



Meeting:	Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee Report
Meeting date:	25/04/2024
Report of:	Director of Environment Transport and Planning
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for Economy and Transport

Scrutiny Report: Digital Residents Parking and Parking Enforcement

Summary

1. This scrutiny report provides background to parking enforcement and follows on from the November 2022, Digital Respark (resident parking zone permit management) scrutiny report to the Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee and provides an update.
2. A copy of the November 2022 report is linked in the background papers and focused on issues that developed following the implementation of a new parking system and the decision to move to digital parking permits covering most of the of permit types we have. For the first time this gave residents a customer portal to self serve and there were issues particularly with this element.
3. In addition this report responds to the request to provide more background about how parking enforcement works in York.

Recommendations

4. The Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
 - Note the content of this report and the updates
 - To note the parking enforcement section in this report

- To note the significant drop in contacts to the councils contact centre in terms of parking issues

Reason: To update the committee on parking.

Background

Introduction to Parking Enforcement

5. Parking Services operates a number of functions to deliver the parking services for the city, parking enforcement is just one of those services.
6. Parking enforcement is administered in house with a number of Civil Enforcement Officers covering all parking restrictions that are on the highway and in car parks shown on signage, road markings and dropped kerbs.
7. In addition Automatic Number Plate Recognition enforcement is used for York's two bus lanes and we are currently upgrading the cameras and technology in these locations.
8. The Council has also applied to Government to be awarded powers to undertake moving traffic enforcement powers that will be shared with the Police. This will allow Parking Services to enforce banned turns and yellow box junction offences etc. Should this be granted the service will develop business cases for the further use and roll-out of technology to help with enforcement capacity.
9. Our Civil Enforcement Officers work partly in a responsive way and partly in a planned way. Members of the public can report parking contraventions by calling the free parking telephone hotline 0800 1381119. This helps to inform patrols and better target illegal parking, we have run a parking hotline for many years. This is an outsourced pager service dealt with by a national call centre that asks a number of questions and sends a message to all Civil Enforcement Officers of the incident.
10. Officers have a target to respond to any hotline calls within 45 minutes when on shift. If a vehicle is identified the officers will assess the situation and decide whether to issue a Penalty Charge Notice. If the vehicle has left by the time the officers have arrived it will still be noted and if more calls come in about the same area or vehicle, this will inform our regular patrols and intelligence led approach.

11. We occasionally get comments from the public that they don't see a Civil Enforcement Officer on patrol when they have called about an issue but unless there is another call ongoing the majority of the time, we can evidence that an officer did attend the call and relay what action was taken.
12. In addition officers patrol all resident parking zones on average 3 times per week at various times throughout the day and evening, 7 days a week. Civil Enforcement Officers work on a pattern of random patrols informed by observations, comments of illegal parking and hotline calls.
13. These patrols cover all council car parks except for the pay on exit car parks at Marygate and Coppergate Centre and all other areas where parking restrictions apply across the City of York Council boundary.
14. School parking issues are a significant issue and concern to the public, which is the same across the UK. As with the standard parking patrols we have scheduled patrols of schools on a planned basis with increased targeted patrols at the 20 or so schools that have the highest issues of parking offences.
15. Joint patrols with the police take place but the main issues is that officers can not be everywhere and whilst a uniformed presence will normally have the desired effect as soon as that uniformed presence has gone many parents/guardians revert to more selfish, anti social and in some cases dangerous behaviour.
16. Schools have a part to play in this and recently the Head of Parking met with the Assistant Director of Education to discuss and take forward a new policy to ask schools to more actively work with the Civil Enforcement Officers to tackle behaviours of some parents/guardians. This following an ongoing number of verbal and physical assaults by some of these parents/guardians on our Civil Enforcement Officers. This same behaviour is often directed towards teaching staff or anyone one else involved in these school patrols.
17. The service does face pressures in terms of resource and recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers can be challenging. Currently we are carrying a number of Civil Enforcement Officer vacancies from the establishment but have approval to recruit.

18. We have delegated Civil Enforcement Officer powers to our Taxi Licensing Enforcement Officers and through our close working with that team are using their resource to cover areas around the city centre and starting to expand their coverage to school patrols as and when possible.
19. The partnership work with the Police and Schools and iTravel are part of wider package on parking compliance than just our enforcement. The service has a good working relationship with the police and is often on a number of partnership meetings that have developed into some joint operations and patrols. For example issues with food delivery drivers parking on Duncombe Place that have since dropped significantly following two operations between the police and the parking enforcement service.
20. More support from the Police on tackling the issues around schools would be welcomed, but officers appreciate it is one of a number of priorities for the police.
21. Finally the service works closely with Transport colleagues to review the parking restrictions to ensure that issues observed by Civil Enforcement Officers can be proactively dealt with and the parking restrictions are appropriate to the circumstances and enforceable.

Residents Parking IT

22. The implementation of a new parking IT system was necessary as the old system was life expired and crucially did not meet IT security compliance.
23. A decision was made by the Council to also move to virtual permits for most permit types. The new system would also allow customers to access the IT system to self serve and buy their permits with the Council supporting residents who could not access the system. This was a significant change.
24. After a process of market engagement, procurement and implementation, the new Parking IT system went live in September 2021.
25. The number of issues being raised with the council with the new system was initially significant and caused pressure on both parking services, business support teams and the contact centre.

26. In November 2022 this scrutiny committee received a report following on the issues. A link is provided in the background papers section at the end of the report.
27. Within the November 22 report at paragraph 27 is a table of the issue identified and an update provided. Issues were colour coded as green if they were resolved, an amber colour indicates the situation has been improved but could be even better and red shading showed it is not resolved. Two issues were not identified as complete.
28. The first related to the Customer Useability of the System and was identified as amber i.e. the situation had improved but could be even better. As detailed in November 2022 work with customers and resulted in updated guidance being loaded onto the Councils website of how to use the system. As the previous report identified it would be even better if this guidance was built into the parking portal rather than being on the website, so that the guidance was alongside the forms. It was identified this should be possible with a new release of the software which will also significantly improve accessibility of the system. A new release has not been installed yet, so it remains outstanding although progress is being made.
29. Second issue was enabling residents to check if a vehicle was parked legally. As the permit is virtual residents are not able to check if vehicles have a permit. Officers have asked the IT supplier to consider if a permit checker could be added to a future release.
30. York has only just received the new release of software and we are now in a position to start User Acceptance Testing, which could see this new version being implemented by early summer, 2024 subject to the testing being successful.
31. In general the number of resident issues is significantly improved evidenced by the numbers in the table below.

Year	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Demand	37059	38628	35387	36651	31242	14605	29389	22618	16641

This is the total demand for Parking across the following channels in the contact centre:

- Telephone
- In person appointments
- Triage at front desk

Covid was 2020-2021 which affected the numbers
Digital Permits launched during 2021-2022.

Recommendations from last scrutiny

32. A number of recommendations were made following the November 2022 Scrutiny Committee and these are repeated below with an update.

a. That the financial information on the full cost of the digital residents parking scheme be circulated to all Members.

Update: - This was shared. The cost of the parking system can be broken down as follows: the annual fee is £29,250 and the implementation and equipment costs were £89,995 as a one off.

b. That it be recommended that a corporate apology be made via a press release for the problems with the digital residents parking scheme and information improvements being made, delegated to the Executive Member for Transport in conjunction with Communications Officers.

Update: - The Executive Member attended scrutiny in November 2022 to address any concerns or questions the committee had. At the meeting the Executive Member made a public apology to people who had been adversely affected by the new system. As detailed in this paper and as with all IT system implementation projects there are lessons learned for the council which will inform future projects.

c. That it be recommended that that a User Forum of different groups (groups representing elderly, disabled and non-digital residents) be set up, delegated to the Executive Member for Transport in conjunction with Officers.

Update: This was done and a meeting held with a number of users of the system on the 8th March with the then Executive Member of Transport in attendance, Customer Services Manager and chaired by the Head of Parking Services.

d. That it be recommended that savings on support staff not be made until the digital residents parking scheme was up and running.

Update: The savings were implemented before the recommendation was made, but officers recognise the lesson to be learnt going forward with any new IT systems.

- e. That it be recommended that the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee examine digital inclusion and how support can be given to non-digital residents on the implementation of new systems.

Update: Given a new Council administration officers would suggest that this could be considered if further work is required on this following this report.

- f. That it be recommended that the Executive Member for Transport promote the use of paper permits (for which it was known that paper permits were still being given out to a small number of people).

Update: Where paper permits are available this has been clarified on the website and application process.

Consultation

- 33. Following the November 2022 session, on the 8th March 2023, a panel of customers was brought together with the Executive Member and Head of Parking Services that highlighted a number of areas of improvement but welcomed what the council was trying to do and with some being quite positive of the system compared to others they had used.
- 34. It is intended that this group will be reconvened as part of testing any new system.

Options

- 35. Scrutiny Committee could note and close this work stream for now, whilst noting the lessons learnt which are both for the service but also for the council in the roll out IT systems.

Analysis

- 36. The roll out of the new system and the move to virtual permits and self serve were disruptive and had a significant impact on some of our residents and businesses.

37. However, the statistics from the contact centre as detailed in the table in paragraph 31 of this report show this is a reducing problem as less people are having to contact our contact centre, thanks to the improvements made by officers and improvements made in response to scrutiny.
38. The number of people contacting the contact centre two years after go live of the new system is now nearly half (53%) the number who contacted the contact centre two years before the system went live.
39. Committee could note and close this work stream for now, whilst noting the lessons learnt which are both for the service but also for the council in the roll out IT systems and those lessons are being taken into the new IT systems..

Council Plan

40. This report and the recommendations relate to the Council's key priorities, as set out in the Council's Plan 2023-27 (One City, for all) and any other key change programmes: -

- Economic Growth
- Transport

In support of the 4 core commitments in the York Council Plan: -

- Equalities and Human Rights
- Affordability
- Climate
- Health

41. The move to an online system does pose challenges in terms of equalities and accessibility. The councils approach is that we will appropriately resource the support for the most vulnerable who may not be able to use an online system.

Implications

42. **Financial** – the proposals in the report can be met from current resources. Should additional investment be required this will need to be funded from other sources within the Transport and Parking revenue budgets.

43. **Equalities** - the Council recognises, and needs to take into account its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority's functions).
44. Any change in approach would require an Equalities Impact Assessment to be carried out.

Risk Management

45. While it is acknowledged the system did not perform to the levels expected it should be noted that we have significantly changed a customer journey to add a self serve function.

Contact Details

Report Author:	James Gilchrist
Job Title:	Director Environment, Transport and Planning
Service Area:	Directorate of Place
Telephone:	01904 552547
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	17/04/24
Chief Officer Responsible for report	James Gilchrist, Director, Environment, Transport and Planning
Approved	Yes
Date Approved	17/04/2024

Background Papers:

Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee – 14 November 2022

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=943&MIId=13842>