

Information Relevant to Executive Member Neighbourhoods & Housing

Annual Parking Services Report 2009/10.

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to notify Members of the fourth annual report for Parking Services. The first annual parking report was published for the financial year 2006/07. This report relates to the financial year 2009/10. This report is for information only, however it is being brought to the decision session for the reasons below.

Background & Context

2. The Secretary of State's 'Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions' states that local authorities should produce annual reports about their enforcement activities. It is considered good practice to publish a report which provides the public with information about the way enforcement is carried out and provides reassurance that enforcement is being undertaken properly. It is the view of the Secretary of State that transparency about civil enforcement of parking regulations enables the public to more properly understand and accept the enforcement of parking contraventions. Guidance is given as to the financial and statistical information to be included such reports. The Annual Report provides a record of the activities of the service during the financial year 2009/10 and explains to the public how the service is managed and provides information regarding performance. The report will be published on the Council's website. Such reports also provide an avenue for Authorities to identify local parking issues and also to compare their activities and practice with their peers.

Summary of Annual Parking Report

3. The following provides a summary of the Annual Parking Report.
 - i. Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, implemented on 31 March 2008, resulted in significant changes to parking services including the introduction of differential parking charges based on the seriousness of a contravention. Higher charges apply to waiting and loading restrictions (yellow lines) and most on-street contraventions plus parking in restricted areas off street, including disabled bays. A full list of the higher and lower parking contraventions that apply in York can be found in Appendix F of the Annual Report. Local Authorities are able to issue Penalty

Charge Notices (PCN) by post in certain circumstances including where drivers drive off before PCNs can be served. Use of this provision is made in York. However merely observing a vehicle or making notes which might relate to a contravention does not count. The observation period must have ended.

- ii. The use of park and pay by phone continues to increase. The total numbers of users at the end of March 2010 was 397,751. The number of new users in 2009/10 alone was 124,140 an increase of 4.5% on the 2008/09 figure of 119,055. The average monthly usage in 2009/10 was 10,345 up from 9,921 in 2008/09. The scheme has proved to be popular with the total amount of parking that has been paid for by mobile phone being almost £2m. Users can register online or by mobile phone to use the system.
- iii. The number of calls in 2009/10 to the free hotline service, **0800-1381119**, (for residents who wish to report illegal parking) was 2,408. PCNs were issued in 31% (770) of the calls responded to. This number is particularly effective for those who live in resident parking areas and York is one of the few authorities in the country to offer such a service. Hotline locations are reached quickly and effectively by our Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), on foot if in the area, or our mobile CEOs who are equipped with scooters.
- iv. Nineteen Council car parks (95%) have achieved the Park Mark Safer Parking Award for the Council car parks.
- v. A culture of transparency, fairness, accountability and consistency is actively promoted, both within the parking team and in its dealings with the public. Efforts continue to be made to remove any public perception that parking enforcement is operated as a money making venture and to stress that the emphasis lies on traffic management and not with revenue collection. Full information about parking enforcement policy and procedures is available on the council website and in literature the parking team has produced. This includes the policies for enforcement and processing procedures for PCNs.
- vi. Training and development, and its importance, is stressed in the report. As a result remarkably few PCNs are issued and subsequently cancelled as a result of an error on the part of the CEO (only 0.91% of all PCNs issued in 2009/10). All CEOs (22) have now passed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 in Controlling Parking Areas. In addition, all CEOs now are first aid qualified and first aid has been administered to members of the public on several occasions. The CEOs are front line ambassadors for the Authority. Other training has been provided for the team during the year includes conflict management, equalities, health and safety and IT. CEOs are often the target of verbal, and occasionally physical abuse. During 2009/10 there were 13 instances of serious abusive behaviour towards CEOs, including six of violence being threatened.
- vii. Detailed information is provided on penalty charge notices issued, where and which parking contraventions occurred. Resident parking (Respark)

areas account for 26% of PCNs issued. 2009/10 is the second year of differential parking charges and the number of PCNs issued at the higher rate (which will include Respark) was 10,800 (57%). More emphasis has been placed in the last three years on patrolling resident parking areas and in prohibited parking places. Resources have been channelled onto street enforcement and this is reflected in the performance indicators information in the report.

- viii. The report also explains the importance that the Council places on reasonableness and proportionality when considering representations from motorists, particularly where mistakes have been made by motorists when displaying tickets or permits. This is reflected in the low number (5) of appeals to the independent parking adjudicator.
- ix. In 2009/10 Parking Services commenced a full customer satisfaction survey into Respark using questionnaires that are sent to permit holders as part of their permit renewals. Initial results are encouraging and include 71% satisfied with the scheme (26% very satisfied), 97% received their permit before their existing permit expired, and included 71% who were satisfied with enforcement (24% very satisfied). In addition Parking Services consulted residents at a Council equalities consultation fair this year, and following a suggestion from a disabled resident, in relation to attendance and carer permits, the permits are no longer limited to one per applicant and can now be issued for the number of carers that need to attend to a resident at any one time. This alleviates the necessity for disabled residents, who need more than one carer, to have to buy visitor permits.
- x. The presence of the CEOs on the street is the main way that we try to achieve compliance with parking regulations. Officers out on the street and being seen to be there (eyes and ears) does make a difference in keeping traffic moving and deters problems caused by inconsiderate parking. The CEOs act as a uniformed presence on the street which can itself act as a deterrent to crime, particularly vehicle crime, and they are also in a position to report anything untoward quickly.

Consultation

- 4. No consultation has taken place as this report is for information only.

Information / Update Provided

- 5. The objective of any parking enforcement regime is compliance with parking regulations. The report contains details of the work undertaken to achieve this and the trends over the past years. Enforcement has substantially increased by adopting decriminalised parking administration and enforcement powers. Since 2000 York has undertaken these duties and in York, as in other councils that have been operating civil parking enforcement for a number of years, there is a clear national trend that the public have realised this and they are no longer likely to get away with illegal parking. Taking all factors into consideration it has to be recognised that the success in driving down the number of parking contraventions still remains 'officers on the ground' – the eyes on the street deterrent.

Corporate Strategy

6. Parking services contributes to the Corporate Strategy's priorities to make York a Sustainable City and Safer City by increasing the use of public and other environmentally friendly modes of transport, playing a part in improving road safety and reducing traffic congestion and associated emissions together with encouraging, empowering and promoting people to reduce the environmental impact of their activities.

Implications

7. This report is for information only.

Risk Management

8. In compliance with the council's risk management strategy, there are no risks associated with the information in this report.

Conclusions

9. This report is for public and Member information only. The Annual Parking Report for 2009/10 explains how the parking enforcement service is managed and provides information regarding performance.

Contact Details

Author:

Elizabeth Levett
Head of Environmental
Enforcement and Parking
Services
Communities & Neighbourhoods
Extn: 3101

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Sally Burns
Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Report Approved



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Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contravention. 28th December 2008

Annexes

Annex A – Annual Parking Services Report 2009/10