

MAYOR OF LONDON

Adam Chalmers
Chief Executive
Elmbridge Borough Council
awithers@elmbridge.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA231222-6219

Date: 27 January 2023

Dear Adam,

Thank you for writing and setting out your detailed concerns about the Mayor's announcement that he will expand the Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) London wide in August this year.

I appreciate your acceptance of the need to tackle toxic air and I hope I can reassure you on the issues you see in the upcoming scheme. The Mayor has been clear that this was not an easy decision but a necessary one, as air pollution can lead to stunted lungs in children and a higher risk of dementia in older people. Additionally, more than 500,000 Londoners live with asthma and are more vulnerable to the health impacts of air pollution, with more than half of these people living in outer London boroughs.

The existing ULEZ has had a transformational impact, helping to reduce harmful roadside nitrogen dioxide by 44 per cent in central London and 20 per cent in inner London. However, despite this world-leading progress, many areas of London still exceed legal and safe levels of air pollution.

The evidence from the previous rounds of the scheme is that areas immediately outside the zone see improvements in air quality. We anticipate that this will apply to areas like Elmbridge as vehicles travelling in and out of the zone are upgraded to comply with the standards. Similarly we have not seen any evidence of increased traffic flows on or around the boundaries, or any increase in opportunistic parking on the periphery of the previous zones.

In the notice of the council motion you raised a number of concerns. One concern was the potential for your residents to be subject to fines from the ULEZ. We estimate 15% of vehicles that are currently seen driving in Outer London will need to pay as they will not be compliant with the ULEZ standards which target highly polluting vehicles. Transport for London have a vehicle checker on their website to help people understand if their vehicle is compliant. Any efforts your council can make to promote these resources would be most welcome, and we would encourage you to direct people to the TfL website for information wherever possible.

The council resolution raised the issue of extending zone 6 into parts of your district. TfL are constantly reviewing and developing transport provision and are open to discussions with Surrey County Council and Elmbridge borough Council in order to discuss potential holistic transport strategies.

MAYOR OF LONDON

A number of your points in the letter related to scheme specifics, including access to NHS services, exemptions and discounts, how any net proceeds from the scheme are allocated, and any potential changes to the standards. I can confirm that there are no planned changes to the compliance criteria for the scheme as there has not been since the ULEZ was first introduced.

On exemptions and discounts I am happy to be able to inform you that not only have the existing grace periods been retained they have been extended until October 2027. The Mayor also extended the scheme to create two new grace periods for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and for recipients of the standard rate mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and certain other specific state benefits, these will also run until 2027. It is not necessary to be a resident of the GLA area to benefit from these schemes.

I can confirm that we have retained the arrangements to ensure that NHS patients with an impaired immune system who need to go to essential medical appointments can be reimbursed if they have had to pay the ULEZ charge during their journey. The reimbursement applies to the person who paid the ULEZ charge for the vehicle who transported the patient to the hospital, who may be a friend, relative or carer rather than the patient themselves. The reimbursement is administered by the NHS trusts directly. Again, it is not necessary to be a resident of the GLA area to benefit from this scheme.

I can also confirm that any net proceeds from the scheme will be allocated to improve and maintain the transport network, including new services and improvements, that will see over one million further kilometres added to the bus network, this is part of the biggest ever expansion of the bus network in outer London. We would welcome any information on improvements that would help your residents either as consultations are brought forward or through TfL's regular contacts with your district.

I appreciate your disappointment that the scrappage scheme will not be available for Elmbridge residents. Unlike the other Clean Air Zone cities across the UK London has not received any funding for scrappage from central Government, and I would encourage you to join the Mayor in calling for a national scrappage scheme. I should, however, highlight the new provisions in the scrappage scheme to allow eligible persons to nominate someone else to receive the grant in their stead. This is intended to support people who are providing support to transport for others who have limited mobility or other needs. The nominee does not themselves need to live in London so this may be helpful for some of your residents.

TfL and officers would, of course, be happy to share data and meet with both yourselves and Surrey County Council.

Yours sincerely,



Shirley Rodrigues

Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy