



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
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9 March 2023

Dear Michael,

I am writing to you today about the Mayor of London's expansion of the Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) to the whole of Greater London.

You will doubtlessly be aware of the significant harm that this policy will have on outer London boroughs and the surrounding areas, particularly those on lowest incomes and pensioners, who are both more likely to have a non-compliant vehicle and are least able to pay for a replacement. Consequently, this will cause many people to make difficult decisions about their employment and their engagement with friends, families and local public and commercial services. The wider impact that this will have upon the vibrancy of outer London communities, economies and to individuals' lives is significant.

The Mayor's decision to push ahead with this policy, in the face of clear public opposition expressed via the Mayor's consultation and in subsequent public discourse, has brought a renewed focus by my constituents on the Mayor's decision-making processes and on the wider functioning of devolution in London. Unfortunately, many of my constituents have expressed a total loss of confidence in the former and are increasingly of the view that the balance of powers in London's devolution settlement do not allow for the Mayor to be effectively held to account.

Since the Mayor has announced this disastrous policy, I have received correspondence from over 200 constituents who have expressed that their opposition to the policy while only two constituents have written to me to express their support. Of those who oppose the ULEZ expansion, a great many have enquired about the Government's ability to intervene and prevent its implementation. In addition to direct correspondence, nearly 2000 constituents have signed petitions to this effect. 1506 constituents have supported a parliament petition (631763) calling for a referendum on the removal of the London Assembly and London Mayor while a further 560 have signed a petition (633550), started by a local resident, calling for the amendment of the 1999 GLA Act to remove the Mayor's power to impose road use charges.

I am also aware that a significant number of colleagues within the House and in local government have written to express their support of an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill that would require the Mayor's proposals to obtain the support of councils in London before they could be implemented.

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I recognise that decisions on the rebalancing of devolution settlements are difficult and need to be handled with the utmost care. However, the recent actions of the Mayor of London in his handling of this decision and his disregard for overwhelming public opposition (discounting a large proportion of consultation responses and the apparent premeditated decision-making process) have highlighted the Mayor's willingness to test his powers to the limit.

In the light of these strongly held concerns among my constituents, I would be grateful if you would be able to provide the Department's response to these issues, the tabled amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and your view on whether there is any scope for intervention prior to the implementation of the ULEZ expansion in August.

Given the link to his own portfolio, a copy of this letter will also be shared with the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Mark Harper MP.

With best wishes,

Julia Lopez MP

Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster