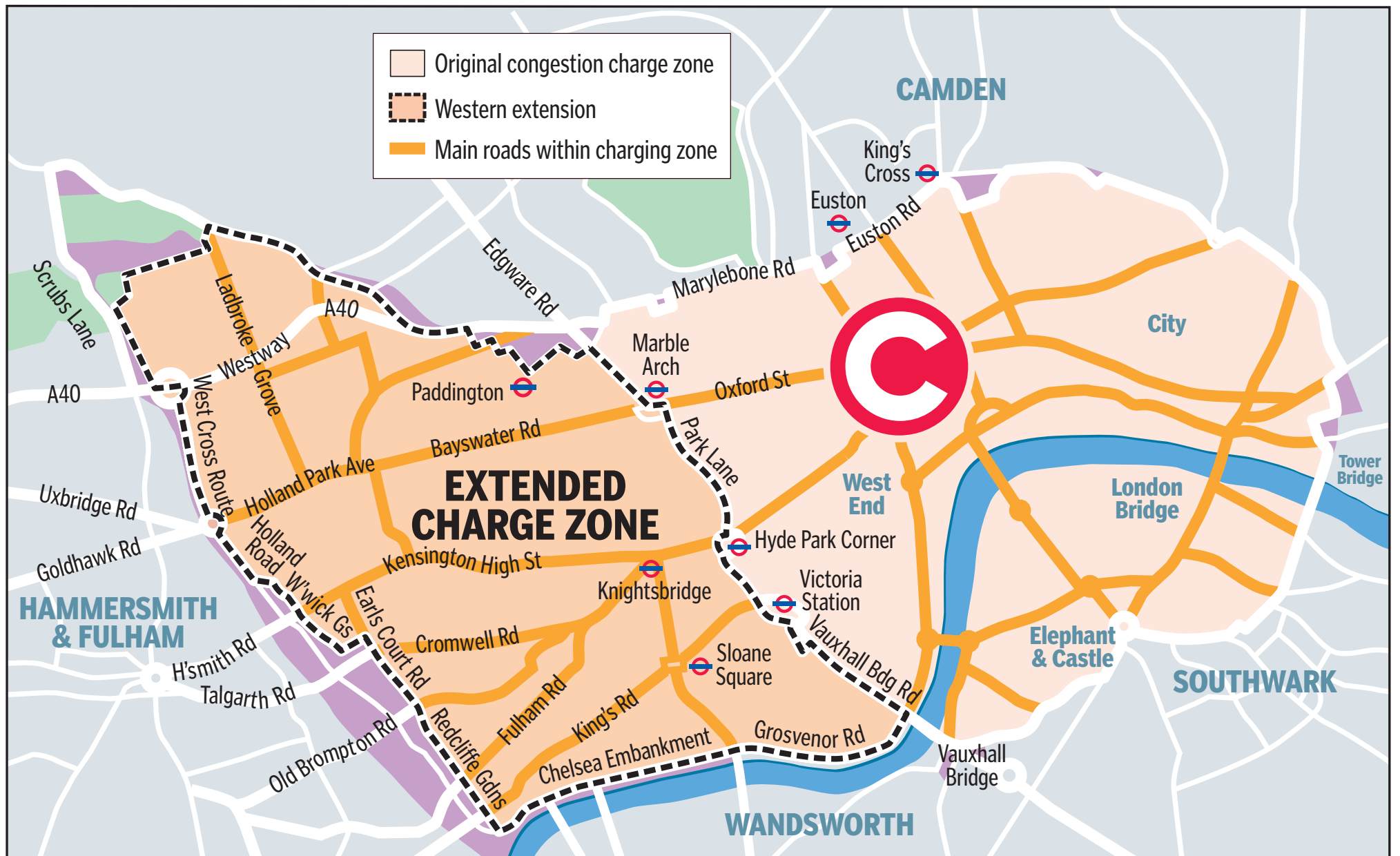


# western C-zone axed?



## Residents are being penalised

THE Western extension should be abolished for the significant damage it is doing to the lives of residents in west London and to its economy. Ken Livingstone's decision to expand westwards was an entirely political one taken against the advice of senior transport advisers. West London is overwhelmingly residential. Employment is 170,000 compared with 1.1 million in the central zone. In the residential streets — nearly 95 per cent of the street length in the extension — traffic flows freely. Residents are having to pay to drive on uncongested roads. Traffic on the main roads could be dealt with by

### ABOLISH IT



**GORDON TAYLOR**  
chairman, West London Residents Association

charging for the use of these roads only, and only when they are congested. The technology for this fairer system is well known. While the original central zone has failed, with congestion back to pre-charge levels, TfL claims the C-charge keeps out 70,000 vehicles per day. In the Western extension, 58,000 drivers have the 90 per cent

charge discount. Many drive into central London for just 80p. Either the Western extension or the discount has to go. Many outside the zone need to bring their vehicles into the extension every day to go about normal business. These are the worst-hit, having to pay a tax of upwards of £2,000 a year to do so. Evidence shows many shops have lost significant business due to the extension. Jobs have also been lost. The new referendum should cover Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Fulham, Acton and Kensal Rise and the question should be simple: Do you approve of the abolition of the Western extension? Yes or No.

### FIVE YEARS OF THE CONGESTION CHARGE

- 17 February 2003: Central London congestion charge launched.
- 9 February 2004: TfL says number of vehicles entering zone has dropped by 38 per cent (by 50,000 a day).
- 18 February 2004: Mayor Ken Livingstone launches consultation into a Western Extension Zone.
- 9 May 2005: Mayor unveils WEZ "sweeteners" including 90% resident discount and reduced shutdown time.
- 16 August 2005: Kensington and Chelsea warns that traffic in parts of west London will be strangled if WEZ proceeds. TfL says congestion will fall.
- 5 February 2006: Standard/RAC Foundation survey finds average speeds across central zone have fallen to 8mph from 12mph a year earlier.
- 17 February 2006: TfL report warns that

- firms will suffer "adverse impacts" if WEZ proceeds as shoppers go elsewhere.
- 13 June 2006: TfL report highlights roads worst-hit by congestion including many roads in the proposed WEZ.
- 19 February 2007: WEZ launched at cost of £123 million.
- 27 March 2007: Coalition of west London residents and traders protest in Chelsea.
- 9 July 2007: Standard/Rac Foundation survey shows that traffic speeds in old zone plunge. Speeds in WEZ fall by about 4mph compared to February.
- 14 August 2007: Ken Livingstone plans to raise charge for "gas guzzler" cars while allowing cleaner cars to enter for free.
- 14 January 2008: Mayoral hopeful Boris Johnson pledges to scrap WEZ if elected.
- 1 July 2008: Mr Johnson announces consultation into future of WEZ.

# Revolt grows on Brown's 10p tax and fuel duty

THE LABOUR revolt over Gordon Brown's 10p tax band blunder reignited today as 21 backbenchers signed a motion attacking the Government. The MPs argue that the Treasury is still failing to help the most vulnerable people hit by the abolition of the low-paid tax bracket last year. They say 1.1 million taxpayers remain up to £120 a year worse off despite Alistair Darling's £2 billion bail-out unveiled in his emergency "mini budget" this spring. The 21 MPs are back-

### JOE MURPHY Political Editor

ing an amendment to today's Finance Bill by Labour MP David Taylor, which would introduce a taper mechanism into the £600 increase in personal allowances for income tax offered by the Chancellor. Treasury minister Kitty Ussher has hinted that more cash would be on its way this autumn in the pre-Budget report. She said: "The action that we took

a few weeks back was the bringing forward of part of the pre-Budget package." The threatened rebellion came as Business Secretary John Hutton denied reports that he was leading a Cabinet revolt against planned rises in fuel duty. Several other ministers had reportedly urged Mr Darling to drop immediately a 2p-a-litre rise in tax in a bid to quell anger at the price of fuel. The Cabinet unease emerged as lorry drivers threatened to bring London to a standstill tomorrow. Protest group

Transaction 2007, backed by the Road Haulage Association, plans the biggest fuel protests so far. Lorries will be lined up along the A40 Westway in the morning and convoys of 10 to 30 lorries will drive into Parliament Square for 10.45am before leaving along Victoria embankment. Drivers are feeling desperate with unleaded petrol at about £1.20 a litre and diesel at £1.32 or more after huge rises in the global cost of oil. Hauliers' leader Andy Boyle said:

"The price of fuel is forcing many out of business. Tomorrow's protest will represent a last-ditch attempt at making their voice heard." The 2p fuel tax rise had been due to start in the spring but was shelved until October. Mr Darling has already signalled he will cancel it altogether if oil prices show no relief in September. One minister said: "We won't get any credit if we wait until the autumn." But an aide to Mr Darling told the ministers to "get on with their own jobs".