



# Department for Transport

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From the Secretary of State  
**Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP**

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Dear Millie,

Thank you for your letter of 23 June to Lilian Greenwood MP, Minister for the Future of Roads, about the request from Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) to depart from the prescribed penalty charge notice (PCN) levels outside London. BCP's proposal is a limited trial at Bournemouth Seafront.

I fully understand that parking enforcement is an important part of traffic management and its importance for reducing irresponsible parking. The aim of any parking enforcement scheme should be to promote compliance and PCNs should be used to deter motorists from contravening. The issue of parking penalties is a controversial subject and identifying the right balance of deterrent and fairness is not straightforward.

In accordance with paragraph 8(3) of Schedule 8 to the Traffic Management Act 2004, I am content, in principle, to authorise a limited departure from the guidelines prescribed in Schedule 3 to The Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (Approved Devices, Charging Guidelines and General Provisions) (England) Regulations 2022.

My officials have considered the BCP's trial proposal and have highlighted areas which, when addressed, could contribute to evidence for future consideration of the effectiveness of increased PCN levels as part of a national review. The area of the derogation can be found in the appendix. Therefore, this authorisation is conditional on BCP confirming to my officials its compliance with the requirements as set out in the appendix to this letter, including providing evidence that there will be sufficient legal parking capacity to accommodate the anticipated levels of illegal parking.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**

## Introduction

The Department fully understands that parking enforcement is an important part of traffic management. The aim of any parking enforcement scheme should be to promote compliance and Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) should be used to deter motorists from contravening. The issue of parking penalties is a controversial subject and identifying the right balance of deterrent and fairness is not straightforward. We therefore look to work with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) to trial higher PCNs over a set amount of time.

The powers that will be used to allow this derogation is paragraph 8 of Schedule 9 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 which states:

“An enforcement authority may, with the permission of the appropriate national authority, depart from any such guidelines.”

## Parking capacity

BCP propose that increased PCN levels will displace illegal parking to legal car parks. Prior to derogation coming into effect, we expect BCP to provide evidence that there is sufficient legal parking capacity to accommodate anticipated levels of illegal parking. If this capacity is not available there is a high risk that the increased PCN levels will result in the displacement of illegal parking to other areas, reduction of visits to Bournemouth or continued illegal parking within the trial area.

## Time Period

We note that BCP Council want to carry out their trial during the school summer holidays as this is when issues arise. We agree that an appropriate time period is the month of August 2025 to gather evidence of the deterrent effect of increased PCN levels.

The time period proposed is from **00:01 on 1 August 2025 to 23:59 on 31 August 2025**.

If there are any concerns with this timeframe, we ask that BCP contact the Department as soon as possible.

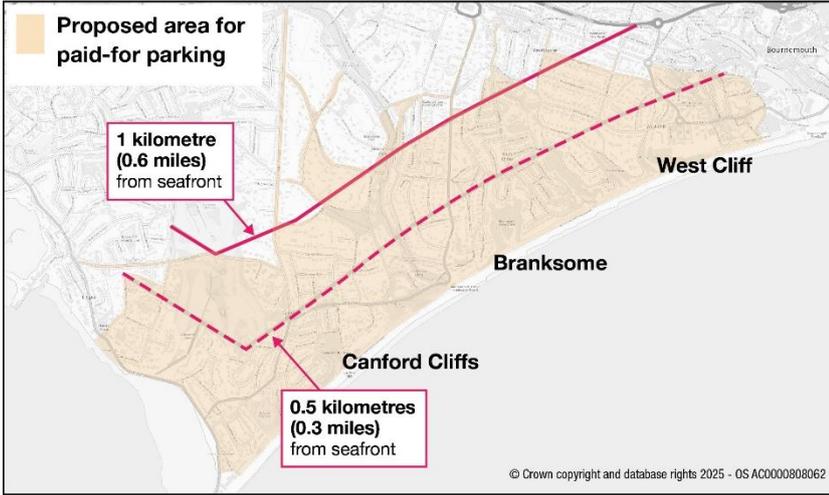
BCP should also take into consideration the amount of notice period they should provide for residents before the trial period commences and the risk that visitors may not be informed at all.

## Location

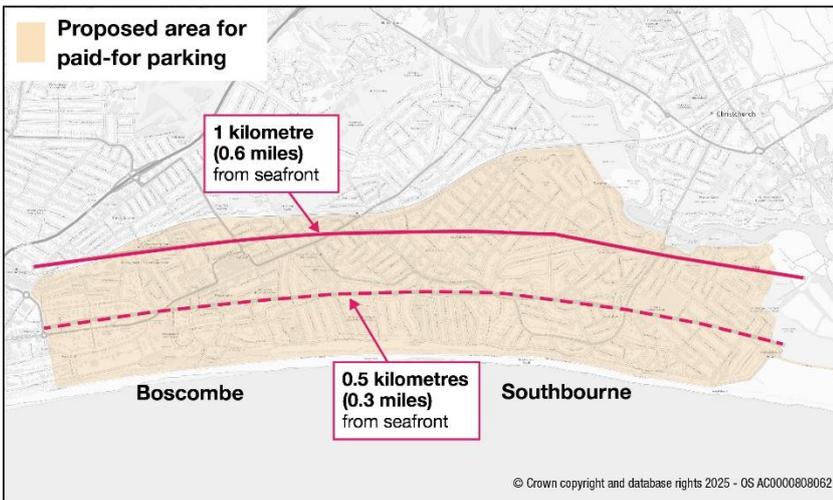
We are content with the area of the derogation to be in line with the area that BCP's current consultation includes, titled 'Have your say on proposals to introduce paid-for parking on some roads near our seafront'. The link to the consultation is here:

<https://haveyoursay.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/seafront-parking-2025?tool=map>.

Area 1 – Canford Cliff, Branksome Chine, and West Cliff



Area 2 – Boscombe and Southbourne



However, for full transparency, we ask that BCP Council provide the Department with all roads included in the trial area, along with Ordnance Survey grid references.

It is anticipated that derogation would lead to some displacement of illegal parking onto roads immediately outside of the trial area. We expect BCP to be considering the impact of this, and to monitor it during the trial.

**PCN Level**

The levels of penalty charges outside London are set by the Secretary of State. The levels of PCNs need to be such that they encourage compliance with the parking regulations. For parity, the Department considers the current PCN levels in operation in London to be appropriate:

Band	Current higher level	Derogated higher level	Current lower level	Derogated lower level
Band 1	£60	£140	£40	£90
Band 2	£70	£160	£50	£110

We also agree that additional parking charges will match the current London levels:

Additional Parking Charge	Derogated Amount
Release from Wheel Clamp	£100
Release from Car Pound	£280
Storage Fee	£55 per day
Disposal Fee	£100

## Publicity

We believe that citizens must be properly informed, and they must have the opportunity to raise concerns and provide feedback about the derogation. However, publicity and ensuring that residents and visitors are aware of the increased charges. BCP would be responsible for informing residents. Ways of doing this could be, **but are not limited** to, providing press releases and using the BCP website and social media prior and during the derogation, to raise awareness of the derogation. BCP must give consideration how to mitigate the risk of visitors not being informed.

The Department also recognises that a substantial amount of traffic will be from visitors to the area, who must be properly informed of the derogation and may not see any BCP media ahead of their visit. A zonal approach does not seem appropriate as it may not notify all drivers sufficiently, and we ask the council to consider putting signs more frequently and on payment information. We would also expect to review BCP's proposed signs and the signage strategy before the derogation comes into effect.

## Evaluation

To ensure that the evidence generated in this trial is of a high enough standard to be used in policy development will expect to approve BCP's plans for reviewing the pilot prior to derogation coming into effect, and we will expect BCP to work with officials from the Department to demonstrate:

- Sufficient legal parking capacity to provide an alternative to illegal parking.
- A success measure of the trial, consisting either of a direct measure of illegal parking rates, or a robust plan for inferring illegal parking rates from a proxy measure (e.g. PCN records).
- An analysis plan that will allow levels of illegal parking to be compared to previous years and changes to be attributed to the trial intervention with some level of confidence. Notably if PCNs are used as a proxy measure, we would expect firm guarantees that the levels of enforcement are comparable to previous year(s).

During the trial period BCP will be expected to provide a weekly review including:

- car parking occupancy and income
- the number of higher/lower level PCNs issued.
- the number of PCNs paid at discount/full rate and cases forwarded to Enforcement Agents
- PCN informal/formal challenges
- review displacement from pilot area into surrounding areas of BCP, will utilise heatmaps to assist with monitoring.
- Feedback from stakeholders

At conclusion of the trial, BCP will provide a full review.