

Note No: A335/03

Protocol Division of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office presents its compliments to all Diplomatic Missions and certain International Organisations and has the honour to inform them of the decision by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council to introduce a charge with immediate effect to cover the costs which the Councils incur in providing diplomatic parking bays.

The charge is being introduced under powers granted to Local Authorities by the Local Authorities (Transport Charges) Regulations 1998. While the Regulation allows Local Authorities some flexibility in setting charges, it does not allow charges calculated to produce a profit or to compensate, for example, for the loss of revenue from parking "pay and display" machines. The charge is therefore designed to recover the costs incurred by the Royal Borough and the City of Westminster in providing diplomatic parking bays, which have previously been absorbed in the overall costs of running the controlled parking zone.

The Royal Borough and the City of Westminster have calculated that the cost to them of providing each diplomatic parking bay is £2,000. This figure covers the legal and administrative costs of establishing the bay, the actual cost of carrying out the work on the street, long-term maintenance, and the eventual cost of removal.

All future requests made to Protocol Division for new diplomatic parking bays or for the relocation of an existing bay within the Royal Borough or the City of Westminster should therefore be accompanied by a cheque for £2,000 made payable to the appropriate Local Authority. This will be a one-off payment, and no further charges will be raised in connection with the bay unless of course there is a subsequent request for the bay to be relocated. The charge will be refunded should the application for the diplomatic parking bay fail for any reason. There will however be no charge in respect of existing diplomatic parking bays or where relocation of a bay is to meet the requirements of the Royal Borough or the City of Westminster.

Arrangements for the provision of diplomatic parking bays by other London Boroughs are not affected by this change.

The Division wishes to remind Diplomatic Missions of the criteria for the provision of diplomatic parking bays. Under a longstanding arrangement, the London Boroughs have agreed to allocate parking spaces for use by individual diplomatic missions where off-street parking is not available. The spaces are allocated on the basis of one parking bay for every five members of the mission's diplomatic staff, subject to a maximum of five bays. In addition, Heads of Mission are allocated a parking bay at their Residence, again where off-street parking is not available. Because of the extreme pressure on parking space in London, these criteria are applied rigidly.

Protocol Division of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Diplomatic Missions and certain International Organisations the assurance of its highest consideration.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE  
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