

## ***CONGESTION CHARGING SCHEME***

- The Mayor of London has published a short consultation paper setting out plans to extend the current congestion charging zone to the west to cover most of the remainder of Westminster as well as Kensington and Chelsea.
- The stated reason behind the proposals is the desire to bring the benefits of the congestion charging scheme to the rest of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea – the areas suffering the greatest day-time congestion in central London. The benefits include an anticipated 5-10% reduction in traffic entering the western extension and reduced congestion within the western zone of 10-20%. However there would be a corresponding increase in traffic within the existing central zone of 1-2%
- This note summarises the proposals and sets out the likely next steps.

### ***The Proposal***

- If adopted, the new zone would be extended from its current western boundary – Park Lane – to the Earls Court one way system. It would be bounded in the south by Chelsea Embankment and in the north by the Harrow Road (A404). As with the present zone, travel on the roads making up the perimeter would not incur a charge.
- In terms of WLA members, this would see Bayswater, the Edgware Road south of the Marylebone Road and Victoria brought within the scheme for the first time.
- An alternative western boundary of the West London Railway Line and a southern boundary of the Thames have been suggested. These alternatives are not currently part of the proposals, but the consultation document nevertheless seeks comments on them.
- The main implications of using these alternative boundaries would be that journeys along the Embankment or the Earls Court one-way system would incur a charge.
- Travel along the current western boundary of the zone running along the Edgware Road, Park Lane, Grosvenor Place and Vauxhall Bridge Road does not incur a charge and the consultation paper seeks views on whether this should be maintained.

### ***Next Steps***

- Changes to the existing congestion charging zone can only be made by amending the Mayor's Transport Strategy. For that to be agreed, there must be a full public consultation. Leaflets have been sent to all central London residents and businesses likely to be affected and comments and views are invited. The WLA will be responding.
- Subject to the outcome of this initial consultation exercise, the Mayor will take a final decision on whether to proceed after the Mayoral Elections in June 2004. A further detailed consultation will then be held on how the new scheme will operate, suggesting that the earliest the scheme could be extended would be Summer 2006.
- Whilst comments are principally sought on whether the zone should be extended and the boundaries of an extension, the consultation exercise is not restricted to these issues and it will be possible to address other concerns about the operation of the scheme, its impact on business and possible changes to it – for example, the application of a charge only at peak rush hour periods. Hard evidence of the adverse effects of the scheme on business will be required to sustain such a submission, however.