

# Parking Charges Policy

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## Introduction

Parking charges help to manage limited parking places to contribute to the accessibility of town centres and other areas with parking controls, supporting economic development, ensure efficient use of the kerbside and helping to improve air quality and promote active travel. This links closely with our Corporate Plan of caring for people, our places and the planet.

Charges for parking have been set and revised over a number of years in a piecemeal way which did not encourage motorists to consider walking, cycling or using public transport instead of driving. As a result there is a wider variation of parking charges in place which are not applied consistently across the borough and make it difficult for visitors to make informed choices about their travel.

The aim of the policy is to set out the basis on which parking charges will be set.

## Scope

This policy sets out a clear basis for setting council parking charges according to the following principles

## Principles

The council sets parking charges in order to manage parking to manage the supply and demand of parking spaces and turnover, improve congestion and ensure expeditious movement of traffic, road safety and air quality.

As such this policy is predicated on three principles:

- managing scarce parking resources, including parking spaces on the highway, access to the kerb for deliveries and disabled motorists, and car park capacity
- ensuring clarity and consistency across parking charges, allowing the public to make informed decisions about travel
- Encouraging use of more sustainable transport, particularly public transport. By making sure that costs of car journeys are not held below those of more sustainable modes.

## Charges in scope

Paid parking at council managed car parks	Yes
Paid parking at council managed car parks at parks and green spaces	Yes
Paid parking on the highway (pay by phone)	Yes
Resident visitor parking (visitor vouchers)	Yes
Permit parking (e.g. resident parking permits)	No
Motorcycle parking in resident and paid parking bays	Yes

# Context

## Target for modal shift

The Mayor’s Transport Strategy sets a London-wide target for 80%<sup>1</sup> of trips to be by walking, cycling and public transport by 2041. To contribute towards the achievement of this target, Barnet has agreed the proposed borough level target under its Local Implementation Plan (LIP)<sup>2</sup> of 72% % of trips to be by walking cycling and public transport by 2041.

This recognises that car journeys will remain an important part of travel in the borough while sustainable transport takes on an increased role. This is vital in the context of the significant population growth brought by development in and around the borough.

The most recent data available<sup>3</sup>, for 2022/23, shows that 50% of trips in Barnet were made by walking, cycling and public transport. This is a reduction from pre-pandemic levels.

Observed							LIP target	
2012/13 to 2014/15	2013/14 to 2015/16	2014/15 to 2016/17	2015/16 to 2017/18	2016/17 to 2018/19	2017/18 to 2019/20	2022/23	2021	2041
50	52	55	54	54	54	50	59	72

On its current trajectory, Barnet is unlikely to meet its 2041 target.

The Council works with TfL and others to identify ways of improving public transport in the Borough – for example the opening of Brent Cross West station and routing buses to link it with the shopping centre; provision of step free access at Colindale Underground station, new and extended bus routes, including the recent introduction of limited stop express Superloop services. This work has helped to improve the public transport provision in the borough and there is the prospect of further improvements, for example enhancements to the bus network in the fastest growing parts of the Borough and a second round of Superloop routes, three of which might serve destinations in Barnet. The Council is also working to promote active travel – for example making the A1000 cycleway permanent and implementing the Barnet Loop as an active travel route.

## Air Quality Action Plan

The Barnet Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028<sup>4</sup> notes that the whole borough is an Air Quality Management Area for nitrogen dioxide and PM<sub>10</sub> particulates with eleven “focus areas” where there are high levels of pollution and human exposure.

<sup>1</sup> [Mayor’s Transport Strategy](#), p22

<sup>2</sup> [London Borough of Barnet Local Implementation Plan 2019](#), p109, p115

<sup>3</sup> [LIP MTS outcomes borough data pack - Dec 2023.xlsx](#), ‘Overall aim Sust Mode Share’ cell H25

<sup>4</sup> [The Barnet Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028](#), p4

The Action Plan sets out seven broad topics for the consideration of actions to contribute to the progress of meeting our aims of Enhancing the Local Environment. One of these topics is:

3) Reducing Transport Emissions: road transport in Barnet is the largest contributor to air pollution in the borough. Actions such as installation of EV charging points and supporting a shift from private vehicle use to public transport are important measures to improve air quality across the whole borough.

The plan also states that the Council will:

- Look at ways of reducing traffic in town centre areas and to promote active travel and public transport.
- Examine the scope to use parking policy to reduce pollution emissions in high street areas and adjacent locations.<sup>5</sup>

And sets out an action to use parking policy to reduce pollution emissions<sup>6</sup>:

Cleaner transport	20	Using parking policy to reduce pollution emissions	Parking Team, Planning	Low	This measure will not in itself reduce NO <sub>2</sub> or particulate matter concentrations in the Borough, but will encourage a change in behaviours regarding the frequency and/or length of car journeys	Revision of the Council's Long-Term Transport Strategy is likely to include consideration of new approaches to parking policy to help enable re-prioritisation of space for active modes/public transport and provision for electric vehicles	Measuring the proportion of residential permits issued to both most polluting and cleanest vehicles.	Barnet is currently revising its transport strategy; this new strategy will be in alignment with air quality and public health policies/strategies including this Air Quality Action Plan.  Barnet's current long-term transport strategy can be found <a href="#">here</a>
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## Transport Strategy

The existing Transport Strategy notes that better management of on-street car parking is an effective way to encourage people to use healthier and more sustainable modes of transport. This is in recognition that kerbside space is a limited resource, and that on-street car parking has an opportunity cost.

The Council is currently developing a new strategy which will highlight the need for a coordinated approach to parking policy, looking at both on and off street provision and its management to deliver on the Council's priorities - including promoting use of more sustainable transport options, improving environmental quality and ensuring the vibrancy of town centres. It is likely to include a more systematic approach to use of space at the kerbside.

<sup>5</sup>[The Barnet Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028](#), p4

<sup>6</sup>[The Barnet Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028](#), p41

## Simplifying charges

In 2024 the cost of parking for an hour ranges from £0.77 to £3.12, with a total of 45 different tariff variations. In practice this limits the public's ability to make an informed choice taking into account cost when deciding how to travel and where to park, where a journey is made by car.

This policy aims to set out a simple and consistent structure for parking charges.

## Setting the charge

In 2024 the basic cost of making a single bus journey in Barnet is £1.75. As such the cost for two journey is generally £3.50. This policy will set the cost of two single standard bus fares as the minimum price for parking.

Once the cost of travelling to and from the location is accounted for it remains a policy target to make the most efficient use of space used for parking and supporting the vibrancy of local town centres by incentivising turnover of vehicles and discouraging long-term parking to maintain availability of space. As such the model for parking charges is as follows:

	Formula (fare units)	2024 rate
Up to 1 hour	2	£3.50
Up to 2 hours*	3	£5.25
Up to 4 hours*	4	£7.00
All day*	5	£8.75

\*Where applicable

Maximum stay restrictions will continue to apply, limiting the use of some parking places to shorter stays only.

# Impact

## Disabled Parking

**Blue badge holders will continue to be able to park in paid parking places on and off street without charge when displaying their badge.**

## Loading and unloading

Goods vehicles collecting and delivering to nearby premises will continue to be able to park in both designated loading bays and in paid parking bays without charge while loading and unloading.

## Motorcycles

Motorcycles have been exempt from parking charges in the borough. However, like other vehicles they emit greenhouse gases, nitrogen oxides and particulates. In line with air quality policies, modal shift targets, and in recognition of the unintended consequences of exempting motorcycles has had on the council's ability to manage the use of parking spaces in town centres, this exemption will no longer apply in paid for parking spaces on and off-street.

In order to address the potential for displacement a requirement for a permit to park in controlled parking zones within resident bays will be introduced.

## Free parking

All parking spaces are provided at a cost to the local authority and as such to the Barnet residents or businesses. In a number of locations across the borough parking is currently offered on council land either at no charge at all - or at no charge for a limited period varying from 15 minutes to 3 hours.

In such cases the borough is directly providing an incentive for travel by car which is not compatible with its aims under the Transport Strategy or Air Quality Action Plan.

Free sessions will no longer be offered at locations where car parks are currently managed under Traffic Management Orders and will not be offered at locations where parking controls are introduced through Traffic Management Orders.