

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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promoting quality public transport.....

European Commission DG Move
 Unit D.3 – Land Transport
 DM28 – 4/71
 B-1049 Brussels

5th November 2012

Dear Sirs/ Madam,

European Commission Road User Charging Consultation

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent Community Interest Company representing all public transport users in North West England.

This matter has been brought to our attention. Whilst it mainly appears to concern the implementation of the “Eurovignette” provisions in Directive 1999/62/EC which apply to Large Goods Vehicles and on which we are not best placed to be consulted, there are a number of connected issues on which we do have an opinion. We list these below in no particular order in the hopes that you might find them useful.

- We have long seen both national and EU wide road user charging as an inevitable (*vis a vis* for example congestion charging) and justifiable (*vis a vis* transparency and fairness) development.
- Although payment of an annual vehicle excise duty could be described as a charge for road use, mileage or time based (as in London) payments can be seen as more equitable.
- The UK’s Transport Act 2008 makes explicit provision for the introduction of road charging and the hypothecation of the revenues to the provision of public transport.
- Our recent experience in the North West of the UK suggests that the motoring public are generally hostile to road user charging even when its benefits, such as decongestion (e.g. in London), are explained. *We base this observation on the result of the referendum in 2010 in Greater Manchester in which over 80% of voters rejected a proposal under which a charge would be made for driving in the peak hour into the core of the City (inside its outer ring road) but also the Government would provide £3Bn from their Transport Innovation Fund to create a step change in public transport.*
- The Confederation of British Industry, long agnostic on this issue, now supports “road tolling”

- Road Charging can not only address congestion, it can also have a benign effect on modal split under which Public Transport can be helped to more easily meet its potential and environmental targets.
- Technology has advanced considerably since the initial difficulties of marrying data from GPS, digital tachographs and mobile phones resulted in the less technical alternative of the Eurovignette for Large Goods Vehicles in Continental Europe. The implementation of an all vehicles EU wide Road User Charging scheme should not now present similar obstacles – today nearly every mobile iPhone or iPad has G3 (soon to be G4) and GPS connectivity,
- Before introducing road user charging it will be necessary to overcome the mistrust of many drivers and operators around the issues of privacy and the ways in which data can be legally used.

We would be pleased if asked to elaborate on any of the above points.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond and please accept my apologies for the slight delay in replying.

Yours faithfully,

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary

Response prepared by Paul Fawcett MPhil FCILT