

Bromley Conservative Group response to the ULEZ consultation

Please accept this Bromley Council Conservative Group response to the Mayor of London's proposals to extend the Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) to outer-London in August 2023.

Extending the Ultra- Low Emission Zone

Bromley Council supports the objective of improving air quality and to this end, we have published a comprehensive Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025 with a matrix of twenty-five actions. The Council is committed to ensuring that its operation is carbon net zero by 2027. In addition, a further 5,000 trees are being planted on the borough's roads to add to the existing 36,000. We are also continuing our rollout of LED street lighting, installing new electric charge points, and investing in renewable energy.

The Council, however, disagrees strongly with the proposal to extend the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to outer London by August 2023. Bromley is, geographically, the largest London Borough, and contains many rural areas which have little public transport and where, unlike inner London, residents are dependent on their cars. The Council is particularly concerned about the impact on the self-employed, small businesses which rely on their vehicles to conduct their trade and on elderly residents and others on fixed incomes already facing substantial increases in fuel costs.

The imposition of a daily charge to drive in the borough will be an additional financial burden and, for many, without the means to purchase a compliant vehicle, it will mean they can no longer trade or afford to drive. The imposition of the ULEZ charge on motorists, including those entering Bromley from neighbouring counties will also be detrimental, especially for those like nurses, police officers, supermarket shelf fillers and others working anti-social hours when public transport is not available.

The Council therefore calls on Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, to abandon his plans to extend the ULEZ. We would like to see the £200m he will spend implementing ULEZ on practical solutions such as improving the public transport network in outer London, invest in making the TfL bus fleet net-zero ahead of the current 2034 target and fund a more generous scrappage scheme.

Changes to the Mayor's Transport Strategy

We are opposed to the change in strategy. Looking at the questions in the consultation questionnaire online this is the closest question to asking if participants are in support or opposed to expanding the ULEZ. We think this question should have been clearer for the benefit of participants.

Summary

As a local authority, we are committed to doing everything we can to reduce our emissions and we have ambitious targets to reach NetZero by 2027. We also have an ambitious Carbon Neutral

Strategy https://www.bromley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/6864/net_zero_action_plan_year_1_-_201920.pdf which highlights the innovative and positive ways we will reduce our impact on the environment without negatively impacting residents' pockets.

Bromley remains a green borough with some of the cleanest air in London. We have more parks and trees than any other London borough and to highlight again, our record on sustainability, we are doing more to improve our air quality by planting over 5,000 new trees, installing new electric vehicle charging points, establishing new woodlands and investing in sustainable energy. We feel that the Mayor of London and TFL should look to Bromley for inspiration for improving air quality, and refrain from implementing a policy which will negatively affect businesses and residents, many of whom are key workers or shift workers, whilst doing little, if anything, to improve air quality.