

## 6. PARKING SERVICES ANNUAL REVIEW 2016/17

REPORT OF: Assistant Chief Executive  
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Wards Affected: All MSDC Wards  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services and Service Delivery  
11<sup>th</sup> October 2017

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### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services and Service Delivery with an overview of Parking Services' activity in 2016/17, including the enforcement contract the Council operate on behalf of West Sussex County Council.

### Recommendations

2. **The Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.**
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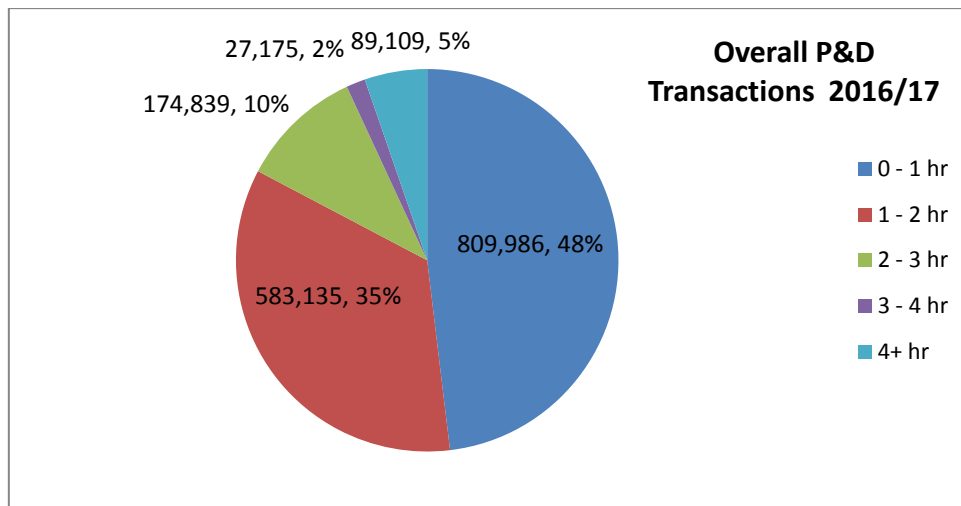
### Background

3. The Council's Parking Services Team manages and maintains the District's 34 public car parks (22 town and 12 rural with a total of 2800 spaces) and since January 2006 provides the enforcement for both on and off street parking. The Council also administers the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions on behalf of West Sussex County Council (WSCC), but the provision of on-street parking and restrictions is the responsibility of WSCC. The service also manages the administration of the WSCC's Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in East Grinstead and administers the Council's concessionary taxi voucher scheme for residents unable to use public transport.

### Monitoring and performance

#### Car Parks

4. As part of the monthly monitoring programme, an assessment of pay and display car park usage is undertaken. This ensures that trends can be monitored and action can be taken if required.
5. The total pay and display transactions in town centre pay and display car parks for 2016/17 was 1,684,244, which was a 2% increase on the previous year.
6. As the chart below indicates, analysis of transaction behaviour highlights that overall, 83% of transactions were for stays of less than two hours with behaviour varying slight variations in each town centre.



7. Season tickets are available in all but one of the Council's eighteen long stay town centre car parks and performance strengthened during the year. The majority of season tickets are purchased by those working in businesses supporting the local economy, but they are also popular with commuters and local residents. All towns have seen a growth in Season Tickets demand; in Burgess Hill it is attributed to the return of AMEX, business demand for Boltro Road car park attributed to Haywards Heath and in East Grinstead there was a noticeable increase from local residents moving into new developments.
8. The infrastructure of the town and rural car park portfolio is managed in partnership with the Corporate Estate and Facilities team. Quarterly inspections are made in each car park to ensure they are fit for purpose and any health and safety issues are addressed. A rolling programme of resurfacing and maintenance is undertaken, along with reactive repairs to address issues of vandalism or accidental damage. During 2016/17 Hazelgrove, Imberhorne Lane, Orion and Horsted Keynes car parks were resurfaced and Queensway, Railway Approach and Orchards car parks were relined at a total cost of £100,136 funded by both capital and revenue budgets.
9. Landscaping and litter clearance from the districts car parks is carried out by our Contractors IDVerde and Serco as part of the Council's wider contract arrangements to ensure high presentation standards. IDVerde litter scavenge the beds and empty bins three times a week in the majority of car parks – Imberhorne Lane, Handcross and Horsted Keynes being the exceptions which are carried out on an ad hoc basis. Serco empty litter bins daily in all principle car parks and sweep on a reactive basis, in response requests from the Operations team. These arrangements are currently under review with our contractors.
10. Members will be aware that the Council has a performance indicator to ensure that 97% of car park machines are repaired within 2 days of a fault being reported. By year end the Council exceeded this target, reporting 100%.
11. Seventeen of the District's car parks retained their 'Park Mark' status after inspection by the British Parking Association. Park Mark is a recognised industry accreditation giving confidence that car parks are well designed and safer for users.
12. Unfortunately, it is difficult to monitor the usage and performance of the District's rural car parks which are either free or operated by a disc system in favour of pay and display. Discs are available for £1 from local retailers.

13. The yearend outturn position for the off-street parking account was £1,256,407 not including Capital expenditure. In 2016/17 the Council invested £100k on capital improvements to car parks. In line with the Road Traffic Regulations Act (1984) if no further investment is required into off-street parking in that year, any surplus can be reallocated for the purposes of environmental improvements in the local area.

## **Enforcement**

14. All enforcement and notice processing procedures are set out by the Traffic Management Act 2004.
15. This Council carries out Monday to Saturday on and off street enforcement on behalf of West Sussex County Council, with occasional Sunday patrols (on-street only). MSDC and WSCC have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) of which an element recommends 70% of enforcement duties are carried out on street and 30% off street. This is monitored by the Parking Operations Manager.
16. Three teams of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) are deployed daily to each cover a town and its surrounding areas. Whilst a regular schedule of deployment is undertaken every day, the team also strives to provide a reactive enforcement service responding to requests made.
17. During 2016/17 14,096 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued by the enforcement team, a 14% increase on the previous year. This is mainly due to the successful recruitment and retention of Civil Enforcement Officers and the completion of line and sign faults on previously unenforceable roads.
18. Of the PCNs issued, 26 appeals (0.18%) were taken to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal for a decision by an independent adjudicator. Regrettably only 6 appeals were ruled in favour of the Councils decision.
19. The on and off street enforcement budget is ring fenced, in 2016/17 there was a surplus of £83,751.95. This was largely due to a number of staff vacancies.
20. MSDC receive 30% of any such operational surplus which is required to be reinvested back into enforcement. The £25,125.58 from 2016/17 will contribute to the purchase of a new notice processing system in 2017/18.
21. A recruitment drive in the autumn resulted in three new appointments, taking the team to 11 CEOs for the first time since 2014.
22. During 2016/17 there were four serious incidents of aggression / violence against a CEO reported to the Police. Two successful prosecutions were supported by the evidence captured by the Body Worn Camera footage.
23. The WSCC SLA monitors the overall PCN cancellation rate due to statutory exemptions and mitigating circumstances (e.g. evidence is provided of unloading, valid blue badge, valid pay and display ticket). The current benchmark is to achieve no more than 12% moving to 7% by 2020. At the end of 2016/17 the cancellation figure for mitigating circumstances in Mid Sussex was 8.8%.

24. Places for People Leisure (PFPL) requested increased enforcement at the Dolphin and Kings Centre Leisure Centre car parks to target non leisure centre users suspected of abusing the parking disc system. This was suspected to be mainly local workers and commuters. A programme of targeted enforcement identified regular abusers but genuine users also received PCNs. These were usually cancelled which made a contribution to the comparatively high cancellation rate identified above. Discussions regarding an improved parking control system continue with PFPL management.
25. In line with MSDC customer service standards, the Parking team has a commitment to respond to PCN challenge correspondence within 10 working days. At the end of 2016/17 99% of challenges were responded to within the target deadline.
26. During 2016/17, MSDC piloted remedial lines and signs project work in partnership with WSCC, where WSCC funded agreed remedial works in areas of the District which have been unenforceable due to faded lines or missing signs. Two successful phases were completed to rectify long standing faults in areas including Cuckfield, Hurstpierpoint, Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Hassocks. The project will continue into 2017/18 to reduce the backlog of remedial works in Mid Sussex.
27. As a result of the above project, a stronger partnership with WSCC Highways team has developed, resulting in improved lines of communication, including a monthly meeting with key Highways Officers to discuss and seek to resolve key operational issues.
28. The Parking Services team work closely with two Enforcement Agents – Marston Holdings and Rundles - to recover bad debts as a result of unpaid PCNs. Enforcement Agents are required to comply with the Ministry of Justice Taking Control of National Goods standards. During 2016/17 the Enforcement Agents recovered a combined total of £32,397, 33% of the enforcement contract bad debt. Last year, no complaints were received about the behaviour of the Enforcement Agents.

### **Controlled Parking Zone**

29. As part of the SLA with West Sussex County Council, this Council administers resident and non-resident permits on behalf of WSCC for the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in East Grinstead. The on street CPZ restrictions are implemented and managed by WSCC. All income generated from the sale of permits is returned directly to WSCC.
30. There are a total of 771 permit spaces allocated in both Zones A and B of the CPZ. As at the end of March 2017, 747 active permits were issued leaving a combined capacity of 3% unsold, (this figure will fluctuate each month). In Zone A (the inner, town centre zone) there was 2% remaining capacity and in Zone B (the outer, near the station zone) there was capacity of 4% remaining. Whilst capacity remains in each of the CPZ zones, it is acknowledged that specific streets in the immediate vicinity of the town centre are facing parking capacity issues.

### **Initiatives and Events**

31. As in previous years, the Council supported the three towns during the Christmas period by offering two parking incentives;
  - (i) Free parking was offered after 1pm in short stay car parks on the day of the towns Christmas lights switch on events

- (ii) A flat tariff of £1 was offered in specific long stay car parks on Saturdays during December up to Christmas.
- 32. Support was also given to the East Grinstead leg of the Mid Sussex Marathon by offering participants a free parking voucher in short stay car parks to encourage patronage of the town after the event. The Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill legs of the event took place on a Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday when parking charges did not apply.
- 33. The team also supported the West Sussex School Safety and Highways teams with initiatives to help improve safety around schools, mainly caused by inconsiderate parent parking. Our support includes targeted enforcement supported by school staff and restricted time permits for parent parking in designated MSDC car parks during drop off / pick up to reduce cars parking on the highway.

### **Taxi Vouchers**

- 34. Parking Services have administered the taxi voucher service since 2014/15. The Council currently offers up to 200 residents who are no longer able to use bus passes due to mobility issues, the option of a maximum of £30 taxi vouchers per annum.
- 35. There are a number of local taxi operators that participate in the scheme and they are reimbursed on production of the vouchers. Customers may pay up to half of their fare with the vouchers.
- 36. There are currently 179 customers using the scheme, at a cost of £2177.71 to the Council in 2016/17.

### **Service Developments in 2016/17**

- 37. During 2016/ 17 additional capacity of 54 spaces was created by opening the disused section of Queens Crescent car park in anticipation of the Burgess Hill redevelopment works which will temporarily reduce car parking capacity in the town. Eight season ticket only spaces were also created in Norton House car park (East Grinstead) following the demolition of a toilet block. The total cost of these works was £46,046
- 38. At the request of Hurstpierpoint Parish Council the short stay period at Trinity Road car park was increased from 2 hours to 3 hours by amending the off-street parking order. The request was made on the basis that increasing the stay length would support the village economy.
- 39. At the request of Cuckfield Parish Council a designated motorcycle bay was installed in the Broad Street car park to meet user demand.
- 40. All pay and display machines were upgraded during 2016 to ensure they would accept the new £1 coin which was launched in March 2017.
- 41. If a PCN issued to a foreign vehicle remains unpaid, the Council are unable to trace the owners via the DVLA. Such cases result in approximately £5000 a year of lost income to the enforcement contract. To improve service delivery, EPC (Euro Parking Collections) have been engaged to trace foreign vehicle owners with the only charge to MSDC of 30% commission if a successful recovery is made. Since January 2017, 3 successful recoveries have been made from 50 cases sent.

42. During 2016/17 the Traffic Penalty Tribunal service launched an online service called FOAM (Fast Online Appeals Management). This new service enables those appealing a decision made by the Parking team to upload evidence and make their case to the Adjudicator online. This has made the appeals process more accessible to the customer and has reduced processing time for the team.

### **Focus for 2017/18**

43. The focus for Parking Services in 2017/18 will be to develop and modernise the service by embracing digital technology, and to carry out research to inform the Parking Strategy refresh in 2020.
44. The key areas of work will be:
- Commissioning Road Space Audits in Burgess Hill and East Grinstead to provide a strategic blueprint for future on and off street parking provision in both communities.
  - Implementing a new Notice Processing digital platform to modernise the enforcement, notice processing and season ticket / permit functions.
  - Researching cashless pay and display options and service developments to inform the Parking Strategy refresh.
  - Continuing with rolling maintenance programme resurfacing Dale Avenue, Franklynn Road and Gower Road car parks and adding capacity to Heath Road car park.

### **Financial Implications**

45. Any financial implications as a result of car parking and enforcement activities are highlighted within the report.

### **Risk Management Implications**

46. There are no direct risk management implications as a result of this report.

### **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

47. There are no direct equality and customer service impacts as a result of this report.

### **Background papers**

None