

Annual Parking Services Report 2008/09: – Information Only Report

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to notify Members of the annual report for the financial year 2008/09. The first annual parking report was published for the 2006/07 financial year. This is now the third annual report for the authority. Annex A.

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 an annual report about their enforcement activities. It is considered to be good practice to publish the annual report to provide the public with information about the way in which enforcement is carried out and to provide some reassurance that enforcement is being undertaken properly. The Secretary of State believes transparency in reports 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 that should be included in the report. The Annual Report provides a record of the activities of the service during the financial year 2008/09 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.

Summary of Annual Parking Report

3. The following provides a summary of the Annual Parking Report.
 - i. The provisions of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 were implemented on 31 March 2008 and 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 now are also able to issue Penalty Charge Notices

(PCN) by post in certain circumstances including where drivers drive off before PCNs can be served. A small number of such tickets have been issued in York.

- ii. The changes introduced by the Traffic Management Act were significant and we required a complete upgrade to our computer system, stationery and uniforms. Additional staff training was undertaken which was vital to the successful implementation of the new provisions. The Act also introduced the requirement to produce an annual report. We had already produced two annual reports in advance of this requirement as we have actively encouraged transparency in parking enforcement.
- iii. The report highlights that the use of park and pay by phone continues to increase. The total numbers at the end of March 2009 was 273,611. The number of new users in 2008/09 alone was 119,055 an increase of 27% on the 2007/08 figure of 94,087. The average monthly usage in 2008/09 was 9,921, up from 7,840 in 2007/08. The scheme has proved to be popular with close to 11% of all parking payments now being received from Pay by Phone customers.
- iv. The number of calls to the free hotline service (for residents who wish to report illegal parking) has increased by 8% on 2007/08. PCNs were issued in 32% (808) of the calls responded to. We now have a team of 4 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) who are equipped with scooters to enable them to reach the hot line locations much easier and quicker.
- v. The report details the progress that continues to be made in achieving the Park Mark Safer Parking Award for the Council car parks. 95% of the Council's car parks now have the Park Mark Award.
- vi. The report explains that 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 try to remove the 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. This is demonstrated by the increased information about parking enforcement policy and procedures that is available on the council website and in the literature that the parking team have produced. In particular, the publication of policies for enforcement and the processing procedures for PCNs.
- vii. The importance of training and development is highlighted in the report. In relation to the issue and cancellation of PCNs remarkably few are due to an error on the part of the CEO (only 0.78% of all PCNs). All CEOs undertake NVQ Level 2 in Parking Control. Of the 22 staff, 19 had achieved the qualification by the end of 2008/09. In addition, 21 of the 22 CEOs now are first aid qualified. Due to their front line ambassadorial role it is recognised that this is a useful qualification for them to have and 2 of the CEOs were able to utilise their first aid training to provide assistance to an unconscious and injured person prior to an ambulance

arriving. Other training including conflict management training was provided. This is particularly important for the CEOs as they are often the targets of abuse. During 2008/09 there were 13 instances of serious abusive behaviour towards them. In one case an offender was fined in the Magistrates' Court for threatening behaviour against both a CEO and several office staff.

- viii. The report provides detailed information on where penalty charge notices have been issued and which parking contraventions have occurred.
- ix. The report explains the importance that the Council places on reasonableness and proportionality when considering representations from motorists, particularly where mistakes have occurred when displaying tickets or permits. This is reflected in the low number (4) of appeals to the independent parking adjudicator.
- x. The report stresses the importance of the presence of our CEOs on the street as the main way that we try to achieve compliance with parking regulations. These officers being out on the street and being seen to be there (eyes and ears) does make a difference in keeping traffic moving and does deter problems caused by inconsiderate parking.

Consultation

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

Information / Update Provided

- 5. Compliance with parking regulations must be the objective of any parking enforcement regime. A decrease in the number of PCNs is one indicator that this is occurring and there is a clear national trend in relation to this, particularly in councils that have been operating civil parking enforcement for a number of years, that the public have realised that enforcement has substantially increased and they are no longer likely to get away with illegal parking. This is not the only factor, detailed information can be found on page 21 of the report. 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. The work of parking services contributes to the Corporate Strategy's priorities to make York a Sustainable City and Safer City. In particular, 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 2008/09 explains how the parking enforcement service is managed and provides information regarding performance.

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

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 2008/09