

Cabinet

23 JULY 2012

**CABINET MEMBER
FOR TRANSPORT
AND TECHNICAL
SERVICES**

*Councillor Victoria
Brocklebank-Fowler*

**PROPOSAL FOR GRADUATED PARKING
SUSPENSION CHARGES 2012**

**Wards:
All**

Presently there is a standard charge for suspending a parking bay of £35 per day. This report proposes the introduction of a graduated charging rates for parking suspensions in H&F.

With the charges proposed in recommendation 1, if works last for example for 8 days, then the first 5 days would be charged at £40 and the last 3 days would be charged at £60.

The charges proposed in recommendation 2 are to encourage utilities to plan their works so that suspensions for traffic flow reasons are minimised and that work where such suspensions are utilised are carried out as quickly as possible.

The charges proposed in recommendation 3 are to encourage utility companies to start work on the first day of work as this will be the only day when the space will be guaranteed to be clear and also enables the space to be returned to use as soon as the work has finished.

CONTRIBUTORS

DF
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**HAS A EIA BEEN
COMPLETED?
N/A**

**HAS THE REPORT
CONTENT BEEN
RISK ASSESSED?
YES**

Recommendations:

- 1. That all applicants for parking suspensions be charged on a graduated basis, with £40 per space per day (for those lasting between 1 and 5 days), £60 per space per day (for those lasting between 6 and 42 days), and £80 per space per day (for those lasting for 43 days or more).**
- 2. That utilities companies be charged the full cost for suspensions that they request for traffic management/flow reasons, that is, where works on one side of the street means that there is not enough space for traffic to pass safely so that bays on both sides of the street are suspended.**
- 3. That suspensions requested by utility companies for road works be charged only for the first day, in order to reserve the space.**

- 4. That the Council charges utility companies for the full cost of traffic flow suspensions (for those bays suspended not directly for road works) from 5 November 2012.**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Council suspends parking bays for a variety of reasons including facilitating building works, furniture removals, utility and highways works, filming and special events.
- 1.2. Currently the price of suspending a parking bay is £35 per day, where a parking bay is considered to be a 5 metre stretch of bay. There is also a fee of £35 for each amendment or cancellation to an existing parking suspension. Amendments and cancellations to existing parking suspensions are not be processed until this fee is paid.
- 1.3. Residents often complain about the number of suspensions of parking suspensions, especially long-term suspensions, as it reduces the available parking spaces, thereby increasing parking stress, and arguably adding to congestion and pollution. It can also often adversely affects the expeditious movement of traffic, including pedestrians.
- 1.4. As a result, officers propose introducing a graduated structure for suspensions fees to the following:
 - £40 per space per day for suspensions lasting between one and five days (equal to maximum cost of pay & display in the borough + 10%);
 - £60 per space per day for suspensions lasting between six and 42 days (cost above i.e. £40, + 50%);
 - £80 per space per day for suspensions lasting for 43 days or more (cost above i.e. £60, +33%).
- 1.5. This change in the fee structure is designed to reduce the number and length of parking suspensions unnecessarily and discourage the long term use of suspended bays so that the expeditious movement of traffic is maintained and the maximum number of parking bays provided whenever possible. Indications from the neighbouring Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, who employ this graduated structure, indicates that the policy has been effective. RBKC introduced the scheme in two phases – firstly to residents and businesses, and then phased in for utilities companies.

2. SUSPENSIONS RELATING TO UTILITIES COMPANIES

- 2.1. The Council is a member of the London Permit Scheme, which means that utility companies are required to obtain a permit from the Council before they can begin work on-street. The Council is allowed to attach conditions to permits to ensure the works are carried out in a safe manner and in the least disruptive way. One of the conditions that we use regularly stipulates that the works promoter must maintain a minimum road width whilst carrying out the works.

- 2.2. If a road is narrow, and the road works extend further from the kerb than the parking bays being suspended, the utility company may need to suspend bays on both sides of the road; one suspension would clear space on the road for the road works itself and the other would allow traffic to flow past the site. Therefore utility works in narrow roads, which require traffic flow suspensions, are far more disruptive to residents as many more bays are suspended than would be the case if the same work was taking place on a wide road. This adversely impacts the expeditious movement of traffic.
- 2.3. If the utility company breaches a permit condition the Council may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) which will cost the utility company £120 (or £80 if paid within 28 calendar days) or prosecute the company via the magistrates' court. The Council carries out inspections of work sites to assess whether permit conditions are being adhered to. We also respond to all complaints from residents regarding problem work sites.
- 2.4. For bays suspended for traffic flow reasons, the Council advertises the suspension for the expected full duration of works on-street. This means that if the works finish before the advertised end date of the suspension, the bay will still be out of use, unless the utility company informs the Council that they have finished works early. Currently, because utility companies pay only for the first day, they have no incentive either to minimise the length of their works or to tell us if they do finish early thereby directly impacting the expeditious movement of traffic and also adversely impacting the available number of parking bays. By introducing a graduated pricing structure there is more of an incentive for the Council to be informed of works being completed in a shorter space of time and for works to be better planned.
- 2.5. In 2010/11, the Council issued 5229 chargeable suspensions. Of these suspensions, 1461 were granted to utility companies, or 28% of all suspensions.
- 2.6. If the Council charged utility companies the full cost of traffic flow suspensions, we would need to change our process for administering suspensions and also changes to the IT system, which records and manages suspensions, would also need to be made in order to calculate the overall charge that is applied to those seeking parking suspensions.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Officers propose to:
 - charge all applicants for parking suspensions on a graduated basis, with £40 per space per day (for those lasting between 1 and 5 days), £60 per space per day (for those lasting between 6 and 42 days), and £80 per space per day (for those lasting for 43 days or more). Clearly with these charges, for example, if works last for 8 days, then the first 5 days would be charged at £40 and the last 3

days would be charged at £60;

- charge utilities companies the full cost for suspensions that they request for traffic management/flow reasons, that is, where works on one side of the street means that there is not enough space for traffic to pass safely so that bays on both sides of the street are suspended. This is to encourage utilities to plan their works so that suspensions for traffic flow reasons are minimised and that work where such suspensions are utilised are carried out as quickly as possible;
- charge utilities companies only for the first day for parking suspensions where there are road works involved on that particular section of highway that necessitate the breaking out of the carriageway. For example, for excavations the Council would charge only for the first day in order to reserve the space. This is to encourage utility companies to turn up on the first day of work as this will be the only day when the space will be guaranteed to be clear and also enables the space to be returned to use as soon as the work has finished;
- that the Council charges utility companies for the full cost of traffic flow suspensions (for those bays suspended not directly for road works) from 5 November 2012.

3.2 The proposed changes should result in a reduction in the total duration of suspensions made for traffic flow reasons. This will help facilitate the safe and expeditious movement of traffic the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities under our duty of Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, and will help meet the requirements of the Network Management Duty as set out in Part 2 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. This proposal can also form part of the measures taken by the Council for the “Keep H & F moving” campaign. The proposal will also ensure that the maximum number of parking bays provided whenever possible.

4. TIMESCALES & COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSALS

4.1 The main costs relating to the implementation of the proposals set out in section 3.1 relate to the IT infrastructure. The IT system is currently under review and the estimated cost for our requirements is £7,500 (subject to approval), within the proposal is the incorporation of the graduated payments structure. The estimated completion date for the project is 31 October 2012.

4.2 There will also be additional costs related to a notification street notice which will be placed around the borough as a supplementary measure to inform all stakeholders of the changes being introduced. The associated cost for this will be £700. There are no changes being made to the legal Traffic Management Order as the Order states that any suspension when implemented, requires that the person carrying out the suspension (Council Officer) places a traffic sign indicating the use of that parking place is suspended.

5. NOTIFYING THOSE AFFECTED

- 5.1 If agreed, the general public and utility companies will be notified of the proposals included in this report prior to implementing the changes via notice in the Chronicle newspaper.
- 5.2 Companies that regularly request suspensions would need to be given ample prior notification so that their works do not overlap the periods before and after the implementation of the changes, if the proposals are agreed.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1. With a graduated parking suspensions charging structure in place there is the slight risk of an increased number of incidents of building materials being stored on the footway or in frontage gardens to avoid paying for the higher suspension charges for parking bays. As a result there may be an increase in the number of StreetScene Enforcement inspections required, in which case there would be an associated impact on the resource requirements of the Environment, Leisure and Residents Services department.
- 6.2. In order to mitigate the identified risk, Council officers suggest that a communications strategy is implemented to ensure that when the graduated suspensions charging structure is publicised, reference is also made to the fact that the Council will also carry out enforcement action against any individuals storing material on the public highway.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is considered that the proposals in this report will have little or no adverse equality impact.

8. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- 8.1 Implementation of the scheme will require an additional upgrade to the IT system, which will be added to. The estimated cost of this work will be £7,500 and will be funded from existing revenue budgets for HFBP IT costs.
- 8.2 Graduated charges would result in increased income from suspension charges. This, however, would be offset by an expected reduction in volumes of suspension for longer time periods.parking bay
- 8.3 The table below indicates the income that would be generated if graduated suspension charges were introduced. This uses the data available for Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec 2011) of this financial year and uses this data to forecast for a full year. The table indicates the Council

would receive £263,308 in additional income (even with a fairly generous estimation of reduced demand).

Parking Bay Suspensions: Graduated Charging

Figures from Quarter 3 2011/12 (October - December 2011)

Category of Days	Number of Bay Days (Q3 2011/12)	Income from Current Charging (Q3 2011/12)	Income if graduated charging introduced (Q3 2011/12)	Additional Income from Graduated Pricing (Q3 2011/12)	Full Year Estimated Increase in Income (no reduction in demand)	Estimated Reduction in demand	Full Year Estimate (with reduction in demand)
1-5 days	4,213	£147,630	£168,520	£20,890	£83,560	20%	£66,848
6-42 days	3,563	£119,455	£194,480	£75,025	£300,100	40%	£180,060
43 days+	374	£13,090	£23,340	£10,250	£41,000	60%	£16,400
Grand Total	8,150	£280,175	£386,340	£106,165	£424,660		£263,308

9. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR FOR LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

9.1 The Council is under a number of statutory duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. In essence, the Council must exercise its functions (in this case considering requests and suspending provisions under a road traffic order regulating a parking bay) as far as practicable to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities.

9.2 The amount of the charge the Council may set for considering any request for the suspension of a parking bay is at the Council's discretion. It must be a reasonable charge and the Council must have regard to the cost to the Council of dealing with the matter. The charge may be above the costs to be incurred by the Council and it would be appropriate to make such a charge if it is considered necessary and proportionate in order to meet its duties set out above, and as explained in the body of the report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext of holder of file/copy	Department/ Location
1.	Graduated Parking Suspensions Charges	Naveed Ahmed x1418	Transport & Technical Services
CONTACT OFFICER: Naveed Ahmed		NAME: Naveed Ahmed EXT. 1418	