

## 7. PARKING SERVICES ANNUAL REVIEW 2017/18

REPORT OF: Divisional Leader – Commercial services & Contracts  
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Wards Affected: All MSDC Wards  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services and Service Delivery  
Date: 11 July 2018

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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 2017/18, 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 the District's 34 public car parks (22 town and 12 rural with a total of 2,800 spaces) and since January 2006 has provided the enforcement for both on and off street parking.
4. The Council administers the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions on behalf of West Sussex County Council (WSSCC), but the provision of on-street parking and restrictions is the responsibility of WSSCC.
5. The service also manages the administration of the WSSCC's Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in East Grinstead and the Council's concessionary taxi voucher scheme for residents unable to use public transport.

### Monitoring and performance

#### Car Parks

6. The total number of pay and display transactions in town centre car parks for 2017/18 was 1,663,899. This represents a 1% decrease on the previous year. Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill saw a small decline in transactions whilst East Grinstead reported growth.
7. As per the previous year, analysis of pay and display transaction behaviour demonstrates that overall, 82% of pay and display transactions related to stays of less than two hours.
8. Season tickets are available in all but one of the Council's eighteen long stay town centre car parks offering a significant reduction on the daily tariff for local workers, businesses and commuters. Season Ticket demand continued to grow in all three towns during the year. As at the end of March 2018, waiting lists are now in operation in all of the Hayward Heath season ticket car parks and two of the three East Grinstead season ticket car parks. Burgess Hill currently has capacity following the recent extensions to Cyprus Road & Queens Crescent car parks.

9. The car parking estate is managed in partnership with the Corporate Estate and Facilities team. Regular inspections are made to ensure they are fit for purpose and emerging 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 2017/18 Dale Avenue, Franklynn Road, and Gower Road car parks were resurfaced at a total cost of £80,475. An additional £13,000 was spent on resurfacing the ground floor of the Martlets multi storey car park to address the deterioration of the surface and respond to the need to secure a further 12 months of usage.
10. In 2017/18 seventeen of the District's car parks retained their 'Park Mark' status after inspection by the British Parking Association. Due to the high standard of the car parks this accreditation has been awarded for three years instead of the usual two years. Park Mark is a recognised industry accreditation giving confidence that car parks are well designed and safer for users. The 2018/19 Service Plan includes the plans to invest in infrastructure improvements to increase the number of car parks that receive the Park Mark accreditation.
11. 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. Discs are available for £1 from local retailers.
12. The year end outturn position for the off-street parking account was £1,228,417 not including Capital expenditure. 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. As part of the Commercial Services & Contracts Division this parking surplus supports the provision of improved car parking services, parks and open spaces, waste management and street cleaning.

## **Enforcement**

13. All enforcement and notice processing procedures are set out by the Traffic Management Act 2004.
14. 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) which recommends that 70% of overall enforcement duties are carried out on street and 30% off street. This is monitored by the Parking Operations Manager.
15. Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) teams are deployed daily to cover each town and its surrounding areas. Whilst a regular schedule of deployment is undertaken every day, the team also strives to provide an intelligence led, reactive enforcement service responding to requests made.
16. During 2017/18 15,259 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued by the enforcement team, an 8% increase on the previous year. With the data available from other West Sussex Districts PCN issue rates range between 12,000 – 26,000 PCNs subject to the size of the authority and their enforcement operations.
17. Of the PCNs issued in Mid Sussex during 2017 /18, 30 appeals (0.19%) were taken to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal for a decision by an independent adjudicator. During the year 9 cases were allowed by the adjudicator. Comparative data with other West Sussex authorities shows that around 0.20% is average number of cases taken to TPT.

18. The services of Euro Parking Collections (EPC) are engaged to trace unpaid PCN fines for foreign vehicles. Working across most European countries, EPC have successfully managed to close 7 cases out of the 127 referred to them, with 44 returned as unable to trace. Whilst this is a relatively small collection rate, these debts would otherwise have been written off. This demonstrates a zero tolerance policy in Mid Sussex. Adur & Worthing are the only other Borough to use EPC in West Sussex.
19. The on and off street enforcement budget is ring fenced. In 2017/18 there was an operational surplus of £78,376.40. MSDC receive 30% of the surplus which is required to be reinvested into supporting the enforcement service. The £23,512.93 from 2017/18 is being used to invest in tablet technology and an additional patrol vehicle to improve deployment performance and service delivery in 2018/19.
20. The CEO team remained stable during the year with 11 officers.
21. During 2017/18 there were four serious incidents of aggression / violence against a CEO reported to the Police. One case was pursued by the Police and resulted in a formal apology to the CEO. Body Worn Camera Footage was supplied to the Police in all cases.
22. 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% cancellations moving to 7% by 2020. At the end of 2017/18 the cancellation figure for mitigating circumstances in Mid Sussex was 7.92%.
23. 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 2017/18, 93% of challenges were responded to within the target deadline. Unfortunately during the first quarter of the year, the team experienced a prolonged period of sickness absence coinciding with a staff vacancy which impacted performance.
24. MSDC continues to work with WSCC to carry out remedial work to faulted on-street lines and signs across the District. Phase three of this project addressed issues in East Grinstead, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and Hurstpierpoint to ensure the areas remain enforceable. A rolling programme of remedial repairs is developed with WSCC who fund these works.
25. The Parking Services Team employs two Enforcement Agents to recover bad debts as a result of unpaid PCNs. During 2017/18 the Enforcement Agents recovered a combined total of £31,503, which equates to 36% of the enforcement contract bad debt. Comparable data with other West Sussex District & Boroughs demonstrates that around 35% is an average recovery rate. Enforcement Agents are required to comply with the Ministry of Justice Taking Control of National Goods standards. No formal complaints were investigated for regarding the behaviour of the Enforcement Agents during the year.

## **Controlled Parking Zone**

26. 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.
27. As at the end of March 2018, 734 active permits were issued to both Zones A and B of the CPZ. This is similar to the previous year resulting in 15% combined capacity remaining in both zones. It is acknowledged that specific streets in the immediate vicinity of the town centre are facing parking capacity issues.

### **Initiatives and Events**

28. 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 each Christmas light switch on events
  - (ii) A flat tariff of £1 was offered in specific long stay car parks on Saturdays during December up to Christmas.
29. Support was also provided for 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 the Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday when parking charges did not apply.
30. The team continued to support the West Sussex School Safety and Highways teams with initiatives to help improve safety around schools, mainly caused by inconsiderate parent parking. The Council's support included targeted enforcement supported by school staff and restricted time permits for parent parking in designated MSDC car parks, during drop off / pick up times to reduce cars parking on the highway.
31. At the request of WSCC, additional on-street enforcement took place on Good Friday and Bank Holiday Monday of the Easter weekend 2017 for the arrival of the 'Flying Scotsman' at the Bluebell Railway. The special event planning anticipated an increase of vehicle movement in the area and the team were required to patrol the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order created for the event.

### **Taxi Vouchers**

32. The Parking Services Team has administered the discretionary 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.
33. There are currently 16 local taxi and community transport operators, including community transport buses registered to 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.

34. At the end of March 2018, there were 131 customers using the scheme, at a cost of £2770 to the Council.
35. A presentation was made to the Mid Sussex Wellbeing Network to promote the service to key community groups that can signpost and outreach to potential users to make an application.
36. Mid Sussex is believed to be the only West Sussex authority to continue to offer this discretionary service. Our nearest neighbours to offer the service are Brighton & Hove City Council with an annual allowance of £70.

### **Service Highlights in 2017/18**

37. During 2017/18 additional capacity of 32 short stay spaces was created in Haywards Heath by acquiring land adjacent to Heath Rd car park to expand the estate. Usage trends are being monitored to inform future parking strategy work in the town.
38. In January 2018, a new IT platform - Chipside - was installed. The project was funded by the 2016/ 17 enforcement surplus and a 50:50 contribution between MSDC and WSCC of £5900 each. This enforcement platform includes new handheld technology for the CEOs and an integrated notice processing system. As well as improving day to day operations for the enforcement and back office teams, the new system will provide capacity for service developments including heat mapping to improve CEO deployment patrols and self-service challenges, enabling customers to view PCN evidence and make a challenge online.
39. In September 2017, the existing electric car chargers were replaced with six fast chargers in the Cyprus Road, Hazelgrove and Chequer Mead car parks. Fast chargers enable drivers to charge their vehicles in a quicker time. As part of the Councils wider Sustainability Strategy project, the chargers and five year maintenance costs were funded by Section 106 monies at a cost of £17,912. The charging service is managed by a third party – chargeyourcar.com, which requires a subscription fee. In the first six months of operation, a total of 563 sessions using 3456kwh of electricity occurred, at a cost of £525 to the Council. There is scope for the Council to implement a charge for the electricity used, and it may be appropriate to look at doing so if usage continues to increase in future.
40. For the first time, fifteen of the seventeen car parks awarded a Park Mark award also received Disabled Parking Accreditation. This accreditation is awarded to car parks that can demonstrate they meet strict criteria, which includes the provision of disabled spaces, accessibility and clear enforcement of disabled bays. Advice has been provided as to how the other two Park Mark car parks can be adjusted to achieve the Disabled Parking Accreditation.
41. In partnership with WSCC, two Road Space Audits were commissioned for East Grinstead and Burgess Hill to respond to the changing landscapes in each town and the need for a strategic overview of on and off street parking provision. The final reports should be delivered by mid-July with the anticipation that the emerging themes will be shared with Members at autumn workshops.
42. During the year the enforcement team piloted different deployment patterns to utilise resources more efficiently. A fourth team was regularly deployed to specifically focus on rural areas. This enabled regular 'hot spots' to have a concentrated focus and the smaller rural areas with fewer restrictions to get attention. The pilot was a success and as indicated earlier in this report, a fifth enforcement vehicle will be acquired in 2018/19 to fulfil this role on a more permanent basis.

43. In March 2018, one of the CEOs received the Councils 'Make A difference' Award in recognition of excellent customer service whilst on patrol when assisting a distressed customer who had recently experienced bereavement. The award not only demonstrates the exemplary behaviour of the CEO but also demonstrates the important role that CEOs play in the community.
44. In July the Parking Team were shortlisted for a PATROL PARC award following the submission of the 2015/16 annual report. The team were awarded a Certificate of Excellence in the Outstanding Concise Report category at a presentation in the House of Commons. The PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations outside London) Joint Committee annual awards recognise the importance of information on civil enforcement processes being made available to the public.

### **Focus for 2018/19**

45. Looking forward, the focus for Parking Services in 2018/19 will be to further modernise the service by embracing digital technology, and to continue to gather evidence to inform the Parking Strategy refresh in 2020.
  - A key project for 2018/19 will be the introduction of cashless parking options into all of the Councils pay and display car parks, and the replacement of the parking disc system with an electronic parking solution at the Kings and Dolphin Leisure Centres. A phased implementation programme will take place during the summer, involving the replacement of all pay and display machines on a town-by-town basis, as follows:
    - W/c 2 July- New machines installed and new payment options launched in Haywards Heath.
    - W/c 9 July New machines installed and new payment options launched in East Grinstead.
    - W/c 6 August- New machines installed and new payment options launched in Burgess Hill.
    - W/c 3 September- Implement and launch new parking solution at Kings and Dolphin Leisure Centres.
  - The machines will continue to accept coin payments but will also accept card and contactless payments, alongside a pay by phone option.
  - WSCC will be introducing Regulation 10 enforcement from April 2018. This makes the provision for PCNs to be served by post provided there is approved evidence that a CEO has been prevented from issuing a PCN in the usual way.
  - As part of the regeneration of Burgess Hill town centre, the team will be preparing for the closure of the Martlets multi story car park in early 2019, and ensuring that a good communication plan promotes alternative parking locations.
  - A Parking Review of Haywards Heath will be undertaken during the year in conjunction with West Sussex County Council.

- As explained in Paragraph 19, in 2017/18 there was an operational enforcement surplus of £78,376.40. MSDC receive 30% of this surplus and are required to reinvest it into supporting the enforcement service. The surplus from 2017/18 is being invested in seven new tablet devices and the hire of an additional patrol vehicle to improve deployment performance and service delivery in 2018/19.

### **Financial Implications**

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

### **Risk Management Implications**

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

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

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

### **Background papers**

None