

Parking re-explained

Without apology to *Haringey People!* Please see first the Council's propaganda sheet esteemed Journal of Record, August 2006, page 12.

Parking in the Borough can end up driving you mad at Haringey and leave you hot under the collar with the Executive. There are also home truths to tell about councils' parking policies and how and why Haringey operates these truths as they do. *Haringey People* pretended to take a look:

“Myth (truth) one: Parking controls are imposed against the will of local people.

unReality: We only consult on Controlled Parking Zones where we have requests for parking controls from residents. If the Consultation shows that our original information is incorrect and there isn't popular local support for them we don't go ahead.”

Translation: Local people are a damn nuisance often misguided and Council policies would run more smoothly if they didn't keep trying to interfere in things that don't concern them. We're *not* neutral on CPZs but we can't admit that. We continue with the pretence of independence, but in truth we want to put CPZs in wherever we can get away with it. We know they are generally unpopular and seen as an imposition by most. That is why we have to seize upon the slightest excuse that appears to confer legitimacy.

We have been plotting planning the new CPZs for *two years* now, so you shouldn't take too seriously our claims of merely responding to requests for parking controls from residents (requests made *this year*, as a result of parking problems we designed-in with our earlier CPZ). We won't review existing zones seriously because that would tend to *reduce* parking problems, especially the wonderful *knock-on effect*. We've said there's no money in the budget for the promised reviews; actually, there's no money in *any* budget for things we don't want to do!

We also know that if we (initially) exclude one street or a small area from a nearby CPZ, in short order they will be forced into joining the surrounding zone: the Will of the People straight down the line – clever eh?! (We honestly believe you are not bright enough to work this out).

In following these policies, we will be obeying orders from TFL and from the Mayor of London (and be raising tons of cash from fines!)

“Myth (truth) two: The council doesn’t consult with the right people or enough people.

unReality: The council consults very widely. Every household and business affected by proposed controls receives the consultation papers through their door, as do neighbouring properties as there can be a knock-on effect. All our consultation documents are available on the website, through libraries and by calling customer service centres, so even if you don’t live in or near a control zone you can still comment if you have an interest.”

Translation: The reason we say we consult well and widely is because that’s what we *should* be doing. And the reason we have no interest in doing this, is because consultations tend to slow down the implementation of the policies *we want*. They are costly and worst of all, involve dealing with the public. Most smart people appreciate that we are obliged to make a ~~grudging~~ minimum ~~show~~ show of consultation. We will pick and choose amongst responses to ensure we end up with ~~the~~ desired a fair result, even if it means having to ~~massage the~~ figures extend the consultation process.

Thanks to our experience of our earlier CPZs, we understand the *knock-on* effect particularly well and we’ve honed it into a fine art. We ~~adore~~ regret the knock-on effect but we’ll do all in our power to ensure this effect is maintained (e.g. Oakfield Road Bridge). We can maintain the pretence of independence and objectivity in our ‘consultation’ because time is on our side.

Reality-check: The Council has already accepted the need to ‘review’ the distribution of the consultation document. Well before *Haringey People* was published, many complained about not receiving booklets. Some libraries do not hold these documents for the public, as claimed. Affected institutions such as churches, schools and libraries have not – in their own right – been consulted. It is said whole streets have missed out. There is only one consultation booklet per household, despite that fact that there may be more than one car owner and more than one adult viewpoint in that household.

If a resident has not received a consultation document – many have not – how will they know in the first instance to go to the places listed? An ‘exhibition’ for the so-called *Harringay Station* CPZ was held *outside* the affected zone, hundreds of metres away, in the summer, on a week-day afternoon, in a library, tucked away at the back of a secluded upper floor, without disabled access. The actions of this Council speak louder than words. Little wonder people felt hot under the collar!

“Myth (truth) three: Parking controls are a stealth tax to raise money.

unReality: Money from parking controls, both permits and penalties, is ring fenced. Councils can't, for example, impose parking fines to pay for library books. Any money raised above and beyond running the parking controls MUST be reinvested in transport-related work.

Translation: We can barely disguise our slaving at the prospect of the *millions* that will be raised from new parking fines. Last year, we raised millions from existing CPZs. The reason that “Haringey’s residents’ parking permits are currently some of the cheapest in London” is that we need to ~~bait the trap with something digestible~~ appear to be cheap *initially*.

As soon as ~~all the traps are set~~ zones are established, we will ~~ramp up the annual fee from the current give-away price~~ review the annual charge, but it’s not really the annual fee we’re after, nor the visitors’ and tradesmens’ charges.

No. It’s the fines for ‘illegal’ parking that we’re really after. We’ve claimed that CPZs will reduce illegal parking, but hey, anyone that believes that will believe anything! Illegal parking (defined by fines) will skyrocket once all zones are in force. This is the real prize. No other tax raises so much cash so fast *and* does not appear to be a tax *plus* pretends to be green and pleases our political bosses. CPZs have got it all!

Every week’s delay of a CPZ is a week’s delay of cash receipts, which is why we find this consultation-nonsense so frustrating.

(Incidentally, as far as paying for library books goes, in truth, a few years ago we didn’t want to pay for certain libraries’ books from *any source*. Fortunately, most people will have forgotten how many branch libraries we wanted to close).

As for Ring Fencing – yes all money raised above and beyond running the parking controls will be reinvested in transport-related work ... so that the equivalent sum already going into transport-related work from the consolidated fund can be released for other purposes (leaving total transport budget little changed). This cash *replacement* effect means that we can spend *substituted* budget monies for basically for anything we like. And some people believe Ring Fencing holds water! Is there a Local Authority in the country better than us at accounting tricks?

“Myth (truth) four: The Council uses parking to persecute school run mums/traders/shoppers/my friends visiting me at home.

unReality: In parking, as in other areas, the council has to balance a number of competing interests – this is never easy. On the roads the interests change depending on the time of day. During morning and evening rush hours we must have parking and traffic management that enables large volumes of people to travel to work and school as quickly and painlessly as possible. Controls are also used to encourage business, improve road safety or keep traffic moving”.

Translation: We don't set out to persecute these people as our main goal; such persecution is only a side-effect. We have to balance many interests, particularly pressure from Transport for London to implement CPZs, as well as our own severe budgetary pressures. Because we are ~~one of the most incompetent and spendthrift Councils in the country, we are obliged to try to screw money from every conceivable source –~~ constantly trying to improve services, this is never easy.

We choose not to enforce all the powers we have currently to control bad parking. We will only seriously enforce the existing parking laws if the ~~turkeys~~ residents vote for CPZs. We much prefer those parking controls that are revenue generating – this is one interest on the roads that *doesn't* vary by time of day.

The swathes of Stroud Green and Hornsey in which we want CPZs are largely quiet residential areas – so talk of morning and evening rush hours is the sort of bluster-cum-nonsense that you have come to expect from us. Parking there is tightest in the evenings – not during working hours. We are well aware that the supposed problem of *commuter* parkers is miniscule but that is the one targeted group that *we really are* trying to persecute in the hope of dividing local communities.