

Test Valley Borough Council

Annual Parking Statement 2017 – 2018

1 Introduction

- 1.1 All public car parks and roads in Test Valley, excluding trunk roads, are designated as a Civil Enforcement Area. The Council enforces the on-street traffic regulation orders (TROs) within this Civil Enforcement Area under an agency agreement with Hampshire County Council. It manages its own public off-street car parks. The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), under the Traffic Management Act 2004, have the authority to enforce on-street restrictions in addition to enforcing parking restrictions in Council car parks.
- 1.2 This is the tenth Annual Report published by the Council in respect of its management of on and off-street parking in accordance with the guidance published by the Department of Transport. It is intended to provide the public with information about its policies, procedures and key statistics relating to its parking activities.

Policy Aims and Objectives

- 1.3 The Council, in carrying out its management of the Borough's road network and car parks, has identified a number of objectives. A summary of those objectives is set out below where the Council seeks to:
- assist in allowing the free flow of traffic by minimising the use of vehicles in the busiest and most congested areas;
 - improve traffic conditions and reduce the risk of accidents;
 - provide sufficient shopper and visitors parking facilities to support shops/commercial organisations and leisure activities; thereby underpinning the Borough's social and economic life, to manage the use of spaces by price to encourage retail vitality and match long term provision to the availability of long term spaces;
 - to safeguard the needs and requirements of residents and, where appropriate, to give them priority over commuter parking in residential streets close to the town centres of Andover and Romsey;
 - safeguard the needs and requirements of businesses/organisations and visitors;
 - control the supply of off street spaces by taking a long term view of transport and transport strategies as they relate to the settlements within Test Valley;
 - regularly review parking tariffs which provide revenue to sustain the Council's integrated transport aims;
 - ensure that parking controls are observed and enforced in a fair, accurate and consistent manner;

- provide a high standard of customer care; provide well maintained car parks that are easy for customers to use with particular regard to disabled customers;
- improve transport infrastructure and the general environment and to ensure that design standards accord with community safety, operational safety and visual amenity.

2 Parking Policy

- 2.1 The Council believes that the making and enforcing of parking regulations needs to be done in a transparent, legal and comprehensive manner. It considers that the preparation and implementation is all about being fair to all users of the highway and the public car parks, to ensure the safety of the public and manage the use of road network by minimising the impact of inappropriate parking.
- 2.2 The parking service website www.testvalley.gov.uk/parking contains details of the Council's policy and the appeal process. It explains our procedures for handling appeals both on the statutory grounds and the exercise of discretion in the case of mitigating circumstances.
- 2.3 The enforcement procedure for parking contraventions is outlined and this forms the framework for maintaining compliance with traffic regulations in a consistent manner.
- 2.4 The emphasis is on transparency and on the provision of information for road users. The Council's policies provide a framework to ensure that we regularly review parking management policies, in consultation with stakeholders and communicate those policies effectively.
- 2.5 The Engineering and Transport web pages are regularly reviewed and updated to provide easy access to information on car park locations and charges together with information for residents regarding permits and traffic regulation orders.
- 2.6 These parking policies are designed to:
- maintain the vitality and viability of town centres
 - manage the traffic network to ensure expeditious movement of traffic (including pedestrians and cyclists);
 - improve road safety;
 - improve the local environment;
 - promote the use of and improve the quality and accessibility of public transport;
 - meet the needs of people with disabilities, some of whom will be unable to use public transport and are dependant entirely on the use of a car; and
 - manage and reconcile the competing demands for kerb space.

- 2.7 The Civil Enforcement Officers who apply the Council's policies whilst on patrol, and the office staff who administer the policies including the appeal process, are in a good position to inform the day to day implementation of restrictions and future reviews.
- 2.8 Reviews of the current policies will take account of:
- existing and predicted levels of demand for parking;
 - the availability and pricing of on- and off-street parking places;
 - the justification for, and accuracy of, existing traffic orders;
 - the adequacy, accuracy and quality of traffic signing and road markings, including signing for Controlled Parking Zones;
 - the level of enforcement necessary for compliance;
 - the levels of penalty charges;
 - the need to resource the operation effectively and ensure that all parking staff are appropriately trained; and
 - impact on traffic flow, i.e. traffic or congestion outcomes.

3 Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The provision of parking enforcement in Test Valley is delivered by an in- house team; the only external element is cash collection from ticket machines, and the operation of cashless parking via the RingGo mobile system.
- 3.2 The Council operate 15 Pay and Display car parks in Andover and 8 Pay and Display car parks in Romsey plus Season ticket car parks and limited stay recreation car parks. The total capacity this equates to is 2078 parking spaces in Andover and 982 spaces in Romsey. In addition to this, most of our car parks contain motorcycle parking bays where single motorcycles can be parked for free when parked in a marked motorcycle bay.
- 3.3 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) are the public face of civil parking enforcement and the way they perform their functions is crucial to the success, and public perception of the Council's Civil Parking Enforcement operation. CEOs are expected to perform their duties in a professional and efficient manner at all times. They should apply consistency, firmness, sensitivity and tact coupled with common sense and patience and be able to think clearly and react sensibly under pressure.
- 3.4 The success of civil parking enforcement depends on the dedication and quality of the staff that deliver it. It is essential to give staff at all levels the skills and training to do their jobs effectively, in order that the Council can command public confidence and respect. This should also improve the self-esteem and job satisfaction of staff, resulting in higher retention rates. Training is seen as an important aspect of civil parking enforcement running costs.

- 3.5 The main objective of CEOs is to ensure that parking controls are observed and enforced in a fair, accurate and consistent manner.
- 3.6 Civil Enforcement Officers duties also include related activities such as:
- inspecting parking equipment;
 - checking and reporting defective signs and road markings;
 - issuing information leaflets or warning notices;
 - providing witness statements;
 - where appropriate, appearing before a parking adjudicator;
 - informing the police of criminal parking activity;
 - reporting suspected abandoned vehicles;
 - putting in place and removing notices about the suspension of parking places;
 - reporting on changes in parking patterns; and
 - assisting with on-street enforcement surveys;
- 3.7 CEOs are allocated daily rounds to enforce; the rounds are made up of a mixture of off street car parks and on street parking restrictions. These rounds are covered in rotation by the available staff. The rounds are regularly reviewed to ensure that all restrictions are covered, with extra attention given to problem or high risk areas. Any requests for enforcement or reports of parking in contravention of restrictions are logged and where appropriate extra enforcement is organised.
- 3.8 The office processes involved in civil parking enforcement are an integral part of the enforcement regime and staff carrying them out need similar levels of skill, training and professionalism as CEOs. It is important to ensure that those staff have the skills, training, authority and resources to give the public a high quality, professional, efficient, timely and user-friendly service. Time and quality targets are set for dealing with queries.

4 Performance Monitoring

Car Park Occupancy

- 4.1 Government guidance highlights that the availability of car parking has a major influence on the choice of means of transport. It is therefore important that the parking stock in the Borough is managed to provide a balance between encouraging use of alternative modes of transport whilst ensuring that the vitality of both Andover and Romsey is not compromised.
- 4.2 The Council monitors parking demand through ticket sales data and all car parks are surveyed for occupancy three times a year (May, August and October). The results, published in the Annual Parking Report, are reviewed annually and consideration is given to reallocating spaces from one category of stay to another to maintain optimum occupancy levels.

- 4.3 Applying the reallocation policy over the last ten years has resulted in the reallocation of spaces in both towns to ensure that sufficient parking spaces are available for shoppers in the car parks closest to the town centres. The reallocation has meant that spaces for long stay parking have been located further out from the town centre.

Summary of Average Peak Demand in Andover and Romsey (public off-street car parks)

Andover					
Percentages are average of three snapshot surveys on Saturdays in May, August and October					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
Ultra Short & Short	77%	79%	71%	74%	60%
Medium Stay	50%	55%	59%	63%	55%
Long Stay	37%	43%	41%	44%	63%
TOTAL	60%	64%	62%	64%	58%
Romsey					
Percentages are average of three snapshot surveys on Fridays in May, August and October					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Ultra Short & Short	98%	76%	81%	79%	81%
Medium Stay	79%	84%	83%	82%	88%
Long Stay	82%	75%	77%	74%	86%
TOTAL	83%	78%	79%	77%	86%

*Andover 2017 figures are average of three snapshot surveys on Fridays in May, August and October

- 4.4 The Reallocation Policy was reviewed in 2012 as part of the review of the Council's Parking Strategy. The Council aims to operate the short and medium stay car parks within a maximum average occupancy rate of 90% based on peak day surveys. This indicator would mean that on a typical busy shopping day, on average, one in nine spaces or more would be vacant with the exception of Christmas shopping periods.
- 4.5 The peak demand for shopper and visitor parking for Romsey and Andover is usually Friday and Saturday respectively however, in 2017-18 there was more demand for parking in Andover on Friday. The parking patterns for the two centres are monitored on those days and the results inform future reallocation reviews. Where there is a case for additional shoppers and visitors spaces, they would be created by re-allocating existing long stay spaces.

Car Park Charges

- 4.6 Charges are reviewed annually and charges have not increased since April 2016.
- 4.7 The Council has continued to provide free parking after 4pm, all day Sundays and bank holidays.

Customer Satisfaction

- 4.8 The Council is committed to providing a quality level of customer satisfaction in its car parks. To enable us to achieve and maintain its target, a questionnaire regarding car park facilities and environment is handed to car park users in all our car parks during one week in November each year.
- 4.9 In 2017, 935 questionnaires were handed out by the CEOs and 327 replies were received. Customers were asked whether they would agree that the quality of eight key facilities including ticket machines and lighting were satisfactory. The responses provided a customer satisfaction indicator of 90.5%.
- 4.10 A questionnaire is also enclosed with all Parking Permit and Parking Appeal correspondence processed during one week each October to provide a random cross sample, requesting feedback regarding the service provided by the Parking Administration staff.
- 4.11 In 2017, 150 questionnaires were sent out by the administration team with correspondence and 39 replies were received. Customers were asked to rate the efficiency and standard of service from poor through to excellent. The responses rating average to excellent provided a customer satisfaction indicator of 96.8%.

Administration Efficiency

- 4.12 To allow for thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding an appeal, consideration of the merits of the case including an appeals panel meeting and the drafting of a detailed response; the target for issuing a decision is 20 working days after acknowledgement (acknowledgement letters are sent the next working day, following receipt of the appeal). In 2017/18 the team processed 2379 appeals and achieved 19.4% compliance for the year. This reduced performance was as a result of long term sickness within the Parking Administration team.

- 4.13 Time taken to process permit renewals is also monitored. The objective is for the permit to be posted within 5 working days of the renewal application being received in the parking administration office. In 2017/18 the team processed 1065 new permit applications and 920 permit renewals achieving 98% compliance with the PI.

5 Key Challenges and Areas of Improvement during 2017/2018

- 5.1 Recruitment of CEOs continues to be a challenge. Throughout most of 2017/18 there have been unfilled posts despite a number of recruitment attempts.
- 5.2 In June 2017 a new online penalty charge notice appeals system was introduced by the Council that merges appeal details directly into the Council's database enabling time saving efficiency in the inputting of new appeals. This system also allows evidential documents to be submitted with online appeals; this will assist the Council to improve the response time in progressing appeals. Applicants can now also upload supporting documents with online permit applications.

In September 2017, the Council introduced the option to pay PCN's by debit card via a 24/7 automated telephone payment system.

- 5.3 Following ongoing issues of anti social behaviour and physical assaults on our CEOs, the Council is planning to issue CEO's with body worn cameras (BWC), similar to those in use by the police.
- A Privacy Impact Assessment and public consultation has been undertaken. The body worn video cameras will only be turned on to record when the CEO considers they are at risk from anti social behaviour or assault. Procedures will be put in place to ensure the use of the cameras and all data recorded complies with current legislation, including the new General Data Protection Regulations.

Off Street Car Parks

- 5.4 On 22nd May 2017, West Street car park closed as a result of the reconstruction of Andover Leisure Centre. Due to this reconstruction, a temporary swimming pool was provided on part of Shepherds Spring Lane car park, this resulted in a temporary reduction in the car park capacity of the Shepherds Spring Lane Car Park of 59 spaces.
- 5.5 The use of the RingGo service continues to grow and for the period 2017-18 we registered 165,452 transactions representing £443,700.50 car park income; in context this is just over 18% of our total car park income.

- 5.6 In January 2016 we introduced the ability to pay on exit by credit or debit cards at the Chantry Centre multi storey car park. The system was reviewed in 2017 and the decision was made to retain the system in the Chantry Centre car park but not to extend the system to other car parks due to reliability issues and operating cost. The option to purchase pay and display tickets by card and contactless options is now being considered.

On Street

- 5.7 During 2017/2018 the Council undertook reviews of the parking restrictions in:

- Valley Park
- Romsey
- Eastern Wards in Andover (St Marys, Alamein, Winton)

Where the reviews proposed changes to the current restrictions, public consultation of the proposed changes were carried out. Following the reviews and public consultations, changes were made to the restrictions in Valley Park and Romsey. The East Andover changes are to be implemented in 2018/19.

6 Enforcement Statistics

- 6.1 In the financial year 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, 9879 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued. During this period 2379 appeals were received of which 1026 were upheld on technical or mitigatory grounds. Eighteen cases were appealed at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal of which six appeals was allowed by the adjudicator, eleven appeals were dismissed, and one appeal was not contested by the Council due to mitigating circumstances. Some more parking statistics can be found on the next page:

7 Other Parking Statistics

Test Valley Borough Council Summary of Parking 2017/18

	2017/18
Parking Statistics	
Volume of on street car parking spaces (marked bays)	1,393
Volume of off street car parking spaces	3065
Total car parking spaces	4,458
Volume of higher level PCNs issued	2,737
Volume of lower level PCNs issued	7,142
Total PCNs issued	9879
of which: Attached to windscreen	9868
Served to keeper by post	11
PCN's Paid during 2017-18	
Volume of PCNs paid	7,627
Volume of PCNs paid at the discounted rate	5,976
Volume of PCNs paid before Charge Certificate (within 56 days)	7012
Volume of PCNs paid after a Charge Certificate served	615
Recovery of unpaid PCNs	
Volume of Charge Certificates registered at Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC)	772
Volume of Warrants of Execution issued to an Enforcement Agent	623
Other PCN statistics:	
Volume of PCNs written off	467
Volume of 2017-18 PCNs resulting in an informal challenge	2,115
Volume of informal challenges which resulted in cancellation of the PCN	920
Volume of PCNs resulting in a formal representation	192
Volume of formal representations which resulted in cancellation of the PCN	34
Volume of formal representations which resulted in a Notice of Rejection	106

Volume of vehicles removed	0
Volume of vehicles immobilised	0
Volume of appeals at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal	18
Of which were allowed:	
Of which were dismissed	11
Of which were not contested by the Council	1

8 Financial - Parking Account

Test Valley Borough Council Summary of Parking 2017/18

	2017/18 £	2016/17 £
On Street Parking Income		
On Street parking income	0	0
On Street residents permit fees	38,886	40,204
On street Penalty Charge Notice income	107,246	83,231
Blue Badge application fees	0	0
On Street parking waivers fees	3,417	1,156
Total on street parking income	149,549	124,591
On Street parking direct costs	160,151	120,020
On Street parking surplus / (deficit)	(£10,602)	4,571
Off Street Parking Income		
Off street parking income	2,264,472	2,328,620
Off street PCN income	197,691	194,113
Other off street parking income	3,863	6,547
Total off street parking income	2,466,026	2,529,280
Off street parking direct costs	1,321,947	1,273,276
Off Street parking surplus / (deficit)	1,144,080	1,256,004

**The income and expenditure of local authorities in connection with their on-street charging and their on-street and off-street enforcement activities are governed by Section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

9 Future Plans 2018/19

- 9.1 In 2018/19 the service will continue to work towards achieving the objectives set out in this report.
- 9.2 Following public consultation in 2017/18, changes are being made to the parking restrictions in the Winton, St Marys and Alamein wards of Andover. The main changes are the introduction of enforceable parking restrictions in the new residential developments at Picket twenty and Picket Piece, and the replacement of temporary restrictions on the Walworth Business Park with restrictions covered by a permanent order.
- 9.3 A review is being undertaken in the Millway, Harroway wards of Andover, North Baddesley and the Nursling and Rownhams wards in the south of the borough, and the parishes of Abbots Ann, Charlton, Grateley, Hatherden and Upper Clatford. Where changes to the current parking restrictions are being considered, public consultation will be undertaken before any decision is made to change the current restrictions.
- 9.4 As part of Hampshire County Council's transition to 2019 (T19) budget saving proposals, the County Council has served notice to terminate the agency agreement between the Borough and the County Council regarding the Borough Council CEO's patrolling of the on street parking restrictions. From 1st April 2020 the Council's CEO's will no longer patrol on street parking restrictions, and the County Council will be making alternative arrangements for this enforcement. The Borough Council's CEO's will continue to patrol the Council's pay and display car parks.
- 9.5 As a result of changes being planned for the management of on street parking, as part of Hampshire County Council's T19 programme, from 1st August 2019 the Borough Council will no longer be undertaking reviews of on street parking restrictions on behalf of the County Council. From this time, all reviews will be undertaken directly by the County Council. A decision by the County Council on the introduction of on street parking charges and potential increase in Resident Permit charges is expected in the autumn.

For more information please contact:

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