

Full Council 14th September 2022

Conservative Group Non-strategic theme motion ULEZ

Council notes that on 4th March the Mayor of London announced his plan to expand the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from its current boundary of the North and South Circulars to cover almost all of Greater London, including Merton. These plans ~~w~~could see the ULEZ expanded by 29th August 2023, subject to the current consultation which Merton Council has formally responded.

~~Council notes that, whilst the ULEZ was originally introduced covering the same area and with the same boundaries as the Congestion Charge Zone, on 25th October 2021 it was expanded by 18 times its original size to its current boundaries. Council therefore notes that this significant change took place less than a year ago and that the ramifications have yet to be fully assessed.~~

Council notes that although Merton enjoys high levels of transport connectivity, there are some lower income areas, particularly in the eastern edge of the Borough that are affected by poorer transport accessibility and do consequently have relatively higher levels of car ownership. due to the limited public transport options in Merton, many residents and families need access to a car to live their daily lives and to travel to work. TfL figures show that 64 per cent of Merton households own a car and ONS figures show that 60 per cent of London households earning between £23,192 and £29,546 own a vehicle.

Council notes that expanding the ULEZ to Merton will impact financially burden many residents facing economic hardship, particularly lower income residents in areas with poor public transport accessibility that are more dependent on a private whose vehicle, s do not meet the ULEZ standard with a daily charge of £12.50 every time they drive their car. For families that drive every day this will mean additional costs of over £4,500.00 per year. This charge will also apply to family members and carers driving into London, thereby creating an additional burden for families, the elderly and those in care.

Therefore, Council welcomes the response to the proposed extension of ULEZ submitted jointly by the Leader of the Council and by the Cabinet member for Transport where:

- The Council recognised the importance of tackling the challenges of toxic air pollution, the climate emergency, traffic congestion but thorough consideration should also be given to the cost-of-living crisis.

-The Council considered supporting measures including a more generous scrappage to mitigate the impact of switching to electric vehicles or retrofitting to become ULEZ compliant. An enhanced scrappage scheme should only be made available to residents in the expanded zone and not offering those in the existing ULEZ zone a second chance of funding.

-The Council noted that the proposals include considering a large-scale and targeted vehicle scrappage scheme to support Londoners, including, for example, those on

low incomes, disabled people, charities and businesses. It is therefore disappointing that the consultation does not provide a firm commitment or adequate details to assess the adequacy of any scheme. The scrappage scheme has to go further and consider retrofit options to save embodied carbon and consideration given to extended measures such as annual travel cards and bike ownership for those who wish to scrap their car.

-The Council requested further details that demonstrated the adequacy of the proposed scrappage scheme and mitigating measures on mitigating the impact on all residents including those on low income and other vulnerable groups, particularly those in areas with poor public transport options. The Council also wanted TfL to go further and plan for active travel and public transport enhancements in low PTAL areas.

-As an employer, the Council also stated its concern about the negative impact identified in the IIA on employees working in social and health care, who rely on a vehicle for essential work journeys. The Council strongly urged TfL to give particular consideration to how the scrappage scheme and wider support measures could be extended to key workers such as nurses, doctors, teachers, police, ambulance and fire brigade workers, as well as those on low to modest incomes who require a vehicle to perform essential work duties or those working shifts at unsociable hours.

-The Council went on to state that the impact on small businesses requires deeper consideration and greater support needs to be offered to small businesses and the self-employed where cars or vehicles are an essential part of the trade and their jobs can't be undertaken by bike or public transport; for example construction workers, tradespeople, delivery drivers.

Furthermore, the Council recognises that the administration is also working with TfL on a faster upgrade to a zero-emission bus fleet in Merton and on increasing the roll out of rapid charging points in the borough.

Given the need for measures to counter the cost-of-living impact on low-income households, small businesses, charities and disabled residents:

- Merton Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to central government to urge them to fund the most generous scrappage scheme to support residents transition to sustainable transport modes, should ULEZ be expanded, to improve air quality and support residents through the cost-of-living emergency.

~~opposes measures to push up the cost of living in Merton by imposing taxes and charges on Merton residents who rely on motor vehicles without providing them with realistic alternatives. Council notes that the Mayor of London has set aside almost £400 million towards expanding the ULEZ and related projects, and suggests this money would be better spent on such measures as:~~

- ~~- a faster upgrade to a zero-emission bus fleet;~~
- ~~- increasing the roll out of rapid 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 vehicles~~

~~Furthermore, council recognises that the administration has:~~

- ~~- Failed to introduce low emission bus zones in the town centres as specified by a Conservative motion passed in February 2019;~~
- ~~- Failed to provide any dates and times of meetings with TfL regarding low emission bus zones as was promised by Cabinet Members in the September 2020 and February 2021 meetings of the council;~~
- ~~- Failed to provide details of discussions with TfL to reduce the financial burden of the ULEZ on Merton residents;~~
- ~~- Imposed taxes on parked cars which has had no meaningful reduction on air pollution;~~
- ~~- Failed to embrace technology led solutions to the pollution crisis which have been implemented by other London boroughs notably LB Wandsworth and LB Waltham Forest.~~

~~Therefore, council calls upon the Leader of the Council to:~~

- ~~- Ensure that his administration makes air quality a priority by implementing low emission bus zones in the town centres, with a quarterly report being provided to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel detailing the steps that have been taken and listing the dates of meetings with TfL;~~
- ~~- Writes to the Mayor of London to demand that he abandons his plans to harm Merton's families and businesses by expanding the ULEZ to Merton and to use the £400 million he has set aside for it on fairer and more effective ways of improving London's air quality.~~

~~Cllr Eleanor Cox — Cllr Michael Paterson — Cllr Nick McLean~~

Motion now reads

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Council notes that expanding the ULEZ to Merton will impact residents facing economic hardship, particularly low income residents in areas with poor public transport accessibility that are more dependent on a private vehicle.

Therefore, Council welcomes the response to the proposed extension of ULEZ submitted jointly by the Leader of the Council and by the Cabinet member for Transport where:

- The Council recognised the importance of tackling the challenges of toxic air pollution, the climate emergency, traffic congestion but thorough consideration should also be given to the cost-of-living crisis.
 - The Council considered supporting measures including a more generous scrappage to mitigate the impact of switching to electric vehicles or retrofitting to become ULEZ compliant. An enhanced scrappage scheme should only be made available to residents in the expanded zone and not offering those in the existing ULEZ zone a second chance of funding.
 - The Council noted that the proposals include considering a large-scale and targeted vehicle scrappage scheme to support Londoners, including, for example, those on low incomes, disabled people, charities and businesses. It is therefore disappointing that the consultation does not provide a firm commitment or adequate details to assess the adequacy of any scheme. The scrappage scheme has to go further and consider retrofit options to save embodied carbon and consideration given to extended measures such as annual travel cards and bike ownership for those who wish to scrap their car.
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- Furthermore, the Council recognises that the administration is also working with TfL on a faster upgrade to a zero-emission bus fleet in Merton and on increasing the roll out of rapid charging points in the borough.

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