

Parking Annual Report 01/04/2014 – 31/03/2015



Introduction

1. Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) places the responsibility for enforcing on-street parking restrictions, in addition to off-street car parks with the Council rather than the police. The Council operates its parking enforcement service under the provisions of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA).

The regulations made under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 enable a Local Authority in England, provided it has been given the relevant power by the Secretary of State, to enforce parking contraventions within a particular geographical area and to enforce other contraventions such as double parking and parking across a dropped footway within a Special Enforcement Area. Darlington Borough Council is operating CPE for both on street and off street contraventions in both areas covering the entire Borough area with the exception of the trunk roads (A1(M) and A66) these remain the responsibility of the Highways England.

This report will provide an account of parking enforcement activity in Darlington between 01st April 2014 and 31st March 2015

Civil Parking Enforcement in Darlington

- 2 From the 31st December 2010 the Council has been operating decriminalised parking enforcement (CPE). Our objectives for CPE are compatible with our Local Transport Plan as follows:-
 - To reduce congestion and ensure expeditious movement of all road traffic
 - To improve air quality and the local environment
 - To maximise safety and reduce accidents
 - To support economic regeneration
 - To comply with the council's Parking Management Strategy
3. CPE is a key component of effective traffic management and improving traffic flow. The integration of enforcement and parking policy should provide better monitoring of the effectiveness and value of parking controls, so that parking provision becomes more responsive to the public's needs. Poor, dangerous, and obstructive parking can pose a danger to pedestrians by blocking pavements and forcing them onto the roads. It also reduces visibility for other motorists and impedes traffic flow. Through CPE all residents, visitors, schools and businesses will benefit from better enforcement of parking regulations and the reduction of incorrectly parked vehicles.
4. CPE transfers the responsibility for enforcing on street parking restrictions (such as double yellow lines, no loading restrictions etc), to the Council rather than the Police. This is in addition to on and off street parking enforcement (car parks, residents parking areas etc) which was carried out by the Council and was ultimately dealt with through the magistrates courts as a criminal matter prior to CPE.
5. Enforcement is carried out by an in-house team of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs). Civil Enforcement Officers do not have discretion and work within a stringent set of guidelines governed by the Traffic Management Act. CEOs

will at the time of issuing a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) make notes and take photographic evidence to substantiate the reason for the issue. This will be used by the back office processing staff if a challenge is received.

6. The Council does not set PCN issue targets for our CEOs and they do not receive any financial gain based on the number of PCNs issued.
7. Income from PCNs is used to finance the enforcement and adjudication systems. Any on-street surpluses (including ticket sales) must be used only for the purposes set out in Section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984. The Council is required to keep separate accounts of parking income from on-street and off street parking bays. Any surplus from off street ticket sales can be used for investment in the Council's transport and environmental policies and to promote Local Transport Plan objectives.

Parking Initiatives, projects and Improvements

8. The following initiatives, projects and improvements have either been started/completed or have been ongoing from previous year:
 - A. Inner Ring Road Stonebridge Junction Improvement
 - B. Feethams Multi Storey Car Park construction - 650 space pay on exit car park
 - C. Sugarhill Park Cycleway - Safer route to school in partnership with sugar hill park(cockerton)
 - D. Central Park South Junction
 - E. Central park link road – to provide a link between Yarm and Haughton Rd
 - F. Commercial St Car Park Improvement. – Resurface/Remodelling parking bays
 - G. Kendrew St Car Park Improvement - Resurface/Remodelling parking bays
 - H. Archer St Car Park Improvement - Resurface/Remodelling parking bays
 - I. Winston St Car Park Improvement - Resurface/Remodelling parking bays
 - K. Feethams Bus and Coach Facilities
 - L. Speed Limit Review of A and B Class Roads
 - M. Grange Road increased from 2hr to 3hr maximum stay at request of business proprietors
 - N. Observation period increased from 5 to 10 minutes for on street parking
 - O. 12, 6 & 3 Month Trader parking permits introduced for local tradesman to purchase
 - P. 3 for 2 hourly parking offer introduced on all car parks
 - Q. Reduction in tariff on several council long stay car parks to 50p an hour

Structure

9. Responsibility for Parking in Darlington is split between 4 teams within 2 departments:
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A	Team	Officers	Department
	Parking Strategy & Commissioning	1x Head of Service 1x Principal Policy Officer 1x Transport Officer	Economic

Responsible for:

Car Parking Strategy

B	Team	Officers	Department
	Highway Network Management	1x Traffic Manager 1x Traffic Management Engineer 1x Traffic Management Technician	Place
	Legal Services	1x Principal Legal Assistant	Resources

Responsible for:

Statutory Highway Network Management Duty

Consideration and prioritisation of requests for new or amended restrictions
Preparation of processing of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

Exemptions, waivers and permissions

Maintenance of signing and lining associated with restrictions

Maintenance of car parks

C	Team	Officers	Department
	Parking Processing & Parking Enforcement	1x Licensing, Parking, Trading Standards & CCTV Manager 1x Processing Appeals Co-Ordinator	Economic

1x Parking Enforcement Co-Ordinator
1x Parking Processing Officer
1x Parking Processing Assistant
2x Civil Enforcement Supervisors
6x Full Time equivalent CEOs

Responsible for:

Civil Parking Operational Enforcement

Management of day to day operation of all pay and display machines

Penalty Charge Notice Appeals

Bailiff Enforcement – Unpaid PCNs

Management of Cash Collections from pay and display machines

Preparation of cases for consideration by independent adjudicator (Traffic Penalty Tribunal)

Freedom of information requests

Management of Resident, Staff and Contract Parking Permits

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10. The management and back office appeals and processing staff deal with all correspondence from the first informal challenge to a PCN being registered with bailiff. All back office staff have received full training and have obtained City & Guilds qualifications in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004. Staff who deal with penalty notice representations refer to a published framework which provides guidance so that each representation is considered on its own merits. These procedures are published on the Council website and can be viewed at

<http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Transport/carparking/carparking.htm>

11. The Council currently employ 8 full time equivalent CEOs (including 2 Senior CEOs) who patrol borough wide 7 days a week. All CEOs shadow a more experienced staff member as part of their training to familiarise themselves with the responsibilities of the role. This will continue until management are satisfied that they are competent to patrol alone. All CEOs have or are working towards a City and Guilds Level 2 qualification in Parking Enforcement.

12. CEOs are equipped with mobile radios to keep in constant contact with the back office and each other. They also wear video cameras on their person to record live footage, to assist with health and safety and challenges against PCNs
13. The CEOs follow enforcement procedures which are included in the published framework on the Council website and can be viewed at:

<http://www.darlington.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/car-parking/>

Locations and Spaces

14. Darlington Council owns, operates and regulates 19 pay and display car parks there are also a number of privately operated car parks in the Town Centre. In Feb 2015 Beaumont St North car park was closed for the construction of the multi storey car park. The Department of Education office block now situated on what was the town hall car park opened in Jan 2015, and the remaining car parking area was reopened to the public in April 2015. Between 01st April 2014 and 31st March 2015 1.1 million pay and display tickets were purchased within the Council owned car parks, which shows a drop in usage to the previous year. However this is explained by closure of two of our busiest car parks (Town Hall and Beaumont St north). There are designated disabled spaces in 90% of council operated car parks. Vehicles displaying valid disabled badges can park in any marked bay. Car Park Locations/Number of Spaces can be viewed at:

<http://www.darlington.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/car-parking/car-parks-and-charges/>

15. There are 298 On Street pay and display spaces which are restricted to a maximum stay of 2 hours with no return within an hour. This is to support turnover in the streets so there are available spaces for visitors to local businesses. **See Appendix 1**
16. The Council has 3 permit holder contract parking areas. 2 are open to local business to serve operational parking needs. Four Riggs, located on Bondgate and Beaumont Street West located on Beaumont Street. The 3rd Winston West located on Winston Street is a business car park rented to the local PCT trust.
17. **Appendix 2** shows the recorded levels of car crime within Darlington car parks for 2007 – 2014.

Disabled Parking

18. The Council provides designated disabled spaces within most of our car parks. Disabled badge holders can park for 3 hours free within a Short Stay car park and they can park all day for free within a Long Stay Car Park.
19. Disabled badge holders may currently park without charge and without limit in all On Street pay and display areas.
20. Darlington Shopmobility is located in the Market Square in the centre of the town (opposite the Town Hall). Shopmobility provides a hiring service to the public for scooters and wheelchairs. Shopmobility also has a small dedicated parking area at the Town Hall.

Residents Parking

21. There are 15 Resident Permit Zones within the Borough of Darlington. Parking is restricted to permit holders 8am to 6pm Monday to Sunday. Out of the 15 zones, 11 require payment for a residents permit and 4 are designated free zones due to parking congestion being created after the construction of the college and football stadium. Charges for permits are currently 12 Months £40, 6 Months £24 and 3 month (temporary permit) £18. In total there are 1509 resident permit spaces. Income received for 2014-2015 is **£42769**

Trader permits were introduced in July 2014. Charges for permits are currently 12 months £150, 6 Months £90 and £50 13 week permit (for long term jobs on a single property). The scheme has proved popular with 31 permits being issued. This permit enables tradesman to park in restricted parking areas when carrying out work, the permit does NOT allow parking in disabled parking bays, or no waiting/loading bans and car parks. Income received for 2014 – 2015 is **£2,790**.

Tradesmen can also purchase 24hr parking waivers from the council for when they need to park in a restricted area, the charge is £5 per 24hrs. Income received for 2014-2015 is **£13,010**

Performance

22. Civil Parking Enforcement commenced on the 31st December 2010 within the borough of Darlington. Differential penalty charge levels which are set nationally were introduced. A higher level of £70.00 (reduced to £35.00 if paid within 14 days) is levied for more serious parking contraventions i.e. no waiting/loading areas, bus stop clearways etc. A lower level of £50.00 (reduced to £25.00 if paid within 14 days) is levied for lesser contraventions i.e. parked after ticket expired, not displaying a valid ticket etc.
23. Between 01st April 2014 and 31st March 2015 Civil Enforcement Officers issued 14,083 Penalty Charge notices. This figure is lower compared to previous years, which suggests this is due to improved compliance by motorists. We are hopeful this trend will continue each year.

Appendix 3 shows the number of penalty charge notice appeals received between 01st April 2014 and 31st March 2015. This has been broken down into appeals which were allowed (cancelled, no payment) rejected (payment required) cases at TPT (Traffic Penalty Tribunal) (drivers have the option to have their appeal heard by an independent adjudicator) and penalty notices referred to bailiff.

24. **Appendix 4** shows the income received from penalty charge notices as of 24/06/2015 between 01st April 2014 and 31st March 2015.
25. **Appendix 5** shows the breakdown of the Council's total expenditure on Civil Parking which is £5,383,194.
26. The Traffic Management Act 2004 (part 6) requires that all income from Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) (including RPZs) should not exceed the cost of running the service. For Darlington in 2013/2014 the outturn position was: Income £2,497,980 see **Appendix 6**

Lessons Learned

27. We continue to learn from the outcome of appeals from the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT) and where the TPT has ruled against us we apply this learning to future cases e.g. where a TPT decision noted that our signage may appear to be confusing or inadequate this information will be forwarded onto our transport policy team to investigate/resolve.

The Way Forward

28. Work is ongoing on the new cinema/restaurant complex coupled with a brand new multi storey car park. This will be a huge development in Darlington and will transform the town centre. The new car park will be pay on exit which will ensure that motorists are not penalised for overstays. Works are expected to be completed summer 2016.

We continue to strive for a reduction in penalty notice numbers by encouraging increased compliance from motorists. For example, we have produced a leaflet for schools to distribute to parents advising of the danger of parking on school keep clear markings.

Appendix 1 – Council On Street Spaces

On Street	Spaces	On Street	Spaces
Beaumont Street	16	Raby Street	2
Grange Road	38	Primrose St	5
Northumberland St	14	Powlett St	12
South Arden St	4	Larchfield St	10
Winston Street	25	West Powlett St	2
Barnard Street	13	Gladstone St	37
Duke Street	34	North Lodge Tce	6
Napier Street	8	Kendrew St	7
Kendrew Street	7	Victoria Embank	9
Park Place	24	Victoria Road	7
Hargreave Terrace	13	Swan Street	5

Appendix 2 – Recorded Car Crime Levels

Car Park	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abbotts Yard	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Archer Street	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0
Barnard Street	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Beaumont Street	2	2	0	0	1	1	2	1
Commercial Street	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1
Crown Street	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Street	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Garden Street	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kendrew/Gladstone Street	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	1
Market Place	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Park Place	3	0	1	0	0	1	5	0
St Hildas	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Town Hall	3	1	0	5	0	0	0	0
Total	23	4	6	5	6	6	16	5

Appendix 3 – Penalty Charge Notices Appeals, Tribunal and Bailiff

Motorists have 2 opportunities' to lodge a written appeal against a PCN. Each appeal received is recorded against the PCN. The actual number of appeals allowed and rejected will always be lower than the number of appeals received

Month	Apr 14	May 14	Jun 14	Jul 14	Aug 14	Sep 14	Oct 14	Nov 14	Dec 14	Jan 15	Feb 15	Mar 15	Total
PCNs Issued	1227	1205	1299	1098	1061	1226	1448	1320	1378	1029	840	952	14083
Appeals Received	482	395	439	498	397	428	502	427	527	475	329	408	5307
Appeals Allowed	208	163	179	229	163	197	227	193	221	213	126	172	2291
Appeals Rejected	103	109	104	108	80	108	113	100	120	78	59	76	1158
Successful TPT Cases						3							3
Unsuccessful TPT Cases	2	2											4

Month	Apr 13	May 13	Jun 13	Jul 13	Aug 13	Sep 13	Oct 13	Nov 13	Dec 13	Jan 14	Feb 14	Mar 14	Total
PCNs Issued	1541	1580	1421	1232	1102	1070	1137	1235	1347	1273	1300	1364	15602
Appeals Received	632	583	561	551	485	323	480	416	484	573	515	494	6097
Appeals Allowed	299	240	233	217	194	166	167	163	166	257	221	218	2471
Appeals Rejected	128	162	141	244	111	97	107	126	141	148	113	94	1612
Successful TPT Cases	4			2				2		2			10
Unsuccessful TPT Cases				2					1				3

Appendix 4 PCN Income Levels - Current and Previous Year Totals

Month	Income
Apr 14	28420
May 14	30763
Jun 14	30437
Jul 14	24796
Aug 14	24934
Sep 14	26078
Oct 14	32580
Nov 14	29854
Dec 14	30232
Jan 15	23201
Feb 15	18307
Mar 15	19787
Total	£319,389

Month	Income
Apr 13	£37403
May 13	£39334
Jun 13	£35104
Jul 13	£28979
Aug 13	£26150
Sep 13	£23917
Oct 13	£27039
Nov 13	£30162
Dec 13	£32675
Jan 14	£28285
Feb 14	£29195
Mar 14	£29554
Total	£367,797

Appendix 5 Expenditure - Current and Previous Year Totals

Description	2014/2015	2013/2014
Car Parks Repairs/Maintenance, Highway Maintenance, Road Lighting Maintenance, Traffic Management, Bridge Maintenance	£4,437,601	£4,452,703
Salaries & other officer costs - Parking Enforcement, Parking Processing & Transport Policy (including overhead costs)	£287,620	£251,190
Legal Fees – Publications (including Traffic Regulation Orders)	£23,859	£29,838
Civil Parking Enforcement – prudential borrowing	£27,780	£23,302
Other Supplies & Services e.g. telephone costs/printing/clothing/machine collections / machine maintenance/equipment/stationary/subscriptions/advertising	£63,369	£60,157
Appeal Processing Costs (DVLA, PATROL & HMCTS)	£16,990	£16,569
Transport (Van Leasing/Mileage/Fuel etc)	£4557	£4392
ICT Hardware, Software & Training, Maintenance, Equipment	£27,417	£14,633
Employee Training & Security Check	£731	£1599
Support Services from other departments	£93,032	£89,371
Building Costs & Security	£44,929	£65,218
Other (Provision for Bad Debt/Capital Charges)	£355,309	£383,084
Total	£5,383,194	£5,391,956

Appendix 6 Income - Current and Previous Year Totals

Description	2014/2015	2013/2014
Penalty Notice Payments	£319,389	£367,797
Resident Permit Payments	£42,769	£41,005
Income from Off street pay and display machines (including pay by phone)	£1,849,174	£1,827,797
Income from On Street pay and display machines	£244,532	£379,115
Daily/Weekly Parking Waivers for Tradesman	£13,010	£11,196
Parking Permits for Tradesman i.e. 12/6/3 months	£2790	N/A
PCN debt recovered by bailiff enforcement	£25,199	£31,523
Total	£2,496,863	£2,658,433