

Brent Council

Parking Annual Report

2020-2021

Foreword

I am pleased to welcome you to the 2020-2021 edition of the London Borough of Brent's Parking Annual Report. The report provides an overview of parking management, and parking and traffic enforcement, in Brent. It recognises the improvements we have made in our services, and highlights the effect both our parking policies and enforcement activity have had in achieving high levels of parking and traffic compliance.

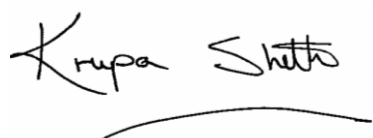
In an unprecedented year, the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic led to lockdowns, decreased motoring and parking activity, and a new priority to protect access for those who were shielding. More than ever, the parking service was called on to respond to the needs of the community and help to ensure the safety of the public and our staff.

I was proud to see the service rise to these challenges. We adapted our approach to support health services and other key workers to help them support residents who needed access to medication, care and food deliveries across the borough. In particular, we ensured that special parking permission notices were quickly issued to our key workers in the health, care and employment support sectors.

We continue to make Brent a safer borough in which to drive, improve motoring standards, reduce traffic congestion, and contribute to reducing carbon emissions. Promoting sustainable modes of travel and improving air quality is of high concern to our residents. We are continually evaluating ways to reduce pollution as part of a wider effort across London, as well as continuing to work across the Council to tackle the climate change emergency in a concerted effort.

As in previous years, this report explains how surplus parking revenue was allocated to meet our wider transport objectives, in particular the provision of the Freedom Pass to older residents and disabled residents.

Thank you for taking the time to read the report. I hope you find it both interesting and informative.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Krupa Sheth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Councillor Krupa Sheth,
Lead Member, Environment

Overview

Introduction

Brent Council is committed to providing a high quality parking service and a fair, easy, consistent and transparent approach to parking management and traffic enforcement.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to explain the aims and objectives of the Council's Parking service. The Report includes information on what we enforce and the effects of our policies. The Report's statistical analysis includes: information on the number of parking and traffic related Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued for the period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021; the income and expenditure recorded in our Parking Account; and how the surplus on this account has been spent.

The Report also meets a key requirement set out in the 2015 Statutory Guidance, issued under the Traffic Management Act 2004. This requires local authorities to produce and publish an annual report on parking enforcement activities.

Why Manage Parking?

Excellent parking management is an important tool that contributes towards achieving the Council's wider transport, economic and planning policy objectives. Well thought-out parking policies and effective enforcement can influence travel patterns, sustain the local economy, balance competing demands for road space, relieve congestion and contribute to sustainable outcomes.

Conversely, parking which is not properly regulated can exacerbate congestion on the road network, reduce the reliability of public transport, impact adversely on the local economy and create road safety problems. Parking services are highly visible to residents, local businesses and visitors. In particular, enforcement needs to be seen as fair, effective and proportionate in order to retain public confidence.

Brent Context

The London Borough of Brent is an outer London borough, covering an area of almost 17 square miles. It is bordered by the London Boroughs of Barnet to the north-east, Harrow to the north-west and Ealing to the south-west. It has short boundaries with the central London Boroughs of Camden, Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea, in the south-east.

In recent years, the Borough has seen several major town centre developments. In particular, the area around Wembley Stadium has been transformed, with the building of new homes, leisure facilities, retail space and restaurants.

As these areas continue to grow and attract new residents and visitors, they will inevitably lead to increased demand for movement to, from and within the borough. While the availability, frequency and reliability of public transport - and the existence of high quality facilities for walking and cycling - will influence the way people travel, there will nevertheless be an unavoidable impact on traffic and parking.

Demand for parking in Brent is high, as it is across the whole of Greater London. The Council seeks to manage this demand through the use of parking controls and traffic regulations. These aim to: improve road safety, the local environment and the quality and accessibility of public transport; ensure that traffic is able to flow through the borough freely; ensure parking in town centres is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles and deliveries; meet the needs of people with disabilities, ensuring that the public highway can be used by all; and ensure that available parking space is shared fairly through regulation and pricing

These aims sit alongside wider Council objectives which include sustainability; the promotion of alternative modes of transport such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport; reducing carbon emissions; and improving air quality.

Brent Council's Parking Service

The Brent Parking team is committed to providing a high quality service, delivering a fair, consistent and transparent approach to parking and traffic enforcement.

The team is responsible for:

- Parking strategy, policy and overall management
- Management of the parking contract, including parking enforcement, Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing, permit administration, and cashless parking
- Management of car parks and on-street parking infrastructure
- Managing the parking appeals and representations process
- Handling Member enquiries, complaints and FOI requests relating to parking
- PCN debt recovery

The Parking Contract

In July 2013 Serco were appointed as the council's parking management and enforcement contractor for a period of five years with an option to extend. In 2018, the Council agreed to award Serco a contract extension to March 2023.

Serco manages the provision of parking services. This includes:

- Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs)
- CCTV enforcement
- Pay & Display machines
- Vehicle removal operations and the car pound
- Cashless parking & electronic payments
- Serco also has key responsibilities for PCN processing services, including the provision of scanning, indexing, software systems and permit administration

Awards

Over the years, the achievements of the Brent Parking service and Serco have been recognised by winning several awards at the British Parking Association (BPA) awards ceremony. The BPA is the largest professional association in Europe representing organisations working in the field of parking and traffic management

Accomplishments have included:

- 2021 British Parking Awards: Finalist, Back Office Team of the Year
- 2020 British Parking Awards: Winner, Parking Team of the Year
- 2019 British Parking Awards: Finalist, Parking Person of the Year
- 2018 British Parking Awards: Finalist, Parking Team of the Year
- 2016 British Parking Awards: Winner, Parking Team of the Year
- 2014 British Parking Awards: Joint Winners of the Parking Partnership Award, with LB Ealing and LB Hounslow

Air Quality

The Council is committed to supporting the Mayor of London's Environmental Strategy, which aims for London to have the best air quality of any major world city by 2050. We are seeking to play our part in reducing pollution levels. The Council has an agreed Air Quality Action Plan to reduce air pollution from all sources, including transport. In this context, the Service is continually reviewing its policies that will support and incentivise more sustainable transport options and the use of less polluting vehicles.

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

On 23rd March 2020 Central Government imposed an unprecedented lockdown, ordering people to stay at home whenever possible, to suppress the spread of the deadly Covid-19 virus. The months following lockdown had a major impact on the UK, both socially and economically. One major impact was an immediate reduction in parking demand and revenue.

From the outset, the Council was guided by advice from London Councils and Central Government scientists and medics. Significant changes to service provision were made immediately.

Risk assessments of parking services were made to show how best to preserve services, whilst following government guidance and managing the wellbeing of both Brent and Serco staff as best as possible. A plan of action was formulated and agreed.

In respect of the Council's Parking service, working from home for all staff commended immediately with the exception of client staff needing to make on-street visits. Support was provided by the Notice Processing team to residents who were shielding, and a client officer was seconded full-time to work at the Marsh Road Mortuary.

Within days of lockdown being announced, special parking permission notices had been distributed to police, NHS and care staff across the borough. This was later extended to pharmacists and to Department of Work and Pensions staff supporting residents. Northwick Park Car Park provided dedicated parking for NHS staff at the nearby hospital from April to September 2020.

For Serco, social distancing within the civil enforcement workforce was introduced, to mitigate against the transmission of infection. Back office staff were asked to work from home. Serco separated its workforce, including management, into two teams, alternating working days. CEO deployment was reduced in the initial period of lockdown to 60% of normal.

During lockdown, the focus of enforcement activity was directed at the most serious parking contraventions, including dangerous and obstructive parking. As a priority we sought to protect access for residents to their homes and for essential services and deliveries. Motoring activity significantly reduced during lockdown leading to a significant reduction in contraventions.

From the end of March until mid-June, Serco CEOs were deployed to Bridge Park Leisure Centre to assist with food distribution for elderly and vulnerable residents' shielding as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The team undertook security and marshalling duties, transportation of food pallets and distribution of PPE. The team delivered hot food to staff working at the Mortuaries at Northwick Park & Marsh Road and to key workers at Brent Civic Centre. Serco also supported Council Officers in patrolling public parks across the borough to support social distancing guidelines issued by Central Government.

From May 2020 enforcement activity was gradually brought back up to normal service levels, moving to 80% deployment on 18th May. We had by then reinstated full enforcement of CPZ areas to protect access for residents to their homes.

From 1st June, enforcement returned to 100% capacity up to 7pm each day. On the 15th June, the lockdown was further eased with non-essential shops reopening so we prioritised enforcement on high streets, where an increase in footfall and traffic was observed.

Traffic and congestion increased as lockdown was eased, with Central Government guidance being updated to 'stay alert' and the public being encouraged to avoid public transport where possible.

On 4th July evening enforcement was reinstated following re-opening of the hospitality sector. Weekend late evening enforcement returned from 7th August.

In late September 2020, infection rates began to climb again and by the end of the month the hospitality sector had closed. In response evening enforcement was again suspended.

Central Government implemented a second partial lockdown on 5th November, followed by further restrictions from Sunday 20th December. A second full national lockdown was imposed on 6th January 2021. Enforcement deployment was therefore reduced to 80% of normal to successfully protect staff health and safety. Deployment was reinstated to 100% capacity as of 1st March. Activity once again focused on priority activities up to 7 pm, given that the retail and hospitality sectors remained affected by lockdown restrictions.

The challenges of responding to the pandemic itself, as well as changes in lockdown restrictions, continued into 2021 and will be further detailed in the 2021/22 Annual Report.

Parking Services

Parking Provision

Over the years, the Council has introduced a number of measures to manage the high demand for kerbside parking space. Parking in most of the south-eastern part of the borough, and Wembley town centre, is managed through Controlled Parking Zones. Some other parts of the borough also have residential parking controls; these typically cover areas near high street locations and/or tube and railway stations (where there may be a demand for parking from commuters).

The Council manages 43 Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) across the borough, serving 56,000 households with over 33,000 on-street parking spaces. Specific times of operation vary but the majority are in operation throughout the day, from Monday to either Friday or Saturday. Current shopping and business opening hours mean that in some areas there can be similar, and sometimes higher levels of parking on Sundays and Bank Holidays than on normal weekdays or Saturdays. For this reason, parking controls apply on Sundays in a small number of locations.

Information on parking restrictions, the Wembley event day zone, a full size map of Brent's Controlled Parking Zones, and a post code search facility to determine whether or not you are located within a controlled parking zone, are all available on the council's parking pages: www.brent.gov.uk/parking.

Resident Permits

Resident permits are available to all residents who live in CPZs. Permit options are available for 24-month, 12-month, 6-month or 3-month periods. Permits are priced according to the vehicle's carbon emission levels with a supplement on all diesel vehicles; and the number of permits issued to each household, up to a maximum of 3.

In 2020-21 a total of 34,557 permits were issued compared to 35,800 the previous year.

Visitor Parking

Residents are able to purchase a single visitor household parking permit, which is non-vehicle specific, to be displayed in a visitor's vehicle's windscreen. Residents can also purchase visitor parking credits which are virtual and can be purchased either via telephone, by SMS, or online.

Visitor parking charges in all CPZs are available in increments for up to 2 hrs, for up to 4 hrs, and for 'all-day' of stays over 4 hrs.

The cost of visitor parking permits are formally linked to be equitable with the cost of bus fares. The aim is to encourage people to consider switching to more sustainable modes of transport. Any future increase in the cost of bus fares set by Transport for London (TfL) will be reflected by the same increase to the cost daily visitor permits. Fewer Visitor Household permits were issued as regular home visits were significantly curtailed for many residents due to lockdown restrictions.

In 2020-21 a total of 219,000 visitor parking credits were issued compared to 240,000 the previous year. Also 2,586 visitor household permits were issued compared to 3,034 the previous year.

Households not located in a CPZ, but which fall within the Wembley Event Day Protective Parking Scheme, are able to purchase Event Day Visitor permits. A total of 867 Event Day Resident, Business, Visitor and Place of Worship permits were issued in 2020/21. The considerable reduction in the number of permits issued, compared to the previous year's issuance of 6,740, was due to the closure of Wembley Stadium during the periods where COVID lockdown restrictions were imposed.

Business Permits

Business permits are available to businesses that have premises within a CPZ. Permits are priced at a flat rate. Business are permitted to purchase up to three permits, with an option to purchase an annual, 6 month or 3-month permit. Schools also have the option to purchase up to three business permits.

Business permit volumes include school staff permits and permits issued for the Business-only CPZ in the Lower Place Industrial Estate. Fewer business permits were issued last year as more staff were working from home.

In 2020-21 a total of 537 business permits were issued compared to 618 the previous year.

Other Permits

The council offers a number of other permits. These include permits for disabled persons, Doctors, Places of Worship, temporary, courtesy, replacement and special permits. There is also an Essential Users Permit; this permit enables individual employees, who work for certain public sector and charitable organisations that perform a statutory service on behalf of the council, to park a vehicle in a controlled parking zone, as part of carrying out official duties. This includes the provision of residential or community care, health care, social housing management and highway maintenance works

Revenue from all permit issuance in 2020-21 was £4.41m

Suspensions and Dispensations

Parking bay suspensions and dispensations are available for a fee. These facilitate large deliveries to residential properties, allowing residents to move home with as little inconvenience as possible. Suspensions are also arranged for a fee to allow for road or utility works to take place on the highway or during construction works.

The Council will also consider special requests made by residents, places of worship or funeral directors, regarding parking arrangements for funerals or weddings. There is a limit to the permitted number of vehicles allowed but no charge is made.

The temporary suspension of a parking bay reserves a specific bay or bays for use on a specified day, or part of a day, by a specified vehicle. If granted, the council will post notices in advance alerting motorists of when the bays will be suspended.

A dispensation temporarily allows parking in a location that is ordinarily not possible, for a maximum dispensation of four hours in every 24-hour period. These include dispensations on Single or Double Yellow lines for a maximum period of 4 hours. If granted, the council will issue a permit that must be displayed in the windscreen on the authorised vehicle.

Details of the applicable fees and the application process for a parking suspension or dispensation are available online.

Revenue from parking suspensions and dispensations in 2020-21 was £1.57m

On-Street Parking

The council provides on-street pay and display parking bays to facilitate parking for visitors to town centres and other destinations, helping to support economic activity.

Pay and display machines are located across the borough near shops and businesses, allowing residents and visitors to park during operational hours. The general principle underpinning on-street pay and display parking is to provide a quick turn-over of spaces, allowing easy access for motorists who wish to make short visits to shop or conduct business; and therefore park near to their destination.

Pricing policy seeks to ensure that there is a regular turnover of parking spaces. Motorists pay a uniform set of charges across the borough; 20p for up to 15 minutes; and then £1 for 30 mins, £2 for one hour, £4 for 2 hours, £6 for 3 hours, £8 for 4 hours.

Revenue from on-street parking in 2020-21 was £2.88m. This was significantly reduced from the £4.513m earned in 2019-20 due to reduced motoring activity during lockdowns.

Paying to park by mobile phone and smart devices

The option to pay for parking sessions using mobile technology and a debit/credit card has been available in Brent since 2009. The service is provided by a specialist company, RingGo, and is available in all of the council's car parks and on-street pay and display bays

Parking via RingGo in Brent is 50p cheaper than making a cash payment, reflecting savings passed to motorists from the reduced cost of cash collections, ticket printing and machine maintenance. In addition, the option for text reminders when parking sessions are due to expire enables the motorist to extend parking time, wherever they are, by making a simple phone call or using the RingGo application on their device.

Demand for pay to park by mobile technology continues to grow strongly year on year. In 2020-21 this accounted for 82% of on-street parking space sales and 75% of our off-street sales, compared to 75% and 71% respectively in 2019-20.

Off-Street Parking

The Council currently operates 10 public car parks across the borough. These car parks provide a combined total of 614 spaces. This comprises of 554 car parking spaces, 14 disabled spaces, 10 motorcycle spaces, 26 business spaces, 4 parent and child spaces and 6 spaces with electric vehicle charging points.

Almost all of the car parks have secured the *Park Mark* Award. *Park Mark* aims to reduce crime and the fear of crime within parking facilities through the achievement of high standards in lighting, signage, cleanliness and surveillance.

Revenue from off-street parking in 2020-21 was £0.237m. This was significantly reduced from the £0.530m earned in 2019/20 due to reduced motoring activity caused by the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Most of our car parks operate from Monday to Saturday with no charges made on Sunday. Preston Road and Disraeli Road car parks offer free parking for the first hour and Northwick Park offers free parking for the first three hours. The majority of the remaining car parks follow the same charging principles in which motorists pay a uniform set of charges across the borough; £1 for one hour, £3 for two hours, £4.50 for three hours and £7.50 all day.

Our car parks continue to offer a safe and reliable place to park. The introduction of season tickets; and the addition of pre-booked parking sessions on Wembley Event days; encourages better use of the council's off-street parking provisions and assists in alleviating pressure for on-street parking spaces.

Wembley Event Day Parking

Between 8am and midnight, parking restrictions operate on Event days within the Wembley Stadium Event Day Protective Parking Scheme area. The best way to visit Wembley Stadium is to plan your journey by public transport. For those who wish to drive and park their vehicle, visitors can pre-book Lonsdale Road, Preston Road and Elm Road car parks.

Brent Car Park Season Tickets

Annual season tickets are available in three of our car parks: Preston Road, by Preston Road Tube Station (Metropolitan line); Northwick Park, close to South Kenton Station (Bakerloo and Overground) and Northwick Park Hospital; and Disraeli Road.

These car parks were selected for their close proximity to hospitals, businesses and/or tube stations, offering a safe and convenient place to park.

Parking Enforcement Overview

The Council enforces parking and traffic regulations through its contractor, Serco, using a combination of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) who patrol the streets and the use of CCTV camera technology. CEOs also use mopeds and cars which enable rapid deployed to attend to urgent enforcement issues.

Illegally parked vehicles and moving traffic contraventions create problems for all road users. We enforce regulations by issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) with the aim of improving motorists' compliance.

What we enforce

As well as managing and enforcing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), local parking schemes and pay and display parking, the Council also enforces other traffic and parking contraventions, this includes:

School Keep Clear Enforcement

School Keep Clear markings (yellow zig-zag lines outside of school entrances) are monitored by the Council using a combination of CEOs, mobile CCTV enforcement vehicles and re-mountable CCTV cameras. Our aim is to maintain and improve road safety outside schools.

Yellow Line Enforcement

The majority of yellow-line waiting restrictions in Brent are on strategic and distributor roads, and have been introduced to promote safety, assist buses and aid effective movement of traffic.

Red-line waiting restrictions on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) are the responsibility of Transport for London (TfL), but aim to meet similar objectives on London's busiest roads.

Single yellow lines are located on parts of the highway where there would be a safety hazard if parking was permitted, especially when there is high volume of traffic. Parking is therefore prohibited at certain times of day. Several restrictions are enforced from 8.00 or 8.30am to 6.30pm, and these times are displayed on signs. Double yellow lines indicate a 24-hour parking prohibition. All double yellow lines within Brent operate seven days a week, including bank holidays. It is no longer a requirement for signs to accompany double yellow restrictions.

22,875 PCN's were issued to vehicles parked illegally on yellow lines in 2020-21.

Footway Enforcement

CEOs take enforcement action where motorists inconsiderately park on the footway. This causes particular problems for visually impaired people, wheelchair users, and people with prams or buggies. If the footway is not reinforced to permit parking, then the paving is likely to crack and cause a trip hazard for all pedestrians.

10,220 PCN's were issued to vehicles parked illegally on the footway in 2020-21.

There are some footways where parking is permitted on residential streets which are too narrow for parking fully on the road. In such cases, footway parking may be permitted either fully (four wheels) or partially (two wheels) on the pavement. Where parking is permitted on a permanent basis, bay markings and signage is installed.

Bus Lanes

Bus lane and bus stop parking are enforced through the use of CCTV cameras. As the Council encourages more sustainable forms of transport, this plays an important role in ensuring the free movement of buses along the borough's road network in order to secure faster journey times for bus users, and reduce potential traffic accidents.

Moving Traffic Contraventions.

Blocking yellow box junctions, making prohibited turns, ignoring no-entry signs, illegal U turns, and driving the wrong way in a one-way road, are all examples of moving traffic violations actively enforced by CCTV. Such restrictions are in place to ease congestion on the borough's roads, and improve road safety.

Yellow box junctions are highly visible to motorists and have crossed diagonal lines painted on the road. Motorists must not enter the box until the lane ahead is clear, this includes turning left over a yellow box junction. However, you may enter the box and wait when you want to turn right, and are only stopped from doing so by oncoming traffic, or by other vehicles waiting to turn right.

Tackling Blue Badge Fraud

The council has effectively been working to tackle Blue Badge misuse across the borough. Fraudulent use of Blue Badges prevents people in genuine need from accessing parking where and when they need it most.

CEOs have been active in carrying out Blue Badge inspections to identify:

- Abuse of Badges. This includes using a counterfeit Badge, using a lost or stolen Badge and using the Badge of a deceased person.
- Misuse of Badges - the fraudulent use of Blue Badges when the Badge-holder is not present.

CEOs have been using the Government Blue Badge database to identify misuse of Badges and reporting any suspicious usage. Joint operations have been carried out accompanied by the police around stations, shopping parades, entertainment venues, and areas where parking is in high demand and a Blue Badge is of maximum value to someone who may misuse it. Through our partnership, the Council has secured several successful convictions.

Enforcement Statistics

Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs)

CEOs have the power to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to vehicles parked in contravention of restrictions.

A PCN may be issued at the scene by being fixed to the vehicle windscreen, or handed to the person appearing to be in charge of it, or issued by post in the following cases: enforcement is by camera; or the CEO was prevented by someone from serving it at

the scene; or the CEO had begun to prepare a PCN but the vehicle was driven away before it was finished and issued.

CEOs issued 105,299 PCNs for parking offenses in 2020-21; a decrease of over 16% compared to the same period last year. This reduction was caused by reduced motoring activity during lockdowns and therefore fewer parking contraventions.

Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Enforcement

CCTV is used to enforce bus lane and moving traffic restrictions, and parking restrictions at bus stops and on School Keep Clear zig zag markings. Camera enforcement signs are displayed to alert motorists to active CCTV enforcement and to encourage compliance with local restrictions.

A total of 53,490 PCNs were issued for bus lane and moving traffic contraventions in 2020-21.

The issuance of PCNs for moving traffic contraventions continued to decrease for the fifth consecutive year with 44,109 PCNs issued in 2020-21 compared to 57,495 issued in 2019-20. This reflects both the reduced motoring activity during the lock-down as well as continuing improvements in compliance by motorists, reducing traffic congestion and improving road safety.

Additional sites for camera enforcement were identified following a survey of priority bus lane locations across the borough. This was done to understand non-compliance and the impact on bus reliability and speed, which has a significant bearing on bus route efficiency. It is important to prioritise the fast and reliable movement of buses. This supports the objective of encouraging sustainable travel as set out in the Council's Long Term Transport Strategy

Following an analysis of the survey results, additional unattended camera systems were installed in 2020 to provide consistent and reliable enforcement at key locations.

Mobile Enforcement

Serco deploys a number of CEOs on mopeds and cars, which enables more effective enforcement across the borough. Officers can be rapidly deployed to attend to urgent issues such as obstruction of residential driveways.

Vehicle Removals and the Car Pound

The Council can remove vehicles parked in contravention where there is a serious impact. The service also relocates vehicles that remain parked in a section of road that

has been temporarily suspended and which therefore obstruct highway resurfacing or maintenance works.

In 2020-21 a total of 1,439 vehicles parked in contravention were impounded. This is a decrease on the 1,779 impounded in 2019-20, due to reduced motoring activity and fewer serious parking contraventions.

All vehicles that have been removed within Brent are taken to the Brent Car Pound which is located at: Unit 20-22, Whitby Avenue, Park Royal, NW10 7SF.

PCN Appeals and Representations

The Council seeks to provide a transparent and fair parking enforcement service. Motorists who feel that they have been unfairly issued with a Penalty Charge Notice may contest the charge. All representations must be made in writing.

The Council has a dedicated and qualified specialist team who consider each case based upon its own merits. All formal correspondence is handled within the statutory time periods allowed for response.

All Appeals Officers undertake training to NVQ Level 3 standard in Notice Processing. Training is also provided in statutory processes, telephone skills as well as team leader and supervisor training. Continually improving the standards of the service provided in Brent is a priority towards which we constantly strive.

The council's web-based service allows customers to view specific details about PCNs they have received, submit a challenge or representation, monitor the progress of the representation, view photos of the incident, and make payments. This provides access to sufficient information to enable motorists to make an informed decision about whether or not to appeal the PCN.

Should a motorist remain unhappy with our final decision, they may make an appeal to the independent appeals service, the Environment and Traffic Adjudicators, who will make an impartial decision based upon the merits of the case in question.

Environment and Traffic Adjudicators Data

The figures published by the Environment and Traffic Adjudicators (ETA) for 2020-21 represent an improvement in the council's record at independent appeal tribunals.

Of the 158,789 PCNs issued, 623 cases were referred to ETA. A total of 210 appeals were allowed or not contested, a significant decrease in the number of appeals that were upheld by ETA for the third consecutive year.

The low proportion of appeals referred to ETA demonstrates increasing motorist confidence in the quality of appeal decisions made by the Council's own Notice Processing team. In addition, the reduction in the number of appeals upheld by ETA demonstrates the impact that the Notice processing team and our ETA Liaison Officer are having.

We intend to continue to focus on reducing the proportion of appeals which are not contested. The Parking team is seeking to address issues of quality, and to ensure that independent appeals are provided with comprehensive evidence from the council. The council is now represented at specific tribunal hearings where key appeals are being heard.

London Tribunals Reports

The previous annual reports by the Chief Parking Adjudicator: 'Parking and Traffic Adjudicators' annual report' and appeal figures for all London Authorities: 'Parking and Traffic Appeal Statistics'; can be found on the London Tribunals website at:

<http://www.londontribunals.gov.uk/about/annual-reports-and-appeal-statistics>

Debt Recovery

Of the 158,789 PCNs issued in 2020-2021, 66% was paid as at 31st March 2021. The percentage of PCNs issued in 2020/21 which will be paid by March 2022 is expected to rise to at least 72%.

Resolution of a PCN can take anything up to three years, though the great majority are either paid or appealed within the first 12 months following the issuance of the PCN. A proportion of PCNs will not be collected. This includes all successful PCN appeals, some of which are not resolved until the independent tribunal stage.

In recent years there have been improvements in the quality of PCNs issued and in the collection of outstanding debt. This is due to a better standard of evidence collected to support PCNs, improvements in PCN processing, and a closer relationship with the council's Enforcement Agents (bailiffs) led by our dedicated Debt Recovery Officer.

Financial Information

An important purpose of the Annual Report is to meet a key requirement set out in the 2015 Statutory Guidance issued under the Traffic Management Act 2004. This is to provide financial information relating to all aspects of parking enforcement operations including the number of PCNs issued, the number of PCNs paid, the income and expenditure related to the enforcement activities recorded in the Parking Account, and how the surplus on the Account has been, or will be spent.

The reduction in motoring and parking activity caused by lockdowns is reflected in the reduced financial turnover recorded in the Parking Account.

Income and Expenditure Summary 2020-2021

	2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-21	
	Expenditure (£000)	Income (£000)	Expenditure (£000)	Income (£000)	Expenditure (£000)	Income (£000)
Parking Administration	1,798	-249	1,650	-	1,597	-
Parking Projects	450	-	199	-	98	-
On-Street Parking	216	-4,530	239	-4,513	222	-2,884
Off-Street Car Parks	77	-544	94	-530	83	-184
Parking Enforcement ¹	5,890	-15,913	6,437	-16,813	6,331	-14,145
London Bus Initiative	123	-	110	-	248	-
Total	8,554	-21,236	8,729	-21,856	8,580	-17,213
Net Surplus		-12,682		-13,127		-8,633

¹Parking enforcement includes combined revenue from parking suspensions, dispensations, issuance of all permits and revenue from Penalty Charge Notice's.

Parking Account Surplus

The use of any surplus in the parking account is governed by Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The legislation specifies how the surplus may be used. The Council has designated the surplus to meet the cost of public passenger transport services.

The whole £8.633m net surplus on the parking account in 2020-21 has been allocated to assist in meeting the cost of concessionary fares: The London 'Freedom Pass'.

The surplus generated does not cover the full expenditure that the Council incurred on concessionary fares. The total cost to the council for offering this service to residents of Brent in 2020-21 was £15.8m; the Parking Account surplus contributed over half towards this cost.

Customer Care

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is key to the delivery of parking services. With a growing move to online and self-service parking account management services, we continue to make enhancements to the online booking system and to online PCN representations. More information is now available on the Parking pages of the Council's website, about on-street and off-street parking provisions, products, services and general information, than was previously available. Careful care and attention has also been taken to ensure navigation around the site is simple and intuitive.

Customer Complaints

The Parking Service registered 64 stage 1 complaints in 2020-21, compared to 119 in 2019-20.

Of the 64 complaints received, 61 were responded to within the Council's customer care deadline. The majority of complaints were resolved at the first stage, investigated and resolved by the Parking service itself.

Customers who remain dissatisfied after their complaint has been considered by the Parking service can request a final review on behalf of the Council's Chief Executive. Of the 64 complaints received, 6 complaints were escalated to final review.

Brent Council's customer care policy includes commitments to: acknowledge written enquires within five working days; respond to written enquiries within 10 working days; respond to all stage 1 complaints within 20 working days; and respond to all stage 2 complaints within 30 working days.

Useful Links

London Borough of Brent Website

www.brent.gov.uk

Brent Councils Parking Home Page

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/parking/>

London Borough of Brent Parking Policy 2020

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/your-council/about-brent-council/council-structure-and-how-we-work/strategies-and-plans/parking-strategy/>

London Borough of Brent Previous Year's Parking Annual Reports

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/your-council/transparency-in-brent/performance-and-spending/council-performance/parking-service-annual-report/>

London Councils Parking Services

<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/parking-services>

The Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions

<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:GhpNioar0usJ:https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/33315+&cd=12&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk&client=firefox-b-e>

List of Moving Traffic Contraventions and the associated traffic signs

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/239537/Highway%20Code%20list%20of%20enforceable%20moving%20traffic%20contraventions.pdf>

List of Footways where parking is permitted in Brent

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/parking/other-parking-services/footway-parking/>

Updates to the London Borough of Brent website may result in some of the links not directing you to the intended page. If you receive a message to say 'page not found', please visit www.brent.gov.uk and search the related topic or area of interest.