



We understand many residents are worried about ULEZ especially at the time of a cost of living crisis'-Havering's Leader of the Council.

28th February 2023 - THE HAVERING DAILY

Havering's Council Leader, Councillor Ray Morgon, has issued the following statement in regards to the ULEZ expansion:

We understand that many residents are worried about ULEZ being introduced and fully understand these worries, especially at the time of a cost of living crisis which is affecting so many people.

As a Cabinet, we have debated this issue at great length as far back as last summer when we submitted our comments as part of the public consultation on the Mayor of London's proposal to expand ULEZ to all outer London boroughs including Havering. Our response can be viewed [online](#).

At all times, we have tried to look at the issue objectively. Although air quality is generally good in Havering, we understand that air quality can still be improved and public health will benefit from this. We will certainly be reviewing our own Air Quality Action Plan that was agreed a few years ago, as well as doing all that we can to improve air quality around Launders Lane, Rainham, as well as some of the other small number of hotspots around the borough such as Transport for London maintained Gallows Corner, around Romford bus garage and the area that borders the M25.

However, especially given the outcome of the public consultation, we were still disappointed with the Mayor's decision to sign the legal order to go ahead with his plans and our response to this can be seen [on our website](#).

If the Mayor of London is determined to press ahead with his plans, we feel its introduction should at the very least be delayed to 2026 to allow residents time to make appropriate adjustment, particularly during this period of high inflation which is also impacting the second hand car market. The Mayor of London needs to pause his plans, in order to consider some of the unintended consequences of his proposal that I have mentioned below, speak to all outer London Borough Councils, as well as those that border London. The Mayor needs to consider an enhanced scrappage scheme to ensure that no resident is left worse off by having to change their car, including those who use their car for business purposes.

We are aware under Section 295 GLA Act 1999, the Mayor has powers to introduce and operate a “charging scheme in respect of the keeping or use of motor vehicles on roads in its area”. Even without what is known as a Section 8 Agreement being signed by Councils (and we haven’t) the permission to install the infrastructure is still available to the Mayor. The Act also overrides any issues around planning consent required in relation to the cameras and signage. However, we understand that the Government are considering using their veto under the Act as the proposal may be inconsistent with national transport policy.

We have been in contact with other outer London Boroughs and some Councils have stated that they can stop ULEZ taking place in their borough and have now joined together to instigate legal proceedings. The legal opinion is that the chance of success is rated low at best. One Council is allegedly setting aside £400,000 to fight the ULEZ expansion in their borough. We, however, will always act in the best overall interests of our residents and that also includes the prudent use of Council taxpayer’s money.

We feel that the GLA have not considered the full impact to outer London boroughs such as Havering. We are also concerned for those who live outside London, and need to drive into the borough for work, for example, health and social care staff, police and many other key public sector workers who are often some of the lowest paid workers.

There is no support for those employees who travel into Havering daily and our strong fear is that many will look elsewhere to work as they will not be able to afford the additional financial burden. It is already very hard to recruit to these services and there are known shortages of staff, and this will become much worse if ULEZ is introduced too quickly.

For many residents, their car is their lifeline to keep in contact with family and friends to avoid social isolation and maintain their health and well-being.

We are also one of the biggest boroughs in London and travelling north to south by public transport is very difficult unless you have a car or another vehicle. We are not like inner London boroughs who have much better connections. Our public transport network must be improved. We therefore need more transport options to help mitigate against ULEZ if it is introduced. The current offer does not meet the strategic needs of our borough.

There are growing cross party concerns as well as from Trade Unions about the impact of the ULEZ expansion to outer London and I urge the Mayor to use this time to reconsider his plans.

I will keep you updated as events unfold.

Article reproduced from The Havering Daily an online newspaper