

## STAFF/MEMBER CAR PARKING AND ESSENTIAL CAR USER CONSULTATION

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Approximately 800 consultation emails were sent out to car park permit holders and their representatives as part of the Consultation exercise. 132 replies were received from staff or their representatives and 18 from Councillors. 34 staff responses commented on the choice between the tiered and flat fee charge rates. 19 considered the flat fee to be fairer, whilst 15 preferred the tiered rate for the same reason.

STAFF REPRESENTATION	RESPONSE
<p>1. Concern that the fee amounts to a pay cut; that it would be detrimental to morale and efficiency and lead to loss of good will. Concerns that parking would become unaffordable.</p>	<p>The majority of Council staff do not have a parking space or any contribution towards costs of travelling to and from work. The rate proposed will amount to a heavily subsidised parking charge which will often still be lower than the costs incurred by other staff without an allocated space. Whilst it is recognised any additional fee or charge will be unwelcome the rate is being kept as low as possible.</p> <p>A significant part of the rationale around charging is to generate income from non-essential users to mitigate the impact of other savings requirements on staff and services.</p>
<p>2. I am an essential user and the Council requires me to use my car to undertake my job. Therefore, I should not have to pay.</p>	<p>Essential users will not be charged under the car parking proposals. However, a review of all essential users is being undertaken as is outlined in the relevant Consultation Document. The review will ensure that genuine essential users i.e. those who meet the Council's criteria retain their allowance, whilst removing it from those where it can no longer be justified on business/operational grounds.</p>
<p>3. Can you give us more details on the criteria for "a protected essential car user" that would not have to pay to park? How many staff do you estimate will be "protected essential car users" and can you provide a breakdown of the numbers by grade/job?</p>	<p>It is not intended that there would be a separate "protected" group. The reference to staff who will be "protected" means those staff who will continue to retain the ECU under the proposed new criteria as per the consultation paper.</p>
<p>4. Not having a free parking space will impact on my productivity and ability to</p>	<p>This assumes that post holders who are not essential users will elect not to use their car for any work purposes. On site parking will still be available but at</p>

<p>undertake my job.</p>	<p>a charge c£1.15 per working day. Casual users will still be able to claim casual user mileage for business journeys. Mileage claims are received now from individuals who do not have car parking spaces but who occasionally use their car for work purposes. Anecdotally, fall out from spaces at other authorities who have introduced car parking charges has been low. There may be some circumstances where exceptions can be made based on a genuine service or other need. A modest investment in the pool car fleet may also mitigate against some of the impact. In several instances it would be more economically advantageous to pay for public transport or taxis where an individual's car is not available rather than maintaining the payment of an essential user payment plus mileage payments where there is limited business use for a vehicle.</p>
<p>5. Many UNISON members have told us that they currently see no alternative to using their cars to do their jobs. Is it fair to generate income from employees that are using their cars in order to perform their jobs?</p>	<p>The views of staff will be considered in deciding whether they should receive/retain the ECU. Where the Council does not deem the use of a car/vehicle to be essential, but agrees that an employee may still use their car for business journeys, they will be entitled to claim the casual car user (CCU) mileage allowance at the rate agreed by the Council.</p>
<p>6. I work part time or have flexible/home working arrangements and I am not in the office every day.</p>	<p>Charges can be applied on a pro-rata basis to suit individual circumstances. If the use of the car park is higher than estimated top up payments may be required. It may also be possible to reduce charges where someone does not drive to work every day, e.g., cycles, walks or uses public transport to come to work on a regular basis.</p>
<p>7. Most car parks do not charge for motor cycles, why will the Council be doing so?</p>	<p>It is agreed that the majority of car parks do not charge unless there are dedicated motor cycle spaces. On this basis the proposal to charge for motor cycles will be dropped.</p>
<p>8. Will the charges cover all other car parks as it is not fair to charge staff who park in some areas and not others?</p>	<p>This consultation specifically covers the Civic Centre and Bromley Town Centre car parks used by staff. A review will be taken of other car parking spaces which are available on a free rather than subsidised basis and a further consultation exercise undertaken in the near future.</p>
<p>9. Are the current proposals based on an equal number of car park users parking at the</p>	<p>The proposals do not envisage a reduction in the number of spaces available. If staff decide to relinquish their space then this will be offered to the</p>

<p>council's car parking facilities or have you factored in any potential drop in people using these facilities once charging is introduced?</p>	<p>wider workforce and there has been some interest already expressed.</p>
<p>10. Why are private business users charged £85 per year by the Council but staff potentially £300 per year?</p>	<p>The business charge relates to on street parking charges to allow some parking in controlled parking zones and is not a comparison of like with like. In practice a limited number of spaces are offered to businesses and the majority of their customers/employees have to pay the prevailing car parking charges if they cannot park on site.</p>
<p>11. Please explain why the charges in the consultation document are based on car parking rates used for members of the public at nearby 'shopping' car-parks? Would you accept that the purpose of using your car to do your job and using your car in your leisure time to be different?</p>	<p>Nearby car parks are used by shoppers, commuters and by those who come to Bromley to work. The figures in the consultation are there to give an indication of comparative parking charges.</p>
<p>12. There will be significant fall out from those who are not prepared to pay for parking, which means that income will not be generated and people will be displaced on to the roads.</p>	<p>Anecdotally, fall out appears low at other Councils who have introduced car parking charges. If there is fall out any permits which become available will be offered for sale to members of staff who currently do not have parking available on site. Initial feed back indicates that there will be good take up and as many of these individuals currently park on the highway near the Civic Centre at greater cost than the charges proposed, it is unlikely that there will be any significant increase in parking on residential roads. In response to some consultation comments, spaces which become available would be offered to those with the greatest identified need before becoming available for general release.</p>
<p>13. Can you tell us which of the 32 London Boroughs charge staff (casual car users and essential car users) to park in their car parking facilities?</p>	<p>16 of the Boroughs who have responded provide some parking facilities – with 4 advising this was very limited. Two provide no parking. Of these those Boroughs indicating that they currently charge or are introducing charges for (some) staff include: Newham, Sutton, Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Greenwich, Havering, Richmond, Enfield, Haringey</p>

<p>14. Are options such as salary sacrifice schemes being considered?</p>	<p>Yes – these options will be looked at.</p>
<p>15. The costs for administering the scheme would exceed the benefits.</p>	<p>With a scheme based on 2 – 3 charging bands, the Council’s contractor has indicated they would not make an additional charge for managing payments.</p>
<p>16. I have to attend late meetings, therefore I need to be able to park on site.</p>	<p>One option is to make parking free on site after a set time, e.g. 5.30 p.m.</p>
<p>17. The proposals could potentially be discriminatory. Will an equality impact assessment be conducted? We are concerned that the proposals will disproportionately affect female staff.</p>	<p>Initial assessments do not disclose any material equality issues. However, a final Equality Impact review will be undertaken before any scheme is introduced.</p>
<p>18. Will the scheme be free for disabled staff/Blue Badge holders, etc?</p>	<p>The consultation document indicated that the likely option was that such spaces would be free. Not all responses favoured free spaces for disabled staff, although it is likely to continue as least in the short term.</p>
<p>19. I may have a contractual right to a free parking space.</p>	<p>This is not accepted.</p>

**STAFF/MEMBER CAR PARKING AND  
ESSENTIAL CAR USER CONSULTATION**

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

**Essential Car User Allowance (ECUA) Criteria**

A number of responses in this area amounted to submissions as to why particular jobs and/or individuals should be entitled to the ECUA as proposed, rather than comments about the criteria specifically; these will be responded to as part of the process of deciding who is eligible for the allowance in future once the ECUA criteria are agreed. Other comments reflected some of the concerns discussed above including the impact on staff morale at a difficult time generally and the potential impact on business efficiency if staff who lose the ECUA no longer use their cars to undertake their jobs.

A summary of other more specific comments relevant to the ECUA criteria review is set out below:

<b>STAFF REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>
1. The wording of the proposed criteria would make it virtually impossible for anyone to be granted essential user allowance	The ECUA will continue to be paid where an employee is required to use their own vehicle in the performance of their job. However the ECUA is more expensive than other options and will only be used when these have been considered and ruled out for sound economic/business reasons.
2. Staff who lose the ECUA will suffer a pay cut of up to £900 per year and will therefore be unable to afford to use their car and could no longer be contractually required to do so. The financial loss will be exacerbated by the introduction of parking charges and overall has the potential to impact on pay differentials between Bromley and competing neighbours.	This reflects the position as it is currently i.e. staff who do not receive the ECUA are not contractually required to provide a vehicle that they use for work purposes. However staff who are not eligible for an ECUA but who continue to travel as part of their job and opt to use their car with the manager's agreement will instead be eligible to receive the casual car user allowance which will offset some of the potential loss.
3. Loss of the ECUA will have a detrimental effect on services as staff who are no longer required to drive will not be able to carry out the same level of work. There is the potential for increased costs in public transport or taxi fares.	The ECUA will continue to be paid where for sound economic/business reasons driving is an integral and regular feature of the job requiring the employee to have use of their own vehicle for the performance of their job. Staff who use

	<p>their car less regularly or for ad hoc journeys will continue to be entitled to claim a casual car user allowance.</p>
<p>4. Have you undertaken any analysis of the risk with regard to lost hours / productivity that the proposals might lead to? And how would this impact on the Council achieving its Better Bromley Vision? Has any analysis been done of what public transport provision exists for non-essential car users to utilise and its viability as an alternative to using their own vehicles, especially in remote areas of the borough?</p>	<p>This will be taken into account in deciding on a case by case basis which posts retain the ECUA. The proposals recognise that whilst the essential car user option is more expensive than some other travel/service delivery options, there may be sound economic/business grounds for it to continue; alternatively for example use of a pool car may mitigate the impact. The scheme is also predicated on those having the greatest need for a vehicle to undertake their duties retaining free parking.</p>
<p>5. Have you estimated the cost of increased travel expenses incurred if more staff start using public transport / taxis to perform their duties?</p>	<p>This will depend in part on fallout rate. Anecdotally this has not been an issue elsewhere. There are costs being met at present, and in some instances where an individual may receive an ECUA plus mileage payments to cover a limited number of callouts then paying for public transport or a taxi on these occasions can be less expensive.</p>
<p>6. Those staff who currently receive the ECUA as a recruitment and retention (R&amp;R) incentive will be worse off because whilst this will be converted to an R&amp;R allowance of an equivalent amount they will be required to pay car parking charges.</p>	<p>In addition to the R&amp;R allowance these staff will in future also be eligible to claim a casual car user allowance (CCUA) for any business mileage which, depending on the amount, will offset some or all of the parking charges.</p>
<p>7. Will social workers that currently receive the essential car user allowance be affected?</p>	<p>Social workers who currently receive the ECUA will be assessed against the new criteria for the ECUA. If they do not qualify as an ECU but currently have the allowance as a recruitment and retention (R&amp;R) incentive, then the equivalent value of their current ECU lump sum allowance will be redesignated as an R&amp;R allowance (RRA), and thereafter they will receive the CCU for business mileage. They will continue to receive the RRA as long as the payment continues to be justifiable on R&amp;R grounds.</p>

<p>8. A number of staff linked their responses on the potential loss of the ECUA to the fact that they would in future be required to pay the charge for car parking.</p>	<p>The fact that someone currently has a car park space does not in itself meet the current nor revised criteria for the award of the ECUA.</p>
<p>9. If staff used public transport or had to walk to their cars parked away from the Civic Centre and there was an impact on productivity – can you confirm that the formal capability procedure would not be used to address this possible scenario?</p>	<p>Every case of poor performance warranting formal or informal intervention by management will be assessed on the merits of the relevant circumstances, including any relevant mitigating factors.</p>
<p>10. Staff have applied for employment on the basis that a full driving licence and access to a vehicle were essential and the ECUA would be paid.</p>	<p>It is for Councils to determine locally what the ECUA criteria are. These criteria may be changed from time to time depending on local circumstances and staff are entitled to the ECUA only for so long as they meet the criteria.</p>
<p>11. Some responses demonstrated a possible misunderstanding as staff appeared to think they will no longer be able to use their cars for work purposes if they do not meet the ECUA criteria.</p>	<p>Staff who are not eligible for an ECUA but who need to undertake journeys as part of their job and opt to use their car with the manager's agreement will continue to be eligible to receive the casual car user allowance.</p>
<p>12. Can the Council confirm that the revised criteria will apply to all officers including Chief Officers</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>13. A number of comments were received in general support of the revised criteria and/or the need to review the criteria. Such responses also reflected the need to recognise efficiency and for any review of the ECUA allowance criteria to be fair and justified and lead by the demands of the job description and not the demands of a need to save money.</p>	<p>The Council's ECUA criteria will focus on identifying staff whose duties are of such a nature that it is deemed essential for them to have a motor car at their disposal whenever required. A corporate panel will aim to ensure the criteria are applied consistently and fairly across the Council and if granted is justified on business grounds</p>
<p>14. The proposal that the ECUA allowance should be given only to those employees who would lose their jobs if they lost their driving licence/use of vehicle is too harsh and will result in genuine recipients of the ECUA losing it.</p>	<p>This reflects the recognised definition of an essential car user as someone whose duties are of such a nature that it is deemed <b>essential</b> for them to have a motor car at their disposal whenever required.</p>

15. Who will decide who is eligible for the ECUA? Who will monitor this across the council to ensure it is being applied equitably? Will there be a process for staff to appeal against the decision?

An initial assessment will be made against the new ECU criteria by each Departmental Management Team (DMT). DMT recommendations will be considered by a corporate Panel to ensure the criteria are operated consistently and equitably across the Council. The Panel will include a number of Chief Officers and senior managers drawn from across the Council together with Finance and HR specialists. There will be a right of appeal to the Assistant Chief Executive (HR).