



# Greater London MAG

c/o 8 Upper Ramsey Walk

London

N1 2RP

T: 0870 774 3557

E: [greater-london-region@mag-uk.org](mailto:greater-london-region@mag-uk.org)

W: <http://greater-london.mag.uk.org>

## Parking in Westminster

### Report for MAG National Committee

## Report by the Greater London Motorcycle Action Group

Prepared by Gerard Livett, Greater London Regional Representative

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## **Introduction**

This report has been prepared in response to a consultation exercise organised by the City of Westminster into motorcycle parking arrangements in Soho and the West End.

It includes various appendices which detail the survey methods, the survey methodology and the comments left on our website.

We would like to thank the Greater London MAG Webmaster, Martin Ward, for his assistance in creating the on-line survey. We also wish to thank everyone who responded to our survey.

## **Executive Summary**

The level of motorcycle parking in Westminster is currently insufficient to meet reasonable demand.

MAG has been asked to respond to a consultation exercise on ways of increasing motorcycle parking.

The majority of respondents in a survey organised by MAG indicated that levels of parking provision should increase.

While a small majority of respondents were willing to pay for secure parking, MAG is concerned that the priority should be to ensure that adequate provision is made. MAG is concerned that the introduction of charging for motorcycle parking could serve as a disbenefit to motorcyclists and could encourage some to switch to less sustainable modes or to cease to travel to Westminster at all.

Crime remains a serious concern, and security measures could help to alleviate issues of theft of motorcycles, but not necessarily theft from motorcycles.

MAG remains of the opinion that motorcycles do not contribute to congestion and that they should be exempt from any congestion or road user charging scheme.

Because of the economic contribution that motorcyclists make to the City of Westminster, MAG is of the opinion that the City Council should investigate alternative sources of funding before turning to the end user when providing new facilities.



## The current situation

At present, there is considerable anecdotal evidence that the available motorcycle parking in the Soho and West End area is over-subscribed and that there is a need for more.

A parking beat survey conducted by Ian Parfitt of the London Commuters branch of the Motorcycle Action Group in October 2004 demonstrated that many bays were full to capacity and that there was scope, in terms of available kerb-side space, to increase motorcycle capacity by extending some of the existing bays. The results of this survey are reproduced as Appendix A.

Current motorcycle bays are provided by Westminster City Council. These bays, although marked as 'Solo Motorcycles Only' (or similar), are in fact free parking and not specifically regulated. This means that in theory there is nothing to stop another class of vehicle parking in these bays. Westminster City Council have given an undertaking to introduce the necessary Traffic Management Regulations to preserve these locations for motorcycle use alone. This process will cost the Council in the region of £80,000 (See Information Box 1).

Any new motorcycle parking (in addition to the parking that already exists) could be implemented by the standard route. The Council has advised us, however, that in some areas of Westminster, any proposals to introduce new motorcycle parking would meet with strong opposition from local residents. The views of residents is a major and significant factor that must be considered by the Council when making a decision. Given the potential objections, this could prove problematic for the creation of new parking areas.

One alternative that has been suggested by the City Council is the introduction of experimental Traffic Management Orders to implement extra motorcycle parking (See Information Box 2). The advantage of this is that there could be more parking provided in the short-term. The disadvantage is that the frontagers need to be consulted before a temporary order can be made permanent. The Council's thinking, however, is that when presented with what could be seen as a *fait accompli*, the objections of the residents would be less severe.

### Information Box 1 – The cost of Traffic Management Orders

Introducing or changing parking regulations (or other traffic management systems) is far more complex than the relevant highway authority simply installing the signs and other apparatus. The proposed Traffic Management Orders need to be advertised, with an opportunity for members of the public to respond. The highway authority also has a duty to consult with statutory consultees, such as the emergency services. Many authorities also consult with bodies they consider to be key stakeholders. Once the representations have been duly considered, the Council can then publish a Traffic Management Regulation and implement the scheme. In the case of a new motorcycle bay, the associated costs of publicity, officer time in drafting the regulation, considering responses and the decision to implement amount to around £2,500.

The revocation of a TMO is also subject to similar consultation.



At present, Westminster City Council have no preferred option for the introduction of more motorcycle parking in the Soho/West End area. The Council is keen, however, to ensure that any solution is fair and equitable to everyone in that area. To this end, the principle of charging for motorcycle parking cannot be ruled out.

In 2001/2002 Westminster City Council did have a trial of paid-for secure parking in the St James's Park area. This trial was subsequently abandoned for a number of reasons, which included the availability of alternative free parking nearby and the complexity of operation of the system.

All measures need to be considered in the context of the Mayor's Transport Strategy which does not recognise motorcycles as a preferred transport mode<sup>1</sup>. Notwithstanding this, motorcyclists are a road user group that has increased. The increase in motorcycling has been attributed to the introduction of the congestion charge. However, motorcycling has been on the increase nationwide since 1996 and in London since 1995 (see figure 1). A 2004 report by the Institute of Transport Studies<sup>2</sup> demonstrated that the primary reason cited by London motorcyclists for the choice of transport was 'to beat congestion'. Elsewhere in the country it was for the 'biking lifestyle'. The introduction of the Congestion Charge was a minor consideration in individuals' transport choices and was reflected in a relatively minor increase in the already upward trend of motorcycle use in London (see Information Box 3). The congestion that motorcyclists seek to avoid is not confined to road congestion caused by other vehicles. As can be seen from some of the responses to the survey, some chose to use a motorcycle to avoid overcrowding on public transport.

#### Information Box 2 – Temporary and Experimental Traffic Management Orders

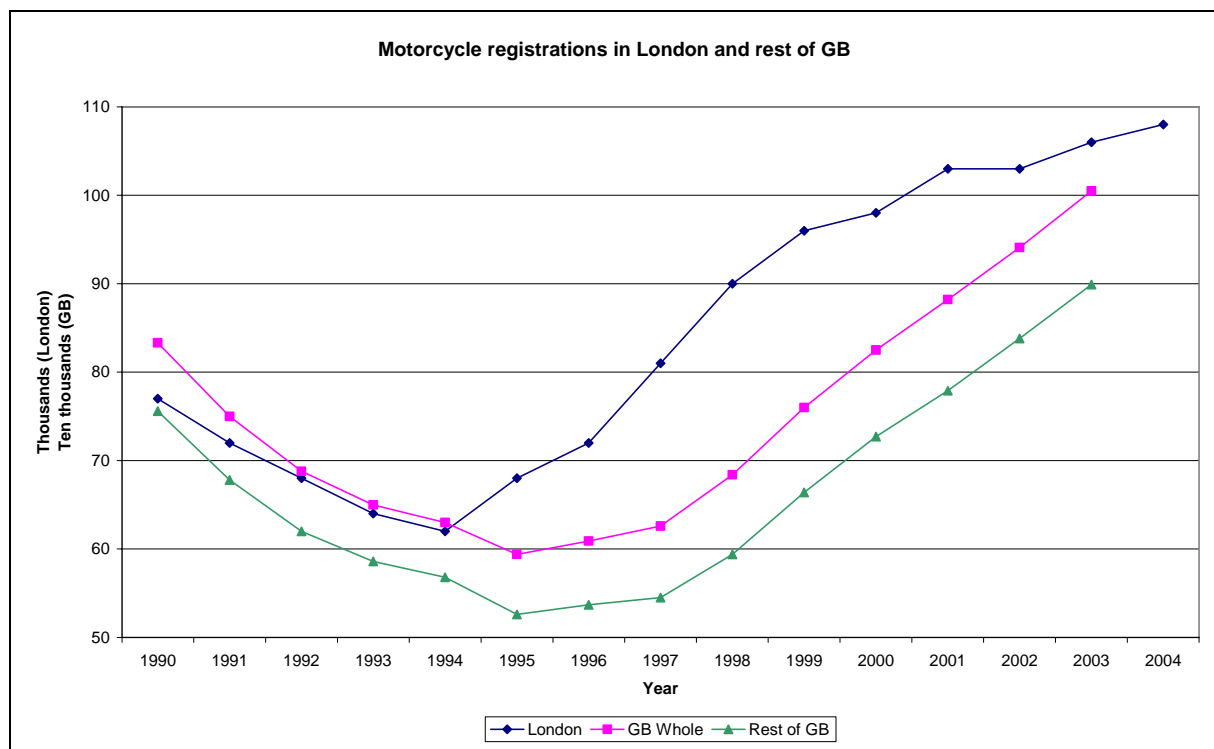
Temporary Traffic Orders are generally used for short-term measures that by their very nature are temporary. The rules regarding consultation and publicity are much simpler – it is enough to publish the Order and the intended duration of its implementation. The most common use of a temporary order is to close a road for works such as repairs or crane operations. Temporary orders expire after nine months.

Experimental Traffic Orders allow for authorities to introduce schemes on an experimental basis without the need to consult fully (as they would with permanent Orders). Experimental Orders last twelve months, although there is a possibility to extend them. Once the Order has expired, they can either be allowed to lapse (in which case the *status quo ante* is restored) or made permanent. If the measures are to be made permanent, there is a duty to consult everyone whose property abuts the relevant section of highway, as well as the statutory consultees. Although this could be regarded as a back-door method of introducing a permanent change it is a normal course of action.

The Orders permitting motorcycles to use three bus lanes in Greater London were originally introduced as Experimental Orders, but have now been made permanent.

<sup>1</sup> The Strategy seeks to accommodate motorcycles and to permit measures to reduce motorcycle casualties, but Transport for London are constrained from endorsing any measure that could be seen to encourage motorcycling. The preferred transport alternatives are cycling, walking and public transport.

<sup>2</sup> *The Differences between London motorcyclists and those from the rest of the UK*, Institute of Transport Studies, University of Leeds: Leeds.



**Figure 1: Motorcycle Registrations in London and rest of GB.**

Source: Livett (forthcoming), *The Contribution Motorcycles can make to Sustainable Transport in London*, University College, London. (Data from Department for Transport and Transport for London statistics).

The overcrowding in Westminster's motorcycle bays was evident before the introduction of the congestion charge, and was entirely predictable.

The extent to which motorcycle use will increase cannot be foreseen with any great accuracy and depends on a number of factors, of which availability of parking and the cost thereof are only two.

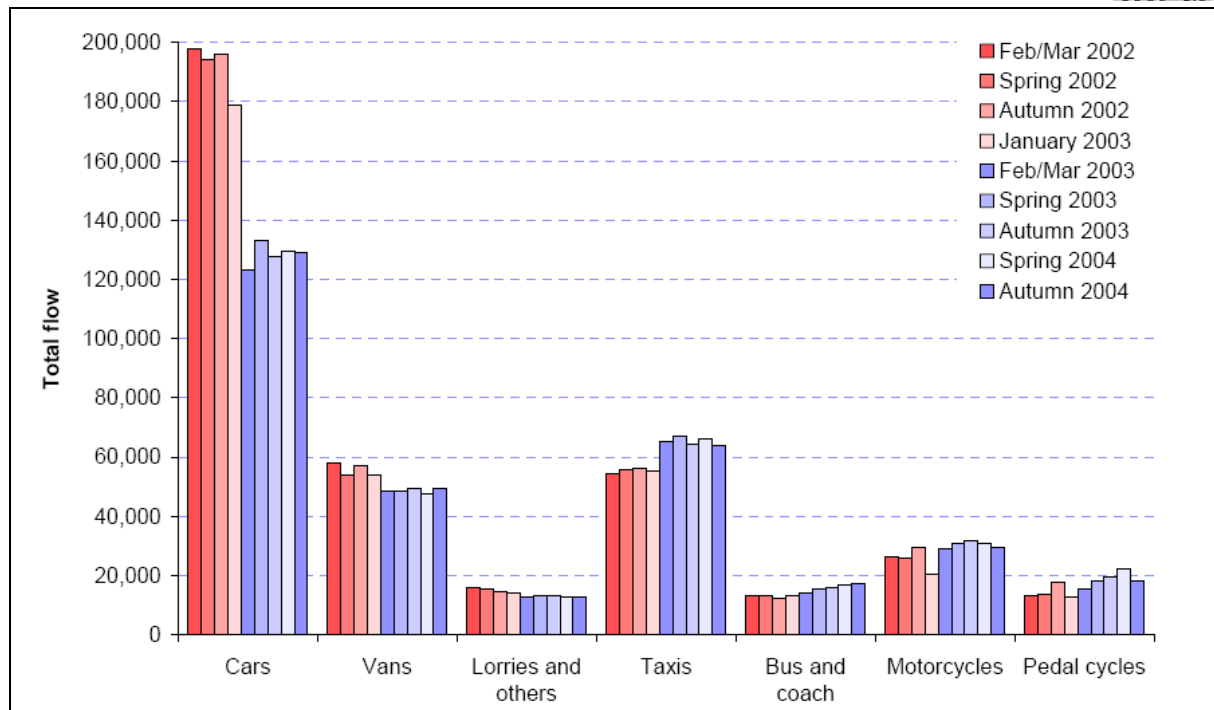
At present motorcycles can park in on-street pay and display bays (subject to payment of the same charges as for cars), and can also park in Westminster's off-street car parks. The car park option is subject to a £3.00 daily charge, but is only available on a season ticket basis. There is little take-up of the car park option, which may be due to price, the availability of alternative (free) on-street parking and a lack of awareness among users.

#### Information Box 3 – Congestion Charging

The introduction of the congestion charge led to a reduction of about 15% in chargeable traffic entering the zone. The figure of 15% is quite significant as it corresponds to the level of change that can be expected in many transport changes. See Information Box 4 for further details.

Of the traffic that did not enter the zone, about 15% was removed in its entirety (the journeys were not substituted in any way), about 15% was diverted around the zone and the remainder of trips were substituted by another mode. Of those trips, about 15% were diverted to modes other than public transport (walking, cycling, motorcycling and car sharing). The amount of traffic that has been diverted from cars to motorcycles in the congestion charging zone represents approximately 1.5% of the traffic that was there before the charge was introduced.

Given that in central London more than 60% of journeys are by public transport, the increase generated in motorcycle traffic was far less than the decrease in car traffic. This is illustrated in figure 2.



**Figure 2: Traffic entering the charging zone during charging hours.**

Source: Transport for London (2005), *London Travel Report 2004*.

## Motorcycle Security

Motorcycle crime is a major concern to the Motorcycle Action group. Data from the Home office indicate that the City of London and the West End of London suffer the highest proportions of motorcycle theft in England and Wales. Approximately 80 in every 1000 bikes are stolen in any given year. Although theft rates vary for different types of motorcycle, MAG is keen to see a reduction in the headline figure which indicates that the average motorcyclist has an 8% chance of coming back to a bay to find that the motorcycle isn't there.

Motorcycle crime is not restricted to the total loss of a machine. Thefts of motorcycle parts, accessories, luggage and items stored in luggage compartments are not uncommon. The other significant crime associated with motorcycles is criminal damage. In the financial year 2004/2005 there were 810 recorded motorcycle crimes in the City of Westminster, with 128 of those in the Soho area.

At present, Transport for London and the Metropolitan Police Service are introducing measures to attempt to reduce anti-social behaviour associated with motorcycles. There is little

### Information Box 4 – The Concept of 'Churn'.

Although the expression churn was first used in the satellite television industry, it has become an accepted concept in most fields where a degree of change is the norm.

In any given year, for whatever reason, traffic numbers in any given mode will change by only a few percentage points, implying a minor change. However, disguised in that headline figure is the hidden change that takes place below the surface. Car ownership and use, for example, may increase by only 2% in any given year, but that represents approximately 20% of individuals having changed their car ownership and use status.

evidence to suggest that such behaviour is an issue that needs to be addressed in the Soho/West End area.

Motorcycle crime has an impact on overall crime levels (and levels of perception of crime) in Westminster, so any measure that helps reduce motorcycle crime will have a beneficial effect on crime statistics. Measures introduced to reduce motorcycle crime would have a cost benefit to Westminster City Council. Any reduction in motorcycle crime would present savings in costs and resources to the police. These savings could either be directed towards other policing activities, or passed on in a reduction of the Council Tax precept levied by the Metropolitan Police Authority. MAG would urge that targets for reducing motorcycle crime be included in the Council's Crime and Disorder reduction Strategy.

Damage to motorcycles is not always caused with criminal intent. Because of the overcrowding in the existing motorcycle bays, many motorcyclists are faced with little alternative to making room to park an extra vehicle. This is usually achieved by physically moving smaller, lighter motorcycles closer together to create enough space. This practice is euphemistically referred to as, 'weeding the scooters.' Such physical manipulation can cause minor cosmetic damage to bikes as they are scraped



Scooters parked at maximum!

together. This activity can place individuals at risk of injury from moving what is, in effect, a heavy weight. More seriously, it can place people at risk from a bike being knocked over, with a consequent risk of physical injury and vehicle damage, especially if more than one bike topples over in a domino effect. It can also create problems for someone wishing to leave a parking bay if there is insufficient room to manoeuvre the bike out.



The Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers has produced Guidelines for Motorcycles which give details of the space requirements for parking motorcycles.

One of the aims of current government policies towards transport is to encourage modal shift from less to more sustainable modes. In a recent study on motorcycles and congestion and the factors that can influence the decisions to make a modal shift from cars to motorcycles it was found that:

'For motorcycle travel, the time spent walking from the parking location to the final destination is only valued negatively when there are no specific security measures available at the parking location: if there are security measures, then the walking time has not been found to have an impact on the utility within the range examined within the experiments.'<sup>3</sup>

The range referred to in the experiments is a five-minute walk<sup>4</sup>. This study also revealed that many motorcyclists experience a perceived gain, in both financial and welfare terms, from modal shift away from cars and onto a motorcycle.

## **Parking as demand management**

The use of demand management techniques to control traffic levels has been common practice among transport planners since the widespread introduction of parking meters in the 1960s. Cost and availability of parking provision can affect individuals transport mode choices. As noted above, available motorcycle parking in Westminster is generally overcrowded. This may have the effect of deterring some individuals from making trips to Westminster by motorcycle – acting as a restraint to demand. However, the on-street parking that is provided is free to the end user – which can act as an engine to demand. If more parking were to be provided this could increase demand for parking, but if it is charged for this could reduce demand.

One of the effects of a lack of available parking is that some individuals park on pavements. Pavement parking is generally prohibited throughout Greater London (it is permitted, where indicated, in some locations, mainly in outer London). To avoid being given tickets some pavement parkers either remove or obscure their registration plates in the mistaken belief that parking attendants will then be unable to issue a penalty charge notice. Since the introduction of new powers in the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003, these vehicles can be identified either by removing covers, examination of Vehicle Excise Duty discs or even the frame number. Enforcement powers are available to the Police to identify and take action against the owners of vehicles whose identity has been disguised or obscured.

MAG argues that if an adequate supply of motorcycle parking were provided, then the problem of pavement parking could easily be eliminated.

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<sup>3</sup> Department for Transport (2004) *Motorcycles and Congestion: The Effect of Modal Split*, Department for Transport (with support from Transport for London): London. Page 9.

<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport (2004) *Motorcycles and Congestion: The Effect of Modal Split*, Phase 1 Report, Department for Transport (with support from Transport for London): London. Page 30.



As noted above, the Mayor's Transport Strategy does not seek to encourage motorcycles, but it does advise that in areas of high demand, more motorcycle parking should be provided<sup>5</sup>.

Policy TRANS 11 of The City of Westminster's Draft Replacement Unitary Development Plan states that:

The City Council will seek to maintain an adequate supply of parking facilities for motorcyclists and will consider motorcyclists needs in the design of any traffic calming and management schemes. In recognising the safety and environmental problems caused by motorcycles relative to other modes, it will be necessary to apply a level of restraint through parking policies.<sup>6</sup>

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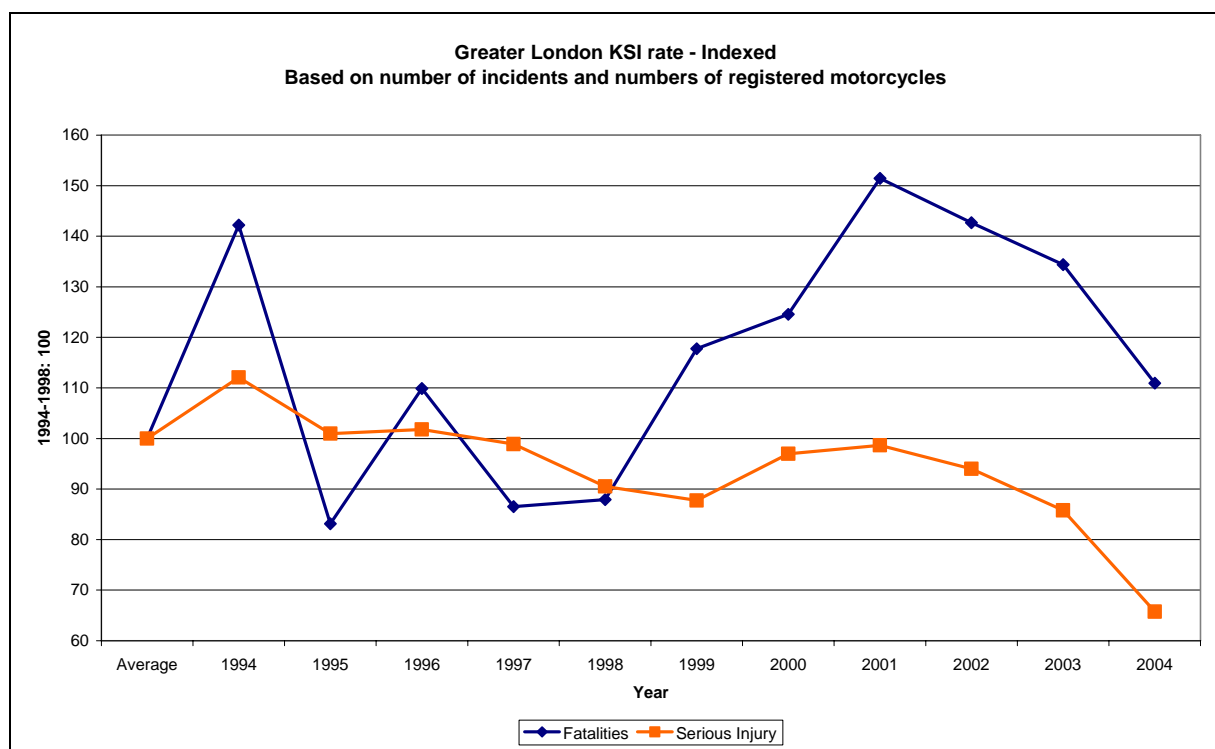
<sup>5</sup> GLA (2001) *The Mayor's Transport Strategy*, Greater London Authority: London. Page 201.

<sup>6</sup> WCC (2004). City of Westminster Replacement Unitary Development Plan: Draft approved for Adoption, Westminster City Council: London. Page 206. Adoption of the Plan was delayed following a Direction from the Secretary of State relating to affordable housing policies.

## Safety

One of the caveats expressed in Policy TRANS 11 is that measures will need to consider the impact on motorcycle safety.

In London, there have been a number of trends operating. As noted earlier, the number of motorcycles in London has been increasing since 1994. The motorcycle casualty rate, as expressed in relation to the number of motorcycles registered in London, increased from 1994 to 2001 and has been falling since then, as illustrated in figure 3 below. Casualty numbers have also followed the same pattern, increasing from 1994 to 2001 and decreasing since. This raises two interesting issues. The first relates to the intuitive approach is that increasing numbers of motorcycles will lead to an increased number of casualties. Up to a certain point that is true, but there is a point, which was reached in 2001, when the reverse appears to become true. The second is that the decrease in motorcycle casualties can be attributed to the introduction of the congestion charge. This too can be rebutted as the charge was introduced in 2003, and casualties began to fall two years earlier. The factors behind the phenomenon of increasing use leading to decreasing casualties is discussed below.



**Figure 3: Motorcycle casualty rates in London.**

Source: Livett (forthcoming). Statistics from Transport for London.

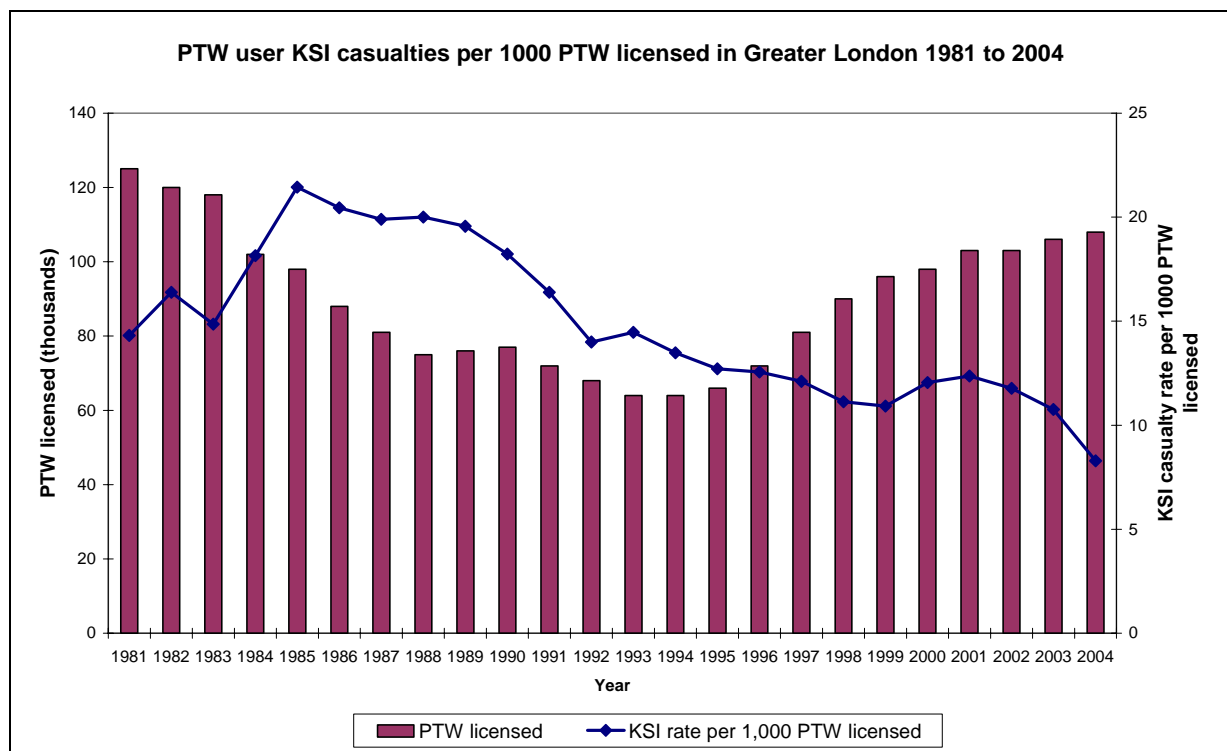
If the issue of the casualty rate per 1,000 vehicles is examined over a twenty-year period, shown in figure 4 below, then it can be seen that there appears to be an inverse relationship between motorcycle numbers and motorcycle casualties. This runs counter to the popular assumption that greater motorcycle numbers result in more casualties. Transport for London use the comparator of

the number of vehicles registered in London, rather than distance travelled, to calculate casualty rates as historic travel data for motorcycles are not readily available, and the number of vehicles registered is considered to be indicative of their use.

In London, the primary blame for the majority of collisions involving a motorcycle can be attributed to the other party. This highlights the issue of the conspicuity of motorcyclists, of which there are two aspects: sensory and cognitive conspicuity.

Sensory conspicuity refers to the ability of an object to stand out from its background. In London, however, the more important factor behind the reduction in motorcycle casualties can be attributed to cognitive conspicuity.

Cognitive conspicuity refers to the expectation of seeing the object in question. Research suggests that car drivers in particular tend not to see motorcyclists as they have not attuned themselves to seeing motorcyclists or necessarily to perceive them as a hazard. Figure 4 below would suggest that there is a critical level of motorcycle use that triggers the necessary degree of cognitive conspicuity of motorcyclists among other road users. This leads to what at first may seem to be a paradoxical conclusion: that the best way to increase motorcycle safety is to increase motorcycle use.



**Figure 4: Motorcycle casualty rates and registrations**

Source: Livett (forthcoming). Statistics from Transport for London.



## **MAG's actions to date**

Once MAG was aware of Westminster City Council's intention to review motorcycle parking arrangements in the Soho/West End area, we decided to conduct our own survey and formulate a robust response to the consultation. Details of our survey and of the results are shown later in this report.

We attended a meeting with officials of Westminster City Council at their offices on Monday April 24 2006. The meeting was attended by Gerard Livett (Greater London Regional Rep), Barbara Alam (MCIA delegate), Helen Timperley (WCC Policy Unit), Kevin Goad (WCC Head of Parking Services) and Paul Middleton (WCC Communications Manager). As a result of this meeting MAG agreed to change their website (<http://greater-london.mag-uk.org/westpark.shtml>) to present a more 'neutral' approach to the issue.

The text of the website is reproduced as Appendix B.

The matter is due to be discussed at the next London Motorcycle Working Group on Wednesday May 17. We have also scheduled a further meeting on Friday May 19. We hope to also have a representative of the BMF in attendance at that second meeting.



## Options

As noted earlier, the City Council has no preferred options.

What is clear from the extant data is that there is overcrowding in motorcycle parking locations. There are two ways that this overcrowding could be addressed. The first is that more motorcycle parking is provided to accommodate demand. The second is that restraint measures are introduced to reduce demand on the available parking.

In considering the options, regard must be made to the needs of all those who use the Soho/West End area. This includes residents, businesses, workers, shoppers, retailers, workers and visitors for other purposes.

The options being considered by the Council include:

- × No change to the present arrangement (other than the regularisation of the existing motorcycle parking bays)
- × Creating more motorcycle bays along existing lines (not delineated, free of charge, no security)
- × Creating free of charge delineated bays
- × Creating paid-for delineated bays
- × Creating secure bays (either paid for or free of charge)

Because any change in parking provision will have a cost implication, the Council is keen to see a contribution towards the cost. They are of the opinion that if charging is introduced it should be revenue neutral and should impose no great bureaucratic burden either on the Council or on users.

A discussion of these and other options follows in the 'Discussion' section. MAG is keen to ensure, however, that there is no reduction in the number of motorcycle parking places provided.



## Westminster Surveys

Westminster City Council have conducted a number of surveys into parking provision in the Soho/West End area. These include:

- × Parking beat surveys (detailed analysis of bay occupancy).
- × CCTV Surveys (using CCTV to monitor bay occupancy around the clock).
- × User Survey (a 200 sample questionnaire similar to MAG's survey conducted at parking bay locations)
- × On-line survey (available to view at:  
<http://www3.westminster.gov.uk/forms/motorcycles.cfm>)

The results of these surveys will be made available once they are to hand.

## MAG Survey

MAG's survey was based on the City of Westminster's survey. We included a question relating to the time individuals arrived at parking bays to determine if this affected the ease of finding a parking space and a question relating to demand management – whether difficulty in finding a parking space deters users from visiting Westminster. We also expanded possible charging scales to include some more realistic levels of £1 and £2 a day (as opposed to the minimum of £1/hour in the Westminster survey).

The survey was put on-line on Monday April 24. It was advertised by e-mail to MAG members in Greater London and through MAG's e-mail activists list. It was further publicised on various bikers' internet forums and by the BMF.

The results were collated on Thursday May 4 with a sample size of 249. This figure is considered to be enough to give sufficiently robust data.

The survey will be revisited before the final report to Westminster is submitted and the analysis and data suitably updated.

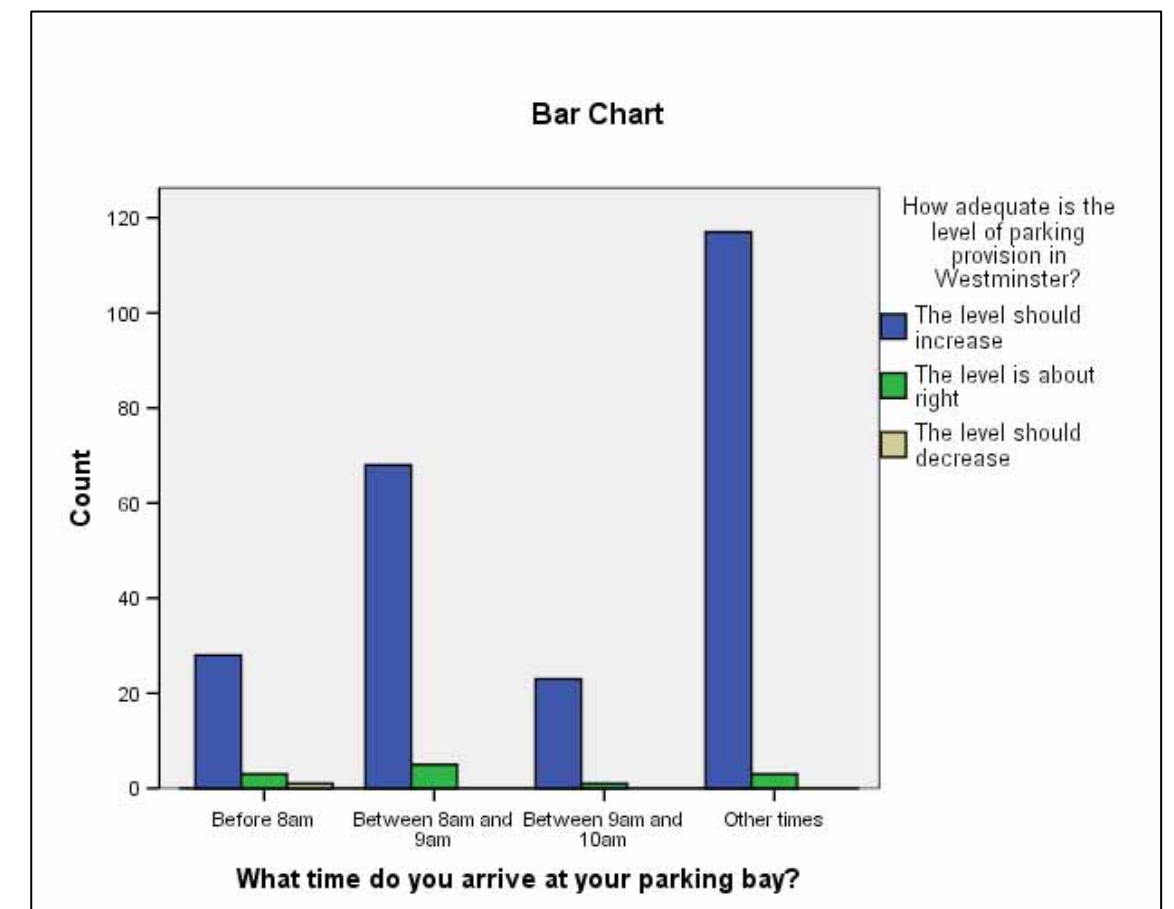
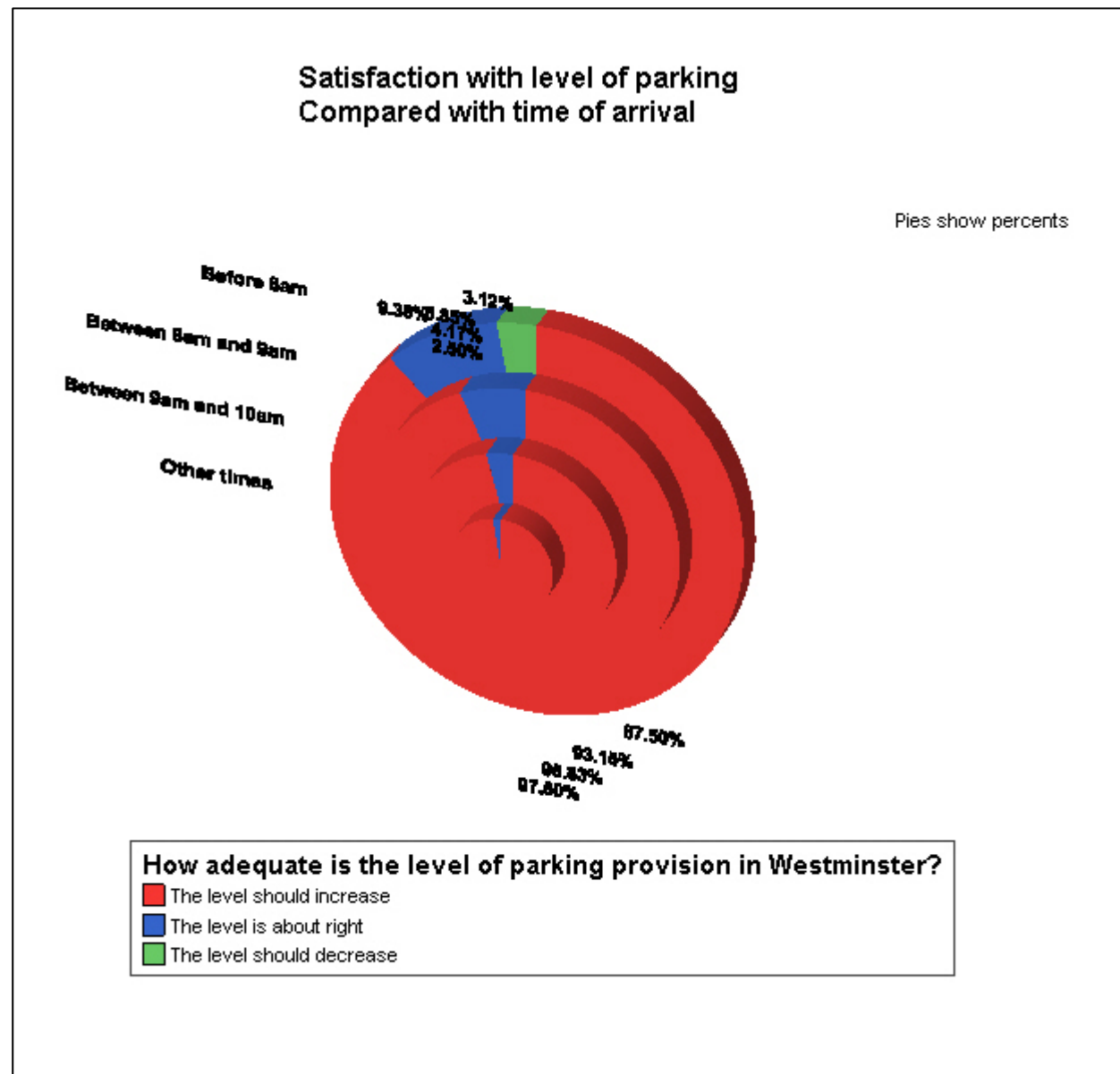
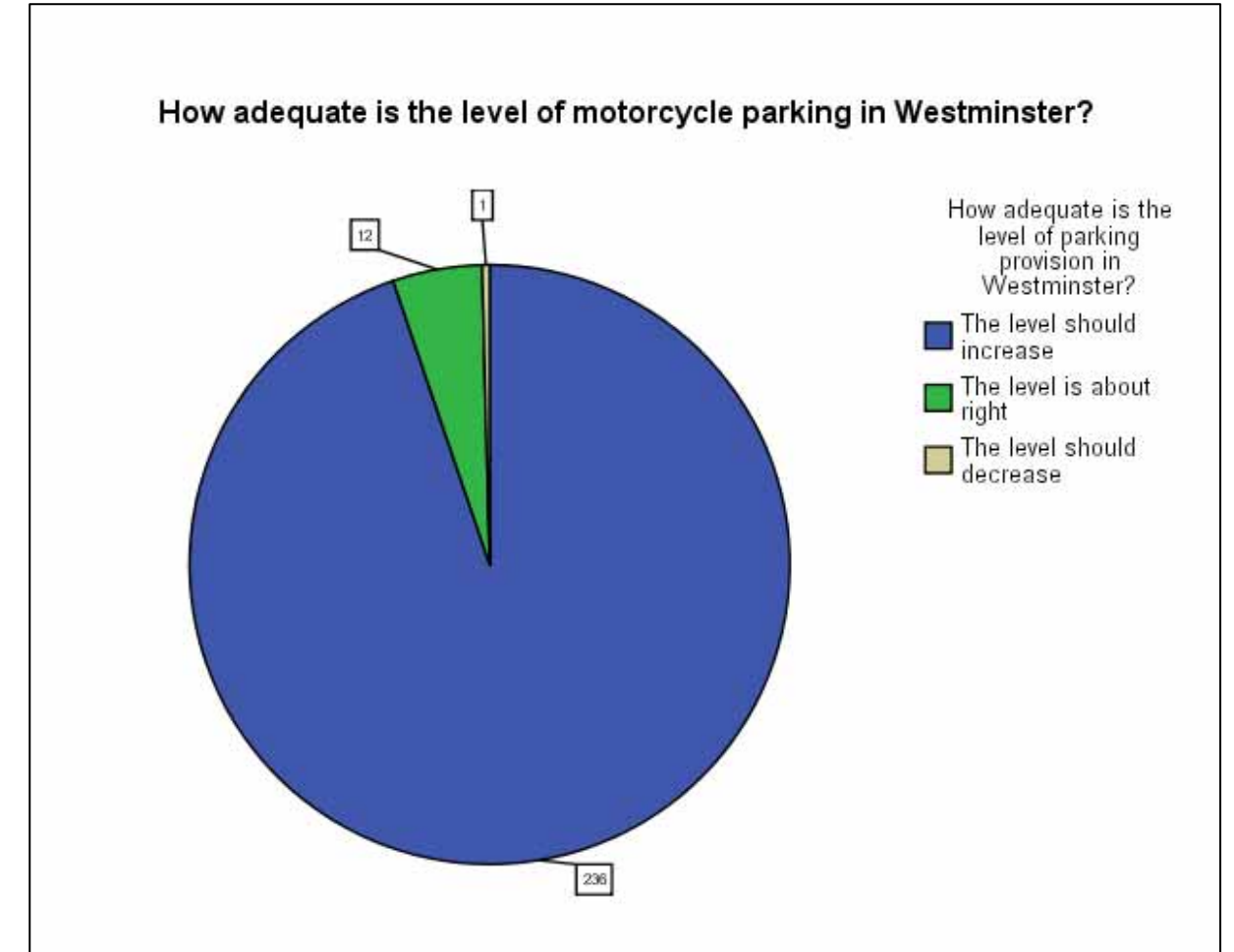
A copy of the survey is reproduced as Appendix C.

The survey included a box where participants could leave comments. These qualitative data are examined in the Discussion section. They are reproduced as Appendix D.

## Survey Results

The first result that will come as no surprise to anyone is that the vast majority (236 out of 249) of respondents were of the opinion that the level of motorcycle parking in Westminster should increase. There was one respondent who expressed the opinion that the level should decrease and the remainder thought it should stay the same. This is illustrated in the pie chart to the right.

If we compare satisfaction with the level of parking provision we can see that it decreases the later the respondent arrives to park. This is illustrated in the bar and clustered pie charts below. Anecdotal evidence suggests that individuals report that it becomes increasing difficult to find a parking location the later in the morning due to the available parking becoming occupied. The survey demonstrates that there is a relationship between time of arrival and satisfaction with the level of parking, and that this is a significant relationship<sup>7</sup>.



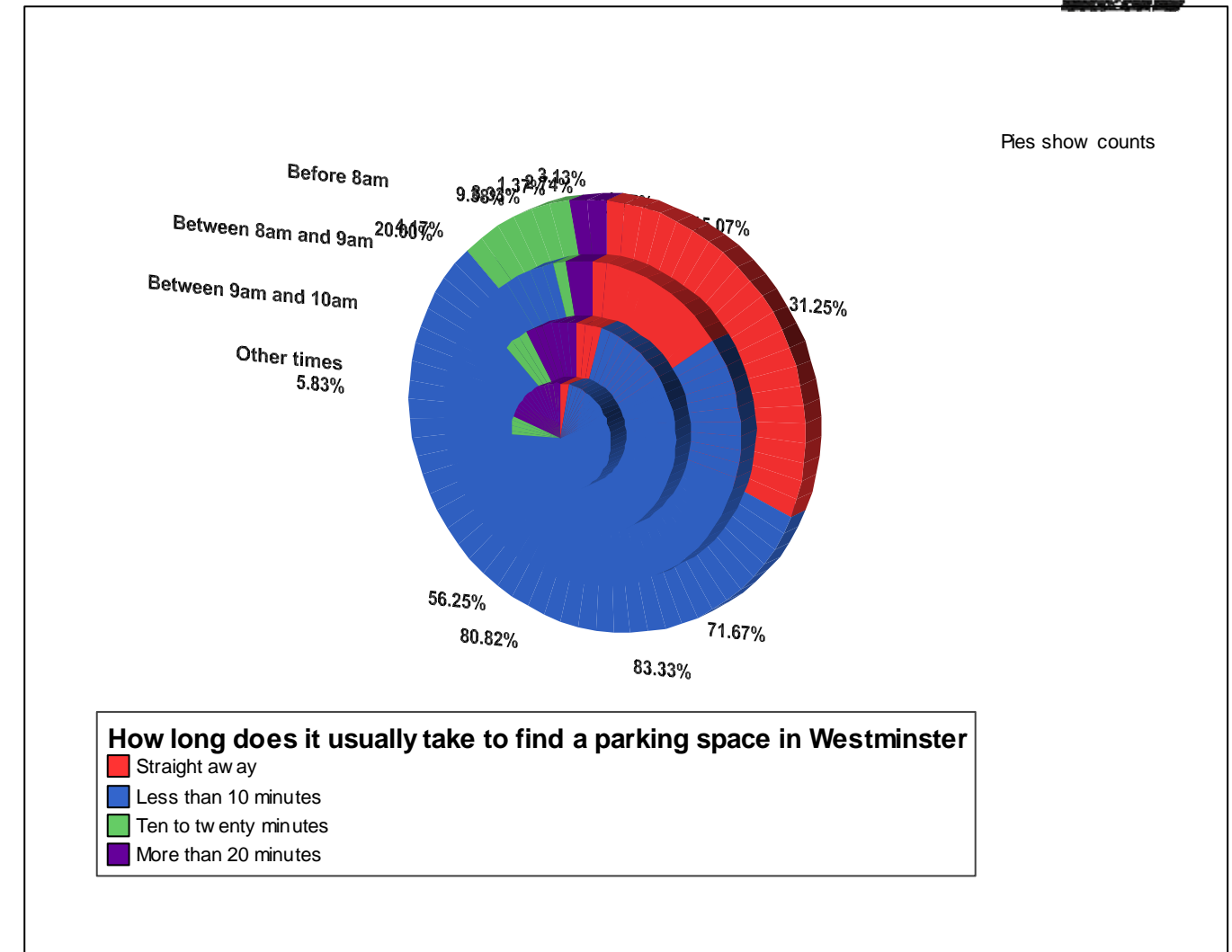
<sup>7</sup> The mathematics behind this conclusion has been omitted.

This is also reflected in the length of time it takes people to find a parking space on arrival. The proportion of people who can find a space straight away decreases during the day, but the majority seem to find a space in less than ten minutes.

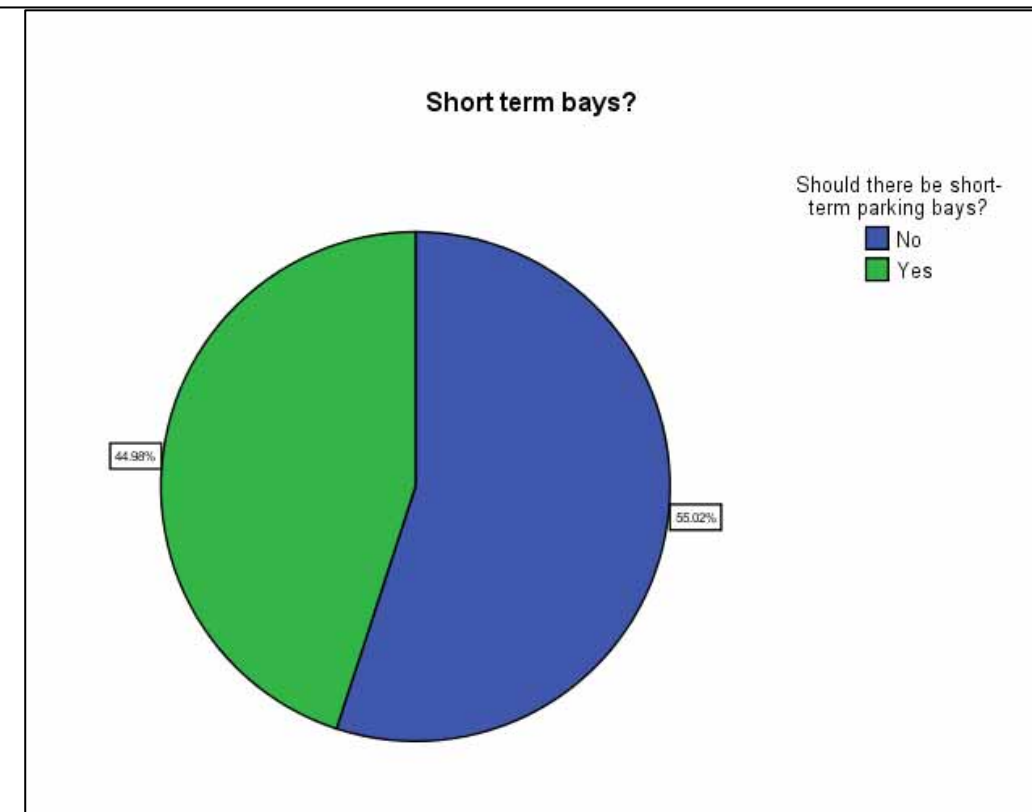
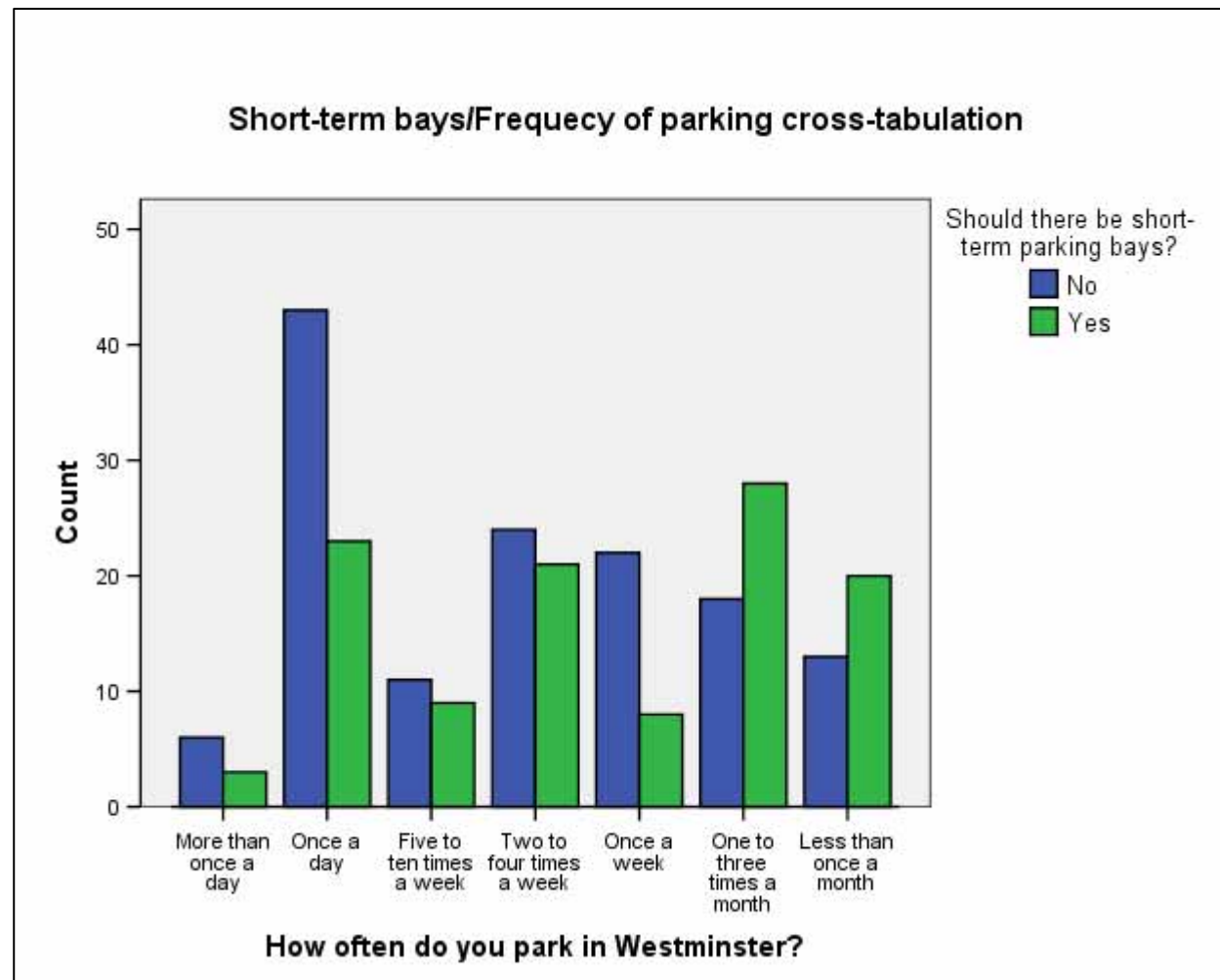
One complaint about Westminster's motorcycle parking that has been voiced is that visitors who arrive later in the day or who need to park only for a short time find it difficult to find a space because the available parking is fully occupied by commuters or people who park all day. Observational analysis reveals that there is movement in and out of parking bays during the day but that this movement is limited. Because of this supposition, MAG asked whether there was a demand for designated short-term parking bays to allow parking for up to two hours and thus distinguish between commuter and visitor parking.

Overall, the majority (55%) of respondents were not in favour of short-term bays, but there was a significant minority (45%) who would have favoured their introduction. This proportion was not constant across the sample, however. When this factor is cross-tabulated against the frequency with which people park in Westminster it can be seen that there is a greater demand for short-term bays among less frequent visitors to Westminster.

This is illustrated in the charts below.



**How long does it usually take to find a parking space in Westminster**  
 Legend:  
 - Straight away (Red)  
 - Less than 10 minutes (Blue)  
 - Ten to twenty minutes (Green)  
 - More than 20 minutes (Purple)





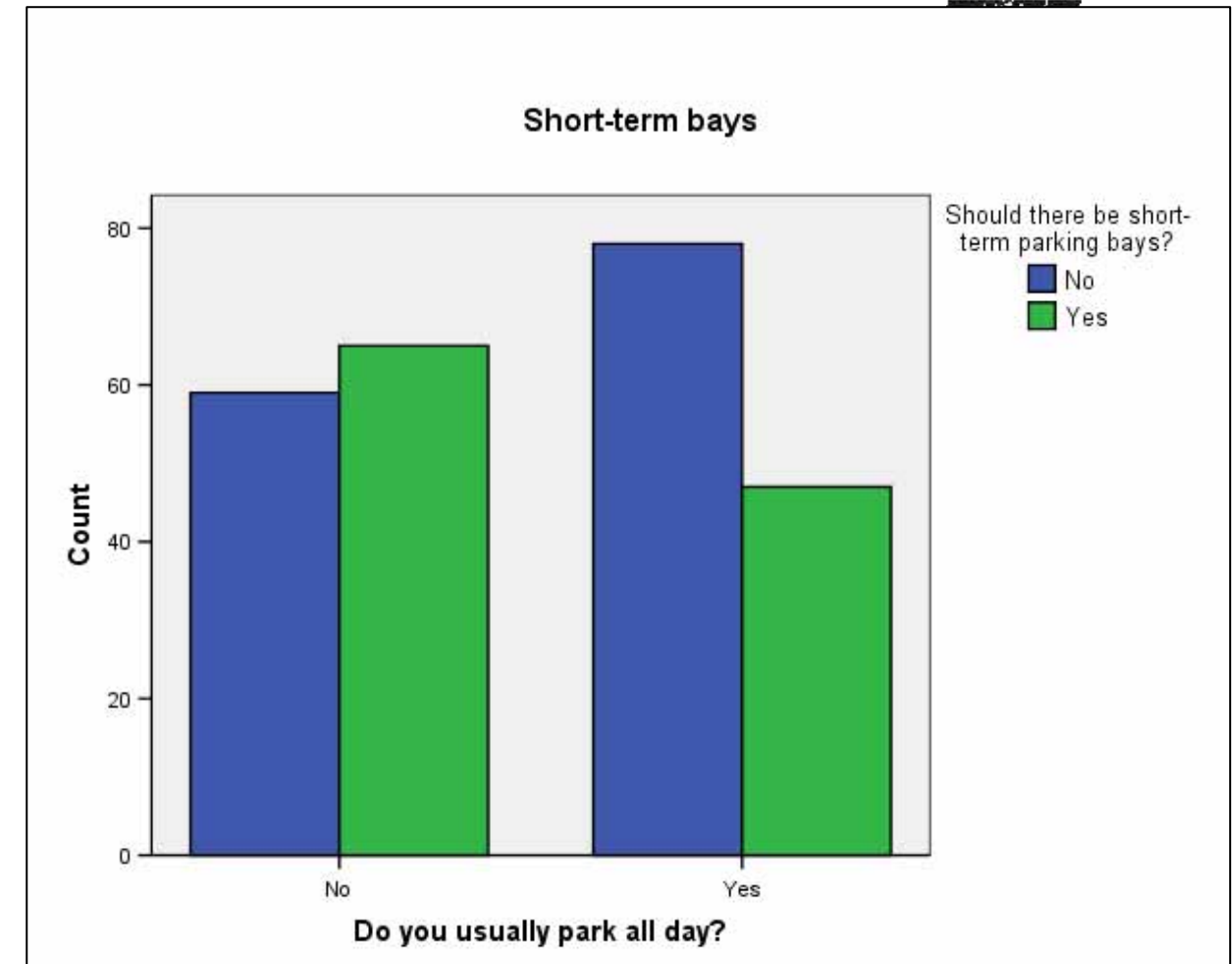
The sample was split evenly between people who park all day (50.2%) and people who do not (49.8%). The majority of respondents who parked all day were not in favour of short-term bays being provided. For those who did not park all day, there was a slight majority in favour of short-term bays, although the difference was less pronounced. The survey was quite clear that any short-term parking bays would be additional to all-day bays.

This is illustrated in the cross-tabulation table below and the bar chart to the right

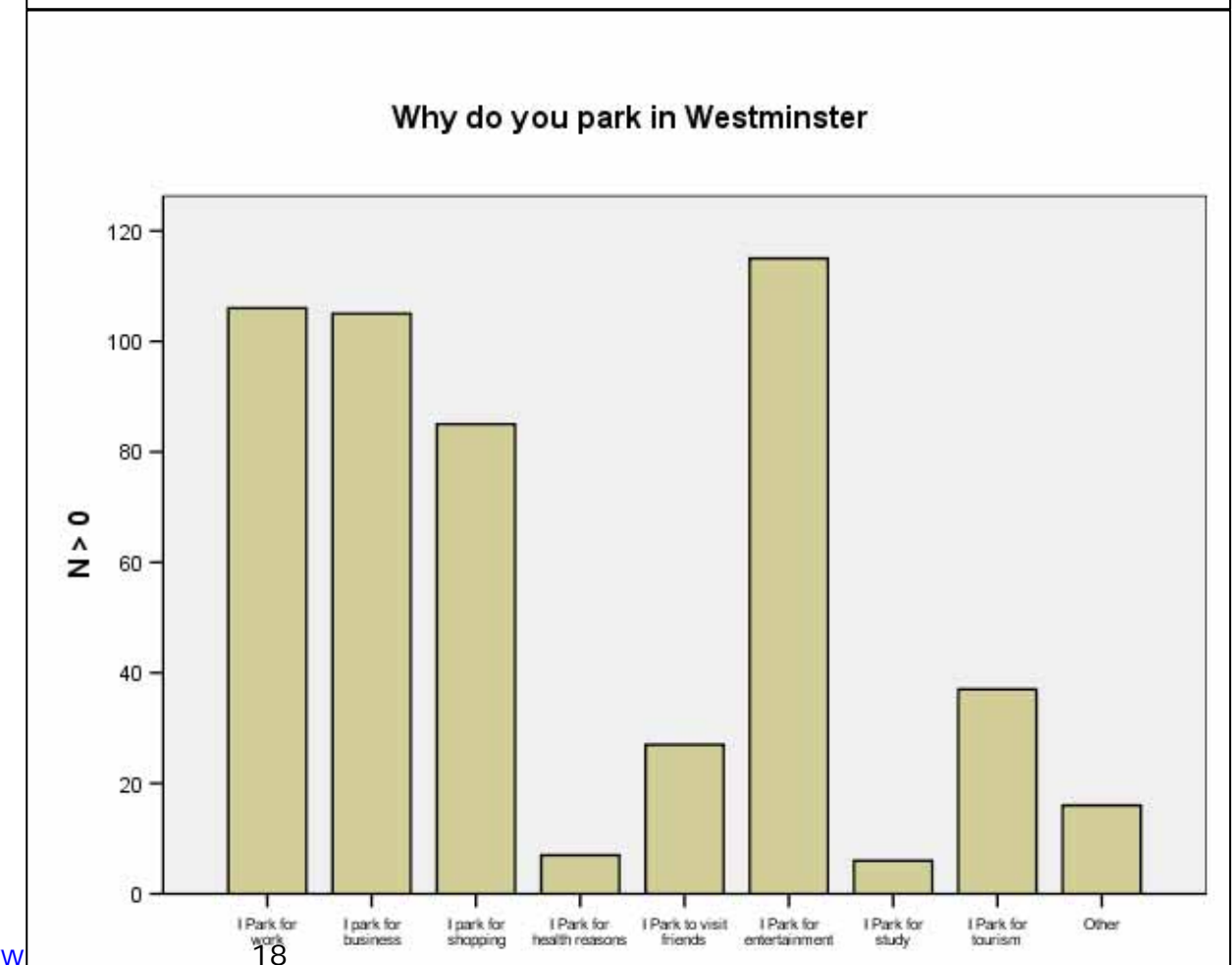
**Do you usually park all day? \* Should there be short-term parking bays? Crosstabulation**

Count

		Should there be short-term parking bays?		Total
		No	Yes	
Do you usually park all day?	No	59	65	124
	Yes	78	47	125
Total		137	112	249



The most common reason for parking in Westminster given in our survey was for entertainment purposes, although work-related reasons came a close second, with shopping third. This indicates that the majority of respondents in the survey come to Westminster for economic reasons and therefore contribute towards the financial well-being of the area.





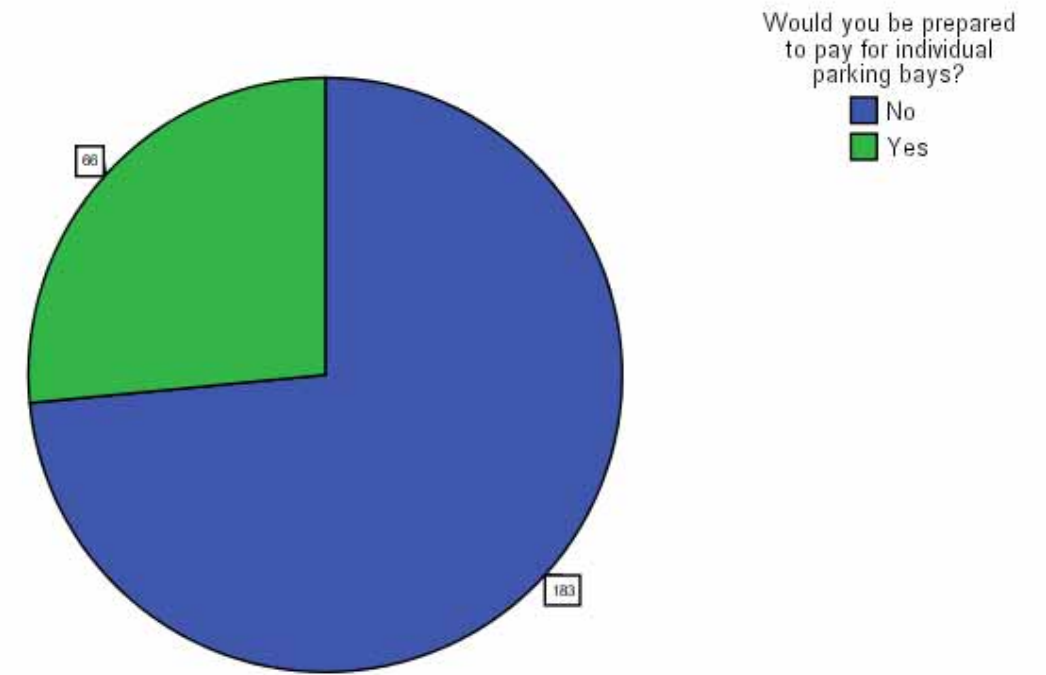
One of the key questions in the survey regards the willingness to pay for motorcycle parking.

Our survey demonstrated that the majority of respondents (183 of 249) were not prepared to pay for individual parking bays. However, if security measures were provided, a small majority were prepared to pay. These are illustrated in the pie charts on the right.

If these results are cross tabulated with the frequency with which people park then it can be seen that there is an inverse relationship between people's willingness to pay and the frequency with which they park in Westminster. This is illustrated in the bar chart below. Although not illustrated, our survey demonstrated that the majority of respondents, regardless of how frequently they parked in Westminster, were not prepared to pay for individual bays. Similarly, there was a marked reluctance to pay for individual bays among those who parked all day and those who did not.

The other comparison is that a majority of respondents who parked all day were willing to pay for secure bays, whereas the figures were even for those who did not park all day (illustrated in table below).

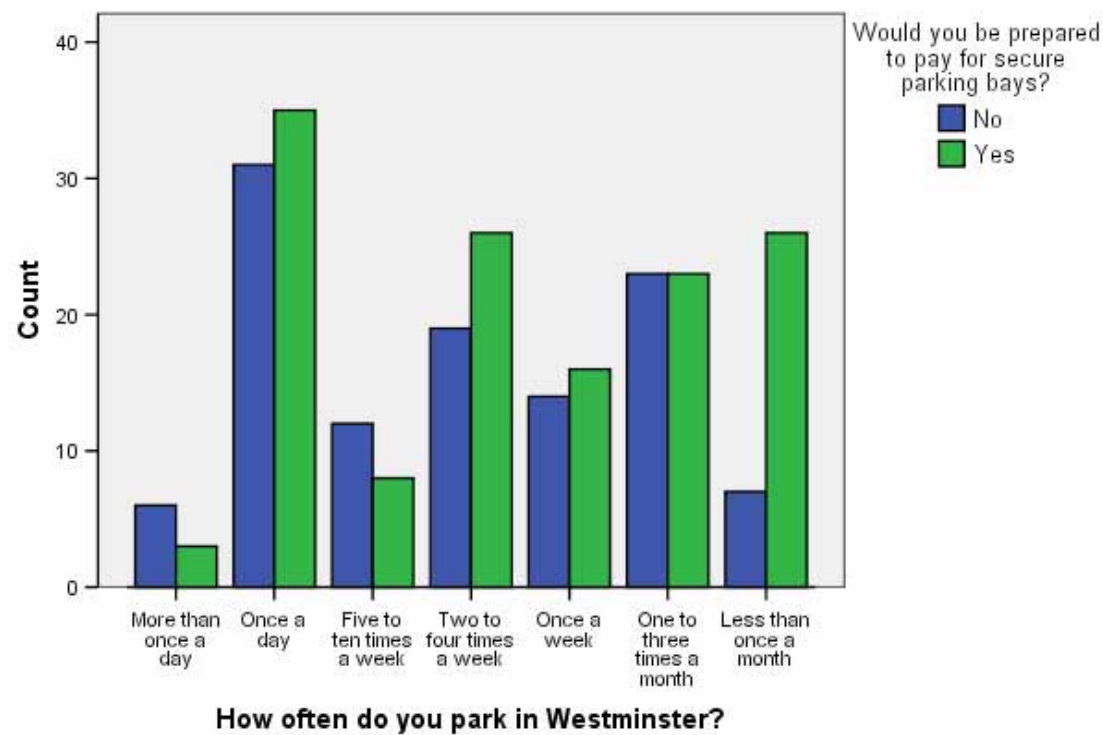
Would you be prepared to pay for individual bays?



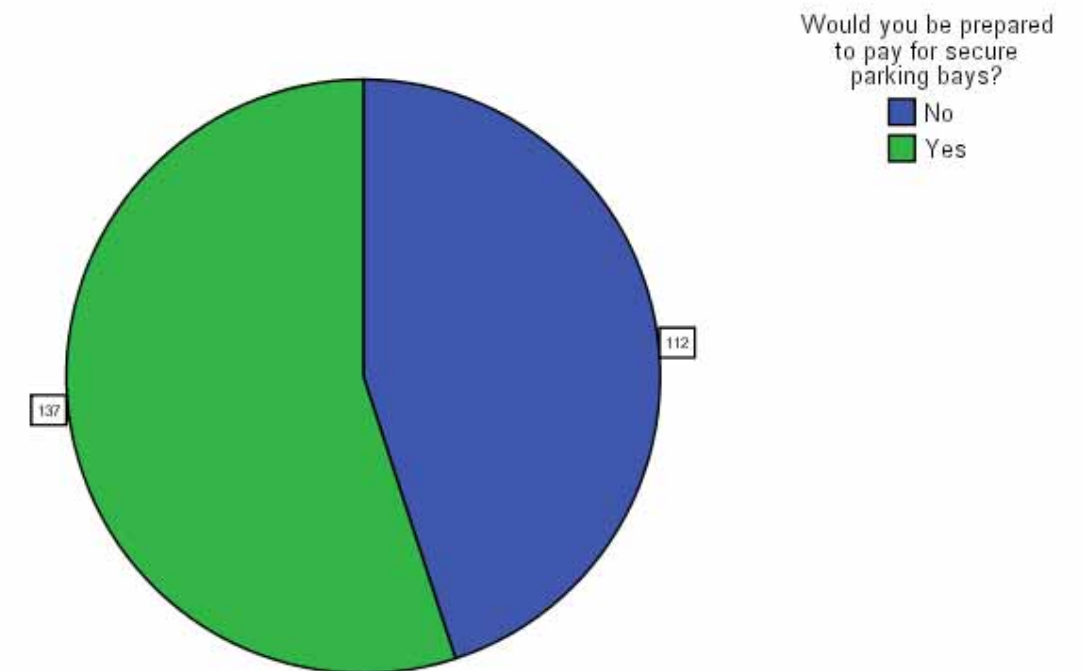
Do you usually park all day? \* Would you be prepared to pay for secure parking bays? Crosstabulation

Count		Would you be prepared to pay for secure parking bays?		Total
		No	Yes	
Do you usually park all day?	No	61	63	124
	Yes	51	74	125
Total		112	137	249

How often do you park in Westminster? \* Would you be prepared to pay for secure parking bays? Crosstabulation



Would you be prepared to pay for secure bays?





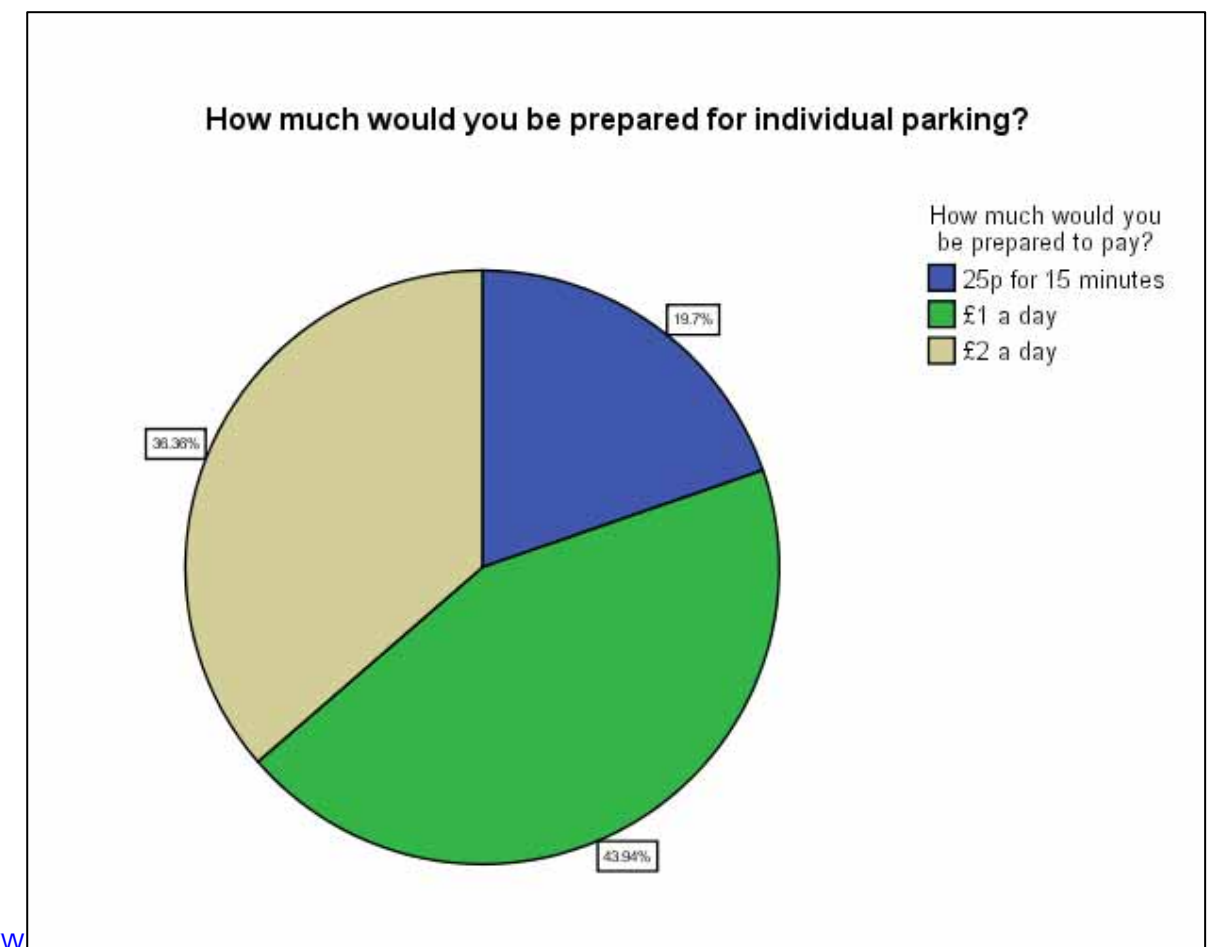
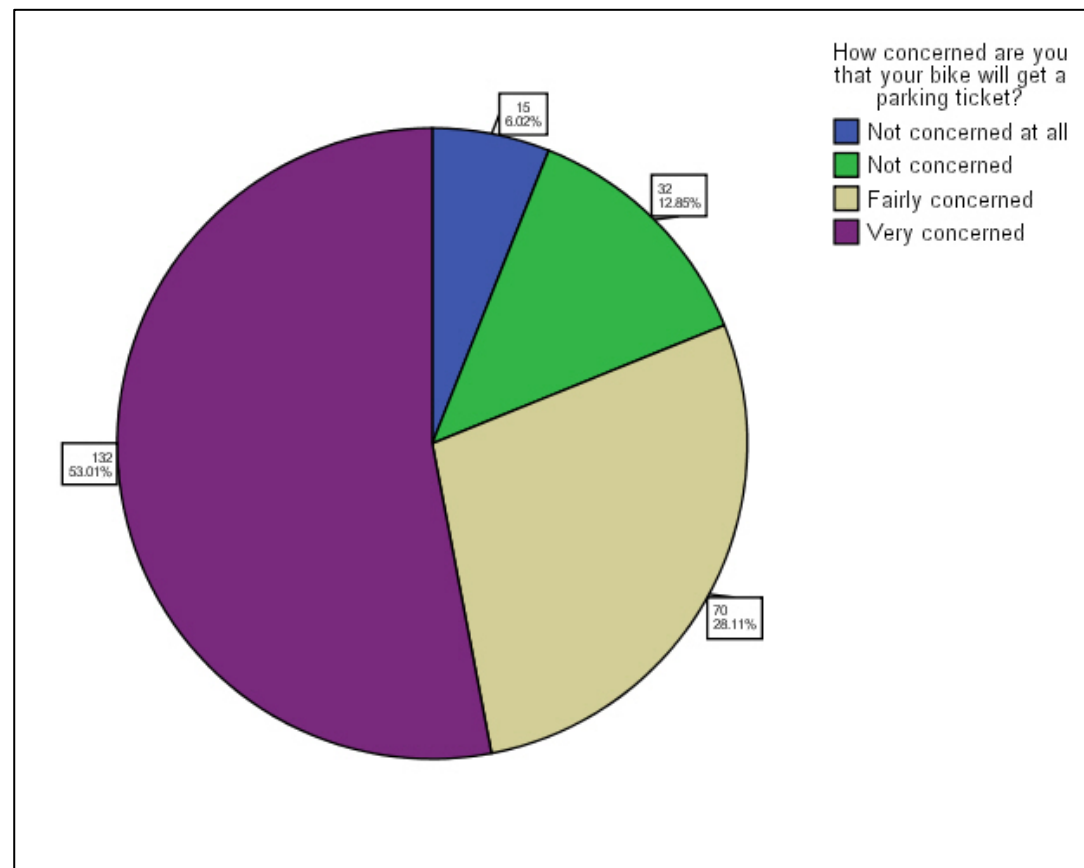
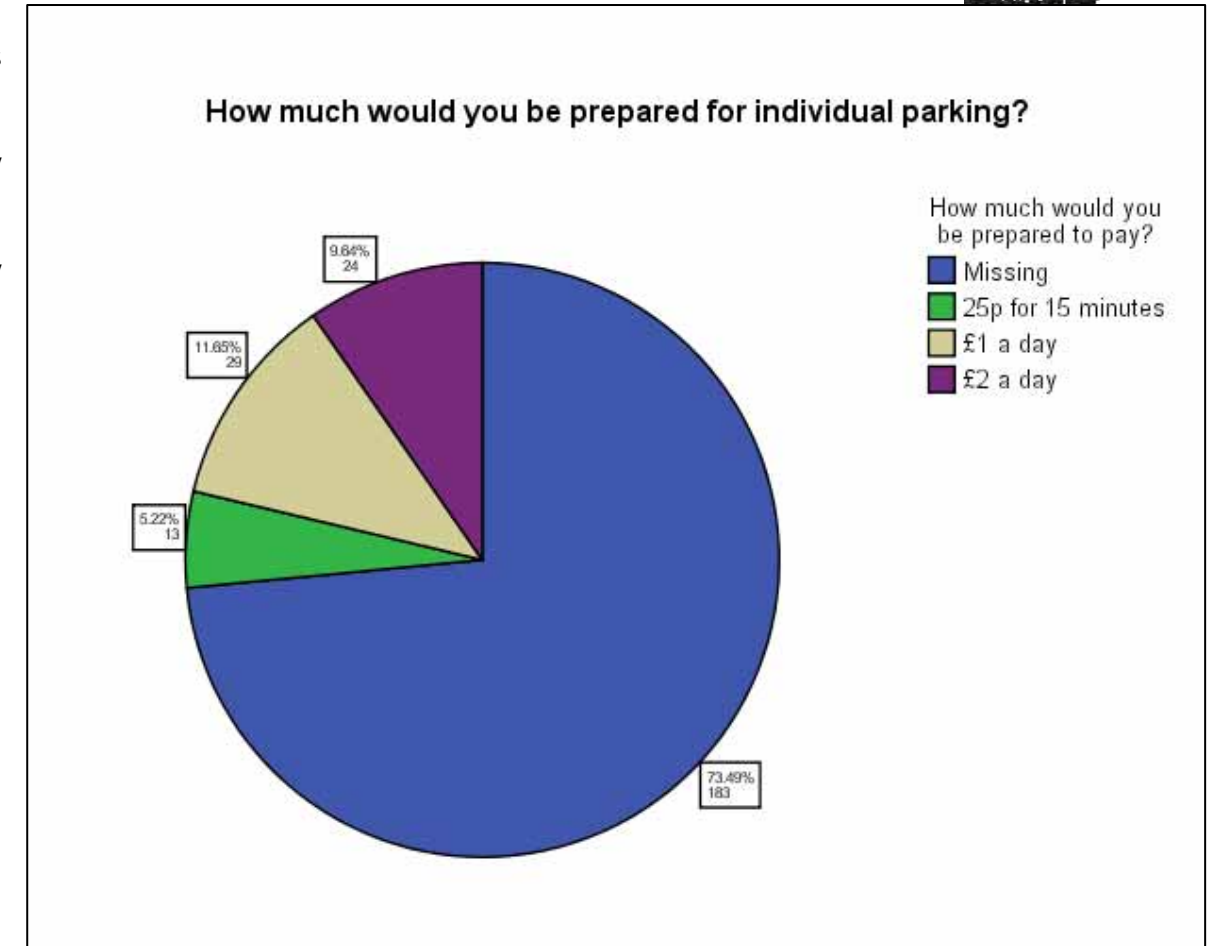
Our survey demonstrated a high level of concern that a bike would get a parking ticket (shown in chart below). There was no discernible variation in the level of concern in relation to the frequency with which respondents parked (as shown in the cross-tabulation below).

Notwithstanding, the majority of respondents were unwilling to pay for individual parking bays, and merely wish to see a greater provision of motorcycle parking in Westminster.

Of those who did express a willingness to pay, the modal value was £1 a day (44%), with 36% prepared to pay £2 a day and only 20% prepared to pay 25p for 15 minutes (£1/hour).

**How often do you park in Westminster? \* How concerned are you that your bike will get a parking ticket?**  
Crosstabulation

Count		How concerned are you that your bike will get a parking ticket?				Total
		Not concerned at all	Not concerned	Fairly concerned	Very concerned	
How often do you park in Westminster?	More than once a day	2	1	1	5	9
	Once a day	3	11	19	33	66
	Five to ten times a week	1	6	5	8	20
	Two to four times a week	2	8	12	23	45
	Once a week	3	1	10	16	30
	One to three times a month	1	5	14	26	46
	Less than once a month	3	0	9	21	33
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>249</b>

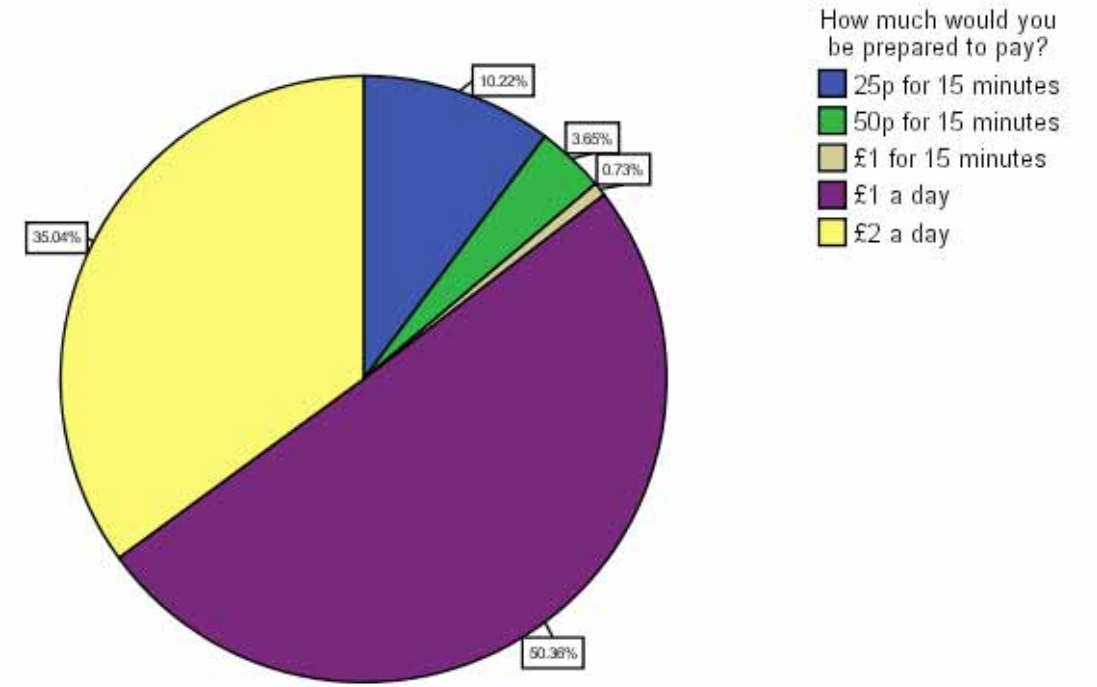


With respect to payment for secure parking, a small majority (55%) of respondents were prepared to pay (illustrated above). Of those who expressed a willingness to pay, the modal response was, again, £1/day (50%). 35% were prepared to pay £2/day, with the remainder prepared to pay between £1 and £4/hour. Please note that these values are for those who expressed a willingness to pay.

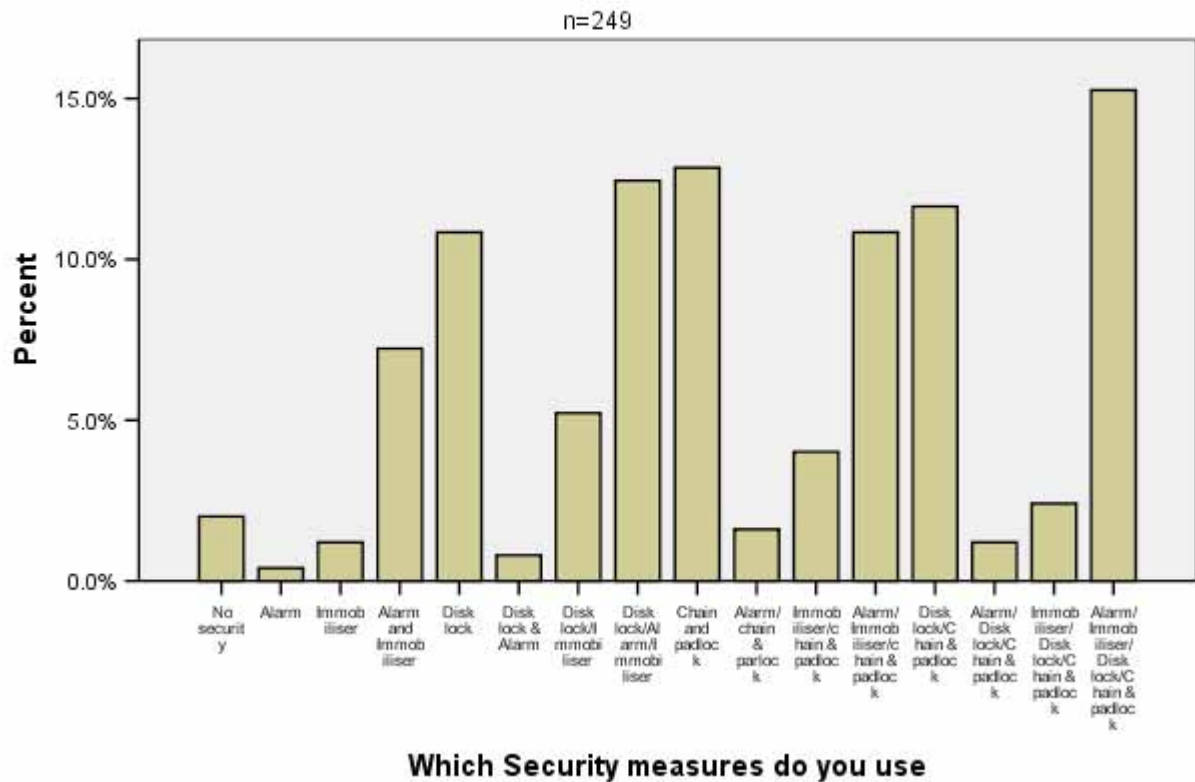
There is a high degree of concern that motorcycles will get stolen, with over 80% of respondents being fairly or very concerned that their bike will get stolen.

This is, in part, reflected in the degree of use of security measures: fewer than 5% of respondents used no security and about 15% using alarms, immobilisers, disc locks and chains and padlocks.

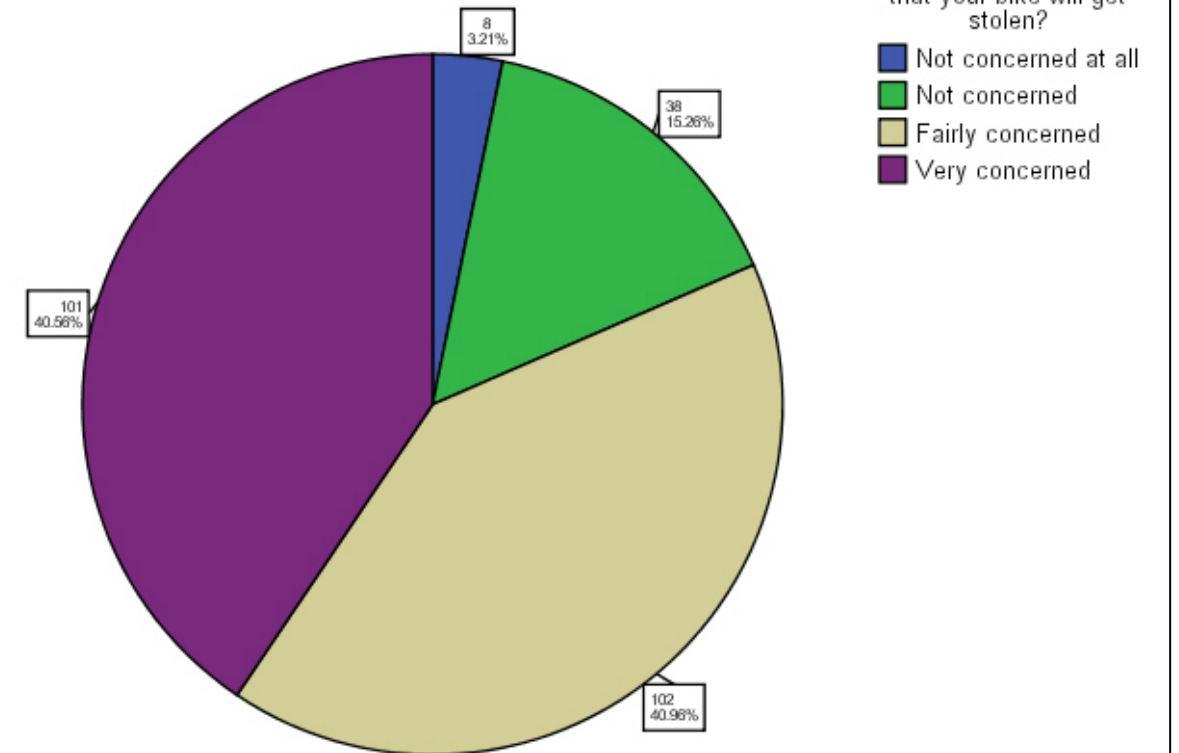
How much would you be prepared for secure parking?



Security measures in use



How concerned are you that your bike will get stolen?





Our survey showed that most respondents park in a motorcycle bay (shown in chart, right).

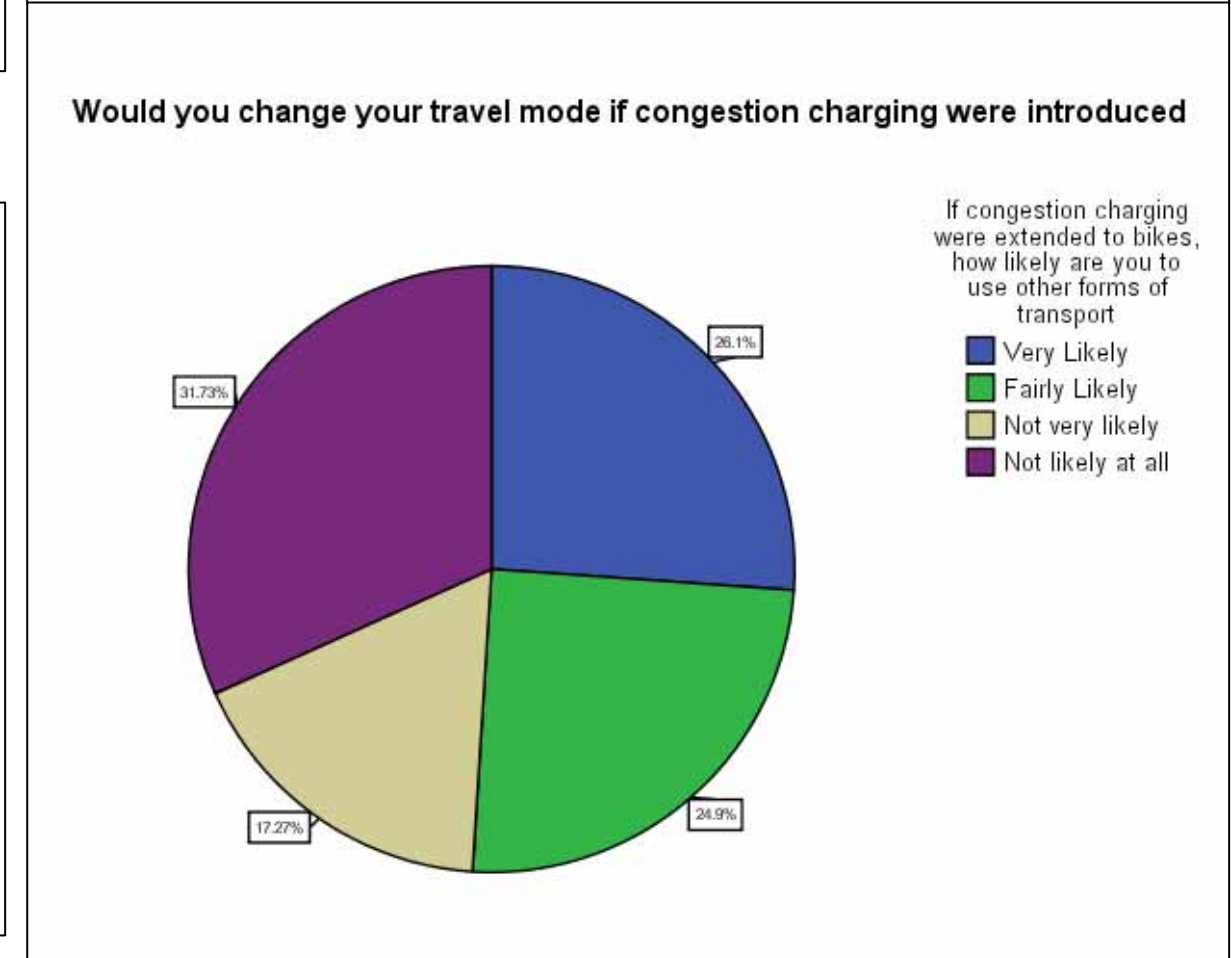
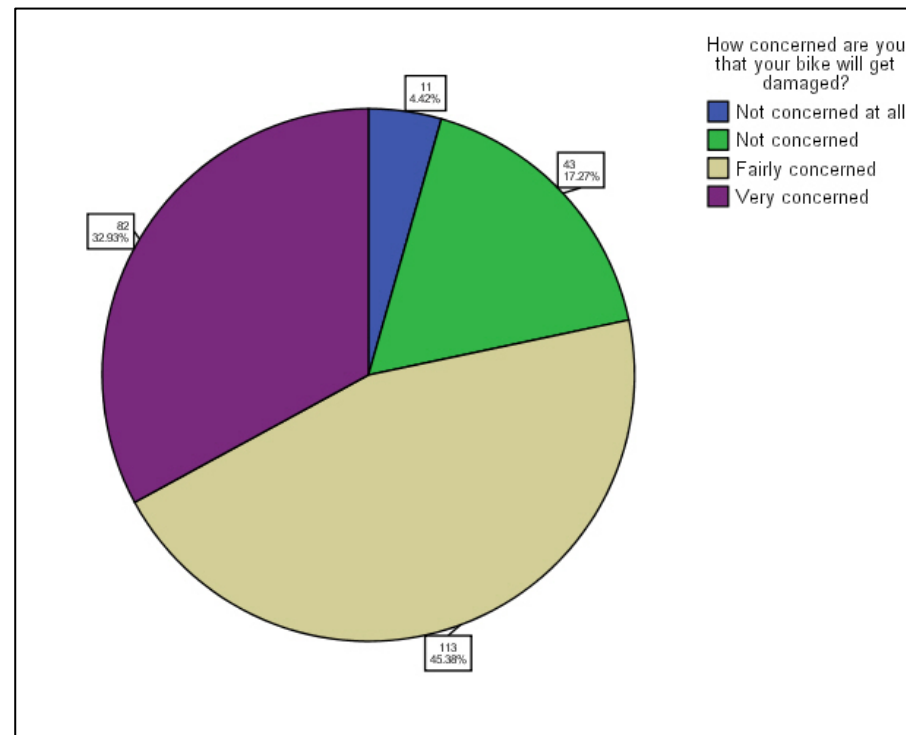
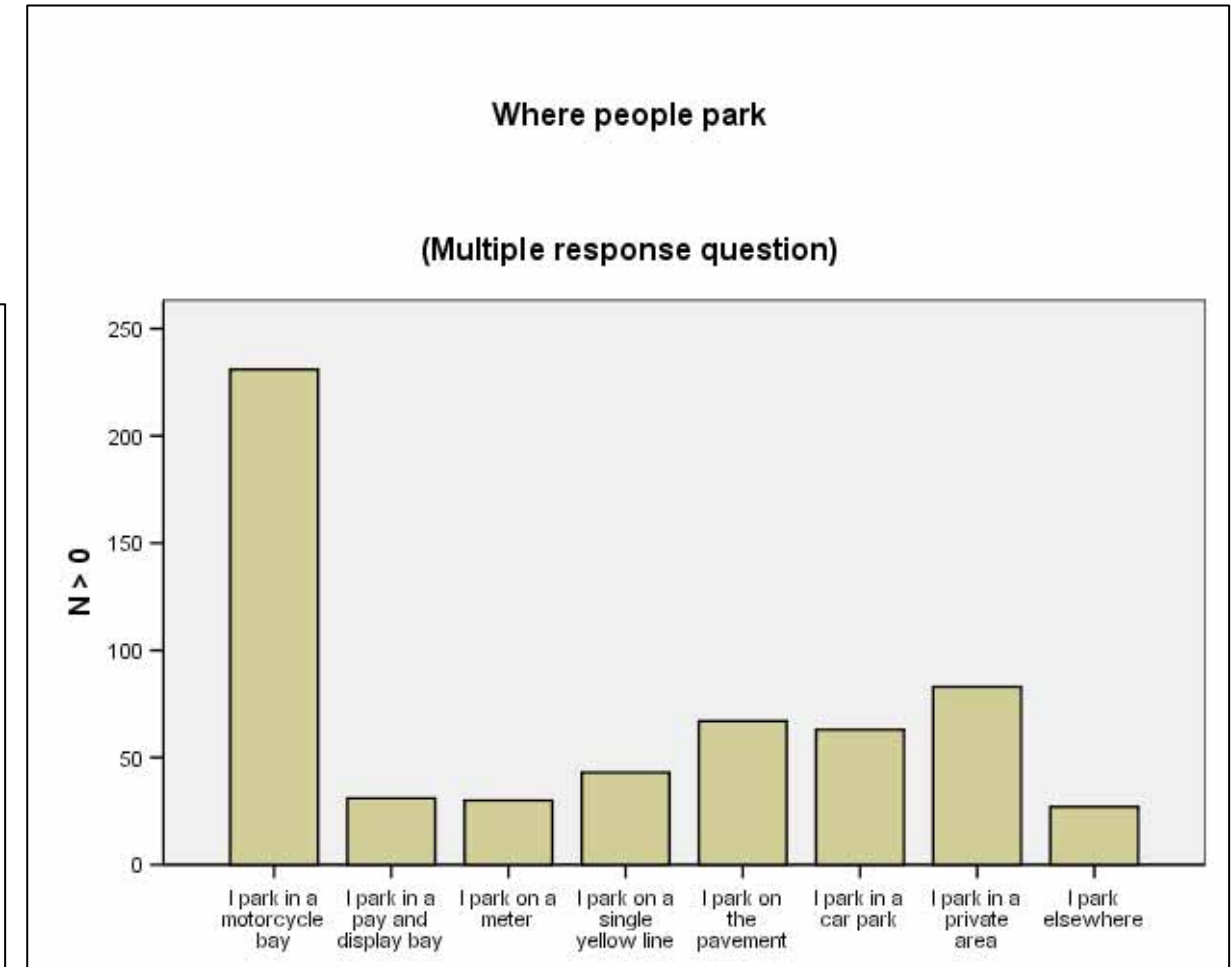
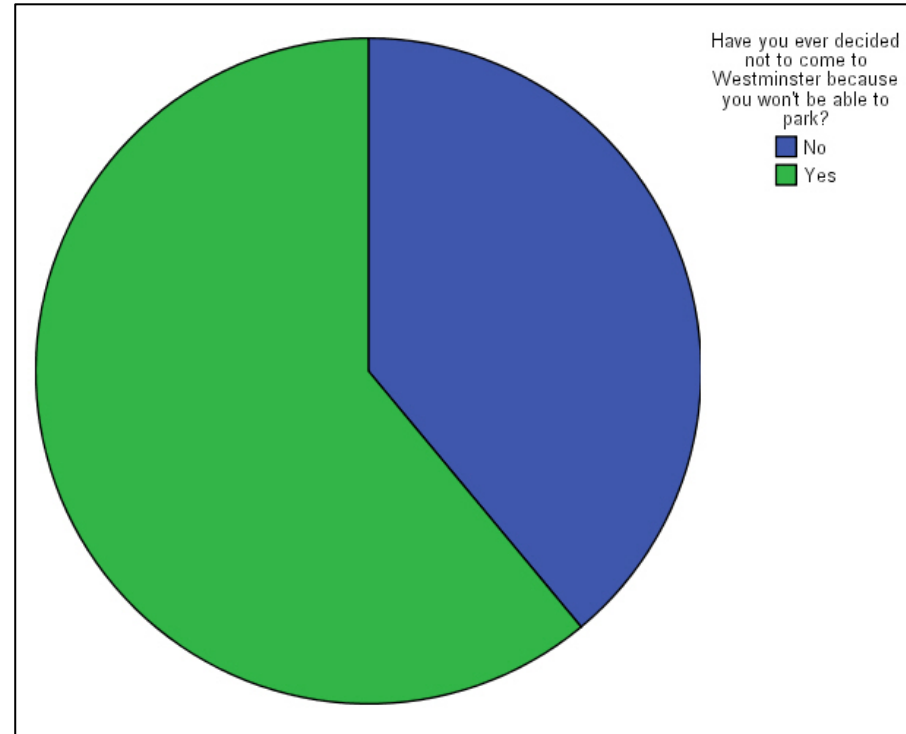
However, there are some who indicate that they have parked in private areas, in paid-for spaces and on the pavement. Because this was question with a multi-response set, the figures add up to more than the sample size of 249.

That people park elsewhere than in motorcycle bays, and on pavements, is perhaps indicative of a lack of supply of available legitimate parking.

One reflection of the lack of legitimate parking spaces is revealed in the proportion of respondents who have, on occasion, decided not to come to Westminster because of doubts over finding somewhere to park.

The availability of free parking, and the exemption from the congestion charge, seems to be an influencing factor on individuals' decisions to use a motorcycle. The majority of respondents indicated that they would change their travel mode if congestion charging were introduced.

Given the over-crowding in existing motorcycle bays, and the extreme measure in use to maximise parking capacity, it is not surprising that the majority of respondents expressed concern that their motorcycle would be damaged.



## Discussion

### Level of provision

The overwhelming response from our survey is that the level of motorcycle parking provision in Westminster is inadequate. These comments left on our survey are indicative of riders' opinions:

- ✘ The provision of bike parking in Westminster is noticeably less than in other boroughs – for instance in many parts of London bikes can use residents' parking.
- ✘ Westminster council should increase the amount of free motorcycle parking available.
- ✘ My view is that there are numerous spaces that could be used for motorcycle parking without inconveniencing anyone.
- ✘ If I was parking in Westminster it would be to visit friends and for tourist reasons etc. without the opportunity to bike and park I wouldn't bother going there other than for absolutely essential reasons.

MAG's own parking beat survey (reproduced as Annex A) demonstrates that there are high levels of occupancy in existing bays. It further notes that there is significant scope for extending the existing bays.

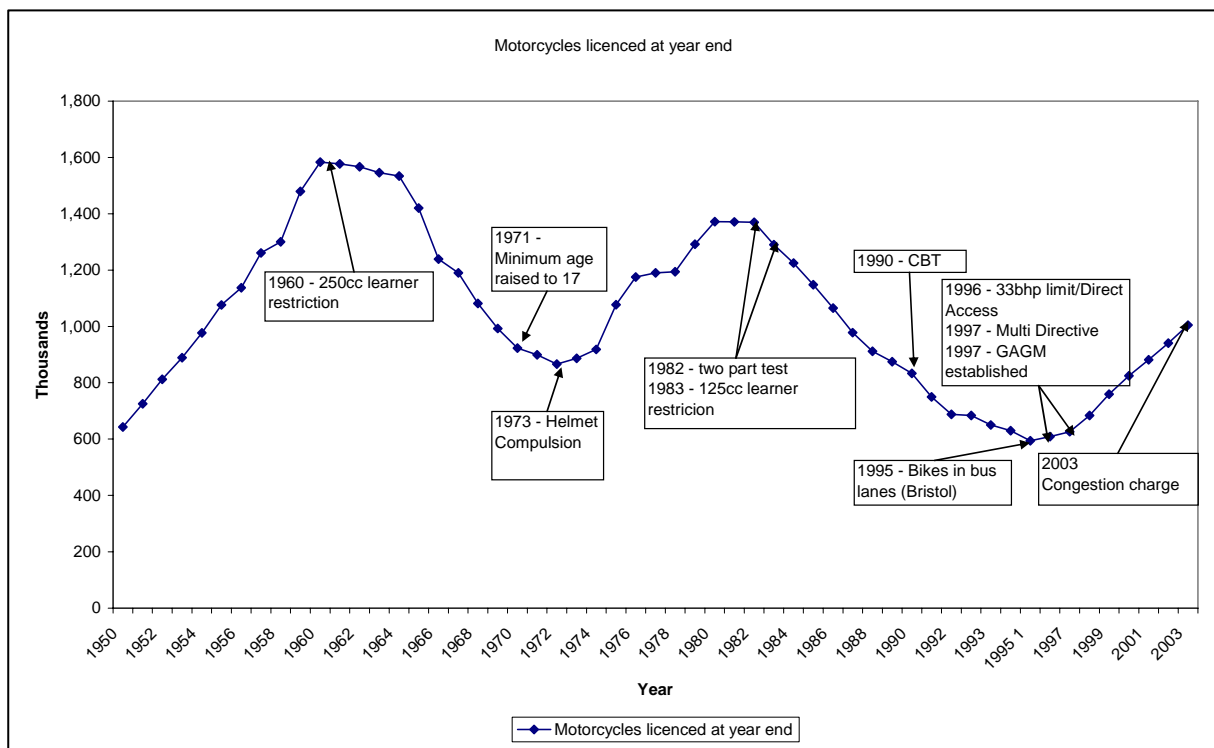
The incidence of motorcycles parking on pavements is often cited as a 'problem.' It is, however, indicative of a lack of supply of alternative, legitimate, parking opportunities. The same phenomenon can be seen with bicycle parking. The number of pedal cycles parked against lampposts and railings is an indication of a lack of suitable alternatives.

It has been put by the Council that there is an element of 'demand management' with regard to the supply of motorcycle parking. The intention would seem that by restricting the supply, then demand will be, to a certain extent, curtailed. This could be seen to have some validity, given that the majority of respondents indicated that they have, on occasion, decided not to come to Westminster because they would not be able to park. Our survey demonstrated that most respondents come to Westminster for reasons associated with the economy. By artificially restricting the level of motorcycle parking, the Council is placing an unreasonable barrier to the economic efficiency of the City.

The difficulty with taking a vehicle anywhere is you need to have a certain degree of certainty that you will be able to park at or near your destination. If a journey is commenced with that belief then the driver will have to find somewhere to park, legitimate or not. That alternative is to travel to a different destination (or maybe even to return to the place of origin) – an alternative that is not available for most drivers. One respondent noted:

*I have frequently turned round and taken my business elsewhere because I cannot park safely in Westminster. I never park illegally, but this means I often cannot stop at all.*

The issue of increasing motorcycle use resulting in seemingly unlimited demand for motorcycle parking is somewhat misleading. Motorcycle use increases and decreases as a response to a number of factors. The greatest level of motorcycle use in this country was in 1960, when the first restrictions on learner motorcyclists were introduced. Motorcycling then entered a period of decline, and use only picked up again in 1973, probably prompted by the oil crisis. The next peak came in 1982 when further restrictions on learner motorcyclists were introduced. The level of motorcycle use in 1982 was not as high as it had been in 1960, whereas car use had significantly increased. The third cycle, which began in 1995, was partly a response to economic well-being. In London, it appears to be a response to changing fashions and as a response to increasing levels of congestion. These cycles are illustrated in figure 5 below.



**Figure 5: Motorcycles Licenced at year end, 1951 – 2004**

Source: Livett (Forthcoming). Data from DfT.

One aspect that was repeatedly mentioned in our survey was the problem of cars parking in motorcycle bays. The reasons for this are explained in the introductory section. MAG therefore welcomes the Council’s commitment to make solo motorcycle bays enforceable.

Another series of comments related to the availability of parking space that the rules do not permit to be used, namely wide pavements and otherwise redundant parts of the highway. This is an approach that is adopted in most European cities.

\* I think sensible (i.e. non-obstructive) off road parking on large footpaths and in nooks and crannies should be encouraged. There is a lot of wasted motorcycle sized space in London, and the criteria for penalties should only be

if motorcycles cause an obstruction, not because I'm sensibly parked in an odd space.

- ✘ The cost of re-allocating bays is a bureaucratic excuse and Kafkaesque. Look at other European capitals and major cities; Paris, Madrid, Rome, the list is endless; where parking is unregulated and where bikes are permitted to park on pavements and vast expanses of allocated on-street parking. They realise that the PTW is the solution to congestion and make provision for it

## Short-term bays

There was no real demand demonstrated in our survey for separate short-term motorcycle bays – despite the anecdotal evidence that bays fill up early in the morning with all-day commuter parkers. There was an increased demand for short-term bays among respondents who did not park all day – perhaps indicating that among this user group, at least, there is such a demand. However, there are difficulties in policing short-term bays, notwithstanding advances in enforcement technology. Two contrasting opinions from the survey are given below:

- ✘ There should also be some short stay parking available but I don't know how this could be managed.
- ✘ Signalling how long one is liable to be absent from the motorcycle would be an invitation to theft. Likewise any time stamped ticket or time display on a meter would help a prospective thief.

## Crime

As noted in an earlier section, theft of motorcycles is a serious problem in the Soho/West End area. Although most respondents used more than one form of security, all of these carry with them a fundamental flaw. Motorcycles, and especially smaller motorcycles, can be very easily picked up and loaded into a van, usually in a matter of seconds. The best form of defence against this is for the bike not just to be secured with a chain, but to be chained to something<sup>8</sup>.

One phenomenon that is noted through observational analysis is that even when security measures are provided they are not fully utilised. This can be for a number of reasons. One is that the user needs to have a security device (usually a lock and chain) that is compatible with the security measure provided. With some of the hoop-style systems these may be too far away from a suitable anchor point on the bike for a standard length chain to reach. Another is that users need to be aware that the security measures are in place.

Crime, and fear of crime, was highlighted as a real issue in our survey. Security is not just about physical measures, but also about a general approach to the well-being of Westminster's residents and visitors. There is, perhaps, a need to

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<sup>8</sup> Most chains can be cropped, but can be sufficient to deter all but the most determined thief.

educate riders about the need to take greater measures to secure their property. Two comments left illustrate the problems:

- ✘ My greatest concern about parking anywhere in London is security. I have had tax discs and parking tickets stolen, and I am sure my bike has been attempted too. Security cameras do not prevent crime, just observe it (sometimes).
- ✘ I understand the argument for secure parking facilities e.g. rails but in my experience (was involved in getting the first one in Wolverhampton installed) the vast majority of riders don't use them (I've often seen chains through wheels right beside the rail but not round it) so you have an expensive bike park filled with bikes that would be just as safe in an ordinary bike park and no room for the few that would use it. Personally if I know I can lock my bike to something then I do.

While secure parking facilities may help mitigate the problem of theft **of** motorcycles, they will do little to address problems of theft **from** motorcycles. This is where other security measures, such as CCTV and a more visible Police presence could come into play.

## Damage

Another issue of concern is damage to motorcycles. As has been demonstrated, scooters and other smaller bikes often end up bunched together in order to maximise the available space. As noted above, this can lead to issues of accidental damage to bikes and difficulties in entering and exiting parking spaces. One comment left on our survey noted:

*I have on numerous occasions come back to find my clutch lever broken, this I have been told (by the recovery firms) is likely to have been caused by motorcycles being removed which are parked next to mine catching the clutch lever. I have also found scratches on my bike from other mopeds which have squeezed themselves into gaps between bikes.*

One suggestion that has been made is for a change to individually marked motorcycle bays to give each bike its own space. This would serve two functions: firstly it would allow for a more accurate audit of the available motorcycle parking provision and secondly, it would give space to allow each bike to be manoeuvred in and out with less risk of damage.

With car parking there has been a move away from individual delineated bays towards single long bays that allow for greater ease of use and better use of the kerb space. Like cars, motorcycles come in various sizes. If bays are delineated then they would need to accommodate all sizes of motorcycle. Given that the majority of bikes that come into central London are smaller as opposed to larger this could lead to an inefficient use of kerb space. One comment left on the survey neatly sums up the difficulty:

*If the council install individual bays, how will they ensure they are big enough for tourers with luggage. I have a GL1800 and ST1300. If these are only mostly used by 125's then people will complain it is a waste of space, if they don't make them all big enough, I will arrive to find the*

*bigger ones have been taken and I cannot park at all and be much worse off!*

## Payment for bays

On-street motorcycle parking has traditionally been free of charge at the point of use. Any change to this is bound to be met with some degree of opposition.

Parking charges can be seen from two points of view. One is that they are there to generate revenue for the authority. The other is that they are there to regulate parking and to manage demand for parking spaces. The generation of income is a secondary effect of parking management. The charges generated should not refer to the relative 'price' of renting kerb-space but should reflect the cost of enforcement, the costs associated with the provision of parking facilities and be tied to a certain extent to control the demand for parking spaces. Ideally, parking services should be revenue-neutral. However, various studies have shown that in any system that aims to be revenue-neutral, a profit must be realised to ensure the smooth administration of the system. In the local authority situation the 'profit' can be used for other road traffic and environmental initiatives.

The Mayor's Transport Strategy notes that:

*'Motorcycles, mopeds and scooters can offer quick, relatively low cost private transport and are more space and fuel-efficient than cars (...). In certain locations of high demand, more motorcycle parking should be provided.'*<sup>9</sup>

The Draft Transport Strategy noted that:

*'In central London, as in the rest of London, motorcycle parking bays are generally free, but the level and quality of provision is considered by users to be inadequate (...) Transport for London will work with the boroughs to enhance and extend the provision of secure parking for motorcycles where appropriate.'*<sup>10</sup>

These two extracts indicate that there was an acknowledgement of the issue of under-provision of motorcycle parking, and a willingness by Transport for London to assist in the increase of secure motorcycle parking five years ago.

All boroughs are able to bid for funds to increase motorcycle parking and to provide security measures under the Borough Spending Plan process.

Although a small majority of the respondents in our survey were prepared to pay for secure motorcycle parking, this was skewed to occasional rather than regular parkers. The comments posted on the survey seemed to be at odds with a willingness to pay, but do reflect a variety of opinions. They include:

- × 'I hope the council will recognise the benefit of the recent rise in bike use, the accompanying ease in traffic and improving safety stats by improving the

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<sup>9</sup> GLA (2001) *Mayor's Transport Strategy*, Greater London Authority, p201.

<sup>10</sup> GLA (2001) *Draft Mayor's Transport Strategy*, Greater London Authority, p157.

parking facilities and resisting the temptation to turn them into another cash cow.'

- ✘ 'If there was provision for individual motorcycle parking bays or bays with ground anchors or hitching rails provided how would this be policed, considering that it is easier to remove a purchased parking ticket from a motorcycle than a car?'
- ✘ 'Outrageous that Westminster should be considering charging motorbikes for parking - and the levels in this survey are ridiculous. It's just another attempt to squeeze the poor, bumbling British public into giving money to the idiots who run town halls.'
- ✘ 'I would be happy to pay for a parking permit such as those issued to car users as long as the problem of security for the display of the disc could be worked out. Possibly bar coded discs that a parking attendant could scan and check the disc related to that bike?'
- ✘ 'I ride from South Wiltshire to our head office in Leicester Square every couple of months. I very rarely manage to find a decent sized space, if any at all, in the motorcycle bays so end up trying to squeeze it in or being creative trying to find bits of pavement or edge of road or flower bed that do not have restrictions. This has on more than one occasion end up with me interpreting the parking restrictions incorrectly and getting a ticket. For all day in a secure bay I would probably pay up to £5 and would look upon £2 as an absolute bargain. I use my bike to avoid congestion (and therefore pollution) for the whole of the journey not just the part of the journey in Westminster. I definitely think the issue of Westminster (and many other London borough's) bike parking needs to be addressed.'

If any element of paid-for parking were introduced it would have to be additional to, rather than instead of existing free parking. When paid-for parking was trialled in the St James's Park area it was not successful for reasons noted in the introductory section. Given a choice between paid-for and free parking, it could be argued that riders will vote with their wallets, leading to a low take-up of paid-for parking irrespective of security measures.

Any paid-for parking would need to be simple to operate and enforce. The traditional difficulty of pay-and-display systems is that motorcycles have nowhere to display a ticket securely. Technological methods to work around this difficulty introduce a level of complexity into the system that could lead to confusion and increased operating costs. Charges would have to be set at a level that is commensurate with the service provided, and the fact that between five and seven motorcycles can be parked in the same space as a car. MAG would be keen to see a cost-benefit analysis relating to the introduction of charges for motorcycle parking, and is concerned that the cost of enforcement and administration could exceed charges raised.

One idea that has been discussed is of the 'Commuter Permit', a system to operate in a manner similar to residents' permits. The advantages of such a system are that all-day parkers could have their own dedicated bays with easily read permits purchased on a season ticket basis. If such a scheme were introduced, it would have to be reasonably priced and simple to operate. The advantage to the Council is that this could guarantee an income stream to fund

the provision of facilities. A difficulty could be that if free alternative parking were available then commuters would again vote with their wallets.

MAG would argue that Westminster City Council consider alternative sources of funding to increase motorcycle parking provision before turning to the end user. Any system of charges would have to be fair and reasonable.

## Social Benefits

One aspect that has been overlooked are the social benefits that motorcycling can bring. As noted in the survey, most of the respondents ride motorcycles to Westminster in order to participate in the economy, thus contributing to the economic well-being of the borough. This is one of the aims of a community strategy.

Motorcycling, especially on smaller vehicles, can be cheaper than using public transport, and the provision of free parking facilities can assist in reducing social exclusion not just in Westminster, but throughout Greater London and beyond by opening up opportunities to lower-paid workers. One respondent noted:

*'The main reason I ride to work because I can't afford public transport. It costs £13.80 per day to come by public transport (Epsom to London). I cannot afford this.'*

Some users have little choice when it comes to their transport mode. People who work shift patterns, for example, or vulnerable individuals may prefer to use private transport for the convenience and security it offers:

*'I have no choice but to use my car (which I do) or motorcycle because I work until 1.am and cannot get home by train/bus at this time. Nor do I feel safe on late night public transport. I therefore have no choice but to use the roads despite all the obstacles deliberately placed to make life difficult for the motorist.'*

As noted earlier, many motorcyclists use this mode as a response to congestion, be it congestion on the roads or on public transport. By restricting motorcycle parking, this could have a serious impact on the roads and an already overcrowded public transport system that many people find uncomfortable:

*'In my view, public transport is very congested at peak hours. Motorcycles/scooters go some way to easing that congestion without adding excessive pollution or crowding roads in Westminster.'*

*'It would force people to use an already overcrowded public transport system.'*

*'Leave motorbikes alone in the West End, we are no problem at all and are one less sardine on the tube added up we ease congestion on public transport.'*

The final view in this section is summed up by this respondent:

*'I live in Westminster so have no choice but to use your bike bays.'*

## Congestion Charging

The principal contributors to congestion are cars and not motorcycles. There has been much literature produced relating to the effects of congestion charging. As noted in the introductory section the introduction of the central London congestion charge led to a reduction of approximately 15% in the chargeable traffic entering the zone. About 45% of the vehicles circulating in the charging zone are either exempt or qualify for a discount.

At present, motorcycles are exempt from the congestion charge, and there is a political commitment for that exemption to remain, given that motorcycles are generally acknowledged not to contribute to congestion. Under current proposals for road user charging schemes, the emphasis is on the use of road user charging to relieve congestion, rather than to have an impact on other environmental factors. While it cannot be denied that motorcycles produce emissions, their contribution to overall levels of vehicle emissions is considered to be *de minimis*, and measures aimed at reducing emissions should be directed against the major contributors.

The vast majority of the respondents were opposed to the introduction of congestion charging for motorcycles, and most indicated that this would change their travel behaviour, either by changing mode or by electing to travel and work elsewhere. The general mood is best summed up by one respondent who said:

*'If congestion charging was brought in for motorcycles I would go and live on the moon and play football with a replica of Ken Livingston's head.'*

The issue of congestion charging is beyond the remit of Westminster City Council. The proposed western extension of the zone would introduce extra traffic into the central London area (mainly from discounted residents' vehicles in the extended zone). This may lead to a slight increase in congestion in central London. One response to this may be a small increase in motorcycle use, for which extra parking provision should be provided.

## Recommendations

Westminster City Council should provide an increase in the level of motorcycle parking.

This increase should be made up from either extending existing bays or by the provision of extra bays.

The Council should meet its UDP undertaking to provide an adequate level of motorcycle parking to cope with reasonable demand as expressed by users.

More security measures for motorcycle parking should be provided. Any new motorcycle parking bays should have security measures as standard.

Charges for motorcycle parking should only be introduced as a last resort and should not be used as a tool for demand management.

Existing bays should remain free of charge.

Charges should only be introduced for secure parking so that there is an element of end users seeing some tangible benefit in return for their funds.

Westminster City Council should thoroughly investigate all potential funding sources, including Transport for London, for the provision of more motorcycle parking.

Westminster City Council should not introduce short-term parking bays as there is no substantial demand and this could lead to confusion among end users.

Westminster City Council should aim for an average day-time occupancy of on-street motorcycle parking of 85%, allowing 15% for movements into and out of bays during the working day.

Motorcycle parking bays should be operational and enforceable at all times.

Motorcycle crime, and fear of crime, remains a major concern. The Council should therefore introduce targets for the reduction in levels of reported motorcycle crime and that these targets be included in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.