

1st floor
NLBP
23 October 2019
Our ref: 5659508

Thank you for your request received on 25 September 2019, for the following information:

I discovered quite shockingly whilst renewing my resident permit today (18/09/2019) that my annual fee for parking has increased by more than double.

Last year 2018 I believe I paid £85 to park my vehicle which was based also on Barnet Council's emission scale.

Can you advise me why my permit has increased by more then 100%? It is now more than double the cost and this is unaffordable. I am not sure if this is lawful.

Under FOI can you advise on the following:

- 1. Was a consultation conducted on price increases for resident permit parking?***
- 2. Why are charges based on emissions when the car is actually stationary and not moving and therefore not giving any emissions?***

My car is a Euro 6 emissions standard meaning it is within acceptable EU limits in terms of harmful emissions and therefore under the London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) would not charged.

- 3. Did Barnet Council contact affected residents to advise of the 100% and / or significant increase in resident parking permit fees?***

- 4. How can Barnet Council justify the payment scale on emissions? Is this lawful?***

- 5. How can Barnet Council justify the increase in price and that is lawful?***

- 6. Where is all this money going - streets are filthy, no street sanitation services? Then Barnet Council allow Capita to effectively steal £millions because of woeful financial governance and lack of controls?***

- 7. If I am unsatisfied and do not want to pay this resident fee or I wish to challenge this, please provide me the names and organisations I can contact.***

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

The council holds the information requested and the answers to your questions are below.

I discovered quite shockingly whilst renewing my resident permit today (18/09/2019) that my annual fee for parking has increased by more than double.

Last year 2018 I believe I paid £85 to park my vehicle which was based also on Barnet Council's emission scale.

Can you advise me why my permit has increased by more then 100%? It is now more than double the cost and this is unaffordable. I am not sure if this is lawful.

Under FOI can you advise on the following:

1. Was a consultation conducted on price increases for resident permit parking?

The consultation was advertised in a Notice of Variation of parking charges dated 13 June 2019. The notice was advertised in the local press.

2. Why are charges based on emissions when the car is actually stationary and not moving and therefore not giving any emissions?

My car is a Euro 6 emissions standard meaning it is within acceptable EU limits in terms of harmful emissions and therefore under the London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) would not charged.

Since 2014, permit prices have been based on the emissions (g/km CO₂) rating of the vehicle.

The current permit prices were implemented in September 2019, following a decision made by the Council's environment committee in March 2019. The new prices reflect the trend by vehicle manufacturers towards cleaner, lower emitting vehicles in response to environmental concerns and consumer demand. More refined emissions categories have been adopted which are aligned to the DVLA categories used to calculate vehicle tax rates, and reflect the wider changes to the vehicle market which has reduced the overall emissions profile.

The new categories are more progressive and better support the council's objectives to improve air quality by incentivising cleaner and zero emission vehicles. It brings some vehicles out of the lowest emissions categories of the previous charging structure so as to reflect the desire to continue to see the emissions profile improve over time. A discount on permit prices continues to be offered to vehicles with 7 passenger seats or more to reflect the traffic management reduction aim in keeping a potential additional vehicle off the road.

Since 2001, the entire borough has been designated an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This was due to the predicted exceedance of the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and the 24-hour mean objective for particulates (PM₁₀). Traffic along the main roads in the borough formed the primary source of the air pollutants. The new permit categories better support the Council's objectives to improve air quality by incentivising cleaner and zero emission vehicles.

3. Did Barnet Council contact affected residents to advise of the 100% and / or significant increase in resident parking permit fees?

The current resident permit prices were agreed at Environment Committee in March 2019 which is published on the website at this page

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=695&MId=9669&Ver=4>

The Council's parking permits webpage was updated in August to advise that permit prices were changing. The Council's call centre message was also updated to include this message.

The proposed changes to permit prices were advertised in a Notice of Variation of parking charges dated 13 June 2019.

The permit prices were advertised in The Barnet (Charged-for Parking Places) (Amendment No.65) dated 12 September 2019.

Notices were advertised in the local press.

4. How can Barnet Council justify the payment scale on emissions? Is this lawful?

Local authorities are permitted to charge for parking permits in accordance with sections 45 and 46 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act"). The Act sets out that provision can be made for special charges to be made for classes of vehicle. Classes of vehicle can be determined by, amongst other factors, engine capacity or type and vehicle emissions. The Act provides that charges may be set at the discretion of the authority, although statutory guidance confirms that charges should be proportionate and consistent with the aims of the authority's traffic management strategy.

5. How can Barnet Council justify the increase in price and that is lawful?

Not all permit categories have increased in price.

Local authorities are permitted to charge for parking permits in accordance with sections 45 and 46 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act"). The Act sets out that provision can be made for special charges to be made for classes of vehicle. Classes of vehicle can be determined by, amongst other factors, engine capacity or type and vehicle emissions. The Act provides that charges may be set at the discretion of the authority, although statutory guidance confirms that charges should be proportionate and consistent with the aims of the authority's traffic management strategy.

6. Where is all this money going - streets are filthy, no street sanitation services? Then Barnet Council allow Capita to effectively steal £millions because of woeful financial governance and lack of controls?

Authorities are required under section 55 of the Act to keep an account of income and expenditure relating to their on-street parking places. The Council publishes this as the Special Parking Account which is available to view online here:

<https://open.barnet.gov.uk/dataset/special-parking-account>

In accordance with the Act, any surplus revenue (i.e. left over after the costs of administration and enforcement of parking places have been paid) is used to fund road and footway improvement schemes, highway maintenance and concessionary travel in the borough.

7. If I am unsatisfied and do not want to pay this resident fee or I wish to challenge this, please provide me the names and organisations I can contact.

A complaint may be submitted via the Council's website here
<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/your-council/contact-council/complaints>

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.