

ANNUAL PARKING AND ENFORCEMENT REPORT 2008/2009

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 New Forest District Council is required to produce an annual report under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. The Act became law on 31 March 2008 and this is this Council's first report. The report sets out the financial and statistical information concerning the Parking Enforcement Service, together with additional information which the Council believe will be of interest to residents. This is the first annual report, future reports will be able to build on the statistics and financial information provided to allow comparisons to be made.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The District Council operates 50 car parks comprising of some 6000 spaces. These are managed under the regulations set out in The District of New Forest (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2005 (as amended). A copy of the Order, car park locations and charges can be found on the Council's web site (www.newforest.gov.uk/parking).
- 2.2 Hampshire County Council have appointed New Forest District Council as it's agent for the enforcement of on street Traffic Regulation Orders (yellow lines). The District covers an area of approximately 290 sq miles with a population of 173,000.
- 2.3 On 31 March 2008 the Traffic Management Act 2004 came into force, its biggest impact being the introduction of differential charging (two tier penalty rates depending on the offence).

3. POLICY BEHIND SERVICE PROVISION

- 3.1 The overarching transportation policies can be found in The District Council's Traffic Management Strategy which is available on the Council's web site (<http://www.newforest.gov.uk/trafficmanagement>). The Council manage it's off street car parks and undertakes on street enforcement in line with the Hampshire County Council's Local Transport Plan-New Forest Area Strategy. In essence the strategy recognises the need to preserve the special nature of the area, as well as recognising the importance of tourism and the part which the car plays in personal mobility.

3.2 Off Street Car Parks

The Council has no statutory obligation to provide off street parking but does so in order to:

- Maintain the economic viability of our Town/Village Centres.
- Enhance accessibility to residents and visitors alike, particularly important in an area with relatively poor public transport links.
- Improve the safety and environment for pedestrians and motorists alike by providing parking off the highway.
- Reduce the environmental impact of parked vehicles by providing an alternative location other than the highway.

3.3 On Street Enforcement

The Council acts as agent for Hampshire County Council for on street enforcement in order to:

- Make best use of resources by combining the District Council's off street enforcement with the Highway Authority's requirement to enforce on street regulations.
- Minimise traffic congestion by reducing the number of vehicles parked in contravention of Traffic Regulation Orders.
- Improve road safety by reducing the number of vehicles parked in contravention of Traffic Regulation Orders.
- Assist residents by enforcing residents parking schemes.
- Increase the number of parking opportunities by enforcing limited waiting areas.

4. ACTIVITY

4.1 Enforcement of on and off street parking regulations is achieved by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) patrolling dedicated beats. In the financial year 2008/9, the Council employed 9 full time Civil Enforcement Officers and issued 9053 Penalty Charge Notices and 529 Warning Notices.

4.2 Between 1 October and 31 May each year a six day roster is worked. Between 1 June and 30 September a 7 day roster is worked. Due to a drafting error in regulations made the by the Department of Transport, seasonal staff were not employed in 2008. This error has now been amended and seasonal staff will be employed in 2009.

Patrols Undertaken in financial year 2008/9

Location	Number of Patrols	Patrol Hours
On Street	23844	4946
Off Street	16080	4491

4.3 Penalty Charge Notice-Information concerning issue/cancellation.

The Council's operational guidelines for the issue and cancellation of Penalty Charge Notices are set out on its web site www.newforest.gov.uk/parking .

Penalty Charge/Warning Notice issue for period 1 April 2008 to 31March 2009 (correct at time of writing report)

Number PCNs issued at higher level	1979
Number PCNs issued at lower level	7074
Number PCNs paid	7395
Number PCNs paid at discounted rate	6567
Number PCNs against which informal challenge received	2325
Number cancelled as result of informal challenge	1432
Number against which a formal representation has been received	275
Number cancelled as result formal representation	138
Number cancelled for other reasons (e.g. driver untraceable)	253
Number Warning Notices issued	529

4.4 The Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT)

The Traffic Penalty Tribunal provides an independent judicial process for the hearing of appeals against the issue of Penalty Charge Notices. In financial year 2008/09 3 appeals were lodged relating to PCNs issued by New Forest District Council. These resulted in; one appeal being upheld; one appeal being allowed; one was not contested by the Council. Further information can be obtained concerning TPT on their web site www.trafficpenalty.gov.uk.

The TPT annual report for 2007/2008 sets out a number of tables. One of these indicates that out of 181 Councils, New Forest District Council received the second lowest appeal rate per PCN issued. This reflects the care that the Council takes when dealing with challenges and representations trying to ensure that the concerns raised by motorists are carefully considered on an individual basis.

4.5 Administration

Table giving details of correspondence activity.

	1/4/07 to 31/3/2008	1/4/2008 to 31/3/2009
All Correspondence answered with 14 days of receipt	92%	74%
Pre Notice To Owner (NTO) correspondence answered with 14 days of receipt	94%	80%
Post NTO Correspondence answered with 14 days of receipt	80%	64%
Total number correspondence received	4544	3799

On the 31/3/2008 new regulations came into force under the Traffic Management Act 2004. This inevitably meant some delay in dealing with correspondence as staff became familiar with the new regulations and all outgoing correspondence had to be revised to reflect this. This period of adjustment has now passed and the target for 2009/10 is that 80% of correspondence will be fully answered within 14 days. It should be borne in mind that considerable research and evidence collection is required when answering post NTO correspondence.

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

5.1 The Parking Account

As a local authority which operates Civil Parking Enforcement, the Council is required to keep an account of all of its income and expenditure in connection with its on-street charging and its on-street and off-street enforcement activities. These finances are governed by Section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

The legislation sets out provisions for dealing with any deficits or surpluses in the enforcement account, which excludes all income from off street car parks except income from Penalty Charge notices. Any deficit is to be made good out of the authority's general fund, whilst a surplus can either be carried forward in the account to the next financial year, or it can be used to carry out specific projects for one of the following purposes:

- 5.1.1 Repaying the general fund of any amount charged to it as a result of a deficit accrued in the enforcement account over the last 4 years.

5.1.2 Meeting all or any of the cost of the provision and maintenance by the local authority of new off-street parking provision.

5.1.3 If it appears to the local authority that the provision in their area of further off-street parking accommodation is unnecessary or undesirable, any surplus can be used for the following purposes -

- (a) Meeting costs incurred, whether by the local authority or by some other person, in the provision or operation of, or of facilities for, public passenger transport services, and
- (b) The purposes of a highway or road improvement project in the local authority's area.

5.2 **New Forest District Council's Parking Enforcement Account**

(Kept under Section 55 of the Road traffic Act1884 as amended by the Traffic Management Act 2005)

INCOME	£
Penalty Charges-Off street	101,841
Penalty Charges-On street	107,476
Residents Permits	4,083
Dispensations issued	2,108
Total income	215,508
EXPENDITURE	
Employee (business unit allocated costs)	407,332
Premises (business unit allocated costs)	237,734
Supplies & Services (business unit allocated costs)	17,203
Support Services (business unit allocated costs)	58,895
Capital financing	12,494
Total allocated expenditure	733,661
Deficit	528,153

5.3 New Forest District Council Parking Management Accounts

On Street Parking Account

INCOME	£
Penalty Charge Notices(on street)	107,476
Residents parking permits	3,428
Dispensations	2,108
Total income	113,012
EXPENDITURE	
Employee Costs	132,174
Supplies and Services	14,477
Support services	24,132
<i>Capital Financing?</i>	11,784
Total Expenditure	182,567
Deficit	69,555

Off Street Parking Account.

INCOME	£
Meter Income (town and amenity)	1,290,267
Clock Income (long and short stay)	568,237
Hythe Market	42,587
Amenity Permits	72,318
Other (licence fees/boat storage etc)	17,889
Penalty Charge Notices(on street)	101,841
Total income	2,093,138
EXPENDITURE	
Employee Costs	456,604
Supplies and Services	277,144
Support services	53,486
<i>Capital Financing</i>	21,200
Total Expenditure	808,433
Surplus	1,284,705

Overall Parking Account

INCOME	£
Meter Income (town and amenity)	1,290,267
Clock Income (long and short stay)	568,237
Hythe Market	42,587
Amenity Permits	72,318
Other (licence fees/boat storage etc)	17,889
Penalty Charge Notices(over all)	209,317
Residents parking permits	4,083
Dispensations	2,108
Total income	2,206,806
EXPENDITURE	
Employee Costs	588,778
Supplies and Services	291,621
Support services	77,618
<i>Capital Financing?</i>	32,984
Total Expenditure	991,001
Surplus	1,215,805

5.4 Comments on Parking Account

Because the Council has such a wide area to cover and does not charge for on street parking or have large scale residents parking schemes, it's on street parking account is always likely to be in deficit. The Council believes that enforcement is a Traffic Management activity rather than a revenue raising one. However, overall, the Council's parking service made surplus of £1.2m in financial year 2008/9. This surplus was transferred to the Council's general funds which pay towards such facilities as concessionary fares for the disabled as well as younger and older people.

5.5 Parking Clock Scheme.

Since 2004 the Council has operated an off street parking clock scheme. In 2008, 40,571 short stay clocks were sold and 3484 long stay clocks. The clocks cost £10pa for short stay clocks and £80pa for long stay clocks. Full details of the clock scheme can be found on the Council's web site www.newforest.gov.uk/parking. Clocks can be obtained via telephone, the Council's web site, Council Recreation Centres, local offices, Visitor Information Centres and at Brockenhurst and Burley Post offices.

5.6 Level of off street charges

In March 2009 the Planning and Transportation Review Panel considered a report which compared parking charges in the District with those in neighbouring and similar authorities. The report stated that meter charges in the District were broadly in line with neighbouring councils but the clock scheme gave motorists the opportunity to park long and short stay at a cost substantially lower than neighbouring Councils.

6. SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 The Customer Services action plan for 2009-12 sets out the key service development targets for the Parking Service. For 2009 the key developments are set out below.

6.2 Enforcement

6.2.1 Schools

Safety outside of schools is a major concern and this was reinforced following representation from the Association of Town and Parish Councils. In order to tackle this concern the Transportation Group are in the process of ensuring that all "Zig Zag" lines outside schools are backed by a Traffic Regulation Order allowing them to be enforced by Civil Enforcement Officers. Enforcement staff will give priority to the enforcement of regulations outside schools. However, given that there are 68 state schools in the District, this will inevitably be on a reactive basis.

6.2.2 Enforcement of Dropped Footways (dropped kerb).

The Department of Transport have recently published Regulations clarifying the Council's powers to serve Penalty Charge Notices to those who park in a manner which obstructs dropped footways. The parking of vehicles in front of dropped footways is a cause of concern and the Council welcomes the opportunity to issue penalties to those who park in this inconsiderate manner. The regulations relating to dropped footways which form an access to property are complex to enforce. The occupier of a property can legally park in front of the dropped footway to their property or give permission for a motorist to do so. This pragmatic

approach is necessary to assist residents but does mean Civil Enforcement Officers will only issue PCNs in residential locations if a problem has been reported by a householder.

6.2.3 Out of Hours Patrolling.

During the course of the year concerns have been raised relating to the level of enforcement in certain on-street "hot spot" locations. In order to try and alleviate these concerns out of hours patrolling will be undertaken in 2009 and during the summer a split shift system introduced for seasonal patrol staff. All out of hours patrols will "target" particular problem areas.

6.2.4 Off Street Car Parks.

During the course of 2009 the Council intends to introduce the facility to allow motorists to pay for parking by mobile phone. This will give the motorist the ability to use a credit/debit card for payment, to "top up" parking time where permitted and to receive text reminders when paid parking time is coming to an end. An automated telephone service is also being introduced for the payment of parking fines.

6.4.5 Lymington Parking Study.

At the instigation of the Planning and Transportation Scrutiny Panel the above study is being undertaken in 2009. The study will assess the future parking needs of Lymington and consider how those needs should be met. The study will focus on the peak holiday periods and busy market days.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Parking Service is one of the most high profile services operated by the Council and the service developments proposed will enhance the service provided for the public. Parking makes an overall contribution to the Council's finances which go towards the provision of such transport related activities as the concessionary fares scheme. On-street enforcement is undertaken on behalf of Hampshire County Council, in support of their Traffic Management Plans. The District Council will continue to provide off street car parks to help ensure the economic viability of our towns and villages and as a service to visitors and residents alike.