



Birmingham City Council
Annual Parking Report
2014/2015

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Introduction

Foreword from Councillor Tahir Ali

Parking continues to be an important aspect of life for people in Birmingham. Whether as resident, commuter or visitor, the need for adequate provision of parking facilities, both locally and within the City Centre, is a priority for people in this City.

With the provision of parking comes the need to ensure that it is properly managed and enforced, in line with the expectations of the public. The safety of people will always be our priority in every aspect of our service. To that end, I will ensure that enforcement of traffic regulation is carried-out in a fair but robust manner, in order to prevent inappropriate parking practices.

One element of our service where I will take a strong approach is assaults on our parking enforcement officers. We have seen an escalation in both verbal and physical attacks on the workforce, who are doing a difficult and demanding job. I will not tolerate this and am committed to using all the powers and influences available to the Council to stop these assaults, and ensure justice is done, where such attacks take place.

This report provides a brief outline of the services the Council delivers, highlighting some of the work we have undertaken in the 12 month period and how I see the Parking Service developing further initiatives over the coming year. I hope you will find this informative.



Councillor Tahir Ali

**Cabinet Member for Development,
Transport and the Economy**

Chapter 1

About Birmingham

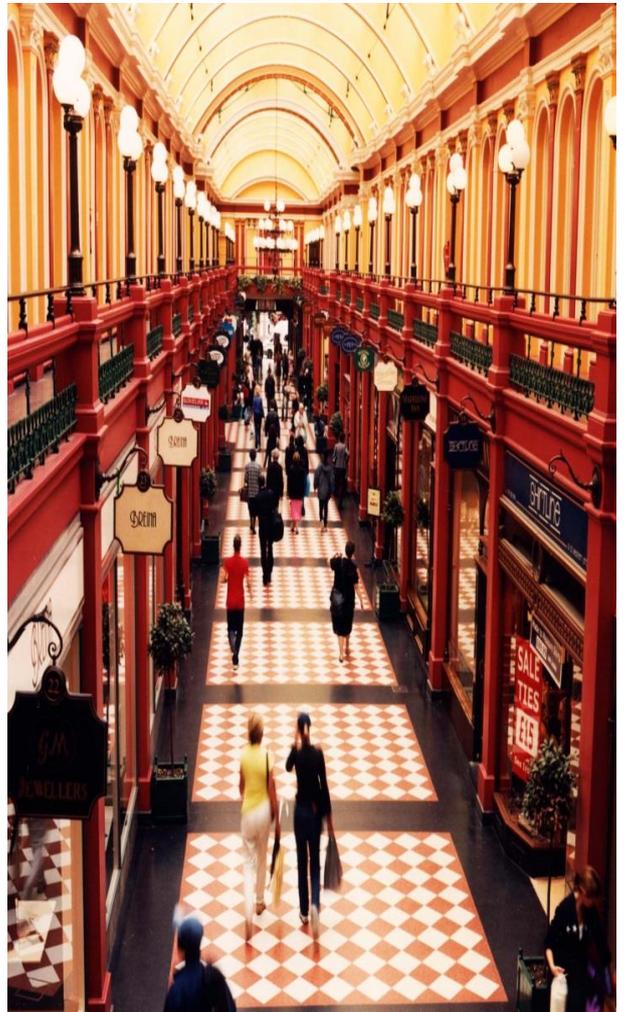
About Birmingham



Birmingham City Council seeks to tackle a wide range of difficult parking-related challenges which are experienced across the city. These challenges are compounded by the fact that Birmingham is a diverse city undergoing large amounts of change. It is the regional centre of the West Midlands and this is reflected in the policies within the Regional Transport Strategy.

Over the last two decades the City's population has been stable (increasing slightly from 1,004,500 (1991 Census) to 1,073,045 (2011 census)). The City's average household size (2.56 people/household) is above the national average (2.36 people/household) according to the 2011 Census. There were around 410,700 households in 2011, an increase of 5% since 2001.

The density of population varies across Birmingham with the most densely populated areas within the inner city areas formed by complex networks of Victorian streets.



Objectives



Policy Objectives

The provision and enforcement of parking controls play a key role in supporting Birmingham's transport objectives by;

- managing the traffic network to ensure expeditious movement of traffic, including pedestrians and cyclists) as required under the TMA Network Management Duty
- contributing towards encouraging more sustainable modes of travel
- improving road safety
- improving the local environment and supporting the vitality of the City Centre and local centres
- supporting the quality and accessibility of public transport and taxis
- meeting the needs of people with disabilities, some of whom will be unable to use public transport and depend on the use of a car, including the provision of disabled bays in convenient areas for blue badge holders

- providing areas for effective loading and unloading for businesses and supporting the efficient movement of goods
- supporting the development of alternative forms of car ownership such as car clubs
- managing and reconciling the competing demands for parking space

The availability of car parking has a significant impact on the Council's transport objectives. The provision of parking is a key factor in influencing peoples' choice of travel mode to a destination and can support and influence the use of more sustainable travel choices.

As such, the management of available parking can play a vital role in helping the City to deliver the reductions in carbon emissions which it is committed to and also reducing congestion. However the availability of parking also has an important role in contributing to the success of the local economy and parking management needs to reflect this.

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Objectives

Equally, increased on-street parking displacing into inappropriate places can have an adverse impact on road safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, with impacts for social inclusion and equality. Inappropriate and obstructive car parking can also have impacts on general traffic congestion, as well as, creating difficult access conditions for emergency services, refuse collection, deliveries and bus services, etc.

The City Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of Traffic Regulation Orders and will continue to review these, to ensure that they remain appropriate for present day traffic management and frontage uses.

As pressure for on-street parking space (and public off-street parking) continues to increase the introduction and enforcement of suitable parking restrictions will become even more important.

The Council has a Parking Policy, which sets out a comprehensive approach to managing on-street and off-street parking provision, control and enforcement. The Parking Policy provides the policy framework for effective parking management, which supports the Council's strategic objectives for integrated land-use and transport planning, environment management, social inclusion, economic prosperity and regeneration: all important elements of sustainable development.

Our website www.birmingham.gov.uk/parking is used to provide useful information about on and off-street parking, parking enforcement, resident parking, blue badge parking, etc. and to also encourage feedback about the services provided.



Parking Provision



Off Street Parking

The City Council provides and operates a variety of off-street car parks across Birmingham, serving the City Centre, key local centres and major commercial and residential areas.

The operation of car parks in the City Centre consists of the management and maintenance of 7 multi-storey car parks and 23 surface levels car parks. This equates to around 5,300 off-street parking spaces, with a total number of spaces within the City Centre totaling around 30% of the total available off-street parking, when including privately-owned car parks which are open to the public.

On Street Parking

Controlled Parking Zones

A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) is an area where all on-street parking is controlled. When you enter a zone there are entry signs to tell you what restrictions apply within it. Parking is only allowed in parking bays and yellow line restrictions apply everywhere else.

Motorists who want to park for a short time in a CPZ can use the pay and display bays. Pay and display bays can also be used by motorcyclists and there are also various on-street parking bays for motorcycles which are free of charge. Within a CPZ permit holders will be able to park in designated permit bays during the hours of operation.

Resident Parking Schemes

Parking Schemes are normally implemented where a parking problem is specific to only a few roads. As with CPZs, only permit holders will be able to park within designated bays on the roads covered by the scheme, during the hours of operation. Resident Parking Schemes do not need zone entry signs and the restrictions are individually signed.

On-Street Pay and Display

On-street parking in Birmingham City Centre, the Gun Quarter and the Jewellery Quarter is subject to CPZ restrictions. Where paid parking is required on-street these zones are operated on a pay and display. On arrival at a parking area, (which is marked at either end by a sign), either a ticket must be purchased from a machine and be displayed in the front windscreen of the vehicle at the side, or

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Parking Provision

alternatively payment can be made by phone using a debit or credit card (cashless parking) .

Parking is limited to a maximum stay of up to two hours in the Inner Zone and up to four hours in the Outer Zone and the Gun Quarter Zone. There is a mix of two hour maximum stay and four hour maximum stay bays in the Jewellery Quarter Zone.

Cashless Parking

Cashless parking is a quick and secure way to pay for parking in Birmingham. Instead of having to put money in a Pay and Display machine, you can use your mobile phone and pay by credit or debit card. An additional feature of our cashless payment system is that if drivers finish their business in the City Centre before the parking time purchased expires there is an option to stop the parking session early and obtain a reduced charge, based on any unused full remaining periods, (part hours will not be subject to any reduction in charge) With cashless parking, drivers can also choose to have a text message sent to remind them when their parking session is about to expire.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Road transport accounts for over 25% of CO₂ emissions in the City. This is a significant source of harmful pollutants, which affect air quality and health e.g. NO₂, particulate matter.

A key strand in our policy to tackle CO₂ emissions and improve air quality is to support the uptake of low emission vehicles. To do this, we have been involved in a number of projects which are helping to

develop a network of electric vehicle charging points in the City.

In 2012, the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) designated 8 'Plugged-in Places' areas in the UK, and the Midlands was one of these. The "Plugged-in Places" programme offers match funding to the public sector and to consortia of businesses to install electric vehicle charging points. Working with "Plugged-in Midlands", the City Council implemented a network of 36 electric vehicle charging points at 18 locations across the City in on- and off-street locations.

In August 2014, our electric vehicle charge points provider changed to "Charge Your Car". Drivers do not have to be a member to use the charge points and can access them using the CYC mobile phone app, a CYC card or your debit/credit card. Currently there is no charge for the electricity used, but in some locations, such as certain off-street car parks, the relevant parking charges still apply.



Enforcement



Parking Enforcement

Birmingham City Council's parking enforcement objectives are to encourage a high level of compliance by motorists with regards to the City's parking controls in order to;

- encourage sensible and safe parking.
- reduce congestion (badly parked vehicles slow down other road users including the emergency services and buses).
- make the roads safer for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.
- allow buses to operate more effectively.
- allow the Police to devote more resources to tackling crime.
- improve the environment

Deployment Plan

The daily enforcement deployment covers all areas of Birmingham and there are up to 20 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) deployed on Street at any one time between 07:00 and 23:00hrs Monday to Saturday and between 09:00 and 18:00hrs on

There are specific focus areas in addition to general deployment which are patrolling;

- red routes during the hours of operation to maintain free flow of traffic.
- main arterial routes during peak periods.
- areas where there are a large number of single fronted shops and small businesses where congestion occurs.
- outside schools which have problems with vehicles parking, with a view to educating motorists and deterring vehicles from parking outside school entrances and crossings.

Abandoned Vehicles

Abandoned vehicles can be expensive to remove, have a negative impact on the environment, look unsightly and can lower the quality of life in neighbourhoods. They can be an aspect of crime, take-up valuable parking spaces and can become dangerous when vandalised or filled with hazardous waste and rubbish. Such vehicles present a risk of explosion or injury and will very often become the object of arson.

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Enforcement

By removing abandoned vehicles our streets will look less neglected and less likely to attract other anti-social behaviour. Abandoned vehicles can be reported via the City Council's website.

Vehicle Removals

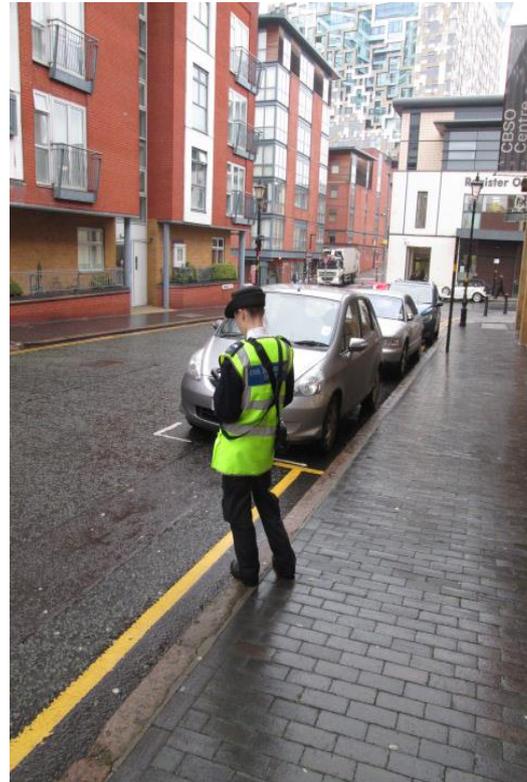
The City Council also provides a vehicle removal service to carry out the removal of motor vehicles that contravene parking restrictions in high risk areas, such as red routes and school no parking zones within Birmingham. The seizure of vehicles is the ultimate sanction for parking contraventions and is therefore used to address only the most serious contraventions.

Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility

As part of our procurement policy all contracted service providers to the City Council must abide by the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility.

Under the terms of the agreed Business Charter Action Plan, our Civil Enforcement service provider will develop recruitment initiatives focused on those from workless backgrounds, offer work experience placements in roles and will also sponsor a school road safety programme, amongst other initiatives.

In addition to meet our commitment to the Living Wage, many CEOs working on behalf of Birmingham City Council had their pay increased from 1 February 2015, when the Council awarded its latest contract for parking enforcement services to NSL Ltd



New Initiatives

Ticket machine Investment

We have recently installed 39 new Parkeon Strada ticket machines in the Inner Zone parking area, replacing a total of 73 existing machines. A further 4 machines will be installed upon completion of the New Street Station redevelopment. The reduction in the number of machines is largely as a result of an increase in the number of motorists using the Pay by Phone service.

These modern and stylish machines are wireless-linked to our back office, allowing staff to produce various usage reports, monitor machine reliability, cash flow and maintenance and service calls.

The machines have proved to be very reliable and popular with customers, cutting back dramatically on fault reports.



Season Tickets and Parking Permits

Work has started on developing an on-line facility for customers to apply for and purchase car park season tickets and on-street parking permits.

This system will considerably accelerate the application/renewal process for customers and reduce the need for them to make phone calls, send e-mails, and make personal visits to our offices to collect passes. This on-line service will also have significant benefits for our back office staff.

Brownfield Road: Enforcement in action

Grass verges, footpaths and pavements are all part of the 'Highway'. The City Council has a statutory duty to keep all highways clear and free of obstructions and to ensure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic, including pedestrians.

Parking of vehicles on grass verges, footpaths and pavements is ever-increasing and widespread, creating significant problems in many areas for highway users, residents and the City Council. Circumstances of each location differ greatly from one location to another and it is therefore difficult to identify a single solution that can be collectively applied. However, it has become apparent that a

number of locations throughout the City need to be regulated by preventing parking on the verges, footpaths and pavements.

In doing so, the City Council introduced a Pilot scheme at Brownfield Road, to trial enforcement measures at a problematic location where inconsiderate parking practices needed to be eradicated. The scheme was aimed at tackling the problems by means of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) , rather than physical changes.

The Council determined that the treatment of verge parking by TRO needed to take consideration of a number of factors, such as road safety, the expeditious movement of traffic, the effect of vehicles displaced as result of imposed parking restrictions and the overall impact on the street scene. In total nine public meetings were held and correspondence delivered to frontages on seven occasions and every household was visited and canvassed on the proposed scheme. Subsequently, Brownfield Road received complete support from local Councillors, the local Policing Unit and the vast majority of residents.

The initial feedback from those affected by the scheme suggests the restrictions and associated enforcement action has been successful in achieving the aims of the pilot project and that residents are generally complying with the restriction. The project will be continually monitored to further inform similar projects in the future.



Future Plans



Moving Traffic Offences

It is hoped that in the near future Local Authorities will be given the powers to enforce certain moving traffic restrictions, such as, one-way streets, prohibited turns, yellow boxes, pedestrian zones, and prohibition of vehicles.

Whilst there is no current timescale provided the Government for the devolution of these powers, the City Council believe that they are essential to the effective delivery of our Network Management Duty, but until that time, we continue to rely on the Police to be responsible for enforcement of these offences.

Expansion of Controlled Parking Zones

The Council proposes to continue to develop Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and Residents' Parking schemes where they are appropriate and supported. These are likely to be in the City Centre, in some local centres and around major trip generators, such as hospitals and sports venues.

Infrastructure Replacement and Renewal

Work to further implement our parking equipment strategy will take place during 2015, with the proposed replacement of the pay and display ticket machine stock within the City Centre, with more modern, energy efficient parking equipment, utilising the latest technology.

Exploring New Technology

The City Council is committed to providing a modern and responsive parking enforcement service and will explore the use of technology available to undertake Civil Enforcement as the powers contained within the Traffic Management Act 2004 are rolled out.

Blue Badge Misuse

The Birmingham City Council is recognised by the Department for Transport as a Centre of Excellence for tackling Blue Badge misuse and will continue to develop this area of work and share Best Practice with other authorities.

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Future Plans

Partnership Working

The City Council together with its partner Civil Enforcement and Vehicle Removal Contractors will continue to work in partnership with West Midlands Police and other agencies in joint initiative enforcement operations with a view to making best use of available resources and working toward tackling crime and assisting with tackling threats and abuse aimed at CEOs.

We will seek to expand the pay by phone service both in terms of its geographical coverage and range of products available to customers.

The City Council will continue to liaise with neighbouring Local Authorities to ensure a consistent approach to enforcement is taken across the region.



A summary is shown below of income and expenditure relating to parking service activities undertaken as part of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

2014/15	£m
Income	9.0
Expenditure	4.26
Net Surplus	4.74
Use of Surplus	
Part Provision of Off- Street Parking Accommodation (contribution to running costs)	(3.22)
Capital Investment in Car Parks (Prudential Borrowing Charges)	(0.5)
Highways Improvement Works	(1.02)
Sub-total	0

The surplus from Parking contributes towards expenditure on highways/road improvements which enables the City Council to supplement its limited Revenue and Capital resources so as to maximise spending on the highways for the benefit of the motorist.

Under the requirements of Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as modified by Section 25 of the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 2007, the City Council is required to maintain a statutory account in respect of total income and expenditure in respect of on-street and off-street enforcement activity (included within the overall Parking figures above)

The 1984 Act (as amended by later regulations) requires Local Authorities to use the net surplus from On-Street Car Parking for certain specified purposes, as follows:-

- The provision and maintenance of Off-Street Parking Accommodation;
- If it appears to the Local Authority that further provision of Off-Street Parking Accommodation is unnecessary or undesirable, the surplus can be used for highways/road improvements.

There are no obligations placed on Local Authorities regarding the use of net surpluses from Off-Street Car Parks.

Appendix A

PCN Statistics

(figures produced in September following financial year when some cases are still going through the recovery process)			
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Total No. Higher level issued	75,015	71,586	83,306
Total No. Lower level issued	54,851	53,448	56,956
<u>Total number of PCNs issued</u>	129,866	125,034	140,262
Total number of PCNs cancelled	5,109 (4%)	3,864 (3%)	4,049 (3%)
Total number of collectable PCNs	124,757	121,170	136,213
Total number of PCNs paid	100,603 (81%)	96,518 (80%)	108,356 (80%)
Total No. of PCNs paid at discount	69,181 (55%)	65,603 (54%)	72,586 (53%)
Total No. of PCNs where a representation (informal/formal) was made (excluding transfer of liability)	22,530 (17%)	21,106 (17%)	20,948 (15%)
Total No. of PCNs cancelled/written off as a result of representation (informal/formal)	9,618 (43%)	9,413 (45%)	9,428 (45%)
Total No. of PCNs cancelled/written off for other reasons	11,212 (9%)	9,567 (8%)	8,583 (6%)
Total No. of vehicles removed	1,776 (1%)	1,677 (1%)	941 (1%)