

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15th December 2022

Officer Response to the reasons for Call-in:

Key Decision 5564, Changes to Controlled Parking Zone Permit Charges.

Reason for call-in
<p>1. It is not the right time to be increasing CPZ charges on hard working families during this current cost of living crisis. This is particularly true for motorists who need their cars to get to and from work. This includes teachers, nurses, doctors and other key workers who have no option but to use their cars. Due to Russian aggression against the heroic Ukrainian people fuel prices have also gone up and therefore the Council making this decision now is further proof the administration wants to penalise car users.</p>
Officer response
<p>The cost of permits has not increased for several years, since 2016 for residents permits and since 2011 for visitor vouchers and business permits. The full cost of operating CPZs has been examined in detail by Finance officers and charges are being set to recover these costs. This is a fair approach and consistent with other local authorities, ensuring that those that directly benefit from the service bear the cost.</p>

Reason for call-in
<p>2. This has nothing to do with finances as the report shows and is simply a political attack on motorists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Reference to London Plan (2021) – “The current London Plan includes policies relating to the management of car parking demand to encourage a shift to more sustainable modes. The Plan goes on to set out how private vehicle ownership should be addressed in spatial planning, by making it clear that low or car free development should be the norm and setting lower maximum car parking standards for new developments.”b. Mayor of London’s Transport Strategy (2018) – “the Mayor’s Transport Strategy made it clear that, in order to deliver this sustainably, the use of active and sustainable transport must be increased and overdependence on private vehicles reduced”c. Enfield Transport Plan (2019) – “encouraging sustainable and active travel”d. Climate Action Plan (2020) – “Limit the provision of car parking spaces on new developments in line with the New London Plan and better manage existing kerbside space.” The fundamentals of this report have nothing to do with new developments.
<p>The above within point 2 therefore contradicts Para. 15 of the report:</p>

“Taking into account the above policy framework, the key objectives of the review of charges are to:

- Ensure that the cost of operating CPZs are fully recovered.
- Help rebalance kerbside space so that streets are less vehicle dominated.
- Increase the proportion of trips made by active and sustainable modes in line with the Mayor of London’s Transport Strategy.
- Encourage a switch to vehicles which produce less pollutants and greenhouse gases while in use, which will support the carbon reduction targets in the Council’s Climate Action Plan.
- Provide consistent and clear charges for permits for residents CPZs.”

The Council is clearly confused as to the primary purpose of the report, is it to take cars off the road or to action paragraph 15 of the report? If the answer is the latter, then surely the Council can implement most of these changes without taking more money from hardworking residents. If all cars became electric would therefore charges fall?

Officer response

Control of parking is a well-established policy tool that can help achieve a number of strategic objectives relating to mode shift, air quality, road safety etc. It is also reasonable to set permit prices so that the full cost of providing CPZs is met by those that benefit from the service rather than being subsidized by residents that do not have a vehicle.

Permit prices for EVs have been kept low to provide an additional incentive for people to transfer away from more harmful petrol and diesel vehicles. As the number of EVs increases it is likely that all Councils will have to further review their approach to permit charges to ensure that schemes remain cost neutral.

Reason for call-in

3. There is no way the Council can make a decision without seeing the complete breakdown of responses to the alleged consultation.

Officer response

Consultation was carried out between December 2020 and February 2021 and generated 890 responses. A summary of the consultation is set out in paragraphs 16 and 17 of the report, and the associated table.

As a direct result of the consultation, a number of the proposals were subsequently amended:

- The link between permit price and engine size was retained (rather than being

linked to emissions). As a larger engine size will generally equate to a larger vehicle, this retains a connection between the price of the permit and the amount of kerb-side space occupied.

- The limit on the number of permits per household was not implemented
- The cap on the number of visitor vouchers has been removed
- The 25% uplift in price applies to individuals rather than households that want more than one permit.

The consultation results have been fully considered and have helped to shape the proposals set out in the report.

Reason for call-in

4. The new policy to charge more for additional cars is not sensible. If multiple people in the household each have a job that requires a car they are now being penalised for not being able to use alternate modes of transport.

Officer response

The original proposal to limit the number of permits per household is not being progressed as part of the current changes. The 25% uplift only applies to individuals that want more than one permit. For example, in a household comprising three adults, all three would be able to obtain a first permit at the lower rate.

Reason for call-in

EQIA Report

5. The Councils own EQIA report shows that in areas of higher deprivation there is more car usage therefore showing this policy would harm those least able to pay. It is true to say that some residents in these areas will have the CPZ permits free of charge already but that doesn't mean all will be in this position.

Officer response

Car ownership is lower in the more deprived parts of the Borough. However, housing density is generally higher in these areas and the concentration of vehicles over a given area may therefore be higher than in more suburban areas. This is illustrated in the charts in the EQIA attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The impact of the proposals on those disadvantaged due to socio-economic factors is set out in the EQIA. For those on low-income that have to use a car or van, it is acknowledged that proposals may have an impact, albeit relatively minor given that the additional cost associated with purchasing a permit is low compared to the cost of running a car.

As noted in the EQIA, most of the borough provides a good level of public transport

accessibility, providing a cost-effective alternative to car ownership. In addition, the Council is investing in improving cycle facilities across the borough, providing a healthy and cheap means of active travel.

Reason for call-in

6. The elderly will be disproportionately impacted – As the report states “Between 1995/1997 and 2020 the proportion of people aged 70+ holding a licence increased from 39% to 77%. We are aware that some older people with a pensionable income may have a fixed income and could potentially be disproportionality impacted by increases in CPZ costs”

Officer response

The purpose of the EQIA is ensure that proper consideration is given to the impact on protected groups. The EQIA notes that permit prices are a relatively small proportion of the cost of running a car when considering other running costs (insurance, fuel, maintenance etc.). Furthermore, as an affordable alternative to car ownership for residents, those over 60 are eligible for free travel across London’s bus, underground and rail services (as free local bus journeys nationally for those of pensionable age). On balance, it is not felt that the impact of the proposals on older people will be significant.

Reason for call-in

7. Pregnant women would be negatively impacted – As the report states “It is possible that an increase in permit prices could disproportionately negatively impact those who are pregnant, as they may find it difficult to walk short distances and as such rely on private vehicles for door-to-door transport”

Officer response

The purpose of the EQIA is ensure that proper consideration is given to the impact on protected groups. The EQIA notes the potential for the proposals to negatively impact pregnant women. However, it is also noted that permit prices are a relatively small proportion of the cost of running a car when considering other running costs (insurance, fuel, maintenance etc.). On balance, it is not felt that the impact of the proposals on pregnant women will be significant.

Reason for call-in

8. Those from an ethnic minority are likely to be negatively impacted – As the report states “It is possible that the uplift in permits for multiple cars registered at one house may have a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority communities. This is because minority ethnic groups in the UK have greater proportions of multigenerational households compared with the White ethnic group. Which may

mean that they are more likely to have multiple cars at one property”

Officer response

The purpose of the EQIA is ensure that proper consideration is given to the impact on protected groups. The EQIA notes the potential for the proposals to negatively impact people from certain ethnic groups on the basis that they may be more likely to comprise multi-generational households. However, this impact has been largely mitigated by the decision not to cap the number of permits per household and to only apply the 25% price uplift to individuals wanting more than one permit. Additionally, most of the borough provides a good level of public transport accessibility, providing a cost-effective alternative to car ownership. In addition, the Council is investing in improving cycle facilities across the borough, providing a healthy and cheap means of active travel.

On balance, it is not felt that the residual impact of the proposals on people from different ethnic groups will be significant. In addition, monitoring will be carried out to better understand the characteristics of permit holders.

Reason for call-in

9. This will harm those that are socio-economically disadvantaged – As the report states “The increase the cost of CPZ permits will affect all car users living in these zones and may have a disproportionate impact on those who are socio-economically disadvantaged”

Officer response

The purpose of the EQIA is ensure that proper consideration is given to the impact on protected groups. The EQIA notes the potential for the proposals to negatively impact on people on lower incomes. However, it is also noted that the cost of a permit is a relatively small proportion of the cost of running a car when considering other running costs (insurance, fuel, maintenance etc.). In addition, it is noted that most of the borough has a good level of public transport accessibility, providing a cost-effective alternative to car ownership. In addition, the Council is investing in improving cycle facilities across the borough, providing a healthy and cheap means of active travel.

Whilst acknowledging that the additional permit cost will impact on household budgets, this will be relatively minor in the context of the cost of running a car.