

City of Westminster: Parking Policy Review

Background and Information

Westminster's Duty and Responsibilities

All local authorities have a legal responsibility to manage the streets as effectively as possible – enshrined in the Traffic Management Act (2004). This means we have to balance the needs of all road users – whether residents or visitors, delivery vehicles or buses.

Westminster's Parking Policy Review

Our Parking Policy Review is the first time in ten years that we have taken a thorough look at the way in which we manage traffic in Westminster. We have looked at many aspects of travel in the City, including how much traffic flows through Westminster throughout the day and night, how busy our parking spaces are, and the public's views about travel in Westminster.

The proposals below are built on this evidence and will help us to keep Westminster moving in the coming decade.

What are we proposing?

After almost a year of investigation, analysis and consultation, Westminster published eight draft policy proposals in early May. These proposals are an attempt to mitigate and reduce the issues and changes highlighted during the review.

The eight draft policies are:

1. Extending hours of control in the West End on weekday evenings (Zones E & G);
2. Extending hours of control in the West End on Sundays (Zones E, F3 & G);
3. More marshalled taxi ranks and hubs;
4. Additional charges for second and third residents permits;
5. Introducing a visitor's parking permit scheme;
6. Providing a mechanism to allow communities to request changes to local parking arrangements
7. Improving waiting and loading provision in the West End
8. Keeping green transport issues under review

More detailed on each of these proposals can be found over the page.

What happens next?

After two rounds of consultation, over 20 meetings across the City, the sending of over 80,000 e-mails, letters to businesses, churches, residents associations and amenity societies, information posted through every letterbox in the borough and a large-scale parking summit in June, Westminster is now considering the feedback provided.

Council officers will publish recommended policies in late July, and the Council's cabinet will take a decision on the proposals on 1st August.

We have been consulting on 8 draft policy proposals

1. Extended Hours of Control in the West End on Weekday Evenings (Zones E & G) on an Experimental Basis

Parking controls in the West End currently finish at 6.30pm every weekday evening, meaning that any vehicle can park on pay-by-phone bays, shared use bays or single yellow lines after that point until 8.30am the next morning. Our parking occupancy survey shows that more than 70% of bays in the West End are now occupied during the evening, meaning that people will have to drive around for longer or may not even find a space at all. We are proposing to introduce charges as a way to free up more spaces and help resolve this problem.

2. Controlled Parking in the West End on Saturday and Sunday (Zones E, G & F3) on an Experimental Basis

A similar situation exists in the West End on Saturdays and Sundays. We know that after 11am on a Sunday, almost 90% of spaces in the West End are occupied. Outside these hours, motorists can occupy parking bays for extended periods of time, effectively reducing the turnover of available spaces, and in turn making it more difficult for people to find a convenient and appropriate place to park.

3. More Marshalled Taxi Ranks and Hubs

We know that many visitors to the West End come in by public transport, and they have benefitted from the significant investment in the transport system in recent years. We want to ensure that the taxi trade, an important part of London's transport mix, is also supported.

4. Additional Charges for Second and Third Resident Permits

Pressure on resident parking in Westminster is particularly intense. Although over the past two years we introduced over 1000 new residents parking spaces across Westminster, there remains a shortfall of resident parking spaces against demand. We are proposing to increase the charge for a second or third permit issued to the same household to try to mitigate this issue.

5. Introduce a visitor parking scheme

Many residents have explained that they want to allow visitors to park nearby as necessary, and this issue is particularly important to some of our most vulnerable residents. We therefore propose developing a visitor parking scheme that will provide concessions for residents' visitors, without causing undue stress on parking spaces or risking serious fraud problems.

6. Reviewing tariffs and controlled hours at the instigation of residents

Throughout the consultation process, some residents and resident groups have highlighted concerns about current arrangements for controlled hours and tariffs in their areas. We want to create a formal and transparent process for the future to respond to requests for changes.

7. Improved Waiting and Loading Provision in the West End

In order to thrive, the businesses of Westminster require servicing from a wide range of commercial delivery vehicles. This demand is particularly acute in the West End. We therefore propose to designate 'shared use' loading bays in Zones F and G of the West End, and provide additional 'loading pads, where vehicles can unload safely and conveniently.

8. Keep green transport initiatives under review

Westminster is required by law to seek ways to improve the air quality in the city. However, our survey shows mixed opinions about whether more provision for green transport is desirable or necessary. We therefore propose to keep the provision of green transport infrastructure under review and work hard to find proposals which win the support of local residents.