



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01607

Name of petitioner

Peter Gregson on behalf of Kids not Suits

Petition title

Congestion charging in major Scottish cities

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to legislate for congestion charging in every major Scottish city (population over 300,000) with the proceeds from such charges to be used to subsidise more sustainable modes of transport, such as re-opening suburban railways that were closed, or reduced to freight, due to Beeching cuts; fixing cycling black spots; better park and ride facilities; and improved road surfaces (e.g. filled potholes).

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

I have raised it as a motion at the Edinburgh CLP to call on Edinburgh Council to introduce the charge- it was remitted until after the election.

I called for it to be implemented in every Scottish city by writing to Kezia Dugdale MSP, who has not replied to my e-mail as yet. I also copied in Sarah Boyack MSP and Neil Findlay MSP.

I have also discussed it with Ian Murray MP.

Petition background information

Congestion charging would reduce car usage in town centres and improve air quality. It would not apply to electric vehicles and would be weighted against gas –guzzlers. However it would not be levied on citizens living within congestion charge zones, whatever they drove.

Any new scheme must be simple and user-friendly. Decisions on how congestion charge income is spent would be subject to consultation by local authorities, who would, of course gain and control the proceeds of the congestion charges.

The charge to any driver entering the congestion charging zone should be approximately equal to the costs of a day saver ticket on the bus, thereby incentivising them to leave their car at home- and keep the price to a level that most could afford, should car use be imperative due to work or family needs.

HISTORY

All will refer to the fact that only one Scottish city has dared consider congestion charging- that was Edinburgh Council, ten years ago.

The Edinburgh referendum on congestion charging failed for three good reasons:

- Politicians should never hold a referendum to ask people if they want to be taxed; they will always lose; if it is a manifesto commitment or has been ordained by a democratically- elected government, that should suffice.
- Edinburgh's proposal for a doughnut arrangement with two congestion charging rings served only to confuse and enrage both citizens and neighbouring authorities.
- Those living within the charging zone should not be expected to pay. Otherwise these citizens will be paying to leave their homes in their cars- a profoundly unfair arrangement. They will have no choice not to use their car if they have dependants, are self-employed with equipment, have to drive outside of the city to work, etc. It is patently unfair to charge people just for leaving their homes.

WHY IT'S NEEDED

I believe that concern about climate change is so widespread, and that advances in technology have made electric cars an attractive purchase, that this time the congestion charge would attract public support.

Most cities are likely to experience an exponential growth in population over the next 20 years, with studies suggesting an increase of almost 30 per cent in Edinburgh alone. The current transport infrastructure will be unable to cope.

There is an example of a service in Edinburgh that could benefit from the congestion charge. The South Suburban Rail Line was closed in 1962 and is presently only used for freight. Its reinstatement to take passengers would provide endless possibilities and potential. Reinstating the South Sub could act as a catalyst for an integrated transport plan for Edinburgh that is truly fit for the 21st century. The station at Gorgie could serve Heart of Midlothian Football Club, Craiglockhart could serve Edinburgh Napier University, and Blackford and Newington could serve the University of Edinburgh. A new link to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary that stems from the current South Sub station at Cameron Toll would vastly improve the transport options for patients and national health service staff, and it would serve the ever-expanding Edinburgh Bio-Quarter. The congestion charge could provide the £18M-£30M funds needed to make the south sub rail line reinstatement, which has cross-party support, a reality.

I believe the revenue generated from the Congestion Charge would also serve to fix the potholes, etc, thus making travelling by car, bus, taxi and bicycle a more pleasant experience and making every city a city to be proud to live in. Thus car drivers paying the charge would be paying into a fund from which they will directly benefit.

This petition is one of a raft of Petitions to the Scottish Parliament launched in the run up to the Scottish Elections by Kids not Suits under the aegis "Vision for an emancipated healthy democratic Scotland".

Unique web address

<http://ww3.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/CongestionCharging>

Related information for petition

Wikipedia has good information on congestion charging in Edinburgh, London and other UK cities.

Also visit the petitioner's website at www.kidsnotsuits.co.uk for more information and updates

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

22 / 03 / 2016

Comments to stimulate online discussion

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What future world do we want to create for our children?