a national distance-based road user charging scheme would be highly controversial and could potentially cause unrest among the public, as seen with the recent resistance to clean air zone charges in Birmingham and Manchester. The Government should carefully consider the potential consequences of such a scheme before proceeding.

11. If distance-based road user charging was introduced, do you think Londoners who drive should pay less in total for vehicle or driving-based charges, the same, or more than they do currently?

As previously discussed, I believe that road tax, council tax, and fuel duty are sufficient contributions towards the right to free movement on roads that individuals have paid for. Therefore, I do not support the implementation of distance-based road user charging, and the question of payment amounts becomes moot.

12. Mayors and local authorities currently have powers to introduce new road charging schemes. Do you think anything further is required beyond an electoral mandate for these bodies to use those powers (for example a local referendum)?

I believe that local referendums should be required before any new road charging schemes are implemented, with both arguments presented and the cost of the referendum being paid for by the council. This will ensure that any decisions made are fair and unbiased and that the needs and preferences of concerned residents are taken into account.

13. How are other cities and countries working on similar smarter road user charging

ideas faring, and what policy goals?

alternatives are they looking at for achieving similar

Many cities and countries are implementing similar smarter road user charging schemes. However, the success of these schemes is questionable, and they often face resistance from the public. Alternative solutions should be explored to achieve similar policy goals without infringing on the rights of road users.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Template 3

The Committee received 83 responses that included similar wording to the following:

1. Do the current road user charging systems in London require reform?

No. Maintain the current Congestion Charging and ULEZ charging zones as they stand today in March 2023, do not expand them further and do not revise them for the foreseeable future.

2. How might smarter road user charging differ from the current daily charges for driving applied in London?

Road user charging is not 'smarter' in any sense, because it's an additional unjustified charge on top of existing road-charging schemes, national annual vehicle tax (Road Tax) and fuel tax and indeed tax on energy charges when it comes to electric cars.

3. How might charges for driving in London be varied for different types of journeys, such as travelling for work, caring responsibilities or essential services?

This level of complexity would be confusing for the public, and unnecessarily complicate the cost of living, working and leisure activities in London, essentially badly hurting and damaging the London economies as people might just prefer to not visit London at all.

4. What strategies and targets could smarter road user charging support?

None, as it should not be implemented.

5. What technology could be used to support smarter road user charging?

None, as it should not be implemented.

6. How could smarter road user charging assist with tackling current challenges such as traffic, air pollution and climate change?

None, as it should not be implemented.

7. Are road user charging schemes best set up at a city or regional level, or as a national system, and what benefits or difficulties would you expect with either approach?

Multiple and maximum difficulties in all scenarios, not least of which huge public uproar and opposition. Whatever the cost of road charging will be, it will inevitably be greater than road tax for most drivers.

8. If smarter road user charging is introduced, which charges or taxes should it replace and how should the current taxes and charges be changed?

None, as it should not be implemented.

9. What discounts and exemptions would you like to see for any new smarter road charging scheme, for example to help disabled people, those on low incomes, those who need to drive for work, or people who live in areas with low levels of public transport?

None, as it should not be implemented.

10. If the Government were interested in a national distance-based road user charging scheme, would London be a sensible place for a trial?

Sure, if you want to kill the Capital's economy and turn it into a ghost town

11. If distance-based road user charging was introduced, do you think Londoners who drive should pay less in total for vehicle or driving-based charges, the same, or more than they do currently?

How far would that go? How fast you drive, how big is your car, how many people are you carrying? 'Sorry granny, I can't afford to give you a lift to your crucial treatment appointment'?! It also raises the alarming question as to how extensively are you monitoring peoples' activities in their own personal cars, and implies infringement of privacy and civil liberty laws.

12. Mayors and local authorities currently have powers to introduce new road charging schemes. Do you think anything further is required beyond an electoral mandate for these bodies to use those powers (for example a local referendum)?

Yes, no such steps should be taken without a full, fair, and transparent referendum that everyone, including those living in surrounding areas who will also be affected, can vote on. And the results must be strictly adhered to, unlike your referendum on the ULEZ Expansion which appears to have been duly ignored.

13. How are other cities and countries working on similar smarter road user charging ideas faring, and what alternatives are they looking at for achieving similar policy goals?

The circumstances of each individual town or city should be examined, analysed and widely consulted on, before any changes are initiated. Too often, far-reaching consequences are not thought-through in detail, particularly in terms of the hardship implications for vast numbers of the communities affected.

Template 4

The Committee received 16 responses that included similar wording to the following:

1. **Do the current road user charging systems in London require reform?**
 - The existing ULEZ scheme in particular needs reform, ideally abolition. The current operation is already particularly unfair to pensioners, those on low incomes, and businesses needing transport. We already pay road tax and fuel duty - that is enough. Incentives for change, not punishment would be more effective.
2. **How might smarter road user charging differ from the current daily charges for driving applied in London?**
 - It would certainly be different, in that charging would be based on distance covered, instead of a flat rate, even if only for a short distance. However neither is fair, the scheme would be very complicated and difficult and costly to manage.
3. **How might charges for driving in London be varied for different types of journeys, such as travelling for work, caring responsibilities or essential services?**
 - We should not have to pay extra whether travelling for work, for caring or for essential services. We already pay fuel duty, which is a cost per mile as you pay more if you drive more. We don't need any more road charging systems, people are already paying over the odds.
4. **What strategies and targets could smarter road user charging support?**

- Public transport needs to be completely overhauled to give us more routes, more vehicles and frequency, and above all be made drastically cheaper. Punishing people for travelling is counterproductive. Carrot works better than stick.
5. **What technology could be used to support smarter road user charging?**
 - More technology is not necessary, would be costly and should only be increased by choice, not by imposition. So called 'smart' technology means more RFR EMF technology, which we already have more than enough of in our everyday lives. Our every movement would be surveilled, tracked and taxed. Human beings want LESS technology intruding in their lives, not more.
 6. **How could smarter road user charging assist with tackling current challenges such as traffic, air pollution and climate change?**
 - It cannot. Rather than charge people by the mile, it would be smarter to give the people cheaper and more efficient public transport. Scrapping HS2 and using the earmarked £106bn would go a long way to help subsidise public transport. As would some other kinds of excessive, nonessential spending, too numerous to list here. Would road user charging also apply to EV users? It doesn't say.
 7. **Are road user charging schemes best set up at a city or regional level, or as a national system, and what benefits or difficulties would you expect with either approach?**
 - There are no benefits to either. The reintroduction of the clean hydrogen fuel cell will help us reach net zero. We already have road user charging at national level, i.e. ROAD TAX and FUEL DUTY. We do not need any more.
 8. **If smarter road user charging is introduced, which charges or taxes should it replace and how should the current taxes and charges be changed?**
 - Make clean fuel available at low cost. Better to focus on the health and well being of the nation, not on more ways to price people out of driving their cars and visiting family and crippling the economy in order to pay for TFL's huge deficit. Making public transport more efficient and much cheaper will incentivise giving up cars.
 - Why not reduce the road tax on older vehicles that have been around for many years and have paid their own carbon dues by remaining in use instead of being replaced by another brand new car (most of the carbon in cars is in the BUILD).
 9. **What discounts and exemptions would you like to see for any new smarter road charging scheme, for example to help disabled people, those on low incomes, those who need to drive for work, or people who live in areas with low levels of public transport?**
 - The majority of the population are on low incomes, there should be no charge for them or workers or disabled people. There should be no charging anyone. The smartest thing to do is introduce heavily subsidised, cheap and efficient public transport.
 10. **If the Government were interested in a national distance-based road user charging scheme, would London be a sensible place for a trial?**
 - Nowhere would be a sensible place for a trial, for all the reasons given.
 11. **If distance-based road user charging was introduced, do you think Londoners who drive should pay less in total for vehicle or driving-based charges, the same, or more than they do currently?**
 - Instead incentivise using public transport, as described above. The real cost of implementing / imposing this scheme will not only cost the economy dearly, it will dislocate society at many levels.

12. **Mayors and local authorities currently have powers to introduce new road charging schemes. Do you think anything further is required beyond an electoral mandate for these bodies to use those powers (for example a local referendum)?**

- Absolutely! All of these new major, lifestyle-changing schemes should be put to a democratic, public vote.

13. **How are other cities and countries working on similar smarter road user charging ideas faring, and what alternatives are they looking at for achieving similar policy goals?**

- It appears this scheme for London is to be a global template, as described in Sadiq Kahn's GREEN LIGHT: NEXT GENERATION ROAD USER CHARGING FOR A HEALTHIER, MORE LIVEABLE, LONDON: <https://www.centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Next-Generation-Road-User-Charging.pdf>

In conclusion

I strongly object to **smart road user charging** because it is a draconian imposition beyond measure. It will cripple society and the economy so should not go ahead. There are better alternatives for clean air, as touched on above, which will allow people to move about freely and breathe freely - as is our inalienable right.

Template 5

The Committee received 27 responses that included similar wording to the following:

1. Do the current road user charging systems in London require reform?

The road user charging systems in London must be abolished. The road user charging systems in London are not fit for purpose and are devised for the sole purpose to raise revenue for TfL and the Mayor. The Mayor's evidence in the report he obtained from the Imperial College shows bias and conflict of interest. The Jacob's report demonstrates, the road user charging systems have little or no impact to reduce or mitigate air pollutants. I ask that the systems are completely abolished.

Template 6

The Committee received 29 responses the included the following wording:

To whom this may concern,
Please find my response as a very worried British citizen and a London resident to the Mayor of London plans to expand ULEZ and implement a PPM system in London.

Q1. Do the current road user charging systems in London require reform?

No. ULEZ has impacted people's lives and wellbeing more than enough. The government and the mayor of London should stop charging residents and motorists for the new reforms! People are on their knees after very difficult 4 years. I personally had to close a very

successful business due to Covid and scrap one car on the first round of ULEZ. State and local politicians should let people be! Give people something to be happy with and not put more stress and financial burden on hard working families. We need less regulation and less taxation. We need to allow people more time to recover.

Q2. How might smarter road user charging differ from the current daily charges for driving applied in London?

Instead of proposing new systems, adjust the old systems, which are limiting enough and are a violation to our freedoms namely freedom of movement. People that have more money can afford paying, but those that struggle struggle even more due to this.

Q3. How might charges for driving in London be varied for different types of journeys, such as travelling for work, caring responsibilities or essential services?

You should not have to pay extra whether you are travelling for work, for caring or for essential services. We already pay fuel duty, which is a cost per mile as you pay more if you drive more. We don't need any more road charging systems, people are already struggling as it is. Suicide rates are skyrocketing, people lost their jobs, their relatives. Enough is enough!!

Q4. What strategies and targets could smarter road user charging support?

Why don't we look at the health and happiness of the nation instead of spurious targets? Keep your hands out of hard working people's pockets! The government should take money from the rich and from corporate companies, not from simple people who work to run this country!

Q5. What technology could be used to support smarter road user charging?

We don't need anymore technologies on top of what we currently have. Just improve the current systems and stop pouring more money on more cameras to tax us further! This is a disgrace and history will hold you accountable for your disgusting actions. It's not about air quality, it's not about people's health, it 100% to tax us residents more than we are already taxed!!

Q6. How could smarter road user charging assist with tackling current challenges such as traffic, air pollution and climate change?

The ULEZ is already doing this. The people don't want any more. We are taxed via VED on emissions, electric cars have been incentivised. This nonsense needs to stop NOW!

Q7. Are road user charging schemes best set up at a city or regional level, or as a national system, and what benefits or difficulties would you expect with either approach?

We already have a road user charging at a national level by paying road tax. Stop with this big lie now before things in London escalate. It is difficult enough to make a living in this city as it is!!

I bought my Diesel car a few years ago WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WAS ENCOURAGING people to buy diesel cars, it's shameful that now I'm being asked to scrap the car! I spent £££ to maintain this car, it is in immaculate condition. Why not reduce the road tax on older vehicles that have been around for many years and have paid their own carbon dues by remaining in use instead of being replaced by another brand new car (most of the carbon in cars is in the BUILD - YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS BUT KEEP IGNORING THE FACTS!)

Q8. If smarter road user charging is introduced, which charges or taxes should it replace and how should the current taxes and charges be changed?

It shouldn't. The people writing this report should focus on the health of the nation, not on more ways to price people out of driving their cars and visiting families. You have betrayed the people of London and people visiting London with this scam!

Q9. What discounts and exemptions would you like to see for any new smarter road charging scheme, for example to help disabled people, those on low incomes, those who need to drive for work, or people who live in areas with low levels of public transport? We DO NOT WANT A ROAD CHARGING SCHEME. LONDON RESIDENTS ARE ASKING FOR Less hypocrisy, more understanding. BEGGING NOT ASKING. more people will kill themselves if this goes ahead than those who die of air pollution.

Q10. If the Government were interested in a national distance-based road user charging scheme, would London be a sensible place for a trial? No. Nowhere is a sensible place for a trial. Let the people be free to roam in their city and stop this bizarre greedy nonsense.

Q11. If distance-based road user charging was introduced, do you think Londoners who drive should pay less in total for vehicle or driving-based charges, the same, or more than they do currently? Frankly, with leadership like we have now we would all pay more. It would cost many, many people dearly and your names will be on these documents for history to judge you if this goes ahead!

Q12. Mayors and local authorities currently have powers to introduce new road charging schemes. Do you think anything further is required beyond an electoral mandate for these bodies to use those powers (for example a local referendum)?

All of these new schemes should be put to a public vote like any good democratic country would do - anything else is the work of a dictatorship. But what do you know about democracy?? 65% of London residents and 80% of businesses were against ULEZ but the mayor of London ignored everyone!! (Whilst he has 3 cars driving him around) - hypocrisy! Another example of DONT DO AS I DO - DO AS I SAY!!

Q13. How are other cities and countries working on similar smarter road user charging ideas faring, and what alternatives are they looking at for achieving similar policy goals? Firstly, we the people did not have a say on the policy goals. Give the people the chance to vote on the policy, then give us the chance to vote on the road charging scheme. Anything else is a shameful dictatorship regime!!

Template 7

The Committee received 21 responses that included similar wording to the following:

To whom it may concern

Smart Road Charging is a terrible idea.

1. It will prejudice motorists who are already struggling with higher prices
2. It will prejudice people who need their car to visit, hospitals, doctors, relatives or elderly parents etc.
3. It will also prejudice businesses which have to make deliveries.
4. It will also invade into the privacy of motorists.

I must assume that Smart Road Charging is trying to be "invented" for 2 reasons:

1. Another kind of tax

Answer: more funds to waste

2. To reduce fuel emission.

Answer: I suggest you tackle the root of the problem first ! For example: why make Baker Street and Gloucester Place into two-way streets? This is now causing non-stop traffic jams,

when there have never been any before. I believe more accidents are being caused, because pedestrians as well as motorists have to look both ways much more carefully. I suggest you also re-consider some speed limits, like Marylebone Road, a major road going in and out of London has now been reduced to 20mph. I believe this is only to get more revenue/fines from "speeding drivers", more money for the insurance companies, but it also creates more traffic jams, more pollution and I believe the safety of drivers as well as pedestrians must be taken into consideration, because drivers are becoming much more aggressive, whilst pedestrians spend more time looking at their phones than the traffic.