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THE LBHF PARKING RIP-OFF

**Many charges DOUBLE
Key workers hit
Were you consulted?**

H&F adds insult to injury, but residents fight back

Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) Council now has new Emissions-Based Parking Charges. Residents were shocked to see the punitive new charges rushed in in February. A Freedom of Information (FOI) response claimed that a consultation was advertised before Christmas in the London Gazette. This is an obscure notices publication and you'd have to really know that the notice was there. They might as well have hidden it in a crossword clue!

H&F also claims that a notice was put in the local paper, the West London Gazette. The situation is similar, Its website, mylondon.news, has a little-known link ('Public Notices'), but a search found nothing.

Even so, 10 groups responded, although H&F won't say who. They must either have telepathic powers or were tipped off? And why were motorcyclists seen as more equal than others?

Worst of all, there was no mention on the H&F consultations page ('HaveYourSay') or in the weekly mailouts to residents during the 'consultation' – which disingenuously carried a 'Parking for less' message that gave an opposite message to the real intentions.

This is at odds with its Constitution, preaching 'openness' and 'comprehensive stakeholder engagement'. Worse still, H&F justified doubling many people's permit charges, citing an obscure 'parking census' that had a knee-jerk response of 49% supporting parking charges to drive 'higher-polluting vehicles' off the road.

Neither initiative meets the expectations from the famous Moseley-Haringey case on consultations, which laid down principles such as reaching those who would lose from the measure, and providing sufficient and unbiased information for an informed response.

The measures certainly attracted ridicule. H&F simply doesn't get it that vehicles parked with their engines off have zero emissions! Or that Euro 6 diesels match Euro 4 and 5 petrol engines for key emissions, yet all diesels are hit with a 50% surcharge! And to complete the confusion, remember that a previous Labour government actually assured us that diesel-engined vehicles were 'greener'!

A legal challenge could prove interesting.

H&F's charge bandings are unrelated to the pollutants that fall under the national Air Quality Strategy, but relate to the vehicle's CO₂ rating. This gas is an essential for life, and given off by all advanced living things. It is an essential 'food' for plants (photosynthesis) and its atmospheric levels are topped up to boost growth.

Residents' anger at receiving exorbitant renewal demands stretches to the new ZatPermit online system. For some strange reason, it seems beyond the wit of H&F to have carried residents' data over; instead renewers are forced to key in all their data from scratch.

H&F also defends demanding a driving licence scan as 'for fighting fraud'. Funny how Bexley and Havering councils (e.g.) manage renewals without it? As H&F did previously.

The Data Protection Act requires data minimisation for good reason; sensitive personal data not being there means it can't be used for identity fraud. Residents are threatening to refer this unnecessary imposition to the ICO watchdog that can levy heavy fines.

A licence is about driving vehicle classes UK-wide and has no connection to vehicle location or keeper status. In theory, one family I know could be denied a permit if their elderly mother temporarily surrenders her licence, even though only her daughter does the driving!

Residents query if ZatPermit was simply rushed in to maximise revenue.

Over 10,000 'name and shame' leaflets have gone out urging residents to complain to those responsible (and who promised cheaper and even free parking!). A petition has enough signatures to command a H&F Cabinet debate, which is open both to the public and resident deputations.

As on other campaigns, I had to start solo, cadging help from friends, but by sticking at it, we now have a team of leafleters.

Checking your council's Constitution might reveal new possibilities for those who live, work or study in a borough. These include asking a Cabinet member a searching question at Council meetings; you can also get an unscripted follow-up question on their answer and the meeting is videod.

As councils may answer but not publish responses to demanding FOI requests, it's best to use the WhatDoTheyKnow website. This even helps to police responses and failure to respond on time, which constitutes another breach of the law.

Article link <https://techsceptics.org.uk/emissimposs2.pdf> or <http://bit.ly/4jQE7zE>

References

H&F proposals – background and implementation

<https://bit.ly/49G4sN1> or www.fairdealforthemotorist.org.uk/parkingcon.htm

FOI response re: London Gazette, W London Gazette, parking census (PDF)

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/parking_permit_increases/response/2983730/attach/2/Response%20all%20information%20to%20be%20supplied.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/parking_permit_increases#incoming-2983730

H&F Constitution

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/councillors-committees-and-decisions#our-constitution> (current)

Moseley-Haringey case (Supreme Court, 2014), consultation principles

<https://ukscblog.com/case-comment-r-moseley-v-haringey-london-borough-council-2014-uksc-56-2014-1-wlr-3947/>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New%20Conversations%20Guide%2012.pdf>

<https://www.casemine.com/judgement/uk/5a8ff70060d03e7f57ea57e3> (full judgment)

Euro 4/5/6 standards compared, Labour support for diesel engines

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/emissions/euro-emissions-standards/>

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/emissions/diesel-emissions-are-diesel-cars-bad-for-the-environment/>

National Air Quality Strategy, controlled pollutants

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-air-quality-strategy-for-england/air-quality-strategy-framework-for-local-authority-delivery#annex-a-tables-of-pollutants-and-limits>

<https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/uk-limits.php>

https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/Air_Quality_Objectives_Update_20230403.pdf

H&F promo for new ZatPermit system

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/parking/parking-permits/residents-parking-permit/renew-your-permit>

Bexley and Havering council renewals

<https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/parking-transport-and-streets/parking-permits/apply-or-renew-parking-permit>

<https://www.havering.gov.uk/downloads/file/5119/mipermit-step-by-step-user-guide>

Data Protection Act requiring data minimisation

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-protection-principles/a-guide-to-the-data-protection-principles/data-minimisation/>

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-protection-principles/a-guide-to-the-data-protection-principles/>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12> (Act)

Resident petition to H&F Council

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/west-london-fair-parking-prices-31026234>

<https://democracy.lbhf.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=170&RPID=146948058&HPID=146948058>

Right to questions and deputations to Council meetings

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/councillors-committees-and-decisions/take-part-democratic-process>

WhatDoTheyKnow FOI website

<https://www.whatdotheyknow.com>

Latest update on this article

<https://www.techsceptics.org.uk/emissimposs3.pdf>

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