Central London Congestion Charging

Impacts Conference - Stockholm
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1. Background
Central London’s problem

- Greater London - largest urban area in Europe, over 7 million population
- Central London - 1 million workers, heart of UK business, government, media, heritage
- Suffered worst traffic congestion in the UK
  - average traffic speeds 15 km/hr
  - vehicles typically spent half their time in queues
- Congestion increasing, costing people and businesses time and money
- General acceptance - ‘something must be done’
TfL facts - journeys

- Every weekday in Greater London
  - 6 million journeys are made on London’s buses
  - 3 million on The Tube
  - 7 million on foot
  - 0.3 million by bicycle
  - 0.2 million by taxi
  - over 160,000 on the DLR
  - over 52,000 on Croydon Tramlink
Where is the Congestion Charging zone?

Central London only
2. How the scheme works
Charge Payment

• Flat charge of £8 per day (£5 until 4 July 2005)

• Monday - Friday 7am - 6.30pm (moving to 6pm from February 2007)

• Daily, weekly, monthly or annual payment, for individual vehicle registration number

• Payment available up until midnight, but charge rises to £10 after 10pm

• Ability to “Pay Next Day” introduced on 19th June 2006
Key Exemptions and Discounts

- Motorbikes / mopeds
- Military vehicles
- Emergency services
- Taxis and licensed minicabs
- Disabled persons
- Buses, coaches and minibuses
- Certain alternative fuel vehicles
- Breakdown and recovery vehicles
- Certain health service workers
- 90% discount for residents of zone

Exempt and 100% discount currently account for 39,000 vehicles a day (30% of total traffic)
Payment channels
April 2003 - March 2006

Total payment 93,000 / day
64,000 @ £8
16,000 Residents @ £0.80
13,000 Fleet Accounts @ £7
Electronic Payment

• High levels of satisfaction with the electronic payment methods:
  – 98% of SMS users rate ease of using the SMS payment service as good or better
  – 84% of web users rate ease of using the website for payment as good or better
  – 80% of people making an enquiry or complaint rate ease of using the website as good or better (up from 60%)

• People vary their payment methods but those paying electronically are more likely to stick to these methods:
  – In the last 5 payments those using the web used it 4.1 times, those using SMS text used it 4.3 times
Campaign for SMS

...is within easy reach

A reminder about how to pay the Congestion Charge by text message

We thought you’d appreciate a reminder about how to pay the charge by text message. It’s the quickest way to pay - and it’s easy too. And so you don’t forget what to do, we’ve provided a handy leaflet for you to keep.

To register call 0845 900 1234

MAYOR OF LONDON Transport for London
3. Enforcement Process

Transport for London

Congestion charging

Central ZONE

Mon - Fri
7 am - 6.30 pm
Cameras, Signs & Road Markings

Cameras at all routes in, out and within the charging zone

Signs at every entry and exit point and up to 17 miles away on main arteries into London

Comprehensive network of road markings
Operations Infrastructure

- Tfl Hub Site
- Data Centre
- WAN
- Cameras
  - On & inside Inner Ring Road London
- Call Centre
During the day the system constantly checks new images/interpretations against those already stored. By the end of the day only the best, highest quality images and interpretation progresses to the next stage of the process.
Identifying potential offenders - checking

- ANPR and automated payments systems are good but they are not perfect
- Manual checking of lower confidence reads is essential to ensure that the cases that are progressed through to enforcement stage are reduced as much as possible
- Over 900,000 captures every day are deleted from the process using manual checking and automated processes
- By the “end of day” there are around 140,000 unique images that represent all the unique vehicles that have entered the charging zone for the charging day
Enforcement

- If no record of payment by midnight, £100 penalty charge (PCN) sent to registered keeper of vehicle
- Opportunity to make representation to TfL and to appeal to independent adjudicator if contested PCN
- Follow-up of non-payers via debt registration and collection
- Vehicles of persistent evaders clamped and / or removed

Numberplates of all vehicles in zone

Numberplates of all vehicles in zone with no matching payment / discount

- Opportunity to make representation to TfL and to appeal independent adjudicator if contested PCN
- Follow-up of non-payers via debt registration and collection
- Vehicles of persistent evaders clamped and / or removed
Customer Improvements Delivered in 2005

- Improving fleet scheme including allowing cars onto the automated scheme
- Sending a simple leaflet on the charge to all (36 million) car-owning households in Britain
- Promoting the use of SMS
- Amendments to IVR system to make it quicker and easier to pay for a single day (90% of IVR calls)
- Monthly & Annual Discounts
- Reducing some administration charges

- Increasing PayPoint outlets at petrol stations
- Website - improving payment processing, FAQs and foreign language content
- Preventing duplicate payment
- Improving management of fleet schemes
- Improving credit card security
- Electronic interface to PATAS
- Improving SMS error messages
Customer Improvements Planned for 2006

- Pay Next Day
- Residents and 9+ seats affirmation
- Improving the process for residents changing vehicles
- Improving the process for rejected discount applications
- Recording all calls
- Blue Badge review
- Review of administration charges and refunds
- Web redesign
4. Impacts
Continued Benefits

• Congestion in charging zone down 26%

• Traffic entering charging zone reduced by 18% - cars down 37%

• Bus patronage up, reliability and journey time improved

• Net revenues £110m per year
Investment of scheme revenues 2005-2006

- Bus network: 82%
- Roads and bridges: 3%
- Road safety: 2%
- Walking & cycling: 1%
- Borough plans: 1%
- Environment: 11%
Congestion levels in the charging zone
During charging hours

Charging starts

Excess delay (min/km)
Night-time travel rate (min/km)

Travel rate (min/km)
Total traffic entering the charging zone
During charging hours

- Cars and minicabs
- Vans
- Lorries and others
- Taxis
- Buses and coaches
- Motorcycles
- Pedal cycles

Charging starts
- Feb/Mar 2002
- Spring 2002
- Autumn 2002
- January 2003
- Feb/Mar 2003
- Spring 2003
- Autumn 2003
- Spring 2004
- Autumn 2004
- March 2005
- Spring 2005
- Autumn 2005
- November 2005

Total flow
- Feb/Mar 2002
- Spring 2002
- Autumn 2002
- January 2003
- Feb/Mar 2003
- Spring 2003
- Autumn 2003
- Spring 2004
- Autumn 2004
- March 2005
- Spring 2005
- Autumn 2005
- November 2005
Business and economic impacts

• Broadly neutral impact on business performance in charging zone
  – No overall impact on employment, no. of businesses, turnover, commercial rents or profitability
• Retail sales declined after July 2005 due to the London bombings but recovered by early 2006
• Within the charging zone, the retail sector has increased its share of enterprises and employment since 2003
• The majority of charging zone businesses continue to recognise that decongestion has created a more pleasant working environment and easier journeys for employees using public transport
Safety and Environment impacts

Although not an objective of Congestion charging:

• Road traffic accidents continue to reduce
  – Between 40 and 70 fewer accidents per year

• Reduced emissions
  – Nitrogen Oxides (NO$_x$) down 13% and Particulate matter (PM$_{10}$) down 15%
  – Accelerated decline in concentrations of PM$_{10}$ within the charging zone compared to the rest of London
Accidents within the charging zone

Vehicles Involved in Accidents

- Pedestrian
- Pedal Cycle
- Powered 2-Wheeler
- Car
- Taxi
- Bus or Coach
- Goods Vehicles
- Other

Charging starts
- 2001 (Feb '01 - Jan '02)
- 2002 (Feb '02 - Jan '03)
- 2003 (Mar '03 - Feb '04)
- 2004 (Mar '04 - Feb '05)
Overall changes in travel

• Reduced car traffic does not mean significantly reduced people coming to the zone, as most have transferred to other modes
  - 50 – 60% moved to public transport
  - 20 – 30% divert round zone
  - 15 – 25% other adaptations

• Overall congestion charging has led to 5,000 fewer trips per day to the charging zone
  – This is negligible in the context of 1.5m people in the zone per day
Bus passengers

Number of passengers (thousands)

Charging starts
Public transport

• Supply meets demand - an extra 14,500 bus places have been provided to charging zone in peak hour to handle 14,000 additional passengers
• Improved bus reliability: 60% less traffic disruption
• Improved bus speeds of around 6%
• Excess bus waiting time reduced by around one-third
• Overall increase in patronage of up to 2 percent on the whole underground network
Representations Received

Representations Received as a % of PCNs

- 2004
- 2005
Key lessons learnt

• Political commitment of Mayor
• Effective research and clear policy objectives
• Extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement
• Strong project management
• Adequate public transport alternatives
• Effective traffic management
• Strong public information campaign
• It works and has public support
• Need for ongoing customer and impacts monitoring, stakeholder engagement and scheme improvements
• Need for effective contract management
Western Extension
Why an extension to the west?

• Main concentrations of congestion in central / inner London to the west and south-west of the existing charging zone
• High levels of congestion throughout working day
  – Intense inter-peak congestion
• Good public transport throughout the area
  – Bus routes and good Underground coverage
• 60% of incoming trips in morning peak by public transport, of which 20% by bus
• Feasible boundary route for accommodating diverting traffic
Western Extension consultation

- Discussions with key stakeholders (July / Sep 2003)
- Public and stakeholder consultation (Feb – Apr 2004)
- Publication of revised Strategy (Aug 2004)
- Informal engagement with key boroughs (autumn 2004)
- Preliminary consultation with key stakeholders (Jan – Feb 2005)
- Full consultation on preferred scheme with public, businesses and stakeholder groups (May – Jul 2005)
- Decision to proceed (Sep 2005)
- Go-live date (Feb 2007)
Projected impacts of the proposed extension

- 10 to 14% reduction in traffic volumes within extension
- 15 to 20% reduction in congestion in western zone
- Benefits to bus journey times and reliability
- Traffic on boundary routes largely unchanged
- Small increase in public transport passengers
- £30 – 50m net revenue
- Reduced accidents and emissions