

▲ Are Congestion Zones ▲ Good Idea? In this report I will be finding out whether or not congestion zones are a good idea, using researched data, charts and tables to back up my ideas. The conclusion of this matter relies on how accurate and reliable the information is. Congestion Zones are used in hope that traffic gets reduced. The mayor of London has recently put congestion zones into place in hopes they will reduce traffic by 15%. Critics of the scheme however, say that it is unworkable and unfair. They also claim it will probably lead to more congestion as people try to avoid the charging areas. Central London has had a dramatic cut in traffic since the introduction of the congestion charge. 40 000 less people are driving through the zone each

Some people agree with the congestion charge, and can produce many facts to support their view. My source one can also provide many facts and figures. Source one says that since the congestion zone was put into place, traffic had been cut by 18%, and delays were down by 30% since the congestion zone has been brought in, the advantage of congestion zone was clear as the traffic was rapidly decreasing after the introduction of congestion zones. If the traffic is reduced then there will be no delays so not that much pollution released in to the atmosphere; which leads to climate effects for example global warming.

The public transport in the city has improved dramatically by 20%, with 29,000 more people using the service - which will mean much more money towards its improvement. This also contributes to the protection of our planet against climate changes which can have social effects. If more people chose to use the bus or taxi then this would improve their health as they would walk and always go on separate cars.

Source one also says that the streets of London were 'clogged' and the heavy traffic on the roads were costing businesses approximately £2 million a week. Congestion zones are good because people only use them if they really have to, the evidence to this point is in source 1 when it states "there are 65,000 fewer car trips", and so this means a cut down on gases being emitted into the air. So, less pollution.

Source 1 also states that the costs that people pay are going towards the environment, new more environmentally friendly buses. As £50m is contributed mainly through quicker and more reliable journeys for road and bus users. This is also an advantage as the money is not going to the government but is used to help our transport. The news article declares that, Research, polls and surveys also shows that 75% of Londoners supported the scheme 'because it works'.

That factor that it really helps us as all of the congestion charge is kindly contributed to improving the public transport. Source 2 goes on saying that their research have shown that there was much urgently street works done with the help of this money, such as replacing ancient leaking water pipes. If congestion zones are reducing traffic by 21 per cent and 70,000 cars every day then it must really work.

On the other hand congestion zones can also become a disadvantage. For my second source, I have a newspaper article from London Evening Standard news to support my point. In this source, Angie Bray states that the rate of traffic rose to 2.6 and 2.7 minutes per kilometre. This is a disadvantage as if there is a high traffic rate then there will be more pollution caused than cars at normal speed. The number of cars that was entering the congestion zone has rapidly increased from previous years. The newspaper clearly states that "surely now is the time to start thinking about an alternative way to tackle congestion". Evidently, the congestion charge did not really work out as the number of cars has risen.

The local newspaper gave me evidence that congestion charge was a failure as it states that earlier this month their research has told them that traffic in the morning rush hour was running more slowly than before the scheme began. Angie Bray speaks that the charge has lost its main justification. Which is truly concerning as there is no change in climate.

Congestion charge has a knock on effect on the environment and economically. Not many people will want to pass through the zone unless it's necessary, so they would find other alternative ways to pass the area causing more congestion in other roads. This affects the people around that area as they live in an atmosphere filled with bio-products. Thus, many would use buses to travel instead of their own cars. This again results in a disadvantage of congestion zones as there is more buses equals' huge amount of pollution made by one bus against 10 cars.

Congestion charges can affect people and also businesses. This is because businesses have lost profits after the congestion zones were placed. As businesses need stock delivery which might need to cross the charging area which trails to extra costs, leading to lower profits. The workers might have to cross the congestion zone to go to work every day, resulting in quitting that job. This again affects the businesses to lose their workers. The evidence from source 1 supports my point as it states that 68% of retail businesses said the scheme would have been better without the charge.

Source reliability can make all the difference, which is why I have picked three very reliable sources. My Source one is a report by BBCNEWS. I feel this makes it very reliable. This is because the BBC is a well-known and trusted organisation, backed by the government. The Source also includes exclusive interviews for the BBC by the mayor of the time, Ken Livingstone. This report was published on the 17th February 2004. Though this source is a lot years old, I think it is still reliable, because the evidence is still valid. The Source is very relevant to the question, as it provides facts supported and given by the government, but also includes opinions of Londoners. The Source also has validity, as it addresses all the factors that it claims to. My source 2 is as reliable as source one as it is a report from the local newspaper for London readers. It is well known in London so it is trusted a lot. This report contains exclusive interviews with Angie Bray. However it was published in 22th November 2007 as this means it are a couple of years old, so it is not reliable as this data is not up to date

and might not be the case now. My source three holds a great importance of the reliability as it is reliable. This is because facts and figures from the article is as relevant and reliable. As it comes from a trust worthy newspaper article. Because the stats are from the government, they are going to be very reliable indeed, as they will contain no gossip, rumours or assumptions. Out of all my Sources; I feel that my Source two is most reliable. This is due to age, validity, fact, bias, author and the exclusive interviews. This Source shows both positive and negative points about the congestion charge.

The congestion charge also has an impact on many other things, which I can place under Social, Economic and Environmental.

The social effects are that the people that will be affected by this are local. It will mainly affect local, seeing as those in the area will either have to pay the charge, or they will be facing probable delays on alternate routes, due to the number of people trying to avoid the area. They will also benefit from the cleaner, safer air if they live around the congestion zones. If a person is caught up in heavy traffic their journey times will be unreliable, impacting on all sorts of things such as family, work, health appointments etc. The economic effects are that for those that have no choice but to pass through the zone it is just adding to their payments. Not only do they have bills and road tax, but now they have to pay £8.00 every time they need to get somewhere essential, such as my research shows some businesses are being affected by things such as for instance stock delivery, which now costs the business more because of the charge.

Finally the environmental effects are, obviously pollution plays a big part in the charge. My data shows that the pollution levels inside the zones are decreasing massively. With toxic nitrogen levels dropping quicker but still maintaining a normal level, it seems to be like the charge is working. As for the environment, if a vehicle is moving slowly or stationary, it produces more carbon emissions than if it moves at a normal speed. Thus, more global warming and other climate change which affect animals and humans. The other gases are released like sulphur dioxide, this will cause acid rain and damage the marble and other materials which costs a lot to repair. One of the negative effects of the congestion charge is its knock-on effect on the wider community; with people looking for new routes, surrounding areas could become clogged with congestion, and we would have the same problem all over again.

To conclude, after considering all the evidence for both sides, I think that overall congestion charges are a good idea. That's not to say that it doesn't have its negative points though, because it does. The information that most helped me reach my decision was the data I found, and my source 1, BBCNEWS report. This is because I feel the health of the people will be improving, and you can't really argue with that. Also, the fact that the money is being spent on the public - which I think is a brilliant idea. However, like I have said, the congestion charge does not come without its negative points, such as: people paying a 'double tax' when they have

no choice, delays and congestion being created on alternate routes due to drivers trying to avoid the congestion charge area, and also, the fact that some businesses are suffering is something that I find quite unacceptable. So yes, the system does need some tweaking, but overall think it is a good idea that initially solves a problem. I think my conclusion is valid because I have considered all of the evidence and made an educated decision.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY;

Source one- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/london/3494015.stm>

Source two- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7752046.stm>

Source three-

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/roadtraffic/speedscongestion/roadstatstsc/roadstats07tsc>