

## APPENDIX 1 LOCAL AUTHORITY BENCHMARKING

### 1. INVESTIGATIONS AND FINDINGS

1.1. We conducted a benchmarking exercise with nearby Councils with a view to identify best practices and trends to facilitate service improvements in our own garage service. The key findings were as follows:

1.1.1. Councils which rent garages to out of borough customers and permit lettings for storage have considerably lower void rates than those who don't. All Councils that allow storage changed their policy in recent years as part of a void reduction strategy, and all confirmed their lettings increased as a result.

1.1.2. All Councils that allow storage also let garages to private sector customers but in all cases Council tenants and leaseholders are given priority.

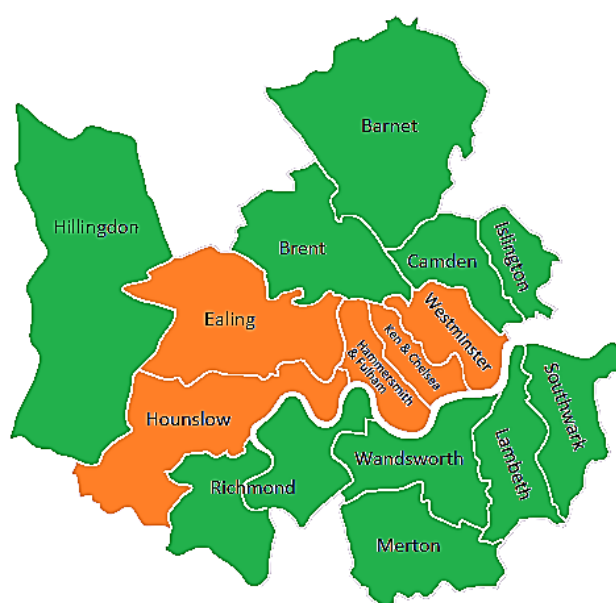
1.1.3. All performing Councils actively advertise their voids, invest in their stock, promptly repair garages, and are proactively redeveloping or selling garage sites where occupation levels are low or the site is in disrepair.

1.1.4. All performing Councils have a good online offering geared towards lettings with online application forms and eGis mapping showing the location and availability of their sites.

1.1.5. Most Councils that allow storage have also simplified the rental charges. The majority have one standard price for their garages irrespective of size. This has helped reduce waste in managing complicated pricing structures.

1.1.6. All performing Councils have a dedicated in house repairs resource for minor repairs, lock changes and clearances. This has helped reduce the timescales involved in making vacant units available to rent again.

1.2. The map below provides a visual representation of nearby Councils which are leasing garages for storage and leasing garages to out of borough customers. The boroughs highlighted in green all rent garages for storage and to out of borough residents. Those highlighted in orange including Hammersmith and Fulham Council don't.



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**2. BENCHMARKING DATA**

<b>Hammersmith and Fulham Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
1209	27%	No	No	£23.08 £35.00
When compared to those boroughs that do not let garages for storage LBHF is performing relatively well with a 27% void rate, but the benchmarking exercise has shown that amending the policy to permit storage and lettings to out of borough customers will reduce the void rate further. The proposal to charge non-residents £50 per week to rent a garage is also comparable to inner London Councils.				

<b>Kensington and Chelsea</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
400	5%	No	No	£19.00 £57 Private
RBKC stock is in a reasonable condition. They repair/replace doors as and when required. They have no void reduction or refurbishment plans in place because the borough is affluent and demand for garages is very high.				

<b>Ealing Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
2481	61%	No	No	£13 Council £13 Private
Ealing is redeveloping some sites but they have no void reduction or refurbishment plans in place.				

<b>Hounslow Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
2500	50%	No	No	£12 Council £30 Private
Hounslow has no void reduction or refurbishment plans in place but are looking to redevelop some of their freestanding sites.				

<b>Lambeth Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
2258	1%	Yes	Yes	£12 Council £30 Private
Lambeth were running at a 60% void rate. To reduce the void rate, they changed the policy to permit storage, invested in the stock and hired a dedicated repairs/clearance in house resource. This helped reduce voids from 60% to 1%.				

<b>Southwark Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
7900	27%	Yes	Yes	£19 Council £27 Private
Southwark underwent a major garage refurbishment programme which reduced the void rate considerably. A large proportion of their voids are in the Aylesbury Estate area which is currently being redeveloped. Southwark attribute the high lettings to the added security brought forward using side hung steel doors in place of the traditional up and over door.				

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<b>Camden Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
2500	27%	Yes	Yes	£12 Council £36-£50 Private
Camden is undergoing a major refurbishment programme replacing up and over doors with side hung steel doors. They have also developed a fully integrated website whereby customers can identify and apply for a void garage online. This has helped release back office resources by channelling demand online.				

<b>Wandsworth Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
2700	32%	Yes	Yes	£22 Council £22 Private
Wandsworth actively invest in their stock and are redeveloping areas where there is low lettings or high disrepair.				

<b>Barnet Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
2500	%50	Yes	Yes	£18 Council £18 Private
Barnet changed their policy to storage two years ago. Demand for garages has been on the rise since and are now considering investing the stock as well as redeveloping low letting and disrepair sites.				

<b>Richmond Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
1200	35%	Yes	Yes	£18 Council £35 Private
Richmond rents over 55% of their garage stock to private customers. Their garages are inspected on a regular basis and any major works are added to the yearly refurbishment programme. A large proportion of their voids are in sites which are earmarked for redevelopment.				

<b>Islington Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
2900	30%	Yes	Yes	£30 Council £30 Private
Islington changed the policy to allow storage four years ago. They leased 200 garages for storage in year one and say demand for storage is rising.				

<b>Merton Council</b>				
<b>Stock</b>	<b>Void %</b>	<b>Storage</b>	<b>Non-Borough</b>	<b>Rental Prices</b>
5000	50%	Yes	Yes	£31 Council £31 Private
Merton are in the process of amending the licence agreement to allow storage. They are also selling and redeveloping under occupied sites.				