

Consultation on the draft Parking Policy
for the London Borough of Barnet

Report

Prepared for:
London Borough of Barnet

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Background and Objectives

Alpha Research consulted local residents and businesses in 2013 and early 2014 regarding parking in the London Borough of Barnet. This helped to inform a draft parking policy drawn up by the Council.

The draft parking policy has been reviewed in a further consultation, which is the subject of this paper. In October 2014, Alpha Research conducted three group discussions, involving resident parking permit holders (half of whom were involved in bringing a judicial review against the Council in 2013 regarding parking permit and visitor voucher prices), disabled residents and new or expectant mothers.

This piece of research sought in depth the views of these residents to inform the final parking policy. As well as overall views on the draft version of the policy, particular issues were explored such as:

- Parking on footways
- How parking prices and permit prices are set
- Disabled parking
- Parking near schools
- The enforcement of persistent offending and non payment of fines

Examples of discussion guides and recruitment screening questionnaires are appended.

Management Summary

- The preparation by the council of a formalised parking policy was welcomed
- The draft policy was seen as inaccessible (long and complex) for residents and too vague in places to be practicable
 - a summary and an indication of council priorities for action was called for
- Demand-led town centre pricing for parking was acceptable, albeit as long as it did not make parking restrictions more complex or inconsistent than they currently are
- Tiered residents' parking permit prices were thought to be an administrative headache, but if introduced then the most acceptable criteria were seen to be the duration of the restriction or the length of the vehicle
- It was recommended that a yearend surplus be reflected in reduced permit prices in subsequent years
- Three permits per household, where each additional permit is more expensive than the last, was acceptable
- The policy was seen to explain in detail the process of *set up* of controlled parking zones (CPZs), but the procedures for *review* and change of existing CPZs was less clear
- The electronic parking map was welcome, ideally with a paper version in due course
- Consistency, visibility and clarity of signage was of significant concern, not felt to be given sufficient attention in the policy
- Clearer policies regarding parking on single yellow lines; near junctions; and how more parking would be provided in the borough, were also desired
- Multiple payment options for parking were preferred, but credit card (especially contactless) machines were favoured if only one option was available
- Restrictions in particular localities were suggested for review
- Residents want more information regarding CCTV before they decide if it should be used more (e.g. installation and signage costs; how footage would be monitored and how enforcement would work)
 - the use of CCTV near schools was contentious

- There was consistent support for footway parking where it does not damage the pavements or detract from pedestrian safety, especially for those with buggies or wheelchairs
- The dropped kerb policy was cautiously welcomed, as residents were concerned about the cost and the loss of front gardens for little or no gain in parking allocation
- The administration of the Blue Badge scheme and the set up of disabled parking bays were felt to work well
 - wider enforcement of fraud was welcomed
- The policies for *review* of established footway parking and disabled bays were less clear, and the council were seen to be slow to change existing restrictions
- Proposed enforcement options with regard to persistent evaders were welcomed
- Residents would like this paper to be made available in the public domain

Findings

Overall views of the draft parking policy

Participants in the group discussions recognised that parking is an important issue in the borough and were in support of a formalised parking policy.

Looking around, most of the road rage is to do with parking, "I got here before you", blah blah blah, ridiculous. To mothers with buggies, it's no fun.

Respondent with disabilities

A small minority of the 25 individuals we spoke to believed the draft parking policy indicated that the council was keen to be more transparent and flexible in approaches to parking in the borough.

I think it's a very positive move, I think there are lots of good ideas in this...I won't say it's perfect but there are lots of things here about perhaps being more flexible about the costs ...I think there's some very good things about changing the CPZ rates, maybe looking at one hour, doing things that other boroughs do.

Permit holder JR (Judicial Review group)

However, most were concerned that the document was too long and turgid to be accessible to the general public. It was observed that it is 'woolly' and does not provide enough definite or actionable policies, or indicate the Council's priorities for attention. Of most concern, particularly amongst the participants in the consultation who had been involved in bringing about the judicial review, was that little improvement would result:

If this is adopted for the next five years and no change is made to it, it's not going to be very helpful at all, especially as they don't have to review it, they're just putting in they might look at it, they might not do anything about it. There's a great reluctance to change anything and the council officers, well they're going to try and move to whatever they're currently doing at the moment.

Permit holder JR

There was a perception (mainly, but not solely, amongst residents involved in the judicial review) that the council does not give sufficient credence to residents' concerns about parking. For example, some were disappointed that the policy did not have a stronger stance on road safety or environmental issues, such as reducing the use of cars (e.g. by including provision for car club parking bays, or encouraging car sharing). It was recognised that to do so it might need to cross-reference policies for transport or planning, but it was unclear in its current form how the policy might facilitate, adopt and enforce new initiatives.

[Barnet Council]'re very, very conservative in terms of how they go about managing parking and congestion, so you do not have a single car club parking bay in Barnet, you do not have speed bumps in Barnet, even outside schools although residents are calling for them, you do not have simple systems to ease congestion in roads because of the mantra of the free-flow of traffic is everything.

... there was a huge battle to simply have a barrier outside school gates, which anyone would think would be uncontroversial, it took a load of campaigning and marches and local newspapers engage for that simple measure to be done and I suspect we'd have a long fight in the county where it absolutely makes perfect sense and I know in Haringey, Islington or Brent, absolutely that would be done, have that sort of sensible measure.

Permit holder JR

If you're going to really go for road safety, you have got to really think probably with a much more stringent, streamlined policy document to deal with that, rather than to try and muddle it with, this is trying to do too many things, the parking issues throughout the borough are sensitive, difficult, completely different as you go round the borough and we've heard that all this evening and there are different pressures and different issues and they all need treating not one cap fits all.

Permit holder JR

[The draft Parking Policy] is nonsense, all these things are just words, there's nobody to enforce this, this whole document is rubbish without somebody to enforce it because council officers will do what they like and there's no specifics in this document about the way they do manage of the things in here. They're all arbitrary, they're all left to council officers, there's not enough technical detail in here.

Permit holder JR

Setting parking prices

Town centres

There is an appetite for free, short term parking amongst residents. Many decried the cost of being a motorist and car owner, through road tax, insurance, fuel etc. It was hoped that, where possible, there could be free parking near shops for between 10 and 30 minutes, to allow for quick trips to pick up one or two items. However, this would only be welcome if Pay by Phone was not required for the purpose.

It was observed that the Broad Walk shopping centre in Edgware; Brent Cross; and some Hertfordshire towns all operate longer term (up to a couple of hours) free parking policies and it was perceived that this leads to more custom and greater prosperity in town centres, which in turn would lead to more business rates being paid to the council [albeit via central government]. It was understood that there would be set up and enforcement costs for free parking, but some would rather pay an annual charge (e.g. in the form of a higher council tax) to have a permit to be able to park for free in the borough.

The draft parking policy was seen to support more local flexibility over parking charges, depending for example on levels of demand. The target of 85% occupancy seemed sensible to participants, and there was some support for demand-led pricing, as long as what was seen as an already complex and variable system does not become more confusing. Respondents were generally either indifferent to more variation or called for more, rather than less, consistency.

I wanted to ask, how does this differ to what's in place now because it seems so, this non-unification across the whole borough, it would make much more sense to have an hour's parking is thruppence ha'penny, two hours is this, the first hour is free, unification across the borough so it doesn't matter whether where we are, it doesn't matter whether we're compos mentis or not but we know in those areas, that's how much we pay for parking and that kind of thing.

Respondent with disabilities

There's no reason why one street in the borough should cost any more than another, you're parking in the same borough, doesn't matter if your house is more expensive than somebody who lives 5m down the road, you should be paying the same price to park in the high street as the next person does in theirs, it's one borough!
Mother of baby

One respondent argued that quieter town centres may become even quieter if the parking became cheaper, as people would park for longer and the availability of parking might drop from its current levels.

Resident parking permits

There were calls for residents parking permits to be free, or capped at a lower rate, such as £15 per annum:

It does irk me that they charge for it, I'm paying an awful lot for council tax, there's absolutely no reason why they couldn't give me a free permit for my street or for the two streets either side because your permits only cover a very small area that you live in, so there's no reason they couldn't give a free one and if you need a second one, you pay for it because yes, there are a lot of two car families but I can understand if you need to pay for a second but if I'm paying a fortune for council tax and living in the borough, there's no reason I should have to pay for a permit, to park outside my own front door.
Permit holder

The proposal for tiered permit prices met with a little approval, but many thought it could be administratively burdensome and perhaps consequently costly for the taxpayer.

When the CPZs first came in, they were relatively straightforward and very simple in the way that they worked ... if the parking zone system was worked out properly in the first place and these were reviewed and interrogated properly, you would be getting good parking quality, umpteen days of the week. You're

not. So that is the fault of the system. I would still stick to the standard charges because if you're not careful, you will employ more people to do the same job and cost more money

Permit holder JR

Adding another level of bureaucracy to what is already a bureaucratic thing

Permit holder

Specifically, setting permit prices depending on duration of the restriction was a little contentious, especially for those residing in zones with longer periods reserved solely for residents. However, it was recognised as an administratively straightforward option, compared with working to criteria based on emissions or levels of congestion.

Using emissions or road tax bands was seen to be in use in other London boroughs, but not regarded as particularly fair way to set permit prices, as a higher tax band car was seen to be a necessity for larger households and road tax already reflects emissions. It was also questioned how the council would account for owners changing their cars.

Basing prices on the level of local congestion was seen to be the most complex solution and carried little or no appeal.

The only alternative criteria suggested was to use the length of the vehicle, for this represented how much parking space would be needed.

The possibility of the council having a surplus at year end was raised. The judicial review group were quite clear that revenue could not be sought when setting prices, but that a surplus may result which could be allocated to certain, parking-related functions. It was suggested that any such surplus should instead be redistributed to the permit holders by way of a reduction in permit prices in the following year.

Numbers of permits permissible per household

The current limit of three permits was felt to be acceptable, although one or two respondents thought that there “does not need to be a cap as it should be self-regulating” i.e. if there is insufficient parking available and each additional permit is more expensive, then owners would be discouraged from purchasing additional cars.

Participants in the consultation largely supported an increased price for additional permits in a household.

It's part of the luxury of owning a second car

Permit holder

The current tiers were thought unlikely, however, to act as a disincentive to owning additional cars. There was some call to move to steeper increases, for example by using an exponential system, whereby the second permit costs twice the price of the first permit, the third costs twice as much as the second, etc.

It was queried whether the policy accounted for houses of multiple occupation. If, for example, a house has been split into a number of bedsits, it was unclear what the pricing system would be for parking permits.

Controlled Parking Zones

Set up and review

The draft policy sets out the current processes for setting up controlled parking zones (CPZs). Participants were keen that the process is kept as simple as possible, involving transparent consultation with local residents on straightforward choices. For example, there was some perception that there is insufficient publicity of proposed changes to parking restrictions.

Although the policy does specify the process for *set up* of a CPZ, more clarification is sought on the facility and process for *review* of CPZs, to identify changing patterns of usage or needs of residents in a particular zone. It was felt at present to be difficult to change an existing CPZ.

I think that everybody who lives in a CPZ should be given a regular opportunity to say they want to stay in it or they don't, we were given a consultation in Durham Road which was manifestly ill managed, we didn't go for it and then we got half of it, half of Durham Road was put in the CPZ, half was not and then in order to make it neater, the borough decided to put the whole of the road into it because it made more sense from their point of view. And I think the whole thing is totally anti-democratic, they pretend to be consulting people and they don't and I think everybody who lives in a CPZ should have the opportunity, on a regular basis, to say they want to stay in it or they don't want to stay in it.

Permit holder JR

Once you've got a controlled parking zone, you can never get rid of it, ever, once they've got it all done, you know and I don't know what basis they do it on, I think it was a sort of house to house? But once you've done it, you can't get out of it, you're stuck with it.

Permit holder

Parking map

There were calls for more prominent markings on roads and signs for drivers as they enter an area with different restrictions.

It's best to just have a line marked on the road when restrictions change

Permit holder JR

A parking map is due to be released by the council in the new year, in electronic form. It was welcomed that the council was intending to make parking controls more consistent across the borough. However, it was suggested that this should be possible without a map and noted that CEOs should have this information in full already.

That information is already there and that resides with our CEO people, how the hell, what do they work on? What document are they working on? So that information is already there, so for them to now just say "Oh yes, we're going to make sure that all these anomalies are flagged up" is somehow disingenuous I think.

Permit holder

Although the map was seen to be a useful development, it was noted that some would prefer, or only be able to use, a paper version.

Suggestions for improvement

In general, the policy did not reassure participants that signage around the borough will become more prominent and less confusing. At the moment, it was felt that it was often possible in the borough to unintentionally park unlawfully, because restrictions are not consistent, can change without clear reason and are not well signposted.

I was trying to park today and there was something saying, "Parking permits only for events", what are you talking about? Event parking, I mean it's very difficult, I didn't park at all because it's better not to, they're feral, the traffic wardens around here. So it would be very nice if you could say, can you make it absolutely clear when you're allowed to park and when you're not. Footway parking or no footway parking, it applies to everything across the spectrum.

Permit holder

For example, single yellow lines cause confusion as their meaning was variable. It was hoped that the parking policy might address this.

Single yellow lines near traffic islands have resulted in legally parked cars obstructing buses to the extent that they have to cross on the wrong side of a traffic island to get past. Similarly, respondents were worried about the dangers of bus stops marked in zigzag areas (e.g. Chipping Barnet, East Barnet)

It was hoped that the final policy would be clearer too about enforcement against parking on corners and junctions, regarded as quite dangerous yet not currently enforced.

One hour morning CPZs came in for criticism because they fill up very quickly once the hour restriction is over.

There was seen to be little in the document about freeing up more parking capacity in the borough, for example through:

- partnership with large stores that have private car parks, to provide extended free or cheap parking to allow their customers to use other shops and facilities nearby
- increased parking allocation in new housing developments
- reserved spaces for those attending doctors' surgeries

Many were keen to discuss methods of payment, with Pay by Phone remaining an unpopular option, as seen in the first consultation. Multiple options at each site would be preferable, but

of the individual options, credit card machines, especially if contactless, were favoured. Some, however, stressed their desire for a return to cash meters.

You get so many people actually telling me they're not coming to shop in Barnet because they don't want to put their credit card in and they don't want to stand there with a phone in their hand, just put some money in. Okay, somebody has to go and empty it out again but it does bring people in when it's easier to park.

Permit holder

Alternatives suggested included a permit which can be topped up periodically rather than every time you park (like an Oyster card), or the use of vehicle registration identification cameras.

Specific areas

The use of CPZs around stations was well supported. Of the borough stations which do not have CPZs, Oakleigh Park, West Hendon and Colindale were recommended for the introduction of measures to deter commuters from parking.

Near the [Oakleigh Park] station, there's no parking, there's no station car park so you have a scenario where people using the station, will park in...the residential roads, which when I was working (I'm a new mummy) when I used to come home at lunchtime and in the evenings, we'd have to try and find a parking space because all the people who work in town would then be parked there.

So negotiating now buggies and shopping and things, if I can't park outside which is ideal, I have to find a space to park and then try to negotiate baby, buggy, shopping and goodness knows what. Not good.

New mother

Conversely, it was argued that some centres and shops do benefit from no restrictions (e.g. shops near Burnt Oak station). Indeed, the policy was seen to address shopping areas

separately from areas near stations, yet there are a number of stations which have shops nearby.

It was hoped that the following localities may be prioritised for review:

- Golders Green (Sunday restrictions desired, to discourage long term parking and encourage shoppers)
- North Finchley (felt to be difficult for shoppers to park)
- Cricklewood Broadway (call for restrictions to be relaxed to encourage visitors)
- North London Business Park (roads nearby used by those working at NLBP, which has pay and display parking)
- Brent Cross (roads nearby perhaps do not need to be restricted as the shopping centre has free parking)
- Consider making Raleigh Rd; Nether Road; and Booth Road one way only (or allow parking on one side only)

CCTV

The policy was seen to endorse the increased use of close circuit television (CCTV) to enforce parking. The cameras were seen as an efficient way to enforce parking infringements and act as a deterrent, for example where cars park on yellow lines whilst the driver remains in the car. It was hoped the Congestion Zone model could be adopted in some way i.e. where the number plates of parking cars are identified to charge the driver remotely.

There are people that, certainly in our road again, one of them will sit in the car so they know they won't get a ticket while everyone rushes off to McDonalds and gets their McDonalds for half an hour and they sit there and eat it.

Permit holder

However, a minority were concerned that cameras invaded privacy and were an unreliable way to enforce parking (e.g. perceiving that cases are sometimes difficult to prove or cameras are not switched on). Others questioned whether they would be accompanied by straightforward and visible signage.

Why do we want to give them yet another tool to oppress us even more?

Permit holder

It was hoped that the council would consult further on greater use of CCTV, and when doing so provide information on the installation and signage costs; monitoring of footage; and proposed enforcement policies, to enable residents to make an informed decision here.

The use of CCTV near schools was contentious, even in clearly marked stationary camera cars. It was accepted that more needed to be done to reduce congestion and the dangers of irresponsible parking near schools, but it was hoped that more efforts could be made by schools and the council to encourage car sharing and alternative transport to schools.

It's not fair because of where the school is and obviously public transport doesn't serve it well but the parents park anywhere and then they do their U-turns, they block traffic and it's just dangerous.

Pregnant female

For example, one school had reduced problem parking by listing in newsletters the registration numbers of cars parking inappropriately.

Footway parking

There was general support of footway parking where appropriate, to ease congestion and improve safety, for example where it did not impede pedestrians, especially those with wheelchairs or buggies. It was, however, expected by some that this would come at a cost.

I think [footway parking] is a good idea and where I've seen it, it does seem to work and the roads seem to be substantial enough as well so there's moveability for cars, pedestrians and drop down kerbs as well for people, so I think it works and if it could be achieved in more places, I think that would be better but appreciating that they've got to look at maintaining the pedestrian walkway, pipes and services and goodness knows what so there'll be a charge, increased revenue to expect.

Mother of baby

Participants were clearly not in favour of informal amnesties over footway parking, much preferring a transparent and consistent enforcement, accompanied by clear signage.

The whole basis of any form of administration by a local authority is consistency.

Permit Holder JR

The process of setting up footway parking for a road (as detailed in appendix 13 of the draft policy) was seen to be laborious. Instead, a general consultation was recommended to gauge overall support for footway parking (that meets specified criteria) in the borough. If there was overall approval, the council could identify the roads that meet the criteria and move forward with setting these up once a period of publicity and public consultation has occurred.

It was felt that the council had been hasty in issuing Penalty Charge Notices to those parking on streets where footway parking appeared to benefit traffic flow without causing obstruction on the pavement.

[On one street] residents starting parking half on and half off, which worked. [The Council] could see that it worked, but the traffic wardens decide to go in, make their money, start ticketing people and the whole system shuts down and now nobody can park there.

Wouldn't it have been simpler to say "mmm, what was working? Oh look, let's do half and half." There's no consistency and no justification for anything because now, nobody can park in that street, no use to anybody when actually there is an easy way for that to work.

Respondent with disability

Dropped kerbs

The participants cautiously welcomed the inclusion of a policy with regard to dropped kerbs. They were worried about the loss of character in streets where front gardens are lost and questioned the merit of approving dropped kerbs if no additional parking spaces result (i.e. if only one car can fit on the driveway).

It was suggested that owners could be allowed to park on street across their own dropped kerb, on the understanding that safe crossing points remain for wheelchair and pushchair users. Enforcement practices would need to be adapted to account for this.

It was also stressed that the drive must be big enough to accommodate the owner's car, so that cars do not overhang and obstruct pavement users.

The cost to the applicant was thought to be excessive (costs for initial consultation plus £3000 was quoted). It was also hoped that the Council could be quicker to act on dropped kerbs, particularly where they need to be reviewed.

There were two parking spaces outside my house for many years, one I used to park in and one next door used to park in, then there was a change of owner and they wanted a dropped kerb and a run over, that space was lost and it was supposed to be replaced and I have asked the council when are they going to replace that lost space, that's three years ago and it hasn't been replaced, so one less space in the road.

Permit holder

Disabled parking

No problems had been encountered with the Blue Badge Scheme, or liaison with the Assisted Travel team at the council. It was seen as a straightforward and equitable process. Participants were, however, well aware of the fraudulent use of Blue Badges and were pleased to see the proposed enforcement options in the draft parking policy.

Similarly, (with one exception from a respondent denied a bay upon application) the application process for a disabled parking bay was not criticised. Able bodied drivers were known to park in disabled bays and greater enforcement powers would be welcome.

Removal of bays was felt to take too long. For example, a bay remains on Puller Rd which has been empty for some time.

A friend of mine whose husband died a couple of months ago and she's been trying to get rid of the disabled bay but it's still there.

Permit holder

Persistent evaders

The proposed enforcement options for persistent offenders were welcomed. However, it was inferred from the policy that it is currently possible to get away with not paying fines.

Next steps

Participants welcomed the opportunity to participate in this consultation. Those who were involved in bringing the judicial review were keen to have sight of this paper and requested that it be made publically available.

Appendices

- **Method, Fieldwork and Analysis**
- **Recruitment screening questionnaire**
- **Topic Guide**
- **Respondent letter**

Method, Fieldwork and Analysis

Discussion guides were prepared by Alpha Research and agreed with Barnet Council.

Recruitment was undertaken on-street by Alpha Research recruiters and by email amongst those who were involved in the 2013 Judicial Review. Letters were given to all those who agreed to participate.

Three group discussions, lasting around 90 minutes each, were held in October 2014. The fieldwork involved 25 people from right across the borough, with a good spread of demographics. The discussions were moderated by Derek Mitchell, Director of Research at Alpha Research.

The groups participating were:

Date	Venue	Participants
23/10/14	Hendon Town Hall	People with a disability Mothers of children up to one year old Pregnant women
23/10/14	Hendon Town Hall	Resident parking permit holders
28/10/14	Hendon Town Hall	Resident parking permit holders involved in 2013 Judicial Review

An example screening questionnaire used for the recruitment is appended. This indicates how the respondents were selected to be in line with the demographics of the area, in terms of age, ethnicity, disability, postcode area and sex.

The sessions were digitally audio-recorded and listened back to in full. During thematic analysis, quotes were selected from the recordings which were seen to be indicative of wider feeling. These have been used where appropriate in the reporting.

Example Screener

19708 RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE PERMIT HOLDERS

Group to recruit:
9x CPZ-permit holders to Hendon Town Hall on Thursday 23/10/14 @ 7.0pm

My name is from Alpha Research, an independent research agency, working on behalf of the London Borough of Barnet. I am recruiting for a group discussion on Thursday 23rd October. If you are able to attend, we will pay for your expenses.

Could you tell me if you or any of your close friends or family work in any of these occupations?

1. Marketing 1
 Journalism 2
 Market research 3
 Public relations 4
 Advertising 5
 or for London Borough of Barnet 6
 **If 'Yes' TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, CLOSE**

- 2a. Have you ever been to a market research discussion or group interview?
 Yes 1 CONTINUE
 No 2 SKIP TO Q3

- 2b. How many such groups have you attended?
 1-2 1 CONTINUE
 More than two 3 CLOSE

- 2c. When did you last attend a group discussion or depth interview?
 Less than 6 months ago 1 CLOSE
 6 months or more ago 2 CONTINUE

3. Can I just check that you currently hold a CPZ residents parking permit in [refer to **Permit Zone Area** from database]?
 Yes, confirmed 1 CONTINUE
 No 2 CLOSE [UNLESS HOLD A PERMIT IN ANOTHER VALID ZONE]

4. Which of these age bands do you fit into? **READ OUT**
 17-45 1 **NEED TO RECRUIT 3-6**
 46+ 2 **NEED TO RECRUIT 3-6**

5. To what ethnic group do you consider you belong?
 (RECORD) _____
 White British 1 **NEED TO RECRUIT 3-6**
 White Other/BME/Mixed 2 **NEED TO RECRUIT 3-6**

6. *Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months, and limits your daily activities at least a little.
 (IF APPROPRIATE ADD) Please include any problems which are due to old age.*

Yes 1 **NEED TO RECRUIT 1-2**
No 2 **NEED TO RECRUIT 7-8**

7. Record Sex

Male..... 1 **NEED TO RECRUIT 3-6**
Female..... 2 **NEED TO RECRUIT 3-6**

8. Recruit to **Thursday 23rd October@ 7.0pm group**

EXPLAIN ABOUT THE SESSION TO BE HELD, STRESSING:

- a. IT WILL BE INFORMAL AND CONFIDENTIAL (FEEDBACK FROM INDIVIDUALS WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS)
- b. 9 RESIDENTS ARE BEING RECRUITED FOR EACH DISCUSSION
- c. NOT REQUIRED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT DO NOT WANT TO

RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____

PERMIT ZONE: [please get no more than one person from any one zone]

EMAIL ADDRESS [ESSENTIAL-FOR SENDING CONFIRMATION AND COPY OF THE PARKING POLICY]

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE

DAYTIME TEL: IF AVAILABLE _____ **HOME/ MOBILE TEL:** _____

Declaration

I declare that this questionnaire was conducted according to the instructions given; in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct and that the respondent was unknown to me at the time of the interview.

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE: _____

PLEASE PRINT NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Please remember the following basic rules:

- 1 Respondents should not know each other.**

- 2 Respondents should be aware that the session will last 80-100 minutes and that they should arrive promptly.**
- 3 Respondents should be aware that the session may be audio taped.**

Declaration

I declare that this questionnaire was conducted according to the instructions given; in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct and that the respondent was unknown to me at the time of the interview.

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Please remember the following basic rules:

- 4 Respondents should not know each other.**
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- 6 Respondents should be aware that the session may be audio taped.**

Example Topic Guide

J9708 London Borough of Barnet

Parking Policy Focus Groups

Topic Guide

Objective

To consult with residents about Barnet's draft Parking Policy, to gauge stakeholders' views in depth to help inform the final policy. To explore particular issues, such as:

- Parking on footways
- How parking prices and permit prices are set
- Disabled parking
- Parking near schools
- How those who persistently offend and do not pay fines

Introduction (10 minutes)

Introduce self.

Explain about research, confidentiality, audio recording.

Explain rationale for project - a draft parking policy for the borough has been formulated this year, which has been informed by earlier consultation with local residents and businesses.

Various streams of work are ongoing at the council to look at and improve enforcement procedures, parking prices, payment methods and controlled parking zones.

Looking today to cover the following:

- Views on the draft Parking Policy
- Parking in town centres and outside schools
- How CPZs are set up, and processes for deciding the price of parking permits
- Footway parking
- Disabled parking
- Persistent evaders

The draft parking policy presents what the priorities are for review and what approaches are going to be used. We are interested today in your thoughts on some of the processes and

methods being proposed to decide on parking restrictions, enforcement and prices, and you may give your feedback on particular centres or streets in the borough where you feel that parking restrictions might need revisiting. We are not, however, looking for feedback today on how much parking or parking permits should cost.

By way of introduction, ask respondents to pair off, find out what their partner feels most needs changing about parking in the borough, and then introduce back to group.

Overall (spontaneous) views on draft Parking Policy (10 minutes)

Gauge how much participants have read the policy since being recruited for the group.

Before we talk about certain aspects of the parking policy, do you have any overall comments to make about it?

- how well does it address what you regard as the most important issues regarding parking in the borough?
- were there any parts which were not very clear to you?
- is there anything in particular that you welcome about it - any real *positives* for parking the borough?
- in what ways, if at all, does it not go far enough?

Do you have any comments on the first couple of sections - the policy framework, the introduction and the objectives - which explain what underpins the policy? (pages 6-15)

- the introduction gives background on current and predicted road usage, congestion; travelling to school by car; accident prevention; journey times and air pollution. Do you have any comments on this information e.g. are there any surprises there, or other information you would like to know?

It is perhaps worth keeping the objectives in section 3 in mind as we consider the rest of the policy.

Section 4 - Parking Provision (30 minutes for JR/CPZ group; 10 minutes for other group)

Section 4 looks at the different options available for long and short term parking in the borough and how these can be combined most effectively. For example, deciding on the charges for parking based on usage, where the highest rates would be where there is a lot of demand. How do you feel about this tiered system in operation?

- or the use of limited periods or 'no return' policies e.g. near parades of shops?

Barnet says: that it will be using electronic tools whereby we will pilot in one area the demand of paid for and free parking. From this we will understand better the type and frequency of demand for a particular area which will give us the ability to understand A) the demand for parking and B) the financial impact that offering free parking may cause.

Then they will be able to properly analyse exactly the demand for parking to set free and paid for parking charges to find the right price to increase turnover of visitors in town centres. This will not happen overnight but they say that they cannot simply introduce a free parking policy as the financial impact is too much to burden the council with and subsequently penalises the general fund and non-car owning council tax payers.

Do you have any comment on this approach? *Probe fully*

[JR GROUP ONLY] Did you notice the section at the top of page 18 regarding how local authorities not being allowed to set charges with a view to raising income or setting targets for revenue. Do you have any comments about this section?

- is the wording unambiguous?
 - is it an accurate reflection of the legislation as you understand it?
 - any views re the explanation of how a surplus could be used
- [Appx.5;bullets a-f]

[KEY QUS. FOR JR/CPZ GROUPS] I'd be interested to hear your views on section 4.2.2. Currently, the Council has a flat fee for permits and vouchers, but is considering a variable fee depending on one or a number of factors, namely:

1. the duration of the restriction
2. the amount of congestion locally
3. the environmental impact e.g. emissions of the owner's vehicle
4. the number of permit holders in the household

What do you think of using these criteria to decide the cost of the permits and vouchers?

Discuss each in turn

- which should be used, and which would you recommend not using? Why?
- are there any practical limitations of using a variable charge like this?
- what advice would you give to the council on how they could implement a variable ?

[KEY QUS. FOR JR/CPZ GROUPS] Do you have a view on the number of parking permits that should be allowed per household? [After spontaneous comment, explain that current limit is 3, (£40, £70, £70) but LBB considering up to 5 per household]

- how much do you agree or disagree with higher charges for additional permits?

Section 6 - Parking Control (15 minutes)

This section discusses the use of restrictions like controlled parking zones (CPZs), yellow lines, loading bays and school keep clear markings.

6.4 and 6.5 discuss how CPZ areas are identified, set up and reviewed (e.g. extended, reduced) - do you have any comments about this? (Also summarised in Appendix 7)

- e.g. the processes of statutory/ informal consultation and parking surveys used?
 - is there a need to devise corporate standards for consultation, as suggested at para 2/3 on p.24?
- any views on the areas near stations where CPZs are not in place? (Para 4 on p.22)
- any views on reactive set up of CPZs like in Garden Suburb? (Para.5 on p.22)

Any comments re 6.6-6.13, especially with regard to how the Council monitors compliance (6.13)?

The Council states that: Barnet Council has conducted a borough wide survey of all signs and lines and enforcement including CPZ's. These are currently being plotted on a GIS map (ordinance Survey) so that they can manage their traffic management orders better.

This will also give information to a customer portal website so that for the first time ever customers can view all of our enforcement restrictions, parking bays pay and display machines etc. on a map. They will also be able to view the impact of any changes in restriction on a map in the form of current and planned with a toggle view. Customers will be able to send their consultation comments through the website and it is also smart phone friendly. Customers will be able to search the tariffs and times of pay and display bays across the borough.

This is planned to be live for the start of the new year.

What are your views on this? *Probe fully*

Are there any particular areas, centres or streets where you feel the parking systems could be changed for the better?

Section 8 - Enforcement (15 minutes for JR/CPZ groups; 30 minutes for other group)

Moving on to Section 8 (Enforcement), it's perhaps worth first pointing out the aim of enforcement, explained in the first paragraph of section 8.4.

(a) I'd be interested to know your views on the increased use of CCTV. In Section 8.7 in the bottom paragraph of page 31, the Council proposes to increase the use of both static and mobile cameras. For example, parked CCTV cars to enforce parking around schools (8.9, last para.) are favoured.

- what are your views on the use of CCTV cars to enforce parking around schools?

(b) [KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISABLED/ PREGNANT RESPONDENTS AND PUSCHAIR USERS] 8.10 and 8.11 detail the policy for parking on footways, which is allowed (within strict criteria) on some roads. Appendix 13 details this further and the Council intends to be much more transparent about where this is permitted and where it is prohibited.

What are your thoughts on footway parking?

- Under what circumstances is it appropriate - where should the Council allow it?
- When should it not be allowed - are there places in the borough where it currently is allowed but you think it shouldn't be?
- Any comments on the approach for reviewing footway parking (bullet points p.60)?
 - If council/ residents feel a street is suitable, then consultation takes place to see whether bays should be marked
 - Priorities for review (bullets p.64)
- Do you have any particular roads you would like to see reviewed for footway parking?

(c) [KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISABLED/ PREGNANT RESPONDENTS AND PUSCHAIR USERS] 8.12 and Appendix 12 cover the policy for when people park over a dropped kerb, impeding access to properties or for cyclists, pedestrians, particularly wheelchair and pushchair users.

- any comments on this policy?

- Any comments re the exemptions? (detailed half way down p.65):
cleaning/ refuse vehicles, emergency vehicles, for picking up/ setting down, other vehicles with temporary consent

(d) **Persistent evaders** (8.16) could have the vehicle clamped or removed, or their permit refused or withdrawn until outstanding balances are cleared.
What are your views on this policy?

- *Probe for pros and cons, and other ideas to address persistent evasion*

Blue Badge Scheme (5 minutes for JR/CPZ groups; 10 minutes for other group)

[KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISABLED RESPONDENTS] Section 9 (and Appendix 15) cover the Blue Badge scheme. The criteria to qualify for a Blue Badge are not the subject of the consultation today, but the administration of the scheme by the Council is perhaps of interest.

- Firstly, the application process (detailed at the bottom of p.67) - any comments on this, or how this might be improved? (e.g. seeing the Assisted Travel team at Burnt Oak library or Barnet House)
- What about the set up ('Administration Charge' p.68) process, where identity documents are uploaded, a £10 admin charge is levied and Badges are provided within 10 days - any experiences of this (positive or negative) or suggestions for how it could be done differently?
- Any views on the actions that CEOs can take (p.37) if they suspect the Blue Badge is being illegally used?

[KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISABLED RESPONDENTS] The last section (9.3-9.6) and last appendix (17) detail the process for setting up and removing disabled parking bays. P.72 says how the applicant for a disabled bay must complete an application form; have declaration from their GP; have a vehicle registered at the address; and be in receipt of the correct component of the DLA. Then it must go to public consultation before decision is made.

- any comments on the process?
- what suggestions would you make to improve the process?

Summing up and moving forward (5 minutes)

Now we've discussed in some detail, what is your opinion of the draft parking policy written by Barnet Council?

What would be your priorities for changing, adding or improving to this document?

Check participants are satisfied that objectives on page 1 have been addressed. Thank and close.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

October 2014

Barnet's new Environment Committee is initiating a new Parking Policy and we want to hear your views on this. The policy outlines how the council plans to manage the pressures on the road network caused by Barnet's 145,000 cars – slightly more than one car per household.

Alpha Research Limited has been hired as an independent agency to run some informal group discussions, each run by an executive from Alpha Research and involving up to nine local residents. They will be held where disabled access will be available. The discussions will last about one and a half hours and participants' expenses will be paid.

We would like you to take part in this consultation. Please take the time to have a look at the draft Parking Policy before the discussion, which can be found via engage.barnet.gov.uk at http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/development-regulatory-services/parking-policy-consultation/user_uploads/parking-policy-12_08_2014.pdf

May I assure you that your contribution will be treated in confidence. You also do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. Alpha Research will report findings on a general, rather than individual, level in a written report, a summary of which will be made available publicly by the Council.

If you have any queries regarding the consultation, please contact me on 020 8359 2230 or email me at paul.millard@barnet.gov.uk. If you have any queries regarding Alpha Research or about the arrangements for the groups, please contact Derek Mitchell on 01844 260248.

Yours faithfully

PMillard

Paul Millard, Parking Improvement Project Manager, London Borough of Barnet

**Many thanks for agreeing to coming along to a group discussion at:
Committee Room 1, Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, Hendon, NW4 4BG
at:
7.0pm on Thu 23/10/14**

We look forward to seeing you there.