

PE1607/C

Petitioner letter of 9 November 2016

Congestion Charging Comment on Submissions

It's apparent that the Mayor of London's office has not responded to Parliament's invitation to comment as to whether a referendum on congestion charging would have prevented it ever being implemented.

The only response is from COSLA who have failed to study the supplementary information on the Petition that I submitted on the 4th September at http://www.parliament.scot/S5_PublicPetitionsCommittee/Submissions%202016/PE160720160904_PetitionerSubmissionof4September2016.pdf which states "*The petitioner believes Scotland's cities will never see the congestion charge because, unlike England, current legislation dictates it can only be implemented after consultation.*"

The petitioner asks Parliament to amend legislation so that political parties can choose to include it in their manifestos and if elected would have the power to introduce "Road user charging".

Clearly the details of each and every scheme would need to be discussed and voted upon by local Council Transport Committees, but it should be left up to each local authority to determine how much (if any) consultation is required."

In their response COSLA states "a blanket introduction of congestion charging is likely to be highly controversial and likely to lead to strong reaction from the public".

They this fail to address the concerns I highlight about current legislation. The MSPS at the Petitions Committee said they would ask COSLA to reflect upon why the legislation was not being used. That question has not been considered, or answered.

Why should current legislation be amended?

It may be of interest to the Committee to know that the Petitioner is currently carrying out a survey on protected cycle tracks in Edinburgh which also asks citizens "To reduce congestion in the city centre, what would you support?"

Of the 600 responses to date at the survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/whybike one of the options he gave to citizens was the congestion charge (on the basis that residents living within the zone would not pay the charge, nor would disabled drivers or electric cars, and those entering the charge zone would never be charged more than a day saver on the bus) .

Whilst the most popular option so far given was cheaper bus travel, with 219 people ranking it amongst the top 3 solutions, the second greatest favourite was congestion charging with 149 putting it in the top 3.

Committee might consider that whilst many citizens think congestion charging is a solution to congestion in Scotland's capital, existing legislation is so demanding of consultation prior to its introduction that it shows scant likelihood of ever being introduced.

As was mentioned at Committee by one MSP- what is the point of having legislation if its strictures are so onerous that it will never be used?