



Swale Borough Council Parking Services

Annual Report 2013/14



Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of *The Department for Transport Operational Guidance to Local Authorities, Parking Policy and Enforcement* (section 4.15/4.24) and the *Local Government Transparency Code 2014* (part 2.2), Swale Borough Council has a responsibility to publish an Annual Report detailing on-street and off-street parking statistics.

The aim of the report is to summarise what services the Parking Services department provides and give an overview as to why Civil Parking Enforcement is required within Swale, how we operate and how well we are performing.

Reporting is an important part of our accountability. The transparency given by regular and consistent reporting should help the public gain a better understanding of Civil Parking Enforcement.

Monitoring also provides the Council with management information for performance evaluation and helps to identify where improvements are needed. In addition, it also provides a framework for performance comparisons between other local authorities.

I hope that you will find the contents of this report helpful and informative.

Should you have any further enquiries please contact Parking Services at:

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Councillor David Simmons
Cabinet Member for Environmental and Rural Affairs

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used within this report;

CEO	Civil Enforcement Officer
CPE	Civil Parking Enforcement
DfT	Department for Transport
SBC	Swale Borough Council
MBC	Maidstone Borough Council
P&D	Pay & Display
PCN	Penalty Charge Notice
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
TPT	Traffic Penalty Tribunal

Background to Parking in the Borough of Swale

Parking restrictions are placed at key locations throughout the borough of Swale to specifically ensure the free flow of traffic and to maintain highway safety for both drivers and pedestrians.

The Road Traffic Act 1984 empowered local authorities to implement TROs in order to control traffic movements and parking provision. Responsibility at this time for enforcing observed contraventions came under the Police via on-street traffic wardens.

However, the Police service soon became increasingly unable to deal with the ever escalating volume of parking offences and the subsequent cost of funding the traffic warden service.

Consequently, the Road Traffic Act 1991 was implemented which de-criminalised illegal parking activity to allow the Police to deal with more serious matters and to free up the magistrate courts that were becoming overwhelmed with parking related issues.

This change in legislation (and later amendments) allowed local authorities to manage illegal parking through Civil Parking Enforcement agreements which enabled CEOs to enforce parking restrictions under Section 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, in accordance with the relevant TRO.

All existing TROs may be viewed online at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/tro/>

Parking Policy

Parking Policies are an essential part of the Council's Integrated Transport Strategy. In accordance with the DfT's "*Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans*" the Council's policies are aimed at tackling congestion and changing travel behaviour. In setting these policies the Council has taken account of:

- Existing and projected level of demand for parking by all classes of vehicle.
- The availability and pricing of on and off street parking places.
- The justification for, and accuracy of, existing TROs.
- The adequacy, accuracy and quality of signing and lining which either restricts or permits parking.

With regards to enforcement operations, the Council has set and continues to appraise:

- The optimum level of compliance with parking controls.
- The level of enforcement necessary to secure that compliance.
- The need to effectively resource the operation and ensure all staff are appropriately trained and familiar with all restricted areas in Swale.

When formulating policies the Council consults with local individuals and businesses that have a range of parking needs. The Council's key parking control policies are to:

- Regulate the use of vehicles in the busiest and most congested areas.
- Regulate parking, both on street and off street, and provide adequate P&D facilities.
- Improve traffic flow and road safety.
- Encourage the use of public transport.
- Safeguard the needs and requirements of local residents, visitors and businesses.

Civil Parking Enforcement

Swale Borough Council has contracted the CPE operation to an external agent, *APCOA Parking*, for a term of 5 years with effect 1 July 2011. A Contract Manager, Supervisor and 12 CEOs are employed under this contract.

It is a common misconception the CPE operation is purely a revenue making scheme and that the officers work to targets; this is incorrect. All members of staff under this contract are salaried and not in receipt of a commission based rate of pay or any other performance related incentives.

In accordance with the relevant TRO, the CEOs can legally enforce:

- Single and double yellow lines
- Loading restrictions
- Loading bays
- Disabled bays
- Limited waiting bays
- Resident parking bays
- Taxi bays
- Motorcycle bays
- School keep clear markings
- Crossing zig zag restrictions
- On-street P&D bays
- On-street P&D car parks

Yellow line restrictions are enforceable from the centre of the road to the nearest property boundary. Where a vehicle is parked partially or fully blocking the footway, CEOs are able to issue a PCN, not against the obstruction but against the yellow line contravention. Where a vehicle is observed as parked blocking the footway but where no yellow line restrictions apply CEOs are unable to deal with the obstruction; Kent Police have retained the delegated authority to deal with such offences under highway obstruction powers.

On 18 September 2014, SBC and APCOA Parking implemented cycle patrols to improve service efficiency by responding faster to instances of illegal parking and assisting the public with any technical P&D faults; the CPE contract specifies such faults are to be responded to within 20 minutes.

The case study for implementing the cycle scheme is detailed below:

Enforcement Challenge	Enforcement Solution	APCOA activities	Results
Wide geographic area	Deployment of cycles in lieu of enforcement vehicle	Identification of dedicated cycle CEOs	35% faster response
Delays due to congestion	Raised CEO visual presence	Sourcing of cycles and equipment	4,588.8kg of CO2 emissions reduced
Inefficient vehicle deployment	Increased coverage	CEOs trained to advance cycle standard	14,400 vehicle miles saved per annum
Contributing to congestion and pollution	P&D repair items carried by CEOs	Redesign of beat areas	1,920 litres of fuel saved per annum
Negative end-user experience within car parks if delayed	Driver compliance and P&D fault survey & monitoring	Return of leased enforcement vehicle	£2,480 fuel costs saved per annum
Oversubscribed staff car parks		Risk assessments and Safe Working Instructions for cycle use	£3,000 vehicle lease cost saved
			£800 vehicle maintenance costs saved per annum

5x bicycles were procured and paid for by APCOA Parking; at no cost to SBC.

Since the implementation of cycle patrols, the average response time for P&D faults has reduced from 13.5 minutes to 9 minutes; an improvement from 87.10% to 93.33%

CEOs are now able to cover a beat area of up to 17 miles, as opposed to 8.5 when previously on foot patrols.

To further SBC's 'green' initiative, the CEOs ride their bike to and from work which has reduced approximately 466 car journeys into the town centre per annum, resulting in a reduction of 578kg worth of CO2 emissions.

Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)

Where illegal parking is observed, the CEO on patrol has a responsibility to record the relevant contravention and issue a PCN accordingly.

With effect 31 May 2008, the Secretary of State decided that PCNs would be issued at two different tiers, £70.00 or £50.00, depending on the relevant parking contravention; prior to this date, PCNs were issued at £60.00 irrespective of the seriousness of the offence, of which many recipients deemed as unfair.

- The higher level charge would be applicable if parking is observed in places where it is prohibited e.g. on yellow lines during prescribed hours of enforcement or in a disabled bay without displaying a valid blue badge.
- The lower level charge would be applicable where parking is permitted but a less serious contravention has occurred e.g. failing to display a valid Pay & Display ticket or parked outside the remit of a marked bay.

PCNs continue to be reduced by 50% if paid within 14 days of issue.

A CEO will serve a PCN by either attaching it to the vehicle or placing it under the windscreen wiper, should the notice be issued during inclement weather. The penalty charge will specify the contravention that has been observed, amount payable and the methods available for the recipient to informally challenge the notice.

Although discretion may not be considered by a CEO upon an observation of illegal parking, any mitigating circumstances relevant to the motorist at the time of receiving a PCN remain a consideration of the Parking Services appeals officer as part of the statutory appeals process.

Information on the appeals process and all applicable parking contraventions can be viewed online at <http://www.patrol-uk.info/site/index.php>

Parking Provision and Services

Car parks

SBC currently provides 27 off street P&D car parks which generate income that is used to counterbalance the Council's associated costs in general maintenance and parking enforcement.

Any surplus off street income forms part of the Council's overall income budget which is used to support the provision of a number of key public services. This surplus on the parking account reduces the net budget requirement for the Council and therefore the level of Council Tax charged.

SBC's P&D machines are manufactured by *Metric Group* and operate on a pre-paid payment basis; accepting 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2 coins.

SBC has also recently implemented *Pay by Phone* parking at all off street locations with effect 13 October 2014.

Information regarding car park locations and tariffs can be viewed online at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/car-parks/>

There are a total of 3038 controlled off-street parking spaces and approximately 1990 controlled on-street parking spaces in the borough.

Permits and Season tickets

Parking Services administer all resident, visitor & business permit applications in addition to season ticket requests.

Information on existing permit and season ticket prices is available online at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/Parking-Permits/>

Civil Parking Enforcement

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 sets out under section 55 how any collective surplus can be used from:

- PCN income
- On-Street P&D income
- Residents Parking Permit income

This may be used to:

- Make good the Parking CPE fund of any amount charged to that fund in the 4 years immediately preceding the financial year in question;
- Meeting all or any part of the cost of the provision by the local authority of off-street car parks

If it appears to the local authority that the provision in their area of further off-street car parks parking is unnecessary or undesirable, any surplus may be used for the following purposes—

- Meeting costs incurred, whether by the local authority or by some other person, in the provision or operation of, or of facilities for, public passenger transport services,
- The purposes of a highway or road improvement project in the local authority's area.

Statistical Information

On Street & Off Street performance

	2012 – 2013			2013 – 2014		
	On Street	Off Street	Total	On Street	Off Street	Total
No. of Higher level PCNs	5,454	520	5,974	5,292	532	5,824
No. of Lower level PCNs	3,392	11,513	14,905	3,017	11,739	14,756
Total number of PCNs	8,846	12,033	20,879	8,309	12,271	20,580
Number of PCNs paid at discounted rate	5,689	6,538	12,227	5,251	6,378	11,629
Number of PCNs paid at non-discounted rate	919	1,017	1,936	1,077	1,209	2,286
Total number of PCNs paid	6,608	7,555	14,163	6,328	7,587	13,915
Total number of PCNs unpaid	2,238	4,478	6,716	1,981	4,684	6,665
Total number of PCNs registered with Traffic Enforcement Centre	765	717	1,482	1,578	1,527	3,105
Number of challenges sent to Traffic Penalty Tribunal	45	15	60	15	19	34
Total number of permits issued						
Total number of resident permits issued	2,053			1,943		
Total number of visitor permits issued	12,440			29,350		
Total number of season tickets issued	356			271		
Total number of business permits issued	230			244		

Financial Performance

Off Street Income	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014
Pay & Display income	£1,509,427.42	£1,499,689.91
Season Ticket income	£58,394.45	£51,366.45
Penalty Charge Notice income	£288,484.59	£298,180.47
Sales VAT	£466.66	£1,590.00
Wayleavers income	£75.00	£75.00
Rent income	£192.21	£153.97
Revaluation gain	£10,433.00	£0.00
Total income	£1,867,473.33	£1,851,055.80
Total Expenditure	£1,003,928.61	£1,002,536.44
Surplus	£863,544.72	£848,519.36

On Street Income	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014
Pay & Display income	<i>*No on-street Pay & Display provision in Swale</i>	
Parking permit income	£112,689.99	£117,889.00
Penalty Charge Notice income	£217,539.86	£201,538.67
Fees & Charges income	£0.00	£6,080.00 ¹
Visitor parking voucher income	£1,853.40	£2,174.20
Total income	£332,083.25	£327,681.87
Total Expenditure	£363,569.80	£396,401.20
Deficit	£31,486.55	£68,719.33

Note:

1- This income relates to items that are exempt of VAT which were previously included in overall budgets.