London Congestion Charging

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Introduction: context

- The scheme belongs to the Mayor of London and Transport for London.
- The Department has no direct role, only set the enabling legislative framework (1999 GLA Act)
- So this is a personal view
Background to the scheme

- Introduced in February 2003
- Key aim: to reduce congestion
- Secondary aims: raise quality of bus services, raise money to be spent on transport
- No explicit environmental, health or safety objectives.
Nature of the scheme

• Inside the inner ring road (not just crossing cordon)
• £5 per day 7am - 6.30pm
• Enforcement cameras read number plates
• Can’t buy passes in advance
• Currently processing about 100,000 payments a day
• New road signs
Impacts so far: congestion

- down 30% from same time last year (measured as travel rate)
- means average speeds up from 14.3 kph to 16.7 kph
- so main effect is reduced length of queuing
- average journey times down around 14% (sample of destinations and lengths)

Figures from TfL 6 month report:
www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/cc_intro.shtml
Impacts so far: Traffic

- a reduction in 60,000 car trips entering the zone (or around 50,000) cars. (pre-charging level c. 200,000 per day)

  - 20-30% diverting around the zone
  - 50-60% switching to bus or underground
  - 0-10% changed destinations to outside the zone
  - 10-15% other mode switch (eg. Cycle, scooter etc)

- car occupancy increased by 10%.

Figures from TfL 6 month report: www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/cc_intro.shtml
Impacts on other modes

- Taxi movements increased by 20%
- Bus services increased by 15% - TfL laid on new services
- Overall public transport mode share increased 2-3%
- Cycle use increased 30% (from a small base, and a good summer helped)
- Motorcycles increased 20%

Figures from TfL 6 month report: www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/cc_intro.shtml
Impacts on safety

- Early days - too soon to say anything definitive
- Background is a long term decline in accidents in London
- Accidents in the charging zone follow this trend
- No rise in powered two wheelers, small rise in cycles, but difficult to identify a cause
- Lots of interest - TfL monitoring this closely.
Impacts on environment and health

- First results will be available next Spring.
- Expectations: small impacts - difficult to determine cause.
- But TfL have a monitoring and modelling programme in place.
Monitoring the environmental effects of congestion charging

• TfL will measure impacts of the CC on:
  • air quality
  • traffic noise
  • perceived quality of the environment
Location of environmental impact surveys

Key

Green dot: LAQ monitoring site
Red dot: Noise monitoring site
Blue dot: on street public space survey

Source: TfL First Annual Report, June 2003
Environmental impacts

• CC has resulted in fewer vehicles entering the zone during charging hours.

• Changes in air quality and noise are expected to be less dramatic.
  
  • Traffic is only one factor in air quality/noise levels, and changes in emissions from traffic do not lead to equivalent changes in local conditions.
  
  • CC only operates for one-third of the hours of the year, and mainly affects ‘relatively clean’ cars.
Noise

- Sample measurements have been taken across the TfL road network, supplemented by additional sites in the zone.

- Noise models are being developed by DEFRA and TfL.
Perceived quality of the environment

- An ‘On-Street Public Space Survey’ was conducted with 10,000 people during Autumn 2002 across 24 locations in the zone.

- The purpose of the surveys was to measure changes in attitude before and after charging.

- Traffic noise and pollution were two of the most disliked aspects across different area types.
Lessons

• Political commitment
• Effective research
• Clear objectives / wider strategy
• Consultation (and then amend if necessary)
• Clear procurement
• Use proven technology
• Contingency plans
• Public information
TfL’s commitments and comments:

- The Mayor and TfL continually review scheme performance and wider impacts
- Monitoring programme plays a vital role
- Key surveys of impacts on business, the economy, people and the environment are currently under way
- Achieving a detailed understanding of impacts is a long term process