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## Bromley's Parking Revenue



To get some understanding of the profits that council's make from parking fines, let's look at the income and costs in one London borough – the Borough of Bromley (*Editor: and thanks to Bromley for coming up with these figures so promptly; I will try and obtain some data for other boroughs but I expect it to take some time*).

Here are the figures for 2009-2010 for all parking income, associated "enforcement" revenue from penalty charges, income from bus lane penalty charges, the associated costs and where the surplus of income over expenditure is spent.

Description	Income (£m)	Costs (£m)
On-street Parking (meters)	2.16	0.56
On-street Enforcement	2.22	1.73
Permit Parking	0.66	0.43
Off-street Parking	3.61	2.23
Off-street Enforcement	0.47	0.41
Bus Lane Enforcement	0.35	0.20
Totals	9.47	5.56

As you can see, they all show a substantial surplus with an overall profit of almost 4 million pounds.

**Off-Street Profits.** However £1.38m of the profit comes from off-street parking (i.e. from the councils own car parks) and these figures ignore any capital costs related to the provision of those facilities and the £308,000 that was spent on maintenance of them in that year. But it does suggest those charges (62% over cost) are a lot higher than they need to be. Off-street enforcement basically covers its costs.

**On-Street Profits.** The profits from on-street parking are £1.6m with an additional surplus of £0.49m from enforcement. In addition they made a surplus of £0.14m from bus lane enforcement (not that there are many in Bromley). The total profits from those items were therefore £2.23m.

Where were these "profits" spent? Some £100,000 was spent on "Traffic Management Schemes", £201,000 on "Improvement Schemes", but the vast majority of it went on "Concessionary Fares" which took £1,773,000.

Concessionary Fares are mainly the Freedom Pass granted for free travel to those over 60 or who are disabled.

So in effect road users are supporting this concession whereas it should be a general charge on all taxpayers. The Freedom Pass system was introduced by Ken Livingstone as a hand-out to the electorate and it has been carefully concealed from you since as to how it is paid for. It is managed by TfL but the local boroughs are charged for the cost, and it has been rising rapidly in recent years.

To avoid substantial increases in your Council Tax (which has consistently increased at a faster rate than general inflation anyway), borough politicians have been looking for other ways to cover the cost, and parking charge surpluses have been the answer.

Despite the fact that there was a legal ruling some years back that parking charges should not be used as a general revenue raising method, councils can do this because they can use the surplus to support other transport schemes following a change to the relevant legislation (a not unreasonable proposition apparently at first sight).

*(Editor's Comments: Parking and penalty charges are now being used to bail out the electorate from their own failing to recognise an electoral bribe for what it was. You should know that there are no free lunches in this world and that someone has to pay for these freebies given to a growing proportion of the population, most of whom could well afford to pay. Why should road users subsidise this system? The sooner this system is changed so that taxpayers become aware of what it costs, and all taxpayers contribute to it, so much the better).*

R.W.Lawson, Association of British Drivers, [www.freedomfortransport.org](http://www.freedomfortransport.org), 25/2/2010