

PERSPECTIVE / LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Capital right to take another look at imposing congestion charge on motorists

Edinburgh Council is taking a "fresh look" into congestion charging (your report, 30 December). Why? Much has happened in the 18 years since a congestion charge was originally mooted.

First, the strongly growing economy of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland region has helped provide tens of thousands of new

homes. Equally, job growth in Edinburgh has soared above the national average, and is expected to continue to advance. Both have substantially driven up local car use, so much so that satnav manufacturer TomTom has had to revise its league table of extra travel time caused by congestion. TomTom's latest assessment ranks Edinburgh as the

worst UK city for traffic jams. Edinburgh, with a 40 per cent increase in travel time during rush hours, is above London (37 per cent) and then Bournemouth (34 per cent).

Secondly urban air quality has worsened. Edinburgh now suffers from large, persistent spatial and temporal variations, especially of nitrogen dioxide—a highly reactive

gas closely linked with adverse health outcomes. Its pollution levels persistently break legal air quality standards. Lower concentrations at weekends, as well as two daily peaks tied to each rush-hour, unambiguously demonstrate a close link to traffic and fuel-burning.

Thirdly, despite Kyoto, Copenhagen, Paris and numerous other UN-led

climate conferences, global carbon dioxide levels rise at ever faster rates. International initiatives to curb global warming have not been a success. The focus needs to be much more on action by individuals, or at local or city levels.

In Scotland, transport is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (37 per cent),

followed by agriculture (24 per cent) and business and industrial processes (21 per cent). If we value our time, our health or our planet then we should strongly support the council in its determination to take another look at congestion charging.

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Celtic 1 Rangers 2: Gerrard hails win as his best ever BY NICKY HAY

Scotland must not descend into blaming foreigners BY IAN MURPHY

Proposal for Edinburgh congestion charge to get a 'fresh look' BY DAVID ROL

Money raised to be used for public transport and cycling infrastructure

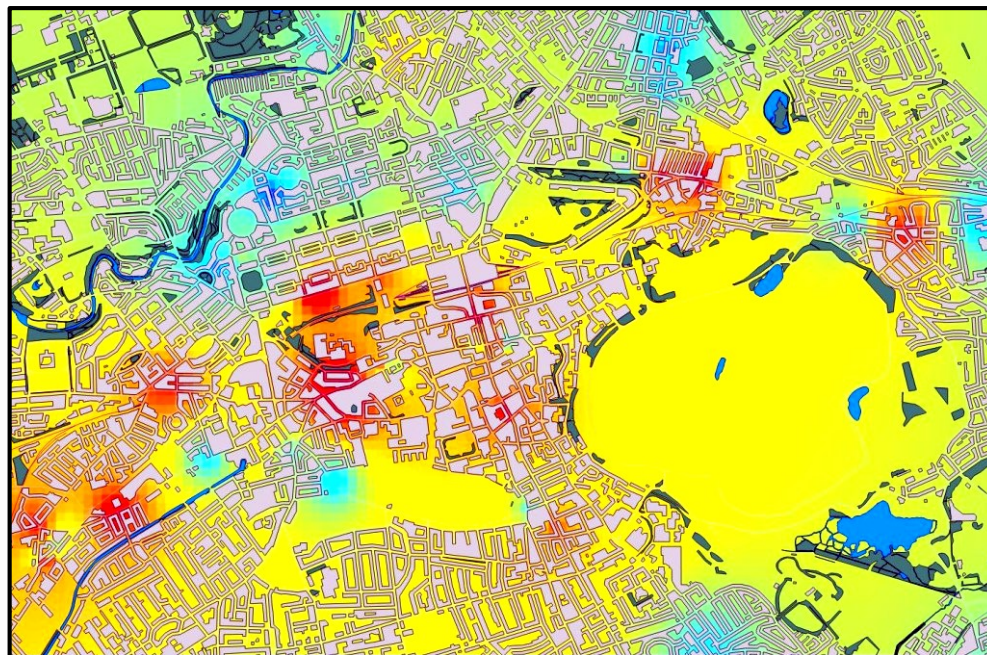
'Literary giant' Alasdair Gray dies BY CHRIS MCCALL

£500m support for Scots farmers BY CHRIS MCCALL

Edinburgh sticks with Underbelly BY BRIAN FERGUSON

Alasdair Gray, one of Scotland's most acclaimed writers and artists, has died at the age of 86 in his native Glasgow. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "Alasdair Gray was one of Scotland's literary giants."

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Red shows inner Edinburgh's most polluted streets, orange the next most polluted, then yellow, green and blue. Anywhere that is red or dark orange is likely to be breaching air pollution safety limits. The map is based on monitoring for nitrogen dioxide by the local authority. (scot.okfn.org & <https://foe.scot>)

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WHO HAS MADE THE EDINBURGH HOT 30? SEE PAGES 6 AND 7

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HOW ERIC LIDDELL'S NIECE IS HELPED BY CENTRE NAMED IN HIS HONOUR Page 3

CITY CONGESTION CHARGE 'BACK ON THE TABLE' Controversial plan set to be re-floated - but with an exemption for all Edinburgh residents

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MUSSELBURGH RACECOURSE
Jumps Meeting
FRI 3 JAN
Gates Open 11am First Race 12.50pm
EARLY BIRD TICKETS AVAILABLE UNTIL MIDNIGHT 2 JAN

FREE SHUTTLE BUSES