



BRIEFING PAPER

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Local road charges

By Louise Butcher

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Contributing Authors:

Louise Butcher, Transport Policy

Summary

This paper explains what local road charging schemes are, how they can be implanted and what the attitudes of successive governments have been to their introduction.

The Labour Government legislated more than a decade and a half ago to allow local authorities to establish local road charging schemes in their areas: these were aimed at combating congestion and tackling poor air quality. However, use of these powers has been limited to a small scheme in Durham and, more recently, limited emissions-targeted schemes in places like Brighton and Nottingham.

The only congestion scheme in the UK is the one in London; plans to introduce such a scheme in Cambridge, Edinburgh and Manchester collapsed in the mid-2000s, in two cases following substantial defeats in local referenda.

However, poor air quality in many urban areas has led to a resurgence of interest in local road charges, specifically by introducing 'low emission' or 'clean air' zones in cities and conurbations across the UK. The UK Government has published an Air Quality Plan and a Clean Air Zone Framework to enable localities to press ahead with the introduction of CAZs where necessary.

London has had a low emission zone since 2008, which has been gradually strengthened, and there are plans to make this an 'ultra' low emission zone by 2019. *This paper does not deal with the London schemes.* more information can be found in HC Library briefing paper [SN2044](#).

Further information on road charging can be found on the [Roads Briefings Page](#) of the Parliament website.

1. What is a road charge and why might it be used?

At the most basic economic level, since roads are not privately owned and access to them is not determined by the market, economists argue that there is a need, if roads are to be used efficiently, for the authorities to set a user charge which, for any given capacity, ensures that socially optimal flows are attained – the ‘road price’.¹ Kenneth Button argues that there is often confusion about what this means:

Road pricing is concerned solely with making the best use of roads from the narrow perspective of users and is not concerned with third-party effects such as pollution which should be treated separately. Congestion may or not be related to environmental damage; 20,000 solar-powered cars per hours on a road may congest it but cause minimal environmental damage whereas 500 old, badly maintained diesel vehicles may cause no congestion but a lot of pollution.²

The idea is that motorists should pay for the additional congestion they create when entering a congested road.

There has generally been a reluctance to adopt economic pricing principles as they are generally seen as being politically unacceptable. This may in part be due to a feeling that “individuals have some form of inalienable right to mobility” and that pricing would restrict this.³ Related to this, as Button argues, is “the position taken in some countries that once a road has been built using public money, normally financed by taxation, then the public have the right to freely use the facility”.⁴

In the UK road charges have been used for two reasons: to tackle congestion and to improve air quality (by charging vehicles based on their emissions levels). In the latter instance, Button argues that negative environmental externalities should be considered alongside the benefits enjoyed by those who can travel more freely or move goods more cheaply: “in almost all cases, environmental improvements would reduce the net benefits employed by transport users. Economists tend, therefore, to think in terms of optimising the level of pollution rather than ‘purifying’ the environment entirely”.⁵

¹ Button, *Transport Economics* (3rd ed.), 2010, pp287-8

² *ibid.*, p288

³ *ibid.*, p293

⁴ *ibid.*, p294

⁵ *ibid.*, p166

2. Who can introduce a charge?

Local road charges can be introduced in England, Wales and Scotland.

There is no legislative authority for such charges in Northern Ireland.

- In **England** charges can be introduced by county councils; metropolitan district councils; Transport for London; a London borough council or the Common Council of the City of London; and Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs)/Integrated Transport Authorities (ITAs). Devolution arrangements in England mean that in practice the relevant authority in some areas would be an entity such as Transport for Greater Manchester or Network West Midlands.
- In **Wales** charges can be introduced by county councils and metropolitan district councils.
- In **Scotland** charges can be introduced by councils constituted under section 2 of the [*Local Government etc. \(Scotland\) Act 1994*](#).

3. How is a charge introduced?

There is separate legislation governing England, London, Wales and Scotland. The process in each of these areas is explained below.

3.1 England (outside London)

Part III and Schedule 12 of the [Transport Act 2000](#), as amended by the [Local Transport Act 2008](#), provide for the introduction of road charging outside London. Charging schemes may only be made “if it appears desirable for the purpose of directly or indirectly facilitating the achievement of policies in the charging authority’s local transport plan”. Local Transport Plans (LTPs) contain the strategic transport priorities of the relevant charging authority.

The procedure involved in making a charging scheme, as set out in the Act, is quite straightforward: the charging authority makes an Order for a scheme. If the authority or authorities (in the case of a joint scheme) are entirely within England, outside London, then they may proceed to introduce the Order as they see fit. There is no requirement to hold local referenda or to obtain approval from the Secretary of State or anyone else.

The charging authority may seek views from local people or representatives but this is at the authority’s discretion. In practice, as road charges are so controversial, it would likely be a brave authority that did not seek to consult their voters in the fullest possible manner.

An Order establishing a charging scheme must:

- Designate the relevant roads;
- The circumstances under which a charge will be imposed;
- The classes of motor vehicle(s) in respect of charges will be imposed; and
- State the duration of the charge.

A charging scheme may make provision in relation to the manner in which charges are to be made, collected, recorded and paid.

The charges that may be imposed by a charging scheme include different charges (which may be no charge) for different cases, including different days; times of day; roads; distances travelled; classes of motor vehicles; and methods or means of recording, administering, collecting or paying the charge.

The Secretary of State may make regulations setting out exemptions from any charge – in practice they never have because no scheme has got close enough to implementation.

The financial provisions for charging schemes are contained in Schedule 12 of the 2000 Act. Paragraphs 7 to 11C set out how revenue from the scheme should be apportioned, what it can be spent on and how any deficit should be made up. In the case of both non-metropolitan local traffic authorities and ITAs, any proceeds must be spent for the purpose of directly or indirectly facilitating the achievement of the local transport

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policies of the authority. There is also provision for other authorities affected by the scheme to obtain funds for the same reason to be applied in a way which will benefit the whole or any part of the area of the authority or authorities whose share it is. This is at the discretion of the charging authority. Any deficit must be made from the charging authority's general fund.⁶

3.2 London

The charging provisions in the [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#), as amended, are broadly similar to those in the 2000 Act. They differ in that the decision to introduce road charges in London is entirely a matter for the elected Mayor of London.

Section 295 of the 1999 Act provides for Transport for London (TfL) to introduce road user charging across all or part of London.⁷ Details of any possible scheme are set out in Schedule 23. The main points are:

- TfL is the charging authority; its role is to implement the mayor's Transport Strategy and manage the transport services for which the mayor is responsible;
- The mayor has considerable discretion over the design of the charging scheme and, acting on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA), approves the final Order setting out the scheme;
- The government has powers to intervene on issues such as the maximum level of penalty charges and exemptions or discounts in line with national policy. It also has to ensure value for money in how the proceeds from a charging scheme are spent;
- For at least ten years all net proceeds from a charging scheme must be spent on improving transport in accordance with the mayor's Transport Strategy; and
- Individual Boroughs or the Common Council of the City of London may also introduce charging but will first need the agreement of the mayor.⁸

The Secretary of State has no right to veto any plan for the introduction of charging in London, though (s)he could, in theory, refuse to make the necessary regulations to approve the proceeds of any scheme (Schedule 23, paragraph 17). Furthermore, any charging scheme that is introduced under the 1999 Act must conform to the *Mayor's Transport Strategy* and the Secretary of State may direct the mayor to change his Strategy if he considers it inconsistent with national policy and likely to have an adverse effect outside London (section 143). Two sets of

⁶ full details of the powers to make a scheme can be found in the [Explanatory Notes to the Act](#), Part III and Schedule 12

⁷ information as to the transport roles of the Mayor of London and Transport for London generally can be found in HC Library briefing paper [RP 08/36](#)

⁸ full details of the powers to make a scheme can be found in the [Explanatory Notes to the Act](#), section 295 and Schedule 23

regulations concerning the powers and procedures for the enforcement of road charging schemes in London provide that:

- The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for making regulations concerning the imposition and payment of penalty charges; liability for charges and penalty charges; the examination of motor vehicles; and for the immobilisation and removal of vehicles; and
- The Lord Chancellor is responsible for making regulations concerning the appointment of adjudicators, evidence, representations against penalty charges and the procedures for adjudication hearings, and the recovery of penalty charges.⁹

Sanctions against those who fail to comply with road charges are civil rather than criminal. The Government has to ensure value for money in how the proceeds from a charging scheme are spent.

Sections 116-121 of the 2008 Act made some changes to how road charges are implemented in London. Amongst other things, it:

- gave a power to the the Secretary of State to prescribe the equipment used for charging schemes in London;
- gave him a power to require information relating to a charging scheme from TfL, the GLA or any London local authority; and
- removed the requirement for the Secretary of State to approve how revenues from a London charging scheme are spent by replacing it with a statutory requirement to spend proceeds ‘for relevant transport purposes’.

3.3 Wales

The process is the same as in England except that Welsh Ministers retain the right to confirm a scheme Order, with or without modification, and can also initiate an inquiry into a scheme Order that comes before them.

The National Assembly for Wales may make regulations setting out exemptions from any charge – in practice they never have because no scheme has got close enough to implementation.

Any deficit in the case of a Welsh county council or county borough council, must be made good from its general account.

3.4 Scotland

Part 3 and Schedule 1 of the [Transport \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#), as amended, provide for the introduction of road charging in Scotland. The process is very similar to that in England and Wales:

- A relevant authority may make a charging order provided it directly or indirectly facilitates the achievement of their local transport strategy;

⁹ the *Road User Charging (Charges and Penalty Charges) (London) Regulations 2001* ([SI 2001/2285](#)) and the *Road User Charging (Enforcement and Adjudication) (London) Regulations 2001* ([SI 2001/2313](#)) respectively; the [Transport for London Act 2008](#) increases TfL's powers to fine and remove vehicles that fail to pay road charges within London

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- Prior to making an order the relevant authority must consult the emergency services, freight and motoring organisations set out in secondary legislation;¹⁰
- It must also publicise the order in the manner set out in the same legislation; and
- An order must be confirmed by Scottish Ministers.

An Order establishing a charging scheme must:

- Designate the relevant roads;
- The circumstances under which a charge will be imposed;
- The classes of motor vehicle(s) in respect of charges will be imposed; and
- State the duration of the charge

A charging scheme may make provision in relation to the manner in which charges are to be made, collected, recorded and paid.

The charges that may be imposed by a charging scheme include different charges (which may be no charge) for different cases, including different days; times of day; roads; distances travelled; classes of motor vehicles; and methods or means of recording, administering, collecting or paying the charge.

Scottish Ministers made regulations exempting from any road charging scheme in Scotland emergency service vehicles, vehicles to which there is affixed a Blue Badge disabled parking permit and buses.¹¹

The financial provisions for charging schemes are contained in Schedule 1 of the 2001 Act. It states any proceeds from a charging scheme must be spent for the purpose of directly or indirectly facilitating the achievement of policies in the authority's local transport strategy.

¹⁰ *Road User Charging (Consultation and Publication) (Scotland) Regulations 2003* ([SSI 2003/292](#))

¹¹ *Road User Charging (Exemption from Charges) (Scotland) Regulations 2004* ([SSI 2004/519](#))

4. Government policy, 1997-2016

4.1 Genesis, 1997-2001

In its July 1998 transport White Paper the Labour Government stated that it would consider introducing legislation to allow local authorities to charge road users “so as to reduce congestion, as part of a package of measures in a local transport plan that would include improving public transport”.¹² Detailed proposals were set out in a subsequent consultation paper.¹³ The then Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who also had responsibility for transport policy, stated that the proposals were not ‘anti-car’, and that a ‘fair’ charging system might have a number of benefits such as cutting congestion, raising money and improving air quality.¹⁴

The Government’s response to the consultation was published in February 2000, it confirmed its intention to proceed with proposals to give local authorities the power to implement local road charging as “part of an integrated package of measures”.¹⁵

As indicated above, the *Transport Act 2000* contained the primary legislation for local road charging schemes in England, outside London, and Wales. Mr Prescott indicated at the time that before he would approve any congestion charging scheme certain conditions must be met. These included improved public transport, local consultation, a plan to reinvest proceeds in local transport and adequate technology.¹⁶ As a result, widespread charging schemes were not expected to be introduced for at least four or five years after the passing of the legislation.

4.2 Reform, 2005-09

Labour proposed some changes to the arrangements for local road charging schemes in what became Part VI of the [Local Transport Act 2008](#).¹⁷ The most controversial aspect was the proposal to remove the requirement for local charging authorities in England to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State for their schemes, combined with the lack of a duty to consult. There were fears that this might result in local authorities imposing schemes on people with little or no consultation and no check from the centre.

In 2013 the Coalition Government published a post-legislative assessment of the 2008 Act. This stated that since the Act came into force in 2009 no charging schemes had been made. However, there

¹² DETR, [A new deal for transport: better for everyone](#), Cm 3950, July 1998, para 4.94

¹³ DETR, [Breaking the logjam: consultation paper](#), December 1998

¹⁴ DETR press notice, “Breaking the logjam: Government action to cut congestion”, 8 December 1998

¹⁵ DETR, [Breaking the logjam: the Government’s response to the consultation](#), 22 February 2000, para 1.10

¹⁶ “Prescott changes gear to calm roads rage”, *The Guardian*, 30 November 1999

¹⁷ for further information, see section V of HC Library briefing paper [RP 08/18](#)

were “no reasons to suppose the provisions ... will not work as intended”:

This has not been tested, though, as no local authority or ITA [Integrated Transport Authority] has brought forward a new road user charging scheme. This reflects local policy choices rather than any issue with the Act. Local authorities are free to continue to develop their local transport policies and plans, including decisions on the role of any charging schemes...¹⁸

The main way in which Labour supported the development of plans for local charging schemes during its time in office was via the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF). This was set up in 2005 mainly with the intention of incentivising local authorities to develop charging schemes. The Government stated that it would make almost £9.5 billion available for such schemes between 2008/09 and 2014/15. In the event, only ‘pump-priming’ money was ever spent because no scheme got properly off the ground.

Full details of the TIF scheme can be found in HC Library briefing paper SN3711, [Transport Innovation Fund \(TIF\)](#), 10 August, 2010.

4.3 Clean Air Zones, 2010-

Background

The Conservative Party has historically been opposed to road charging schemes.^{19, 20} On coming into Government in 2010 the then Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond, told the Transport Committee that “one or two local authorities around the country, I think perhaps anticipating that public capital funding for favoured schemes may be in short supply, are ... looking at whether there are practical schemes that could be promoted, funded by user charging”.²¹

However, a combination of the drive towards devolution in England, and increasing concerns about urban air quality have shifted the Government’s position. Devolution has meant a more relaxed attitude in Whitehall towards local areas deciding what mix of transport solutions is right for them and implementing them accordingly, without requiring approval from the DfT. Elected mayors, for those areas which will get them, also present an opportunity to take forward potentially unpopular proposals – for example Ken Livingstone in London implemented the congestion charge without the need for the local referendum that scuppered Manchester’s plans in 2008 (see below). The elected mayors of London have had the advantage of using their election as a democratic mandate to implement their transport manifestos.

Local areas can already introduce CAZs if they wish. There are CAZ-style initiatives in other English cities focused on reducing bus emissions (e.g. [Brighton](#), [Oxford](#), [Norwich](#)).

¹⁸ DfT, [Post Legislative Assessment of the Local Transport Act 2008](#), Cm 8752, 18 November 2013, p23

¹⁹ with the exception of a levy on HGVs; for more information see: HC Library briefing paper [SN588](#)

²⁰ see, e.g. DoT, *Transport: the Way Forward*, Cm 3234, April 1996; Conservative Party, *A fair deal for the motorist*, July 1999, p6; para 14.19; [SC \(A\) Deb, 9 March 1999, c1015](#) [Richard Ottaway]; and [PBC Deb 8 May 2008, cc367-70](#) [Stephen Hammond]

²¹ Transport Committee, [Uncorrected evidence: The Secretary of State's priorities for transport](#), HC 359, 26 July 2010, Q17

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- [The LEZ](#) covers most of Greater London. To drive within it without paying a daily charge, a vehicle must meet certain emissions standards (i.e. Euro 3 for larger vans and minibuses and Euro 4 for lorries, buses and coaches) that limit the amount of particulate matter coming from its exhaust. If a vehicle does not meet the LEZ emissions standards, it can still be driven within the LEZ by paying a daily charge.
- The LEZ applies to diesel lorries, buses, coaches, motor caravans, motorised horseboxes, larger vans, minibuses and other specialist vehicles.
- The LEZ uses cameras to read vehicle number plates and check them against a database to see if they meet the required emissions rules.
- The [charges](#) for those vehicles not meeting the relevant standard are either £100 or £200 depending on your vehicle. The penalties for non-payment are either £250 or £500 if paid within 14 days or £500 or £1,000 if paid after that.
- In February 2013 Mayor Johnson announced his intention to create an [Ultra-Low Emission Zone \(ULEZ\)](#) in central London from 2020. The new Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced that the ULEZ would be brought forward to April 2019. Vehicles which do not meet the relevant emissions standards will not be able to drive into central London after that date without paying a charge.
- In October 2017 Mayor Khan introduced the [T-Charge](#) (formally the Emissions Surcharge), which operates in the same area as the London Congestion Charge Zone. It is charge of £10 per day for any vehicle entering the zone which does not meet the relevant emissions criteria.

Measures under the Air Quality Plan (AQP)

By far the biggest potential factor which is likely to see more urban charging zones is air quality.

The need to improve air quality is recognised in EU legislation. As part of this Member States were required to prepare adequate plans to reduce air pollution, including particulates and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). These required the level of NO₂ to be brought down to acceptable levels by 2015 at the latest. Over the past three years there have been a number of legal challenges to the Government's plans and various rounds of consultation and draft Air Quality Plans (AQPs).²²

All of this culminated in July 2017 with the publication of the Government's AQP for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in the UK. This is supplemented by the May 2017 CAZ Framework for England.

The AQP states that:

In developing their local plans to tackle the causes of air pollution, local authorities should consider a wide range of innovative options, exploring new technologies and seeking to support the government's industrial strategy so that they can deliver reduced emissions in a way that best meets the needs of their communities and local businesses. Their plans could include a wide range of measures such as: changing road layouts at congestion and air pollution pinch points; encouraging public and private uptake of

Information on the progress of CAZs in Wales and Scotland can be found on the [Welsh Government](#) and [Scottish Government](#) websites.

²² This is covered extensively in the HC Library briefing paper on air quality, [CBP 8179](#)

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ULEVs; using innovative retrofitting technologies and new fuels; and, encouraging the use of public transport. **If these measures are not sufficient, local plans could include access restrictions on vehicles, such as charging zones or measures to prevent certain vehicles using particular roads at particular times.** However, local authorities should bear in mind such access restrictions would only be necessary for a limited period and should be lifted once legal compliance is achieved and there is no risk of legal limits being breached again.²³

The CAZ Framework sets out the principles for the operation of CAZs in England and provides the expected approach to be taken by local authorities when implementing and operating a CAZ. It also states that any CAZ designed in line with the principles in the Framework “will give an additional advantage to an authority bidding for competitive central government funding where air quality is one of the stated assessment criteria for that fund, unless stated otherwise”.²⁴

The Framework argues for consistency, in order to “provide businesses and individuals with the same clear signals on what needs to change to improve air quality, while offering them a range of choices on the action they could take in response”. It goes on:

A consistent approach enables everyone to make straightforward economic and operational decisions, for example about the vehicles they buy and how they use them, knowing they will be acceptable in all zones.²⁵

Broadly, the Framework states that CAZ proposals are not required to include a charging zone, but that:

If local authorities do propose one, they should set out the detail of where it will apply, and the vehicle types to which it would apply. They should also engage and consult with local people, fully assess the impact of such an approach and how it could be mitigated. In all cases, charging zones would apply only to older, higher-polluting models of the vehicle types, so as to have a targeted impact on pollution.²⁶

It also suggests groups of vehicles which could or should be exempted from any charging CAZ, such as historic vehicles, emergency services vehicles, Blue Badge holders and community transport.²⁷ On local discounts, it states that:

Local authorities should consider allowing residents who live within a charging Clean Air Zone additional time to comply with vehicle restriction requirements by 27 providing for a discount on charges where these are included. Discounts may be set at a local authority’s discretion at up to 100% of a charge.²⁸

²³ Defra/DfT, [UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations: An overview](#), 26 July 2017, para 18 [emphasis added]; Annex F to the [Technical Report](#) which was published alongside the AQP sets out how CAZs should be modelled

²⁴ Defra/DfT, [Clean Air Zone Framework: Principles for setting up Clean Air Zones in England](#), 5 May 2017, paras 13-14

²⁵ *Ibid.*, paras 15-16

²⁶ *Ibid.*, para 162, Annex A

²⁷ *Ibid.*, paras 146-153

²⁸ *Ibid.*, para 155

Annex B of the Framework will set out the charge bands that should be used. These have yet to be published.

In November 2017 Defra issued a consultation seeking views on additional measures to support individuals and businesses affected by local NO₂ plans. On CAZ it sought views on how local authorities could use exemptions to support individuals and businesses affected by a charging CAZ.²⁹ The consultation closed on 5 January 2018; the Government has yet to issue a response.

²⁹ Defra & DfT, [*Consultation on additional measures to support individuals and businesses affected by local NO₂ plans*](#), 22 November 2017, section 6

5. Aborted schemes

5.1 Cambridgeshire

In October 2007 Cambridgeshire County Council made a £500 million Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bid to provide for a doubling in the number of buses in Cambridgeshire, more frequent services and, by introducing more bus priority measures, more reliable services. The authority also planned to create new roads and cycle paths as well as better facilities for pedestrians.

To supplement the improvements in public transport, a congestion charge could be introduced in Cambridge. It would operate for two hours in the morning rush hour, Monday to Friday, possibly between 0730 and 0930. The cost would be between £3 and £5 per day.³⁰ The council stated that a charge would only be considered “as a last resort and after attractive alternatives have been put in place for reducing congestion”.³¹ The then Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council, Councillor Shona Johnstone (Conservative), said when the bid was announced in July 2008 that “some sort of congestion charging could be effective in tackling congestion when it is at its worst”.³²

The plans were dropped after the Labour Government wound up TIF in 2010.

There have since been calls for road charges to be introduced to pay for a park and ride scheme in Cambridge. The council has insisted that congestion charging is not currently a part of its plans.³³

5.2 Edinburgh

In 1999 the City of Edinburgh Council began the development of a ‘New Transport Initiative’ (NTI) linked with a new local transport strategy. This resulted in the Local Transport Strategy 2004-07, which proposed a congestion charge alongside improved public transport, including a new tram.³⁴

The Council undertook detailed development of a charging scheme, leading to an application for ‘approval in principle’, the first stage of the consultation and approval process set out in Scottish Government Guidance. Alongside this the council opted for a local referendum.

Approval in principle of the scheme was granted by Ministers in December 2002. The statutory procedures to promote a charging order were started in September 2003, with formal consultation in late 2003. This led to the definition of the final proposals examined at a public

Full details of Cambridgeshire’s proposed road charging scheme can be found on the Council’s [archived website](#).

Full details of Edinburgh’s proposed road charging scheme can be found on the Council’s [archived website](#).

³⁰ Cambridgeshire CC, [Congestion charging](#) [archived 15 May 2009]

³¹ Cambridgeshire CC, [Will a congestion charge be introduced in Cambridge?](#) [archived 15 May 2009]

³² Cambridgeshire CC press notice, “£500 million package to tackle congestion in Cambridge area”, 16 July 2007

³³ “[Cambridge congestion charge: debate hots up over 'radical' idea to fund free Park & Ride buses](#)”, *Cambridge News*, 1 July 2015

³⁴ Edinburgh Council, [Local Transport Strategy 2004-2007](#) [archived 12 October 2004]

inquiry in Spring 2004.³⁵ The nub of the proposal was a £2 daily charge to enter the congestion zone.

In the event, the scheme was rejected by 74% of Edinburgh residents on a turnout of almost 62%.³⁶ While the council proceeded with its public transport plan, congestion charging was abandoned.

5.3 Greater Manchester

In July 2007 the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority (GMITA)³⁷ submitted an application for £3 billion of TIF funding for an expanded Metrolink network; longer trains on many local rail services; more frequent, high quality bus services; new park and ride and yellow school bus services; and a congestion charging scheme.³⁸

In June 2008 the then Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly, announced that Greater Manchester's TIF bid had been granted 'programme entry' (meaning that the Government supported it and would work with the applicant authorities to deliver the proposals) and would receive almost £2.8 billion to support improvements in public transport and a congestion charging scheme for central Manchester. The £2.8 billion package consisted of £1.5 billion from the Department for Transport, £1.2 billion from local contributions, and a £100 million local third party contribution. This was over and above existing funding for Greater Manchester.³⁹ Public transport improvements would be delivered before a congestion charge was introduced in 2013.⁴⁰

On 25 July 2008 the Manchester councils announced that there would be a public referendum on whether the proposed charging scheme should go ahead.⁴¹ It was agreed that the ten councils in the Greater Manchester area would count their votes separately and that for the proposal to go ahead it would require a majority 'yes' vote in at least seven of the ten constituent councils.⁴² Postal ballots were sent out to all residents of Greater Manchester at the beginning of December, with a closing date of 11 December.

An Ipsos-MORI poll in September found that, when asked whether they personally supported the charging proposal, 41 per cent of respondents replied yes, while 39 per cent replied no. Only six of the constituent district councils showed net support.⁴³ On 12 December 2008 the results of the referendum were announced: 79.2 per cent of the just over one million people who voted (constituting a 53 per cent turnout)

Full details of Greater Manchester's proposed road charging scheme are available to download from the TfGM [website](#) [at the bottom, under 'TIF bid'].

³⁵ Saunders/Lewin, [Congestion Charging in Edinburgh – a gestation with complications](#), 2005

³⁶ "[Edinburgh rejects congestion plan](#)", *BBC News*, 22 February 2005

³⁷ now Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)

³⁸ AGMA press notice, "The future of transport in Greater Manchester", 27 July 2007

³⁹ DfT press notice, "[Kelly signals £2.8 billion boost for transport across Greater Manchester](#)", 9 June 2008; full details in the [letter from the Secretary of State to the Manchester Councils](#)

⁴⁰ [HC Deb 9 June 2008, cc22-23](#)

⁴¹ "Manchester vote on driving charge", *Financial Times*, 26 July 2008

⁴² "Gtr Manchester authorities to count C-charge voting results separately", *Local Transport Today*, 21 August 2008 (LTT 500)

⁴³ "Date set for Manchester referendum as poll shows public split on TIF offer", *Local Transport Today*, 18 September 2008 (LTT 502)

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rejected the charge. There was a significant 'no' majority in each of the ten council areas.⁴⁴

The Greater Manchester councils consequently abandoned their TIF bid and in early 2009 published details of a redesigned 'accelerated transport package' and a 'Greater Manchester Transport Fund', none of which contained charging proposals.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ "[C-charge: a resounding 'NO'](#)", *Manchester Evening News*, 12 December 2008; details of the results in individual councils can be found by following the links at the bottom of the article

⁴⁵ AGMA press notice, "Transport for Greater Manchester", 13 May 2009

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