

Bus Lane Enforcement

Introduction

This study looks at bus lane enforcement in London.¹ In addition to their power to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for parking, councils are allowed to issue PCNs for bus lane infringements²; the figures reported by London Councils detail the numbers for London.³ Moreover, councils are now required to declare actual bus lane income, expenditure and surpluses separately from other transport figures in their annual financial returns to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department of Communities and Local Government).⁴ In a separate return they also include budgeted figures for the forthcoming financial year.⁵

There is little consistency in the reporting between actuals and budget (see Table 5). Only four London boroughs reported bus lane income in 2016-17, yet 27 reported issuing PCNs for bus lanes in the same year (see Table 2) – there is thus still some way to go until all councils report fully. Bexley, City of London, Greenwich, Kensington and Chelsea, Redbridge, Sutton and Westminster do not currently enforce bus lanes (although they do enforce moving traffic offences – such as banned turns and box junction infringements – and bus stop clearways). A large proportion of bus lanes are on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN – the Red Routes – counted for statistical purposes in this note as another London borough) for which only about 4,000 PCNs were issued in 2016-17, though Transport for London (TfL), which manages it, does not show any income in this category.

It is estimated that in 2016-17, councils in London had a total income from PCNs issued for bus lane infringements amounting to £32 million, and a surplus (income minus expenditure) of about £23 million, equivalent to some 6% of the surplus generated from parking offences.

In addition, in London there were around 1,236,000 moving traffic offences enforced by CCTV in 2016-17 (up 26% from around 980,000 in 2015-16), which would have generated about £110 million income and a surplus of around £80 million – equivalent to 21% of the parking surplus. This amount is not reported separately in the official returns, but there is a total income for London boroughs of £30 million classed as “other traffic management net income”. TfL reports £11.3 million under this heading, which could cover bus lane and moving traffic offences.

¹ The term ‘bus lane’ in this note encompasses also bus-only roads.

² Councils in London are also allowed to issue PCNs for moving traffic offences such as box junction infringements and banned turns. A separate note has been issued on parking income and expenditure: <https://www.racfoundation.org/media-centre/english-council-parking-profits-up-ten-percent-2016-17>

³ www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services/parking-services/parking-and-traffic/parking-information-professionals/information

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2016-to-2017-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2017-to-2018-budget>

The number of bus lane PCNs issued in London fell sharply in 2007-8 compared to the previous year, and continued to fall before bottoming out in 2010-11 and rising thereafter (see Table 1).

Table 1: Bus lane PCNs issued in London, 2006-7 to 2016-17

Financial year	PCNs issued (thousands)
2006-7	409
2007-8	293
2008-9	234
2009-10	218
2010-11	216
2011-12	233
2012-13	243
2013-14	255
2014-15	266
2015-16	330
2016-17	351

Source: London Councils

In 2016-17 London boroughs averaged about 10,000 bus lane PCNs per authority. Table 2 shows, for all London boroughs, the number of bus lane PCNs issued for the 11 years to 2016-17.

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Table 2: Bus lane PCNs issued in London by borough, 2006-7 to 2016-17

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London borough	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	(thousands)										
Barking & Dagenham	5	16	20	15	11	14	20	20	22	28	29
Barnet	35	42	41	31	24	13	15	17	18	10	6
Bexley*	2										
Brent	12	11	10	9	7	2	1	6	11	8	10
Bromley	10	7	5	6	5	6	6	4	5	12	18
Camden	15	11	9	21	18	19	17	14	11	17	17
City of London*											
Croydon	1	1	1	1	1	3	0.5	0.3	0.2	2	2
Ealing	36	28	18	18	18	25	29	24	23	28	25
Enfield	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	13	28	23
Greenwich*											
Hackney	6	4	2	2	1	1	0.3	1	2	3	4
Hammersmith & Fulham	8	4	2	4	6	9	12	12	15	26	23
Haringey	17	7	8	8	5	5	5	3	4	13	17
Harrow	9	7	6	4	8	9	8	7	9	10	10
Havering										3	8
Hillingdon	9	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	3
Hounslow		2	3	2	3	10	11	19	16	12	8
Islington	15	13	7	4	5	6	6	10	12	13	13
Kensington and Chelsea*											
Kingston upon Thames	4	3	3	6	16	13	13	25	29	25	29
Lambeth	28	22	24	24	21	22	24	30	36	41	44
Lewisham	7	7	9	12	14	10	7	9	8	10	12
Merton	12	13	10	10	10	22	26	15	11	8	22
Newham	32	14	13	6	7	5	5	3	2	9	7
Redbridge*											
Richmond upon Thames	14	9	5	6	6	5	5	3	2	5	5
Southwark	3	0.5	0.3	1	0.3	1	1	1	1	2	4
Sutton*											
Tower Hamlets	10	5	5	5	5	3	1	1	1	5	6
Waltham Forest	6	3	2	2	4	5	2	9	2	3	2

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Wandsworth	14	2	1	1	1	1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Westminster*											
TfL (Red Routes)	96	58	28	17	18	21	26	20	13	8	4
Total	409	293	234	218	216	233	243	255	266	330	351

Source: London Councils

Note: * Bexley, City of London, Greenwich, Kensington and Chelsea, Redbridge, Sutton and Westminster do not currently enforce bus lanes.

For London boroughs, the number of PCNs issued can be compared with the length of bus lanes. There are nearly 290 km of bus lane in London, of which approximately 122 km (42%) are managed by TfL on the TLRN. There is widespread disparity in the rate of enforcement, with Bromley issuing over 11,000 PCNs per kilometre of bus lane and Kingston upon Thames around 8,500, while TfL only issued just over 35 per kilometre (see Table 3). Wandsworth, with 9 km of bus lanes, issued only 61 PCNs, while neither Westminster nor Greenwich, which both have significant lengths of bus lanes, issued any PCNs at all, owing to their policy of non-enforcement.

Table 3: Bus lane lengths and PCNs issued in London in 2016-17, ranked by PCNs-km of bus lane

London borough	Bus lane length (km)	Bus lane PCNs 2016-17 (thousands)	PCNs-km (thousands)
Bromley	1.6	18	11.3
Kingston upon Thames	3.4	29	8.5
Merton	3.5	22	6.2
Harrow	1.7	10	5.8
Enfield	4.0	23	5.8
Lambeth	7.9	44	5.6
Barking & Dagenham	7.1	29	4.0
Islington	4.6	13	2.8
Ealing	9.7	25	2.6
Haringey	6.9	17	2.5
Lewisham	4.7	12	2.5
Havering	3.5	8	2.4
Tower Hamlets	2.7	6	2.3
Camden	8.0	17	2.1
Barnet	3.1	6	2.1
Hammersmith & Fulham	12.9	23	1.8
Hounslow	5.1	8	1.6
Hillingdon	1.9	3	1.6
Brent	7.6	10	1.4
Richmond upon Thames	4.0	5	1.1
Newham	7.9	7	0.9
Hackney	5.3	4	0.7
Croydon	3.1	2	0.6
Southwark	12.0	4	0.4
Waltham Forest	6.5	2	0.3
TfL (Red Routes)	122.3	4	0.04
Wandsworth	9.0	0.1	0.01
Bexley	0.4		
City of London	0.9		
Greenwich	5.9		
Kensington and Chelsea	0.2		
Redbridge	0.8		
Sutton	0.8		
City of Westminster	7.6		

Source: London Councils, TfL

Note: Borough figures are for their own bus lanes and exclude any TfL bus lanes in their areas.

Table 4 shows the gross income from bus lane enforcement (before expenditure) reported by London boroughs in 2016-17 to the-then DCLG. Only four councils reported any income compared with the 27 which issued bus lane PCNs. A further two, Hackney and Lambeth, both of which issue bus lanes PCNs, show enforcement expenditure but

not income (see Table 5). The average income per PCN is £91 based on the very small sample. It is on the basis of this average that the income generated by all of London’s bus lane enforcement, shown in the table, is estimated at approximately £32 million.

Table 4: Bus lane PCNs issued in London in 2016-17, with income as stated to the-then DCLG

London borough	Bus lane PCNs issued 2016-17	DCLG 2016-17 income (£000s)	Income-PCN (£)
Bromley	18,068	1,156	64
Enfield	23,156	3,026	131
Kingston upon Thames	28,984	1,972	68
Waltham Forest	1,751	405	231
Total	71,959	6,559	91
Grossed up for London (rounded)	351,000	£32m	

Source: London Councils, DCLG

Table 5 shows income and expenditure for bus lanes for the six councils which reported any information in their 2016-17 actual figures to the-then DCLG. Only three showed any figures for their 2016-17 actuals and 2017-18 budgets.

Table 5: Bus lane surpluses (income less expenditure) in London in 2016-17, compared with recent budgets

London borough	2017-18 budget	2016-17 actual			2016-17 budget
	Surplus	Income	Expenditure	Surplus	Surplus
		(£000s)			
Bromley		1,156	578	578	-49
Enfield		3,026	750	2,277	1,094
Hackney*	-60	*	60	-60	-61
Kingston upon Thames	1,791	1,972	263	1,709	1,811
Lambeth*		*	141	-141	
Waltham Forest	-32	405	215	190	-3

Source: DCLG

Note: * Hackney and Lambeth show only expenses for bus lanes, not income.

Based on this very small sample, it is estimated that the 2016-17 surplus from bus lane enforcement for the whole of London is likely to be around £23 million, around 6% of the parking surplus of £379 million.⁶

In addition, in London there were some 1,236,000 moving traffic offences enforced by CCTV in 2016-17. It is estimated that they would have generated about £110 million income and a surplus of around £80 million – equivalent to 21% of the parking surplus.

Appendix A gives detailed figures on all moving traffic offences in London, borough by borough. Appendix B reveals how common, and also how successful, were appeals against various forms of PCN in London in 2016-17. Around a half of appeals succeeded.

⁶ See reference in footnote 2 above for the source of this total parking surplus.

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Appendix A

Table A.1: Moving traffic offences (banned turns, box junctions) in London, 2007-8 to 2016-17

PCNs issued (thousands)		2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	% change 2016-17 on 2015-16
Barking & Dagenham	5	0.4	2	9	35	25	17	19	21	33	31	-5%
Barnet	35										56	
Bexley	2									1	13	+821%
Brent	12				8	21	27	24	28	74	72	-2%
Bromley	10											
Camden	15	114	90	60	54	46	31	29	24	34	31	-8%
City of London		4	5	6	3	14	17	5	5	10	11	+6%
Croydon	1	13	5	6	3	5	11	12	13	16	23	+42%
Ealing	36	59	54	33	29	17	23	20	26	47	65	+38%
Enfield	1	0.4	1	2	6	2	9	13	10	15	30	+96%
Greenwich												
Hackney	6	15	10	11	10	10	9	8	11	30	20	-34%
Hammersmith & Fulham	8	15	17	15	36	73	71	99	97	105	83	-21%
Haringey	17	21	13	13	21	16	11	14	20	53	43	-20%
Harrow	9	28	40	43	38	33	47	38	54	60	57	-3%
Havering										4	5	+24%
Hillingdon	9	10	7	10	9	9	7	8	8	9	15	+63%
Hounslow							0	5	7	14	32	+122%
Islington	15	46	44	60	37	40	46	34	44	60	76	+27%
Kensington and Chelsea												
Kingston upon Thames	4							16	20	26	84	+224%
Lambeth	28	43	31	34	34	29	26	23	26	36	34	-5%
Lewisham	7				2	1	1	7	9	11	12	+9%
Merton	12						11	12	18	22	56	+158%
Newham	32	25	26	24	15	13	20	20	17	23	29	+23%

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Redbridge				3	12	7	6	7	11	19	39	+104%
Richmond upon Thames	14							1	1	4	8	+104%
Southwark	3	13	11	13	10	10	12	11	7	33	32	-1%
Sutton												
Tower Hamlets	10	4	5	4	2	1	1	2	1	9	12	+45%
Waltham Forest	6	21	24	31	24	27	23	29	36	84	79	-6%
Wandsworth	14	13	12	9	16	14	10	9	8	3	6	+94%
City of Westminster		15	23	15	10	12	17	15	12	29	51	+75%
TfL (Red Routes)	96	152	119	80	155	139	155	169	126	115	130	+12%
Total	409	611	540	482	572	564	608	650	658	980	1,236	+26%

Source: London Councils

Appendix B

Table A.2: Appeals against PCNs in London (all kinds), 2016-17

Type of appeal	Appeals per 100 PCNs issued	% appeals accepted
Parking	0.66	50%
Bus lanes	0.48	53%
Moving traffic offences	0.85	41%

Source: London Councils