

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 25.2.2003	MEETING NAME Executive
Report title:		Introduction of Congestion Charging	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Of Significance to all Wards	
From:		Strategic Director of Regeneration	

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That the report be received.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Mayor of London's Congestion Charging scheme came into operation on Monday 17th February. The effect of this is that any driver entering or leaving the Congestion Charging Zone, Monday to Friday between the hours of 7am and 6.30pm has to pay a charge of £5 or face the prospect of receiving an £80 fine through the post.
- 3 Southwark is covered by part of the Congestion Charging Zone. The zone area is bounded by Tower Bridge Rd. New Kent Rd and Kennington Lane, the main Elephant and Castle junction is on the ring road and not contained within the zone.
- 4 The purpose of the scheme is to charge drivers for driving in the centre of London and through a pricing mechanism reduce the amount of traffic on roads, thus reducing congestion and time spent in traffic queues by drivers who have to enter the area. It is envisaged that the revenue that is raised from the scheme will in time be directed into transport improvements throughout the capital.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 5 The effects of the scheme will need to be considered once the scheme has settled in and data is available from Transport for London on the effects of scheme. The main issues that will need to be considered are as follows:
 - The effect of traffic displacement to other routes in Southwark
 - The effect on road collisions within the Borough
 - Increases in the use of motor cycles
 - Increases of traffic speeds within the zone
 - Impacts on the capacity of public transport within the Borough
 - Impact on air quality within the Borough
 - The economic impact on the Borough
- 6 Whilst it is possible, in the early stages of the scheme to get some indication of traffic displacement within the Borough it would be some time before sufficient data would be available to assess the other impacts listed above.

FIRST RESULTS OF THE SCHEME

- 7 The scheme was introduced in a week when most of the schools within London were on half term holiday; traffic levels normally decrease between 10% and 15% when this happens. Early indications from TfL suggest that traffic levels in the first day of the scheme were reduced by 25%. It is considered that many people either stayed at home on that day or used another transport means for their journeys.
- 8 Southwark receives daily bulletins from TfL on traffic levels and throughout the week of 17th to 21st February these showed day on day increases, these were not however significantly high. Information relating to 24th and 25th February will be provided through a verbal report to the Executive on the evening of 25th February
- 9 The number of vehicles recorded by TfL within in the charging zone on the first day dropped from an average 250 000 to 190 000. By 10pm on 17th February the majority of drivers (100,000) had paid the £5 charge. Approximately 10 000 drivers failed to pay the £5 on the first day and fines for this are being sent out by TfL through the post.
- 10 Public transport operators throughout London all experienced a rise in usage on the first day of the scheme .

IMPACTS ON SOUTHWARK

- 11 Officers have undertaken observations around the Borough and these support the findings of TfL that traffic was substantially down in the first week. However it was observed that:
 - That the start and finish of peak traffic hours were extended both in the morning and evening.
 - That more traffic was using the ring road.
 - That queue lengths at bus stops appeared to be longer.
 - That passenger loadings on trains and undergrounds within the Borough were not reduced as a result of the school half term holiday

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 12 The Council is not making any direct financial contributions to this scheme. It is however receiving funding from TfL to introduce a number of complimentary measures to ameliorate the negative impacts of congestion charging such as the introduction of traffic calming measures and the introduction of new controlled parking zones. These are designed to protect local residents/businesses from commuters driving as close as possible to the zone boundary and then taking public transport into the centre of the capital

EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES ON THOSE AFFECTED

- 13 Whilst it is possible to get an indication of the impact of the scheme it will be some time before it is possible to accurately assess the impact that it has had on the Borough.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 14 The aims of congestion charging are to reduce unnecessary car journeys and encourage the use of public transport and as such are in keeping with the Boroughs own objectives in the field of transport.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15 There are no legal implications at this stage

REASONS FOR URGENCY

16 In order that the Executive may receive an early view of the information relating to the Mayors Congestion Charging Scheme, which was introduced on 17th February 2003.

REASONS FOR LATENESS

17 The scheme did not become operational till 17th February 2003 and much of the information received from Transport for London was not available before the despatch of the main agenda.

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<i>Key Decision?</i>	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
<i>Officer Title</i>	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	No	No
Chief Finance Officer	No	No
Executive Member	Yes	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services		24.2.03