

Annual Report 2009/10

Parking and Traffic Enforcement

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1. Introduction

The annual report sets out some of the facts and figures relating to Newham's parking and traffic enforcement activity.

At many locations demand for parking in Newham far outstrips the existing supply of available kerb space and the Council has to ensure that it maintains a manageable balance between the different demands of residents, their visitors, businesses, disabled residents, disabled visitors and members of the wider public who choose Newham to shop and socialise.

These needs also have to be balanced with the statutory duty placed on the Council to keep traffic moving, reducing unsafe and obstructive parking, ensuring the safety of pedestrians, motorists and cyclists, and keeping the highways and roads clear on all public transport routes.

Parking and traffic enforcement is often portrayed in the media in a controversial light. However, effective, efficient, fair and consistent parking enforcement is essential to ensuring improved traffic flow, bus and public service journey times as well as pedestrian and motorist safety. Despite the popular misconception, parking enforcement is not about revenue collection. It is about achieving compliance so that the targets set out above can be achieved. While it may seem unfair to anyone who has received a penalty charge notice, it is equally frustrating for those who are affected by inconsiderate parking choices made by motorists.

While the Council does receive representations from those who feel they have wrongly received a penalty charge notice, it also receives many requests/complaints from residents about vehicles parked in contravention of parking regulations. Examples of this are vehicles parked on the footway forcing pedestrians onto the road, or vehicles blocking a resident's driveway. Another common enquiry relates to vehicles that park on street corners, creating a safety hazard for other motorists. Our residents and businesses are also quite rightly concerned as to whether there is sufficient enforcement to protect parking spaces paid for and reserved for themselves and their visitors by virtue of the parking permit scheme that applies within Newham's controlled parking zones. The Parking and Traffic Enforcement team is required to set priorities in order to balance the needs of all its customers and stakeholders.

Parking enforcement is usually measured and portrayed in the media by the number of penalty charges issued. Constant claims are made about ever increasing numbers, league tables of top issuers and the setting of targets. However, Newham's target is not to use penalty charges as a means to generate revenue but rather to educate the motorist and to increase compliance which benefits all of Newham's residents, businesses and visitors to the borough.

While it is accepted that there will always be motorists who refuse to comply with the parking restrictions that apply within Newham, the intention is to ensure that all penalty charge notices are issued in line with Newham's current enforcement policies which are considered to be both fair and consistent. The aim is to have less penalty charges issued due to improved compliance while ensuring that the recovery rate for those penalty charges that are issued increases year on year because of better quality and accuracy.

It is hoped that the report will give residents, businesses and visitors to the borough the opportunity to judge for themselves whether we are meeting the high standards that we have set ourselves on their behalf.

2. The 'Civil Traffic Enforcement and Associated Services' Contract

On 26 June 2009 the Council awarded the above contract to Mouchel Ltd. The innovative approach of one company providing both enforcement and IT allows the Council to deliver a high quality enforcement service that incorporates the latest parking IT software solutions and state of the art handheld computer equipment.

The contract includes provision of:

- a parking and traffic enforcement service;
- a vehicle removal and pound service;
- Stratford Multi-Storey Car Park management;
- civil enforcement officer hardware and software;
- back office notice processing and permit software; and
- a document management service.

3. Service Performance

3.1 Penalty charge notice issue statistics

Issue statistics are presented in two ways: by valid penalty charges issued; and by collectable penalty charges issued. Valid penalty charges exclude those that were spoilt or were warning notices. Collectable penalty charge are valid penalty charges minus those charges that are impossible to collect. An example of this is where the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) have no keeper/owner information for an offending vehicle rendering it impossible to pursue.

Table 3.1.1 – Collectible penalty charge issue statistic comparison

Year	Bus lane	CCTV parking	Moving traffic	On/off street	Total issued
2007/08	14,432	93,595	25,114	83,006	216,147
2008/09	12,909	84,369	26,431	92,571	216,280
2009/10	6,152	71,974	24,416	112,129	214,671

Overall the total issuance is slightly less than the previous two financial years. However, there was a noticeable drop in bus lane issuance, which was largely due to compliance. Ultimately the Council's goal is to achieve 100 percent compliance with parking and traffic restrictions and this drop of more than 50 percent is therefore significant as it represents a big step towards achieving this in bus lanes.

Whilst drivers are complying with bus lane restrictions, the same cannot be said of parking restrictions enforced by civil enforcement officers on the street. It is difficult to understand why drivers continue to flout these regulations but it would appear that they are still prepared to 'take a chance' in locations that they know are not enforced by cameras.

3.2 Recovery rates

Recovery rates are calculated as a percentage of how many penalty charges have been paid against how many were issued.

The information below shows recovery rates for the last three financial years. Generally, a high proportion of recovery is completed after six months of issue, although in some circumstances payments may still be collected up to 18 months after issue - sometimes longer.

Table 3.2.1 – Recovery rate comparison

Year	Bus lane	CCTV parking	Moving traffic	On/off street	Overall
2007/08	60.6%	64.7%	68.7%	63.1%	64.3%
2008/09	67.7%	62.5%	67.5%	67.0%	65.3%
2009/10	52.9%	63.1%	63.0%	60.1%	61.3%

3.3 Representations and associated correspondence

There are primarily two forms of representation available to the customer an informal challenge (made before a formal notice has been issued) or a formal representation (made after a formal notice has been issued).

Table 3.3.1 – Informal challenges and formal representations received in 2009/10

Month	Number of collectible PCNs issued	Number of informal challenges	% of PCNs receiving informal challenges	Number of formal representations	% of PCNs receiving formal representations
Apr-09	18,520	1,768	9.5%	3,111	16.8%
May-09	19,266	1,276	6.6%	2,427	12.6%
Jun-09	19,635	1,356	6.9%	2,019	10.3%
Jul-09	19,557	1,623	8.3%	1,726	8.8%
Aug-09	17,433	1,081	6.2%	1,935	11.1%
Sep-09	16,329	971	5.9%	1,701	10.4%
Oct-09	17,090	1,188	7.0%	1,981	11.6%
Nov-09	16,614	1,241	7.5%	2,337	14.1%
Dec-09	15,422	1,293	8.4%	1,633	10.6%
Jan-10	16,327	1,177	7.2%	1,632	10.0%
Feb-10	17,511	1,686	9.6%	1,789	10.2%
Mar-10	20,967	1,378	6.6%	3,047	14.5%
Total	214,671	16,038	7.5%	25,338	11.8%

3.4 Appeals to the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service

If a customer's formal representation is rejected they have the right to appeal to the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service. The cost of making the appeal is met by the local authority.

Table 3.4.1 – On/off street parking appeal statistics 2007/08 to 2009/10

Year	Appeals received	Statutory declarations received	Total completed by PATAS	Appeals allowed	% of appeals allowed
2007/08	1,081	162	1,021	586	57%
2008/09	1,704	141	1,442	881	61%
2009/10	2110	287	2008	1317	66%

Table 3.4.2 – Bus lane statistics 2007/08 to 2009/10

Year	Appeals received	Statutory declarations received	Total completed by PATAS	Appeals allowed	% of appeals allowed
2007/08	106	21	124	63	51%
2008/09	137	14	111	88	79%
2009/10	58	4	78	64	82%

Table 3.4.3 – Moving traffic statistics 2007/08 to 2009/10

Year	Appeals received	Statutory declarations received	Total completed by PATAS	Appeals allowed	% of appeals allowed
2007/08	134	24	125	40	32%
2008/09	172	23	173	83	48%
2009/10	240	18	231	118	51%

3.5 Removals

In 2009/10 the Council removed 2,453 vehicles as a result of parking contraventions, an average of 204 per month. Special attention is paid to vehicles that have incorrectly parked in disabled bays and to persistent evaders (vehicles with three or more outstanding penalty charges past the representation stage).

Table 3.5.1 – Removal statistics 2009/10

Month	Requests	Total removals	Removals from formal disabled bays	Removals which are persistent evaders	Removal truck hours
Apr-09	1,401	205	18	41	480
May-09	1,212	206	12	33	480
Jun-09	1,265	236	14	42	480
Jul-09	1,317	189	13	30	642
Aug-09	1,036	179	7	38	528
Sep-09	626	193	15	44	527
Oct-09	1,134	234	17	61	585
Nov-09	1,168	238	13	48	588
Dec-09	1,098	182	13	35	519
Jan-10	884	193	20	37	436
Feb-10	955	172	15	71	492
Mar-10	1,131	226	14	106	596
Total	13,227	2,453	171	586	6,353

3.6 Cancellations

Penalty charges are inevitably cancelled from time to time. However, there has been a significant improvement in the Council's penalty charge cancellation rate over the last three years.

Table 3.6.1 – Cancellation rate for the last three years

Year	Percentage of PCNs cancelled (cancellation rate)
2007/08	14%
2008/09	11%
2009/10	9%

3.7 Pay and display

The Council generated £1.3 million from on-street pay and display machines located in seven of the borough's controlled parking zones. The East Ham (34%), Upton Park (26%) and Stratford (26%) controlled parking zones generated the majority of this money.

Table 3.7.1 – Pay and display income by controlled parking zone, 2009/10

Controlled parking zone	2009/10 (£)
East Ham	447k
Forest Gate	65k
Little Ilford	32k
Manor Park	70k
Ruskin	20k
Stratford	332k
Upton Park	334k
Total	1.3m

3.8 Car parks

The Council receives income from seven car parks (a total of 1,260 off street parking spaces), which the Parking and Traffic Enforcement team manage and maintain.

Stratford Multi-Storey Car Park is the Council's only 'pay on foot' car park and due to its position close to Stratford tube and train services, the Olympic development site and the Mall shopping centre achieves the highest income of all Council car parks. In 2009/10 this amounted to £796k, representing over half of the combined income from Council managed car parks.

Table 3.8.1 – Income by car park, 2009/10

Car Park	2009/10 (£)
Madge Gill	87k
Queen's Market	154k
St. John's (East and West)	221k
Salway Road	100k
Settle Point	13k
Shaftesbury Road	176k
Stratford multi-storey	796k
Total	1.5m

3.9 Permits

The Council issues a number of different permits in accordance with local traffic management orders. Permits can be purchased in any of the Council's local service centres or by post.

Table 3.9.1 – Permit charges, 2009/10

Permit type	Permit charge
1st resident	Free
2nd resident	£30 per annum
3rd and subsequent resident	£50 per annum
Disabled resident	Free
Carers permit	£10 per annum
Courtesy car	£5 per fortnight
Trade 1 day	£2 per day
Trade 1 week	£10 per week
Visitors (book of 10)	£3
Business (quarterly)	£50
Business (6mths)	£100
Business (yearly)	£200
Access	Free
Rathbone Market	Free

Table 3.9.2 – Permit issue statistics, 2009/10

Permit type	Number issued
Resident 1 st	13,500
Resident 2 nd	2,888
Resident 3 rd	567
Resident courtesy	454
Disabled resident	650
Carer	86
Business (qtr)	197
Business (half)	277
Business (annual)	1,819
Business courtesy	22
Trade (daily)	157
Trade (weekly)	401
High Street North access	58
WHUFC access	8
Rathbone Market	20
Visitor	35,122
Total	56,226

3.10 Complaints and Member enquiries

There is a clear distinction between a challenge or representation against a penalty charge and a complaint that relates to the manner in which a penalty charge was issued and/or handled by the Council. It is therefore encouraging that the number of official complaints is very low in comparison to the overall number of penalty charges issued.

The complaints received range from perceived poor conduct of staff to accusations that the correct procedures have not been applied. Such complaints are investigated by officers who are detached from issuing tickets or handling representations. This independent structure ensures that an appropriate level of unbiased scrutiny is applied.

The Council has target times for responding to both complaints and Member enquiries. The statistics below demonstrate a near perfect record in meeting these targets.

Table 3.10.1 – Complaints and Member enquiries statistics for 2009/10

Month	Total number of Members enquires and complaints	Member enquiries received	Member enquiries target achieved	% Member enquiries replied to in target time	First stage complaints received	First stage complaints achieved	% public complaints replied to in target time
Apr-09	36	25	24	96%	11	11	100%
May-09	46	31	31	100%	15	15	100%
Jun-09	44	30	30	100%	14	14	100%
Jul-09	37	28	28	100%	9	9	100%
Aug-09	30	19	19	100%	11	11	100%
Sep-09	36	19	19	100%	17	17	100%
Oct-09	78	39	39	100%	39	39	100%
Nov-09	67	28	28	100%	39	39	100%
Dec-09	45	13	13	100%	32	32	100%
Jan-10	66	29	29	100%	37	37	100%
Feb-10	67	26	26	100%	41	41	100%
Mar-10	89	44	44	100%	45	45	100%
Total	641	331	330	99.7%	310	310	100%

3.11 Freedom of Information requests and Data Protection requests

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, the Parking and Traffic Enforcement team are required to action legitimate requests for information in accordance with the legislation mentioned above.

The Council has 20 days to complete Freedom of Information requests and 40 days to complete Data Protection requests.

Table 3.11.1 – Freedom of Information and Data Protection statistics, 2009/10

Month	Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received	% FOI Enquiry Target Achieved (20 days)	Data Protection Act (DPA) requests	% DPA target achieved (40 days)
Apr-09	2	100%	0	100%
May-09	4	100%	1	100%
Jun-09	8	100%	0	100%
Jul-09	0	100%	2	100%
Aug-09	6	100%	1	100%
Sep-09	6	100%	2	100%
Oct-09	3	100%	3	100%
Nov-09	5	100%	0	100%
Dec-09	5	100%	6	100%
Jan-10	3	100%	2	100%
Feb-10	6	100%	4	100%
Mar-10	11	100%	1	100%
Total	59	100%	22	100%

Much the same as 2008/09, every single request was completed within the designated deadline.

4. Financial Summary

4.1 Income

Table 4.1.1 – Parking and traffic enforcement income 2009/10

Item	Income (£)
Enforcement	8,238,613
Pay and display, permits	1,899,641
Total income	10,138,254

4.2 Expenditure

Table 4.2.1 – Parking and traffic enforcement expenditure 2009/10

Item	Expenditure (£)
Employee costs	-2,408,421
Premises	-336,661
Supplies and services	-382,132
Third party payments	-3,836,992
Support services	-1,710,856
Capital financing	-219,098
Total expenditure	-8,894,160
Surplus	1,244,094

4.3 Application of surplus and balance

Table 4.3.1 – Parking and traffic enforcement application of surplus 2009/10

Item	Expenditure (£)
Network management	-521,013
Traffic, Transportation and Safety	-261,972
School Crossing Patrols	-461,109
Total expenditure	-1,244,094
Balance	0

5. Further information

For further information, please write to:

London Borough of Newham
Parking and Traffic Enforcement
Newham Dockside
1000 Dockside Road
London
E16 2QU