

## News Release & photos

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### Convoy to protest against C-charge extension

Hundreds of west London residents joined local politicians in a 'go slow' protest against the Mayor of London's westward extension of the Congestion Charge zone.

More than 100 cars, a Routemaster bus and more than 300 residents took to the streets in a last-ditch attempt to stop the western extension in two days' time.

The route was designed to highlight the residents outside the new zone who will be hardest hit as they will not be eligible for a discount and will need to pay £8 every time they want to do the school run or access basic local services.

Anti Congestion Charge campaigner Councillor Aidan Burley said, "Mayor Livingstone needs to know that we're not going away. We are going on to the streets because we can't have a sensible dialogue with him or Transport for London. The mayor is creating an invisible toll barrier between residents and local services."

Protesters say pregnant mums could end up paying £8 to give birth in a scheme which is being dubbed 'London's baby tax'. Mums who pay on the day will have to stump up £8, but those in labour for extended periods will have to pay more – £10 if paid after midnight, and £50 after 24 hours. Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, west London's main maternity unit, is inside the extended zone whereas most of its catchment area – Hammersmith & Fulham – is not.

Councillor Burley, continues, "This scheme is cutting residents off from vital services, of which maternity units are just one example. Do we really expect women in labour to jump on a bus? And should they really be fined if they forget to pay the charge whilst in labour? The Mayor of London should call a halt to this costly, unnecessary and damaging tax on west Londoners."

Organised by the West London Residents Association and the two local councils, of Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea, the go-slow began at Addison Road, in Kensington, in west London.

David Tarsh, from the West London Residents Association, said, "By cordoning off a large residential area the c-charge extension is creating a ghetto for the privileged, where others have to pay to get in."

The zone will expand west from Monday 19 to include Kensington and Chelsea.

**-Ends.-**