

LONDON DRIVERS SPEAK OUT ON PARKING REGIME

Wardens are unfair, bureaucrats follow rules blindly and many controls are unnecessary, says Benchpoint™ survey

London, England, **EMBARGOED** 21 March 2005: A Benchpoint™* survey on the London parking regime shows that London residents and drivers are mightily disillusioned with the way in which parking regulations are enforced in the capital. It indicates a massive lack of confidence in the integrity of London parking enforcement officials, and may explain why those who work in London parking are so unpopular and have such poor morale.

65 per cent of respondents believe the controls should be more lenient (32% “believe strongly”) and 80 per cent believe that controls are unnecessary in places (51% “believe strongly”). 86 per cent believe that parking can be optimised – in other words there are plenty of places in London where more parking places could be provided.

Enforcement agencies come in for severe criticism. 76 per cent of respondents disagree with the proposition “Enforcement is firm but fair”, or that “parking attendants use common sense”.

78 per cent of respondents believe that parking attendants are over-zealous. Even their basic honesty is called into question- 17.8 per cent believe strongly that attendants falsify details, (23 per cent agree somewhat), and 37 per cent are uncertain. Only 20 per cent believe that attendants do not falsify details in order to issue penalty notices.

Few people –less than 10 per cent- have a good word to say for the judgement of the bureaucrats who hide behind the front line attendants. Over half “believe strongly” that officials follow rules blindly, and a further 28 per cent believe somewhat.

The cost and scale of successful challenges indicates that many wrong decisions are made on the streets, and a lighter touch would ease tempers and reduce costs for councils and drivers.

Over half the respondents (58 per cent), had challenged parking tickets, and of these, over 60 per cent had been successful. 20 per cent of the respondents had appealed to the independent Parking Appeals Service, and of these 66 per cent were successful. Only 23 per cent of challengers thought the local authority had handled it well, but over 37 percent of appellants thought the appeal process had been handled well.

On the Congestion charge, there is overwhelming agreement that the charge has reduced congestion in central London, but has also affected business adversely. There is equally overwhelming opposition to extending the charge to Kensington and Chelsea, or raising the charge to £8.

45 per cent of the respondents made detailed comments on their experiences of London parking, and 56 per cent made detailed comments on how the regime may be improved.

To take part in the survey, go to: <http://www.benchpoint.com/parking>

Survey Methodology

The survey questionnaire was closely based on the terms of reference of a “Scrutiny” of London parking enforcement by the London Assembly, which is due to report next month. The survey covered nearly 600 respondents, recruited through Benchpoint™’s on line panel, and through community websites in Hounslow, Ealing, Richmond, Wandsworth, and Lambeth. Every London Borough was represented in the survey, although borough results for the smaller samples are not meaningful.

All types of road users were represented, but the overwhelming majority used their cars for leisure, or work or leisure equally. The majority of respondents used the Congestion Zone “sometimes”, followed by “never”.

18 per cent of respondents did not live in London Boroughs, but drove in the capital.

Ends. 517 words.

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Notes to editors

- Please acknowledge “Benchpoint™ Parking Survey” if you use this data
- The survey is still “live”. Editors can see the results just before edition time by going to:
<http://optima.benchpoint.com/optima/Reports.aspx?query=view&surveyID=138&reportID=637&ObjectID=6323766938517125001669138>
- (or paste entire string into your browser window, removing any line breaks)
- You may need to update the figures in this release. When on line, hover your mouse over the bars of the charts and the underlying data will appear. You can also right click and copy and paste any chart into a document or a graphics program.
- Comments made by individual respondents are available by arrangement. All comments are anonymous.
- Further analysis of additional questions (on consultation processes) and demographic sub-groups is possible by arrangement.
- The survey was not commissioned or funded by any political or lobbying group. It was sponsored by Benchpoint™ in the interest of open and accountable government in London.
- *Benchpoint Ltd is a new polling company. Its principal business is providing interactive surveys and measurements for businesses and governments. Its unique, advanced, software allows instant, fully-analysed results to be displayed in real time. The company was recently named as having “The best new measurement product of 2004” by a specialist website and publisher in the USA.
- (See <http://www.benchpoint.com/news.asp?article=7> and www.benchpoint.com)
- Benchpoint has no political affiliations.

CHARTS ON NEXT PAGE

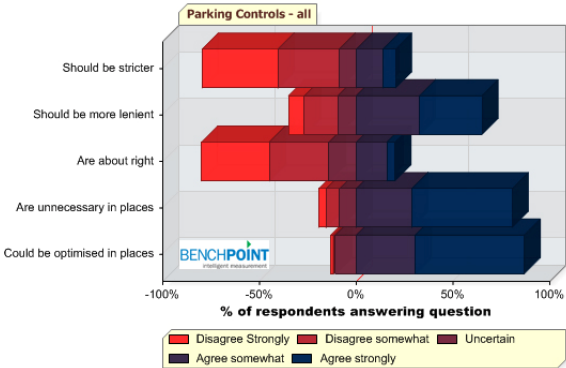
Benchpoint London Parking Enforcement Survey

Data Charts at 1900, Sunday 20 March 2005

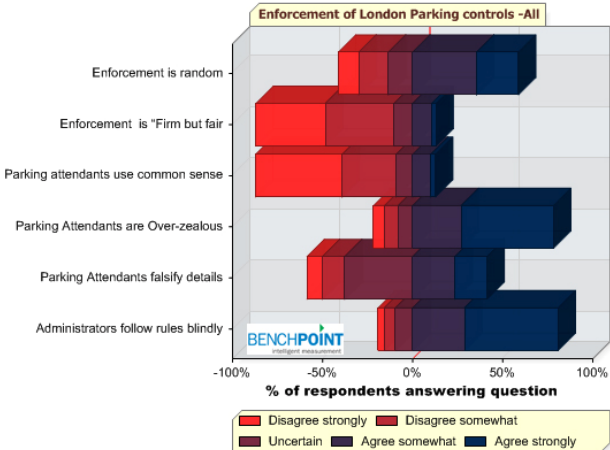
(For updated charts, go to <http://optima.benchpoint.com/optima/Reports.aspx?query=view&surveyID=138&reportID=637&ObjectID=6323766938517125001669138>
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Please acknowledge "Benchpoint™ London Parking Survey in publication or broadcast.

London Drivers believe that parking controls are too strict, are unnecessary in places and could be optimised

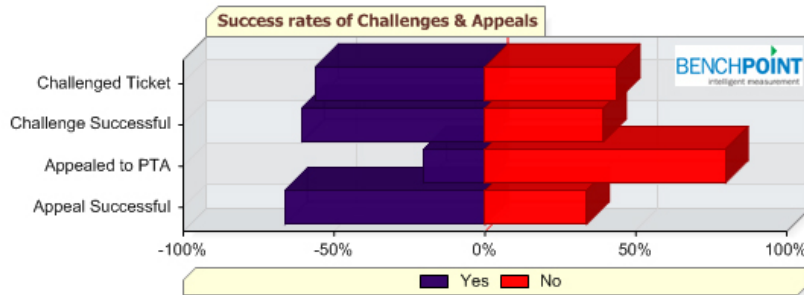


London Drivers believe that enforcement is random, unfair, that parking attendants are over zealous, and administrators follow the rules blindly. They also question the honesty of parking attendants.

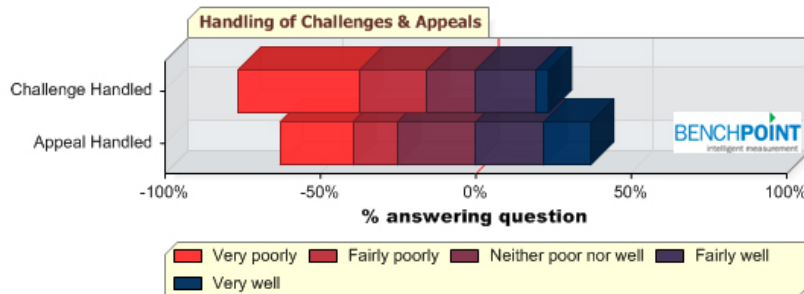


58 per cent challenged parking tickets, and of these over 60 per cent were successful.

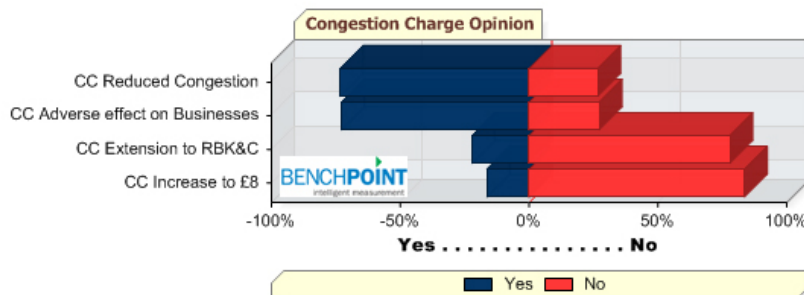
20 per cent of the respondents appealed to the independent Parking Appeals Service, and 66 per cent were successful



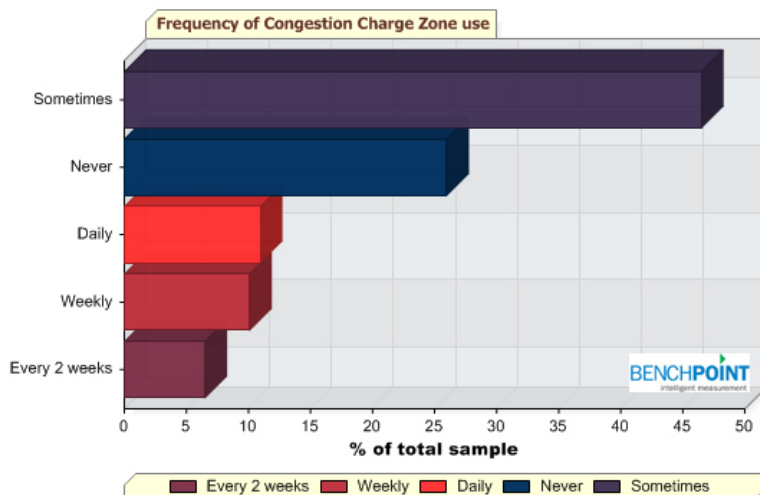
Respondents have a poor view of the way in which London Boroughs handle challenges, but are happier with the Appeals Service



The CC has reduced London congestion but has affected business adversely. Massive opposition to extending the charge to Kensington and Chelsea, or raising the charge to £8.



The majority of respondents are infrequent users of the congestion charge zone



Respondents' vehicle use in London is mainly for leisure, or work and leisure equally

