

JULIA LOPEZ MP
Hornchurch & Upminster



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mayor of London
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
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5 December 2022

Dear Mayor Khan,

I write to outline my constituents' and my own dismay at your announcement that you will proceed with your plan to extend the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) London-wide in August next year, despite a clear majority of Londoners opposing it (60% of all Londoners and 70% of outer Londoners). You may also have seen a letter that I signed with 28 Conservative colleagues, published in the Daily Telegraph on 2 December, calling on you to cancel the ULEZ expansion.

As I outlined to you in my earlier consultation response on this matter, outer London is not the same as inner London. As your own London Plan acknowledges, journeys in outer London can be significantly more difficult than the equivalent distance in more central boroughs, leading to a much heavier reliance on vehicles for personal and business travel. This is especially true among elderly residents and, in a borough like Havering with one of the largest populations of over-65s, many pensioner households will simply not be able to afford to replace their older vehicle or to pay this daily tax of £12.50. Consequently, they will be forced to make difficult decisions regarding their employment, their engagement in the local economy alongside their interactions with friends and family. The wider socio-economic impact of these changes will be substantial.

Within your announcement you advised that you will be implementing the largest expansion of the outer London bus network with the addition of one million kilometres to the network, including improvements to the Harold Hill – Upminster route. This is, of course, welcome but does not meet the scale of change and investment required to mitigate the transport challenges created by the ULEZ expansion.

The confidence that can be attached to any such statements has been severely impacted by the manner in which you have responded to the public's response to ULEZ consultation. This also stands in stark contrast to your comments a day earlier when you announced the reversal of proposals to withdraw 17 central London bus routes with the amendment of a further 40 routes also withdrawn. Interestingly, when responding to this consultation you acknowledged the strength of Londoners' objection to the proposals and advised that this would lead to difficult decisions being taken elsewhere – it is now clear that the consequences of those difficult decisions would be felt in outer London.

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In the same way that the public transport provision in outer London boroughs like Havering is insufficient to be a realistic alternative to use of a private car, the scrappage scheme as announced is vastly insufficient to make vehicle replacement a viable option to those impacted by the expanded ULEZ. Those who are in receipt of means-tested benefits self-evidently receive a low income and will find it most challenging to replace their vehicle. The provision of a grant of up to £2000 will not make a meaningful contribution to the replacement of a vehicle at a time of significant inflation, particularly in the used car market, and of global supply issues which have delayed the delivery of vehicles. This issue is compounded further by the case of retired households who can rely only upon savings to make a significant investment in a new vehicle.

Outer London boroughs are uniquely impacted by the secondary impact that this change will have upon the neighbouring home counties in a way which inner London boroughs will not have experienced when the ULEZ was first implemented. As referenced within my own consultation submission and by many of my constituents, schools and businesses within my constituency are visited regularly by people travelling into the community from outside of London. Many of those visitors will now be faced by a daily tax of £12.50 yet they will not be able to access any assistance offered by the scrappage scheme.

A significant reduction of external visitors to outer London boroughs, coupled with the inevitable reduction in the mobility of outer London residents, will lead to a significant impact on the vibrancy of local communities, economies and to individuals' lives. Outer London boroughs are uniquely exposed to the impact of these changes in a way that inner London boroughs were not and I do not believe that you had given this adequate consideration when making this decision.

Finally, I would also note the deeply cynical move of increasing the fine for failing to pay the ULEZ at the same time as expanding the zone to include all of Greater London. Such a move is further evidence of what many already know to be true, that the purpose of this scheme is simply to plug a hole in TfL's finances and not to improve air quality in outer London. There has been ample opportunity to electrify the bus fleet in outer London, as has taken place within central London. Instead, the modernisation of the central London fleet has come at the expense of outer London as more polluting vehicles have been redistributed outwards.

My constituents and I would welcome genuine efforts to improve air quality in outer London however we cannot support the imposition of a daily tax that will most severely impact the vulnerable and small businesses, during these challenging times. I urge you to reconsider this deeply unpopular and deeply harmful decision.

With kind regards,

Julia Lopez MP