

CONGESTION CHARGING

- The Mayor of London has provisionally approved plans to introduce a congestion charging scheme for Central London from January 2003. The scheme would require all vehicles – including delivery vans and other business vehicles - entering a central zone to pay a charge.
- The scheme would operate from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday and vehicles entering the zone would pay a flat rate of £5 per day. The zone extends from Park Lane in the west to Tower Bridge in the east and from Marylebone Road to Southwark
- The *ALMR* has been lobbying for the past year on this issue and, in conjunction with other industry bodies, has successfully seen the charge for commercial vehicles reduced from a proposed £15 to £5. Draft legislation enacting the scheme has now been tabled for consultation, and scope exists to refine the way in which the charge will be applied and any discounts to it.
- The proposed charge would clearly affect delivery costs within Central London, with distribution costs likely to increase as a result. The scheme would also affect other commercial drivers in the trade, such as BDMs and individual licensees wishing to purchase goods.
- **ALMR Position:**
 - draw attention to the nature of pub retailing businesses and the valuable contribution made to the London economy and tourist attractions
 - to suggest that a congestion charging scheme be directed at the principal source of congestion and those drivers with viable alternatives eg private car commuters
 - to highlight the nature of vehicle use within the pub trade and the way in which outlets receive supplies – estimate that this may be as much as 2 deliveries per day. Stress that there is no alternative to road use for this type of distribution
 - to highlight the fact that the increased distribution costs will be passed down the chain and cannot be absorbed at outlet level
 - recommendation that a charge should not be introduced in isolation but rather in the context of existing restrictions on deliveries, parking and movement of freight within the Capital – drawing attention to the fact that a pub's ability to receive deliveries is limited by opening hours and Council restrictions
 - recommendation that the charge should only apply during the peak morning and evening rush hour periods so as better to target congestion and avoid damaging businesses
 - resident individuals within the zone will get a 90% reduction on the charge – recommend that this extends to a vehicle attached to a resident business and clarification that a pub landlord, for example, would be eligible for a discount on both a personal and company vehicle
 - call for incentives to be provided for fleet operators or those wishing to purchase tickets in advance eg season ticket.
- Opportunity exists to provide a brief comment on the scheme in support of these points or to raise additional areas/issues specific to WLA membership in this context.