

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL

**SUBJECT: WESTERN EXTENSION ZONE REMOVAL OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

**DATE: 17 FEBRUARY 2011**

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**1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED**

1.1 This paper updates the Panel on the Western Extension Zone (WEZ) removal.

**2 BACKGROUND**

2.1 On 20 October 2010, following public consultation earlier in the year, the Mayor confirmed the Variation Order to remove the western extension of the Congestion Charging Zone, with the last day of charging being 24 December 2010.

**3 PROJECT PROGRESS**

3.1 At 6.00pm on 24 December 2010, the WEZ ceased to operate.

3.2 Letters were sent to approximately 48,000 WEZ residents in December 2010 informing them of the termination of their discount, and refunds were sent to customers for any discount registration fee relating to Congestion Charging after 24 December.

3.3 All enforcement data from the camera infrastructure, post 6.00pm on 24 December, was deleted by Siemens, the enforcement service provider.

3.4 All WEZ Congestion Charging signs and roundels were removed between 27 December 2010 and 3 January 2011, and the telecommunications links with the WEZ cameras were terminated on 31 December 2010.

**4 TRAFFIC MITIGATION METHODS**

4.1 In response to the expected changes in traffic flow post the WEZ removal, Surface Transport has introduced a number of mitigation measures. These include:

(a) traffic signal strategies – flexible traffic signal strategies have been deployed for approximately 150 junctions, predominantly located on the WEZ boundary with some key junctions within the area. SCOOT control at 28 key junctions within the WEZ area has also been implemented; and

(b) iBus technology – this has been installed at 30 sites to send data to traffic lights where timings can be altered to help alleviate possible bus delays.

## **5 OPERATIONAL IMPACTS SINCE REMOVAL**

- 5.1 Traffic flows in January 2011 are generally typical of business as usual trends. Compared with the same period in January 2010 the overall number of valid charges has fallen by 44 per cent, broadly in line with the reduction in size of the charging area.
- 5.2 The average number of calls per day received by the call centre in January 2011 has been 11,300 calls, which is in line with expectations.
- 5.3 In January 2011, over 48,000 charges were purchased by over 12,400 customers, who previously had a WEZ resident discount. This suggests that up to 25 per cent of the 48,000 WEZ residents have travelled in the central charging zone, at an average of once a week.
- 5.4 Registration for Congestion Charging Auto Pay opened on 22 November 2010 and as of 31 January 2011, over 70,000 drivers had registered. It is anticipated that by December 2011 around 150,000 – 200,000 people will have signed up for Congestion Charging Auto Pay.
- 5.5 In March 2011, analysis will have been undertaken on a full month's data, enabling a more detailed report of the impacts on traffic and speeds. Additional speed survey data will be available for reporting by the end of March.

## **6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 The Panel is asked to NOTE the paper.

## **7 CONTACT**

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