

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member and Advisers for Regeneration and Development</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Financial and Statistical Report for Parking Services for the Financial Year 2012 / 2013</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

### 5. Summary

This report gives details of statistics and income and expenditure for Parking Services for the financial year 2012 / 2013.

### 6. Recommendations

- a) That the Cabinet Member approves the report for publication in accordance with the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004.
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## **7. Details**

### **Background**

The Council undertakes parking enforcement under the auspices of the Traffic Management Act 2004, which became law on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. The Traffic Management Act requires parking authorities to report each year on financial and statistical information.

This report gives the information required to comply with the Act and supplementary information regarding various initiatives and projects.

### **Parking Enforcement Team**

The role of the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) is not restricted to parking enforcement. The team also act as ambassadors for the town, helping customers whenever possible. They also act on or report other issues which may impact on the quality of the environment, for example littering and anti-social behaviour.

The CEOs are paid a salary and no rewards or incentives are paid relating to the number of penalty charge notices (parking tickets) issued.

### **Administration and Appeals Team**

#### **Restructure**

The Appeals team was restructured at the commencement of the financial year. The purpose of the restructure was two fold:

- To achieve savings by the removal of the Assistant Parking Services Manager post
- To achieve a team which works more flexibly with team members able to undertake a wider range of roles for the benefit of the Service and its customers

#### **Challenges / Representations**

All correspondence relating to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is dealt with within set timescales for the following reasons:

- Timescales are set by the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Council is duty bound to cancel PCNs when these timescales are not met
- Customers can become anxious when challenges have been submitted regarding PCNs with regard to the outcome of challenges and a timely response can alleviate this situation

The team achieved 100% compliance, with all correspondence being answered within the requisite timescales.

Every challenge or representation against a penalty charge notice is reviewed by a member of the Appeals Team and is considered on its individual merits. Members of the team are empowered to use discretion when considering a challenge against a penalty charge notice including consideration of any mitigating circumstances. Fairness and

consistency are considered to be of paramount importance when considering each and every piece of correspondence.

The team also administer Residents and staff parking permits; these are generally produced and delivered within 3 working days of receipt of the completed application form and payment.

## **Projects**

### **Town Centre Parking Review**

A comprehensive report on the town centre parking availability, pricing structure and enforcement procedures has been completed and a detailed report has been drafted. The review was undertaken with input from the following teams:

- Highway Network Management
- Parking Services
- Business and Retail Investment
- Transportation and Traffic

The report assesses the current parking provision for Rotherham town centre, future impacts and customer aspirations to develop a strategy that ensures a balanced mix of parking to meet the needs of commuters, businesses and visitors.

The review has looked at the following areas;

- Current on and off street parking capacity and occupancy
- Charging structure
- Customer needs and aspirations
- Signage to car parks
- Maintenance regime
- Improvement options and cost implications
- Future Impacts

With regard to the parking charging structure, it was agreed that the current charges are at a level with which the vast majority of customers are satisfied (this was evidenced by a recent shopper survey undertaken by the Town Centre Management Team). Accordingly, the decision was taken to leave the charges at their current level.

A number of initiatives were discussed which may encourage further visitors to the town centre. The schemes which were considered included:

- Investment in technology, for example “pay on exit” systems in car parks
- A free hour parking e.g. the third hour free when customers pay for two hours parking
- Low level parking enforcement during town centre events
- Increasing the “grace period” for expired ‘pay and display’ tickets to 10 minutes from 5 minutes

- A relaunch of the “Here to Help” uniform branding for the whole of the town centre team i.e. not just Civil Enforcement Officers but also Town Centre Wardens, Street Cleansing Team etc

The Council is currently under severe financial pressure so it was decided that the initiatives with little or no cost implications would be implemented immediately with the other initiatives to be considered by the Council’s Strategic Leadership Team. Accordingly, the following initiatives have now been implemented:

- Low level parking enforcement during town centre events
- Increasing the minimum “grace period” for expired ‘pay and display’ tickets to 10 minutes from 5 minutes
- A relaunch of the “Here to Help” uniform branding for the whole of the town centre team i.e. not just Civil Enforcement Officers but also Town Centre Wardens, Street Cleansing Team etc (the new uniform has been ordered and delivery is imminent)
- Clear signage to car parks

### Schools

There are over 160 schools in the borough and a rota exists for CEOs to be present at schools at morning “drop off” and afternoon “pick up” times during term time.

School ‘keep clear’ markings and signage is now supported by Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) across most of the Borough. This means that penalty charge notices (PCNs) can be served on vehicles which are parked in contravention of the restrictions.

Enforcement of illegal parking activities outside schools is a serious and difficult challenge for the Parking Enforcement Team. On occasions when the Council’s CEOs attend site drivers, who have parked cars illegally, invariably drive away, often at high speed, to avoid a PCN being served on their vehicle; this can be a dangerous activity in itself. To deal with this issue, the Council successfully sought funding from the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership for a vehicle-mounted CCTV system to facilitate lawful enforcement of such parking activities. The vehicle has been fully deployed since the start of October 2013.

### Blue Badge Fraud Investigation.

The campaign against Blue Badge Fraud in 2012 / 13 resulted in 13 successful prosecutions in the Magistrates Court, bringing the total number of prosecutions to 41 since the Anti Blue Badge Fraud Team was established in 2010.

The work the Council has done follows the Department for Transport award of “Centre of Excellence” status for the way in which the Blue Badge Scheme is administered and enforced in the borough. The Council was also awarded “Effective Enforcement Team of the Year” in September 2011 by Disabled Motoring UK.

The Parking Services Manager also represented the Council by speaking at a Blue Badge Fraud Conference in Edinburgh in June 2012 and addressed a meeting of involved Directorates at Hull City Council in July 2012. Rotherham MBC then hosted a Blue Badge Fraud workshop for Yorkshire and Humberside Local Authorities in November 2012. This

was a well attended event and attendees stated their intention to introduce similar blue badge fraud investigation procedures based upon the success in Rotherham.

## 8. Finance

The total income and expenditure of the on-street and off-street parking account for 2012/13 was as follows:

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£824,571</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Penalty Charge Notices	£205,567
Off Street Pay & Display	£557,923
On Street Pay and Display	£283,211
Permits (staff, residents, private Wellgate permits)	£206,687
Bailiffs	£26,996
Miscellaneous	£384
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£1,280,768</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>£456,917</b>

**It should be noted that the surplus is derived from car parking charges, not from PCNs; the cost of employing the team of Civil Enforcement Officers is off-set by the income from penalty charge notices.**

The Council also works with Total Parking Solutions in locations where it is not appropriate for a Traffic Regulation Order to be implemented e.g. Parkgate Shopping Centre (where this arrangement has been in place since October 2009) and various Council Office car parks to which the public have no access and use is restricted to permit holders only. This arrangement raised a total of £21,704.00 during the financial year 2012/13 and this figure is included in the income figure for Penalty Charge Notices.

### Statistical information:

<i>Number of higher level Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued</i>	<b>3,828</b>
<i>Number of lower level PCNs issued</i>	<b>3,602</b>
<i>Number of PCNs paid</i>	<b>4,947</b>
<i>Number of PCNs paid within 14 days</i>	<b>4,061</b>
<i>Number of PCNs against which a formal or informal representation has been made</i>	<b>1,858</b>
<i>Number of PCNs cancelled (i.e. where an informal or statutory representation is successful)</i>	<b>879</b>
<i>Number of PCNs written off</i>	<b>602</b>
<i>Number of vehicles wheel clamped</i>	<b>Nil</b>
<i>Number of vehicles removed</i>	<b>Nil</b>

The above statistics are accurate as at 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013. These statistics can be subject to change on a daily basis due to the ongoing debt collection procedures.

## Debt collection

In cases where PCNs remain unpaid beyond the statutory period the Council has a policy of registering the debts at the Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC) at Northampton County Court; this is the Court which deals with all parking debt in England (outside London). Once a debt is registered the debtor is given a further 21 days to settle the debt before bailiffs are appointed. There were 1084 debts registered during the financial year 2012/13.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

N/A

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The way in which the Parking Service operates supports the *Corporate Plan* as follows:

### Helping to create safe and healthy communities

- Reducing the numbers of children injured or killed in road traffic accidents.
- Improve road safety and deal with concerns in the community, particularly outside schools.

The procedures support *The Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy 2011 – 2026* as follows:

### To maximise safety

- W. To encourage safer road use and reduce casualties on our roads.
- X. To work with police to enforce traffic laws.
- Y. To focus safety efforts on vulnerable groups.

### To support economic growth

- L. To reduce the amount of productive time lost on the strategic road network and improve its resilience and reliability.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

N/A

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