

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Annual Parking Report 2011/12

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If you have any questions about this report please contact the Parking Services team

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Cheshire West and Chester Council
The Forum
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CH1 2HS

Cheshire West and Chester Council is a member of the British Parking Association.

1.0 Introduction

This report provides information for the period 01 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 on civil parking enforcement activity carried out by Cheshire West and Chester Council. The enforcement of parking restrictions both in the street and 'off street' in Council operated car parks is included. The Police have responsibility for parking enforcement in the former Vale Royal area so detail of this enforcement activity is not included.

1.1 Why have parking enforcement?

Enforcement helps in a variety of ways to improve our Borough. This includes:

Keeping communities safe

Enforcement keeps specific areas (such as busy junctions) traffic free and so it helps to reduce the risk of accidents. Enforcement can also help in special areas such as outside schools where 'keep clear' zones protect children and parents.

Improving accessibility and fairness

Enforcement tackles the abuse of parking spaces including where motorists park in a disabled bay even though they have no blue badge. Enforcement is also used to ensure that residents' parking schemes are adhered to, so helping local communities.

Reducing congestion

By discouraging inconsiderate and disruptive parking enforcement activity helps to keep roads clear and traffic flows smoothly. This means that journey times are more predictable and road-based public transport is more reliable.

Supporting the local economy

Parking enforcement minimises congestion so helping local businesses who might otherwise experience delays with deliveries. By encouraging the turnover of spaces, enforcement also ensures that where appropriate the same space can be used by a high number of different vehicles. This increases the likelihood of customers to local shops being able to find a space to park.

1.2 What is civil parking enforcement?

Councils may obtain powers to carry out parking enforcement instead of the Police by making an application to the Department for Transport. The purpose of allowing Councils to carry out enforcement is to free-up Police resources so that they can be used to address serious, criminal offences. The Police retain powers to take action against dangerous and obstructive parking, but the local Council has the responsibility for enforcing general, parking restrictions.

1.3 How does civil parking enforcement work?

Parking restrictions are introduced through legal orders and road markings and signs provide information to motorists of the restrictions. If a vehicle is parked in breach of a restriction a 'Penalty Charge Notice' can be issued by a civil enforcement officer (this officer is employed by the local Council).

The Penalty Charge Notice is usually placed on the vehicle and contains details of the breach and how a motorist can respond e.g. by making the required payment or by contesting the Notice. The fine issued depends on the category of breach that has taken place – either a 'lower' or 'higher' breach. These categories are determined nationally. Currently the penalty for a 'lower' breach is £50 and for a 'higher' breach is £70.

The civil parking enforcement process - from the issuing of a Penalty Charge Notice to appealing against a Notice - is set out in law. The process includes the length of time during which a motorist should either pay or appeal.



Civil enforcement officers are not allowed to cancel a Penalty Charge Notice. This is to ensure that an Officer is not open to accusations of favouritism, inconsistency or bribery. Any requests to cancel a Penalty Charge Notice are dealt with by the Team Leader for Parking. The Team Leader considers the circumstances and applies the principles set out in the Council's parking enforcement guidance.

2.0 Parking provision

To help ensure that the best use is made of available space restrictions are also placed on a number of the car parks owned by the Council. The restrictions help discourage inconsiderate parking (such as blocking another vehicle in a space), and penalise the abuse of disabled spaces by those who do not hold a Blue Badge.



Park Mark for safer car parks

Ten of the car parks continue to hold a national award for safer parking known as the 'Park Mark' award. This award demonstrates that the car park has been vetted by the Police and judged to have measures in place which create a safer environment for users of the car park and their vehicles.

Improvements

The Council is committed to improving the quality of its parking facilities. An improvement programme first commenced in 2010 continued throughout 2011/12 and resulted in investment of more than £225,000 as car park surfaces were replenished, bays remarked, lighting improved and customer information signs were updated.



Policy Development

A new policy was developed and implemented during the year for Residents' Parking Schemes. The purpose of the policy is to set out the framework for the introduction of a new scheme. This includes the circumstances when a scheme can help resolve parking problems.¹

New initiatives

A trial of payment by phone for parking took place at Gorse Stacks car park, Chester. The trial ran for three months and the information obtained during the trial (including customer feedback) will be used to determine whether this payment method should be introduced on a permanent basis to car parks in the Borough. During 2011 a new on-line reporting form was introduced by Cheshire West and Chester's parking team to make it easier for residents to report parking concerns.

¹ Copies of the Residents Parking Scheme information booklet are available from the Parking Services team. Please see refer to page 1 for contact details.

3.0 Facts and Figures

Penalty Charge Notices

The table below provides detail of the Penalty Charge Notices and cancellations given during 2011/12

	On street	Off street	Total	as a percentage of all PCNs issued
Number of Higher Level PCNs Issued	7,125	1,494	8,619	41.1%
Number of Lower Level PCNS Issued	8,286	4,049	12,335	58.9%
Total	15,411	5,543	20,954	
Number of PCNs paid	12,086	3,403	15,489	73.9%
Number of PCNs paid at discount rate	8,533	2,545	11,078	52.9%
Number of PCNs against which an informal or formal representation was made	3099	2395	5494	26.2%
Number of PCNs cancelled as a result of an informal or a formal representation	1,824	1,706	3,530	16.9%
Number of PCNs written off for other reasons (e.g. officer error or driver untraceable)	390	138	528	2.5%
Number of vehicles immobilised	N/A – the Council does not immobilise vehicles			
Number of vehicles removed	N/A – the Council does not remove vehicles			

Note - Cancellation figures detail all penalties cancelled during 2011/12 and may therefore include details of cancellations of penalties issued in previous years.

Cancellations

During 2011/12 the Council cancelled 3,530 Penalty Charge Notices (this equates to 16.9% of Notices). The most common reason for cancelling a Penalty Charge Notice was failure to display a blue badge where the holder subsequently produced a valid blue badge. To help address this recurring problem all new blue badge applicants and blue badge holders who renew through Cheshire West and Chester Council receive an information booklet which emphasises the importance of displaying a badge correctly and clearly.

Appeals

If a vehicle keeper believes that there is a valid reason for cancelling a Penalty Charge Notice they may make a representation to the Council. If the Council does not consider there to be valid grounds for a cancellation (and so rejects the representation) vehicle keepers may choose to progress an appeal to an independent adjudicator at a Traffic Penalty Tribunal. The adjudicator considers the facts of a case and decides whether to allow an appeal. (More information about the Traffic Penalty Tribunal including grounds of appeal is available on their website: www.trafficpenaltytribunal.gov.uk)

In total 50 appeals of the 20,954 Penalty Charge Notices issued during 2011/12 were lodged with the Traffic Penalty Tribunal. This represents 0.24 % of cases (by way of comparison the national rate of appeal is 0.34%²).

Results at Traffic Penalty Tribunal

Ten of the appeals were allowed by the Traffic Penalty Tribunal and 18 were disallowed (i.e. the Adjudicator found in the Council's favour). The remaining 22 were not contested at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal stage. New evidence often comes to light at this part of the appeals process and it is not uncommon for Councils to decide not to contest a case.

² Annual Statistics of the Traffic Penalty Tribunal

Income and expenditure

The income and expenditure account comprises income received from Penalty Charge Notices and permit fees less expenditure on enforcement and debt recovery costs. In 2011/12, 85 % of the costs of enforcement were met by income. In other words no surplus was generated.

Table 2 - Income and Expenditure Account			
Income	On street	Off street	Total
Penalty Charge Notices	£450,304	£114,706	£565,010
Residents Parking Permits	£25,212	0	£25,212
Dispensation Permits	£8,331	0	£8,331
Sub-total	£483,847	£114,706	£598,553
Expenditure			
	Staffing		£637,036
	Transport		£3,093
	ICT & stationery		£46,624
	External professional services		£15,000
Sub-total			£701,753
Total			-£103,200

4.0 Glossary of terms

Blue Badge	The Blue Badge Scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport. The badge enables holders to park close to where they need to go. The scheme operates throughout the UK, and is administered by local authorities who deal with applications and issue badges. Cheshire West and Chester Council blue badge team can be contacted on 0300 123 7040 or by email enquiries@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
CEO	Civil Enforcement Officer. An Officer authorised to carry out enforcement of parking restrictions in a Civil Parking Enforcement area.
CPE	Civil Parking Enforcement. Description of parking enforcement when carried out by Local Authorities who have been granted powers to carry out enforcement rather than the Police.
Park Mark	An award which is presented to car parks which have been vetted by the Police and which have been found to have measures in place to create a safer environment for users of the car park and their vehicles.
PCN	Penalty Charge Notice (sometimes referred to as a 'parking ticket') issued to vehicles when the vehicle is parked in breach of a parking restrictions.
TPT	Traffic Penalty Tribunal. Independent tribunal appeals for motorists and vehicle owners.

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille, Large Print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

إذا أردت المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، نرجو أن تطلب ذلك منا.

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

Pokud byste požadovali informace v jiném jazyce nebo formátu, kontaktujte nás

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Türkçe bilgi almak istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

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