

Overview of existing Parking Service

1. City of York Council's Parking Services is responsible for overseeing the management and operation of 13 public car parks providing approximately 2,500 off-street parking spaces and 5,000 linear metres of on-street pay and display parking. It also administers the city's Resident Parking Scheme (ResPark) covering 27,000 linear metres of streets equating to 5,400 parking spaces. There are significant areas of other prohibited parking restrictions (yellow lines etc) on the adopted highway that are enforced by Parking Services related to the management of traffic across the City.
2. Within the City centre, the Council operates a Car Park Guidance System that utilises counters in each car park and roadside Variable Message Signs (VMS), to direct users to free car park spaces. At present, this system is largely inoperative due to maintenance problems with the VMS and the Executive Member for Transport approved on the 14th of January 2016 proposals to undertake their refurbishment and bring the system back into operation from the 2016/17 Transport Capital Programme. The counters located in the car parks also provide data for use on the Council's 'YorkLIVE' website and mobile applications, providing live car park occupancy data to users. A project is currently underway to add this live data to the York Data Store, allowing access to it for third party developers and leading to its wider dissemination.
3. In 2014/15 there were 7,253 Penalty Charge Notices issued in the "off-street" car parks and 12,508 issued "on-street". The overall Parking income in 2014/15 was £6,759,762 covering Short/ Standard Stay car parks, on street parking, ResPark Permits, Minster Badge (Residents discount scheme) and Season Tickets income. The use of any balance for Parking income is regulated by Section 55 (4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This Act sets out the purposes for which income beyond the costs of running the parking service can be used:
 - I. Provision and maintenance of off street parking
 - II. Funding public transport
 - III. Highway improvements
 - IV. Road maintenance

V. Environmental improvements

4. Government advice on the raising of revenue from Penalty Charge Notices states that it should not be an objective and Councils should not set targets for them. The purpose of the penalty charge notice is to dissuade motorists from breaking parking restrictions with an objective of 100% compliance.
5. In addition to the designated public parking the Council also operates a further 5,000 car park spaces as part of the six Park & Rides sites on the main arterial routes into the city. Although the Park & Ride facilities form part of a separate contract with the bus service operator running the Park and Ride bus services, the Parking Service is responsible for enforcement of parking restrictions at these locations. There are also some 3,200 spaces in privately operated car parks across the city that adds to the overall parking stock for the city.
6. The Parking Service is primarily made up of two main areas “Civil Enforcement” and “Back Office” functions but also interacts with several other service areas. Parking is one of the Council's highest profile services and brings in significant revenue both in terms of parking fees and penalty charge notices (PCNs). The service is wholly managed and maintained “in house” with the back office functions based at West Offices and the civil enforcement team (and technician) based at Foss Islands Road. Customer enquires are initially taken by the Council's Contact Centre which also manages the parking reception at West Offices. The back office staff deals with more complex telephone issues and queries which are referred to Parking Services from the Contact Centre teams.
7. Whilst there are distinct differences between the enforcement and back office functions they both underpin the range of Parking functions covering:
 - I. Off Street Parking (Pay and Display)
 - II. On Street Parking (Pay and Display)
 - III. Pay by Phone facilities
 - IV. Car Park and Machines maintenance
 - V. Residents Parking across the City
 - VI. Minster Badge
 - VII. Park and Ride parking enforcement and

- VIII. Traffic Management (Prohibited Parking/Yellow Lines/ Disabled Spaces/ Footstreets enforcement/ School Parking/ obstruction/ Abandoned and untaxed vehicle removal etc) to secure the expeditious movement of traffic on its highway network

Civil Enforcement function

8. The Council has been solely responsible for the enforcement of certain Traffic Regulations Orders related to parking since October 2000. This was made possible due to changes in legislation that permitted Local Authorities (that applied for it) to undertake Civil Enforcement by Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE). In 2008 the Traffic Management Act further amended legislation whereas this type of enforcement is now known as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).
9. This service is overseen by the parking enforcement supervisor who has 19 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) that patrol the entire York area on a 3 shift rota 7 days a week 364 days per year. This is complimented by a CCTV vehicle and driver as well as 2 motorcycles and 2 vans for patrols outside of the 'walkable' area or where an urgent response is needed, such as a call to the parking hotline. In addition to enforcement this service area is also responsible for the maintenance of the car parks and all parking ticket machines and lighting. The maintenance of this is by 1 technician who reports to the parking enforcement supervisor.
10. The presence of the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) on and off street is the main way that it endeavours to achieve compliance with parking regulations. Having officers out on the street maintaining a visible presence, positively influences drivers behaviour in keeping traffic moving and deters problems caused by inconsiderate parking and abuse of various parking restrictions, thereby "*securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network*" in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 statutory obligations.

Back Office function

11. The "Back Office" functions are overseen by the Representations Officer who is supported by 4 staff from the Business Support Team to deal with the range of administrative issues that arise. In

addition, Customer Services also acts as the first point of contact for phone enquiries and visits for this public facing service. Some 25% of the footfall into West Offices is parking related and the level of the Customer Services support equates to 2-3 staff.

12. The main duty of this area of the parking service is to execute the administrative functions in line with the Council's policies regarding the enforcement of PCNs issued. It also reviews decisions made on informal challenges and makes decisions on representations/ witness statements/ appeals. The range of duties within the back office that are also supported by Business Support and overseen by the Representations Officer includes:-
 - I. Authorisation and issuing of all car park and resident parking permits
 - II. Maintain electronic parking records in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance regarding resident parking and PCNs.
 - III. Responding and making decisions on informal challenges.
 - IV. Collection and management of keeper details from the DVLA
 - V. Issue of all recovery documents in accordance with legislation regarding PCN income
 - VI. Responding to statutory Representations
 - VII. Prepare evidence cases against appeals made with the Traffic Penalty Tribunal
 - VIII. Respond to witness statements authorised by the Traffic Penalty Tribunal
 - IX. Registration of PCN debts to the County Court - Traffic Enforcement Centre
 - X. Registration and issue of Distress Warrants to recovery enforcement agents
 - XI. Issue of postal PCNS based on behalf of evidence collected from CEOs and CCTV vehicle.
 - XII. Abandoned and untaxed vehicle service

13. There is a high demand for parking in York and as such is one of the Council's highest public profile services. A key objective of the enforcement policy is to provide a balance between the different (and often competing) requirements of residents, visitors, businesses etc to maintain accessibility and thereby contribute to the economic growth and success of the city. The Council can do this by keeping the traffic moving and improving the flow of public transport through:

- I. Enforcement of waiting and loading restrictions, bus stop clearways, cycle lanes, taxi ranks, school keep clear zigzags to improve road safety and the expeditious movement of traffic
 - II. Enforce the resident parking scheme zones to discourage parking by motorists who are not entitled to park in these areas
 - III. Meet the needs of people with disabilities by enforcing the disabled bays to try to ensure that only disabled badge holders are using them.
 - IV. Protect access for emergency vehicles.
14. Services provided to residents and visitors by the Parking Services team include:
- I. The enforcement of parking restrictions throughout the City of York Council area by an in-house parking enforcement team.
 - II. The management of the council's car parks and on-street pay and display areas, including an in-house cash collection team.
 - III. The issue and administration of resident permits.
 - IV. The back office PCN objection and representation service.
 - V. The CEO's also provide an information and ambassadorial role when out on street assisting visitors and residents as required such as giving directions etc.

Interdependencies

15. The location, price, availability and accessibility of Parking are some of the biggest influences on traffic demands in the city centre. It can have significant impacts on congestion, pollution and the economy.
16. For over 20 years the council has operated one of the most successful Park & Ride services in the UK as part of its strategy for reducing traffic demands in the city centre. It is a key element of the Council's sustainable transport strategy for reducing car traffic and improving air quality. A key principle for the Park & Ride service is to intercept traffic along the main principal (A class) radial roads into the city. Many factors influence the patronage of this service with the main ones being capacity and quality of Park

& Ride sites, traffic congestion levels in and around the city and the cost of parking in the city centre, in relation to the cost of using the Park & ride service.

17. There are clear causal linkages between the cost of Park & Ride and the cost of parking in the city centre. High park and ride costs relative to city centre parking costs would lead to it being less attractive and encourage more traffic into the centre. A delicate balance between the amount and cost of parking and the cost of using the Park & Ride service is needed to ensure that the Park & Ride service is not undermined particularly in respect to commuters. Significant increases in traffic levels will inevitably lead to greater congestion and pollution levels. Annually the Park & Ride facility carries approximately 4.5 million passengers (rising year-on-year) and delivers an annual licence fee to the Council of £750K. In view of the increasing demand for Park & Ride services a new Park & Ride site on the A59 at Poppleton and a relocated and improved Park & Ride facility at Askham Bar were opened. In 2014. Park & Ride alleviates a significant level of traffic from the city centre, without which there would be a detrimental impact on accessibility, air quality and congestion levels.
18. At its Executive meeting on 24th September 2015 the Council confirmed its continuing commitment to Park & Ride services by approving the procurement process for establishing the next Park and Ride contract for a further 7 to 8 years. Furthermore the Council's Low Emission Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan are supported by Public Transport objectives which seek to implement a Clean Air Zone in the City Centre where 80% of local bus mileage is to be undertaken using ultra low emission buses.
19. The Council has, for many years, recognised the adverse impacts of inconsiderate parking on residents, particularly near the centre of the city. The attractiveness of the city and high level of tourism has added to the parking issues facing residents. The introduction of Residents Parking has enabled many residents to continue to park in the vicinity of their homes and significant areas of resident parking zones are now in place concentrated around the city centre. Whilst not a public car park facility the residents parking is an integral part of the overall parking strategy overseen by Parking Services.

20. Enforcement is an essential part of making sure parking takes place in an appropriate and legal manner. The level of enforcement is directly related to the levels of conformity, in that, high levels of enforcement result in a higher level of compliance whereas, as might be expected, a reduced level results in greater abuse. The ultimate aim of parking enforcement is to achieve appropriate levels of conformity. Providing a higher level of enforcement will incur greater cost. However, it does directly relate to the levels of income generated from any parking charges and PCNs. Low levels of enforcement will lead to significant reductions in income levels, but will cost less to provide. The impact of having a visible enforcement presence through regular patrols is difficult to quantify, but it is generally accepted it is a significant deterrent to parking abuse.
21. As mentioned earlier both the enforcement and administrative elements of Parking Service currently support several different aspects of parking. Careful consideration would need to be made before determining whether any of these functions should be significantly reduced as there is a practical minimum level below which the resilience and viability of the service would be at risk.