

## **PARKING SERVICES ANNUAL REVIEW 2018/19**

REPORT OF: Divisional Leader – Commercial Services & Contracts  
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Wards Affected: All MSDC Wards  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning & Economic Growth  
Date: 23 October 2019

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning & Economic Growth with an overview of Parking Services' activity in 2018/19, including information about 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 civil enforcement for both on and off street parking.
4. The provision of on-street parking and restrictions is the responsibility of West Sussex County Council (WSCC) . The Council administers the civil enforcement of on-street parking restrictions on behalf of WSCC.
5. The service also manages the administration of WSCC's Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in East Grinstead and the District Council's concessionary taxi voucher scheme for residents unable to use public transport.

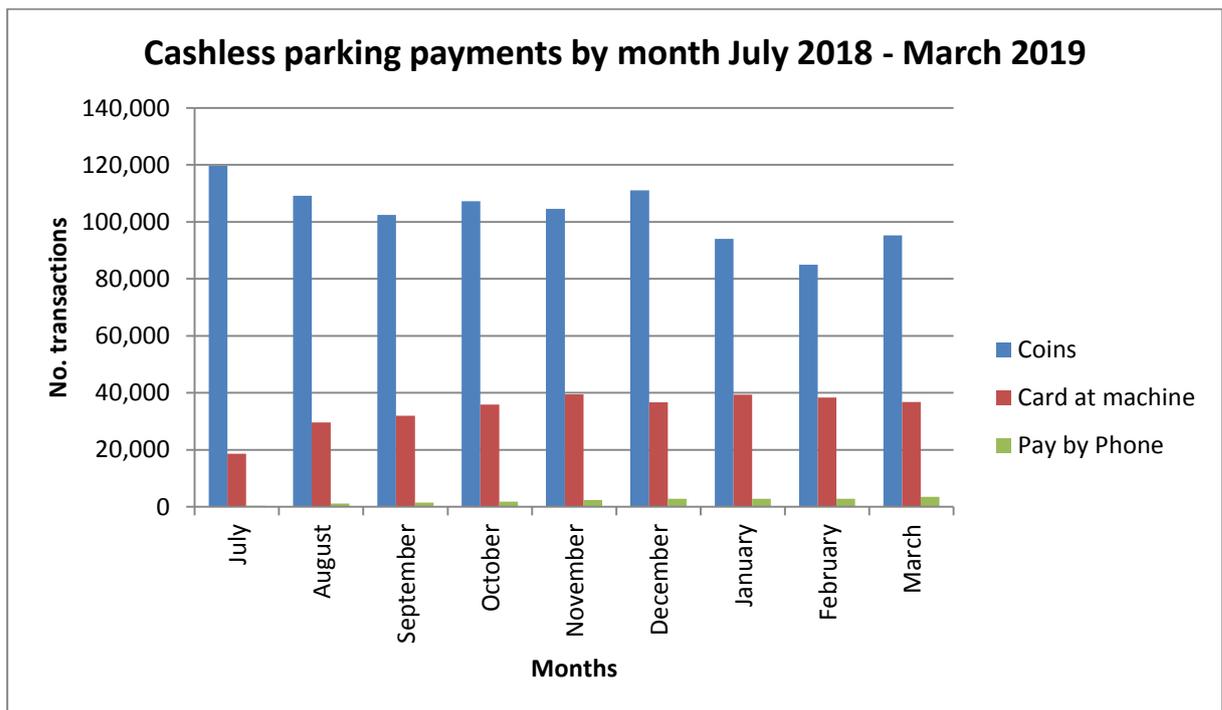
### **Service Innovation during 2018/19**

#### **Cashless parking.**

6. In 2018/19 the Council introduced cashless parking into the town centre car parks. The project was delivered over a 3 week period in July 2018.
7. This involved the Council replacing 42 pay and display machines to accept card payments. 29 machines were enabled for coin and card payments whilst the remaining 13 only accepted card payments. Every car park retained the ability to pay by cash.
8. In addition to the provision of new machines a 'pay by phone' option was also introduced. This service enabled customers to purchase a stay via telephone, app or text message in advance or to extend their stay without returning to their vehicle.

9. Between July 2018 (when the new service was introduced) and year end, 26% of all pay and display transactions were made via cashless platforms; 24.5% via cards at the machine and 1.5% via the pay by phone platform. This significantly exceeds the envisaged participation levels, and demonstrates the high customer demand for alternative payment methods to cash.
10. At the end of 2018/19, the processing charges for cashless parking were 4% of pay and display income for the Council. This matches the Council's expectation when agreeing the business case to support this service improvement.

The table below shows cashless parking payment platforms between July and March.

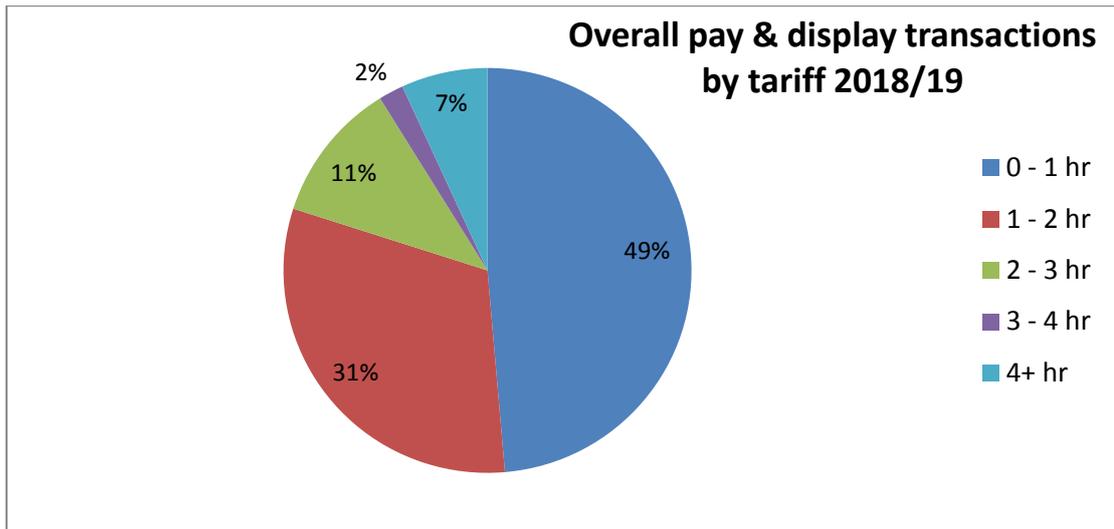


## Monitoring and performance

### Car Parks

11. The total number of pay and display transactions in town centre car parks for 2018/19 was 1,654,754. This represents a 1% decrease on the previous year which was primarily in Haywards Heath due to the loss of spaces in one car park during building works. East Grinstead and Burgess Hill performance was on par with the previous year.
12. High level analysis of pay and display transaction behaviour demonstrates that across the District, 80% of pay and display transactions related to stays of less than two hours. This demonstrates a 2% shift from 0-2hr to 4 plus hour tariffs compared to the previous year. This may be in part attributed to the introduction of cashless parking but it is too early to confirm with confidence.

The chart below highlights the breakdown of stay lengths in pay and stay transactions in 2018/19.



13. Season tickets are available in all but one (Heath Road, Haywards Heath) of the Council's eighteen long stay town centre car parks and offer a significant reduction on the daily tariff for local workers, businesses and commuters. Season Tickets accounted for 9% of parking income in 2018/19, compared to 10% the previous year. Season Ticket demand continued to grow in all three towns during the year. As at the end of March 2019, waiting lists are now in operation in all of the Haywards Heath and East Grinstead season ticket car parks, with only Burgess Hill retaining capacity in two car parks. There are approximately 372 active season tickets in operation at a time, although there will be monthly and seasonal fluctuations.
14. The car parking estate is maintained in partnership with the Council's Corporate Estate and Facilities service. Regular inspections are made to ensure they are fit for purpose and emerging health and safety and enforcement issues are addressed. There is a rolling maintenance programme and in 2018/19 £48,500 was spent on resurfacing St Wilfrid's, Haywards Heath and Christopher Road, East Grinstead car parks. In addition, reactive repairs to address wear and tear, vandalism and accidental damage are funded from the revenue budget to ensure the car park estate is fit for purpose.
15. Park Mark is a recognised industry accreditation giving confidence that car parks are well designed and safer for users. In 2018/19 four of the Districts car parks received 'Park Mark' status after inspection by the British Parking Association and Sussex Police. This brings the total number of car parks with Park Mark status to 21. As part of the ongoing programme of car park maintenance, infrastructure improvements will be identified to bring any remaining key car parks to a standard that would enable them to achieve Park Mark status. Due to the nature of some smaller, rural car parks, it may not be possible for all to achieve this benchmark status.
16. In addition to the above awards, during 2018/19, 19 of the Park Mark car parks also received for the first time Disabled Parking Accreditation from the British Parking Association. These awards recognise good parking facilities for people with disabilities and a commitment to reducing the abuse of disabled spaces.
17. 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 in the Cuckfield, Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint communities and are supplied to the retailers at cost.

18. The total income derived from pay & display and season ticket transactions in 2018/19 was £2,168,717. The yearend outturn position for the off-street parking account was £1,341,905 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 improvements to car parks, the provision of parks and open spaces, waste management and street cleaning.

## **Enforcement**

19. All civil enforcement and notice processing procedures are set out in the Traffic Management Act 2004.
20. This Council carries out 8am – 6pm, Monday to Saturday on and off street enforcement under a contract with West Sussex County Council, with occasional Sunday patrols (on-street only). This Council 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 and in 2018/19 this Council achieved 71% enforcement on street.
21. There are 11 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) deployed on shift teams to cover each town and its surrounding areas. Whilst a regular schedule of deployment is undertaken every day to key areas, the team also strives to provide an intelligence led, reactive enforcement service responding to requests made by the community.
22. During 2018/19 15,211 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued by the Council. Data available from other West Sussex Districts confirms a range of PCN issue rates of between 12,000 – 26,500 PCNs subject to the local authority and their enforcement operations.
23. Of the PCNs issued in Mid Sussex during 2018/19, 32 appeals (0.21% of total PCNs issued) were taken to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT) for a decision by an Independent Adjudicator. During the year 18 (56%) of the 32 cases were allowed by the adjudicator. Comparative data with other West Sussex authorities shows that between 0.17% – 0.32% was the average number of cases taken to TPT and between 36% - 59% were allowed by the Adjudicator.
24. Mid Sussex District Council submitted an annual report to PATROL PARC (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London, Parking Annual Reports by Councils). Local Authorities are encouraged to submit reports to show transparency in civil parking and traffic enforcement activities. The principle function of PATROL is to make provision for independent adjudication in respect of appeals against PCNs.
25. The services of Euro Parking Collections (EPC) are engaged to trace unpaid PCN fines issued to foreign vehicles. Working across most European countries, EPC have successfully managed to close 2 cases out of the 82 referred to them by Mid Sussex, with 44 returned as unable to trace. Whilst this is a small collection rate, these debts would otherwise been written off. This demonstrates a zero tolerance policy in Mid Sussex. Adur & Worthing are the only other Council in West Sussex to use EPC.

26. The on and off street enforcement budget is ring fenced. In 2018/19 there was an operational surplus of £46,307. This was lower than previous years due to a technical issue with the Traffic Enforcement Centre, which temporarily prevented the advancement of debt recovery to the courts in this period. MSDC receive 30% of the surplus which is required to be reinvested into enforcement. The £13,892 retained by this Council will be used to replace end of life Body Worn Cameras for the CEO team.
27. The previous year's enforcement surplus of £23k was invested in a new enforcement vehicle to facilitate new deployment patterns, and in iPads for the enforcement team to improve access to online resources to support enforcement.
28. This Council continues to work with WSCC to carry out remedial work to faulted on-street lines and signs across the District that prevent enforcement. In 2018/19, works in Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead were carried out to ensure the areas remained enforceable. An annual rolling programme of remedial repairs is developed with WSCC who fund these works.
29. During 2018/19 the enforcement team worked alongside WSCC and officers from the Brighton Operation Bluebird team to crackdown on Blue Badge misuse in the District. A total of 5 cases were sent to prosecution for misuse – including one case resulting in a conviction and £6500 fine; 13 cases were required to attend a Community Resolution Order with a £40 fine and 7 Blue Badges were destroyed.
30. Enforcement Agents are required to comply with the Ministry of Justice Taking Control of National Goods standards. The Council employs two Enforcement Agents to recover unpaid fines as a result of PCNs. During 2018/19 the Enforcement Agents recovered a combined total of £35,847, which equates to 43% of the enforcement contract bad debt. Comparable data with West Sussex District Councils in West Sussex demonstrates that between 25 – 45% is an average recovery rate. No formal complaints were investigated regarding the behaviour of the Enforcement Agents during the year.

### **Controlled Parking Zone**

31. 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 prices and restrictions are implemented and managed by WSCC. All income generated from the sale of permits is returned directly to WSCC.
32. As at the end of March 2019, a total of 744 active permits were issued in both Zones A and B of the CPZ. This is a small increase on the previous year resulting in 5% combined capacity remaining across both zones. WSCC guidance is to include a 10% surplus margin leaving total remaining capacity at 15%. It is acknowledged that specific streets in the immediate vicinity of the town centre are facing capacity issues.

### **Supporting the Community**

33. 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.

34. 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.
35. The team continued to support the West Sussex School Safety team 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 Council car parks, during drop off / pick up times to reduce cars parking on the highway.

### **Taxi Vouchers**

36. The Council has administers the discretionary taxi voucher service which 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.
37. There are currently 19 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.
38. At the end of March 2019, there were 116 active customers using the scheme, at a total cost of £3025.
39. Mid Sussex is the only West Sussex Council to continue to offer this discretionary service.

### **Focus for 2019/20**

40. Looking forward, the focus for the Council in 2019/20 is to refresh the Parking Strategy.

Key work areas will be:

- Commission the Haywards Heath Parking Study in partnership with WSCC to provide an evidence base for the current provision of on and off street parking within the town. This will also inform the Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan and Orchards Shopping Centre Masterplan.
- Develop the Parking Strategy refresh to provide a strategic direction and policy to support sustainable and economic growth across the District up to 2031, with a five year action plan.
- To consider any implications for the Council arising from the West Sussex County Council Civil Parking Enforcement Contract review.
- Continuing to utilise digital technology to improve the customer experience by phasing season ticket management to a virtual platform.

**Financial Implications**

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

**Risk Management Implications**

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

**Equality and Customer Service Implications**

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

**Background papers**

None