

**Tower Hamlets Council**  
**Council meeting 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Motion Regarding Parking in Tower Hamlets based on petitions**

Proposer: Cllr Andrew Wood

**This Council notes:**

That in late July (the date is uncertain) a change to the parking rules was noticed on the Council website. It was announced that the changes would go live on the 1<sup>st</sup> September. It was initially unclear what was changing but it generated a lot of comment on social media. At the time there was no opportunity for residents and Councillors to ask questions about this change not least what had prompted it.

The Mayor later confirmed that he had chosen not to consult on this change during questions at the last Ask the Mayor event. It had not gone through any of the normal channels e.g. Cabinet, Forward Plan, allowing for comments and scrutiny. The changes are now live but for the first month nobody will be fined under these new rules but we assume that this will change tomorrow morning.

It resulted in three separate petitions. In late July, a Change.org petition was created which has attracted over 6,099 signatures (as at 27<sup>th</sup> September) of which over 900 have been validated as being from Tower Hamlets residents (Change.org does not require you to input an address when completing their petitions but can be added when first signing up to Change.org).

Cllr Puru Miah and Cllr Andrew Wood submitted two separate petitions which were combined into one petition on the Council website. This received 2,121 signatures between 29<sup>th</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Of note 27,294 parking permits have been issued by the Council across Tower Hamlets – that depending on the size of extended families that perhaps 50,000 to 100,000 residents maybe affected by this change (clearly more work needs to be done to verify these numbers) as many families are reliant on intergenerational support, in particular the elderly. The latest statistics published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2019 showed that Tower Hamlets remains the local authority with the highest levels of income deprivation in the over 60s.

But there are only 24,537 on street parking places, a gap of 2,757 spaces (in addition a number of other people, for example in car free homes, will be parking at night and at weekends).

That of 16 mini-zones, 12 have more permits than parking spaces, which means that cars have to be driven elsewhere during the daytime for this to work (which contradicts measure to reduce car use).

That in some areas like Shadwell & the north-west of the Borough the problem is particularly acute with many more permits than spaces.

For clarity both petitions are attached below as an appendix.

### **This Council further notes:**

That subsequently to the Council petition starting, that point 1 was delivered as the Council did write again to all permit holders with more information including a map of the mini-zones.

That a briefing note was supplied to Councillors on the 26<sup>th</sup> August, five days before go-live.

### **This Council resolves:**

1. That this change to mini-zones be reversed.
2. That if the Mayor does continue with this policy that the changes to the proposed mini-zones be put on hold (by not issuing any fixed penalty notices) until:
  - a. The national coronavirus alert level has been lowered to 2 or 1 (it is currently 4)
  - b. An independent Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out with a particular focus on the socio-economic inequalities impact.
  - c. That we talk to and consult residents on how street parking in Tower Hamlets should work in total, rather than making isolated incremental changes, for example by consulting on:
    - i. The hours of operation in particular whether they should be extended
    - ii. The boundaries of parking zones given new residential areas
    - iii. This proposed change to restricting all day parking to mini-zones
    - iv. Whether parking permits should be issued based on need rather than address
    - v. How we encourage electric vehicle car charging
    - vi. Car club parking
    - vii. Taxi stands & where taxis and private hire vehicles can wait for trade
    - viii. Car-free development rules
    - ix. How to access underutilised private car parks next to roads packed with cars
    - x. How long temporary COVID parking permits should be made available for
    - xi. Whether HMO's should be car free or not?
3. That in future Tower Hamlets Council commits itself to consulting on all such changes in advance with a clear programme of communication and advance notification.
4. That such consultations follow the guidance from the Consultation Institute detailed in the "All Members Seminar: Engagement and consultation Executive Briefing for members on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020"
5. On a separate note this process has highlighted weaknesses in the Council petition system especially related to the spacing and formatting of text that makes them hard to read. This should be resolved.

### **Appendix**

First petition on Change.org

<https://www.change.org/p/mayor-councillors-of-tower-hamlets-revoke-new-parking-changes-from-september-2020-in-tower-hamlets?redirect=false>

## **Revoke Parking Restriction From 1st September 2020 In Tower Hamlets**

Dear Mayor & Councillors,

The parking permit team are changing their T&C's from 1st September 2020, which will have a major impact on local residents', who have relied on the flexibility to move within the Borough to find a parking space or visit friends and family, without the threat of receiving a PCN or worse, have your car removed. This means you can only park in your mini zone and other mini zones for 3 hours. Example: if you live in B1 (you can ONLY park in B1 all day) but in the other mini zone B2, B3 or B4 you can only park for 3 hours.

We sometimes have to park 3 or 4 street away from our home in another mini-zone. By introducing this new restriction to our parking permits, you are penalising all residents, who have paid for their annual permit.

The Mayor should introduce a review of all public service permits in tower hamlets. These are permits given to council staff to carry out their duties, but why isn't the Mayor encouraging council staff to use public transport like the rest of us, or the Santander bicycle scheme or walk. There are staff in many departments within the Council who have a Public Service Permit for their personal vehicle, but never leave the office. If a Public Service Permit is required for a department then get one that officers can share, this will help reduce the number of unnecessary permit holders.

There are over 300 staff who get a public service permit from the Council, which allows them to park in all zones, this even includes tower hamlets homes staff and school staff.

All Councillors are entitled to a free residents permit to use in any zone and this is for a period of five years. Why should they be given an extra privilege than the residents who elected them.

The Head of Parking is not a fair person to implement this policy, as he tried to implement this numerous times in the past. He has not consulted with the local community to get their views. The last couple of years he has been in charge of parking, the service has declined and he has lost large amounts of revenue for permits, debt recovery and PCN's, which could've been used in other areas such as Freedom Passes or meal on wheels.

I would urge the Mayor and Councillors to put a stop to this immediately and think about the community.

Mr Biggs, please reconsider changing your parking proposal back to normal as we all know that is another way of ripping residents off and making large revenue for Tower Hamlets. You supposed to be the Mayor and consult with the residents instead of proposing something quite ridiculous which will be a nightmare in an over populated Tower Hamlets.

We don't want the new Parking changes Implemented here in Tower Hamlets so remove the restrictions immediately.

### **Second petition on the Council website**

This Petition ran from 29/07/2020 to 09/09/2020 and has now finished.

2,121 people signed this Petition.

<https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=122&RPID=29347998&HPID=29347998>

Title: Parking change to mini-zones from 1st September

Statement:

We the undersigned petition the council to Delay the implementation of the changes due to start 1st September that will limit all-day parking to individual mini-zones until:

1. After a proper campaign of publicity including social media and writing to all permit owners (with maps of the mini-zones to make clear the change), not just making a change to the website;
2. Members of our working-class communities have disproportionately been affected by Covid-19. Members who live in the Borough in large intergenerational family networks, older members in these households being reliant on support from family members, who's the only access to that help is via the family car. Nearly 70 years ago Lord Michael Young in his seminal work, "Family and Kinship in East London", wrote about these social relationships, networks of dependence and mutual support that were central to the people's resilience in facing the adversity of insecure and low paid employment. Therefore, in light of this reliance, changes in parking to be implemented post-Covid-19 epidemic.
3. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be commissioned by the Council and published before any implementation of changes, in particular with a focus on socio-economic inequalities. The changes in parking constitute a reduction in public services, therefore an EqIA is mandated by law. And the EqIA should form part of any discussion in regard to the mitigation of the proposed parking changes.
4. This change has been discussed at a public meeting at Tower Hamlets Council allowing Councillors and residents to ask questions before implementation;
5. There has been a full consultation about parking issues more generally in Tower Hamlets, including but not limited to:
  - The hours of operation in particular whether they should be extended
  - The boundaries of parking zones given new residential areas
  - This proposed change to restricting all day parking to mini-zones
  - Whether parking permits should be issued based on need rather than address
  - How we encourage electric vehicle car charging
  - Car club parking
  - Taxi stands & where taxis and private hire vehicles can wait for trade
  - Car-free development rules
  - How to access underutilised private car parks next to roads packed with cars
  - How long temporary COVID parking permits should be made available for?
  - Whether HMO's should be car free or not?

Justification:

This follows an unannounced change to the Council website

[https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/transport\\_and\\_streets/Parking/Parking.aspx](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/transport_and_streets/Parking/Parking.aspx)

Which said that from 1st September;

"A resident parking permit will only be valid all day in the mini zone that you live.

Your permit will also be valid in any other mini zone for a maximum of three continuous hours from the time you first park.

For example, if you live in A1; your permit will be valid for a maximum of three continuous hours in any other A, B, C or D mini zones from the time you first park."

Changes like this need to go through a better review process as the nature of the change was unclear and we also need to discuss wider parking issues.