

# PATROL UPDATE

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## Cllr Jamie Macrae - Welcome to PATROL

Welcome to the second edition of the newsletter. It is over 12 months now since the The Traffic Penalty Tribunal and PATROL moved its premises to Wilmslow and developments continues apace.

During 2013/14 a number of new councils commenced enforcement and became members of the Joint Committee: North Yorkshire and the districts of Hambleton, Craven, Richmondshire, Ryedale and Selby; Worcestershire with Bromgrove and Malvern Hills and Flintshire Council.

A number of bus lane councils also joined: Nottinghamshire County Council, Kent County Council, City of York Council and Birmingham City Council.

During the year the Tribunal appointed 14 new adjudicators based across England and Wales. Adjudicators are independent solicitors and barristers who decide on appeals against penalty charge notices issued by local authorities.

Last July the Chief Adjudicator and Head of Service gave evidence to the Transport Select Committee enquiry into local authority parking enforcement. Responses have also been made to the Department for Transport local authority parking and signs consultations.

Looking forward, the tribunal is preparing to widen its jurisdiction with the introduction of appeals against moving traffic enforcement in Cardiff, against road user charging at the Dartford River Crossing and in Durham.

In this edition, the tribunal explains how its transformation of the appeals process through the introduction of a new on-line appeals portal will improve the user experience.

## Issue Highlights

### New Enforcement

Changes for Cardiff and Durham Council as well as the Highways Agency - Dartford River Crossing

### System BECK

Development continues on the tribunal's appeals portal

### Road Sign Consultation

PATROL and TPT respond to the Government Traffic Signs consultation

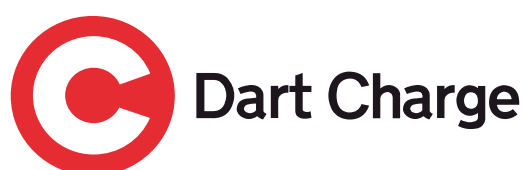
### Parking Report Awards

Why your council should produce a report

### Executive Appointments

Appointments to the PATROL Executive Sub-Committee

## New Areas of Enforcement



### Dart Charge

The Traffic Penalty Tribunal will be providing independent adjudication for penalty charge notices issued by the Highways Agency beginning this Autumn.

This coincides with the introduction of a new scheme to ease congestion at the Dartford-Thurrock Rover Crossing.

A new free-flow scheme will replace the existing barriers with drivers required to pay online, by text, or at one of a number of retail outlets.

The new signage will carry the 'Dart Charge' identity which will appear at places where people can set up an account or pay, or where they can find out more information, as well as on the road signs.

From May 2014, drivers will receive advice with their road tax reminders about the upcoming changes to the way they will pay the charge from October.

This is part of a wider public information campaign which aims to inform Crossing users about the introduction of remote payment and what they will need to do.

Further information is available on the PATROL website.



Cardiff will become the first council in England (powers not yet adopted) or Wales to enforce bus lanes and moving traffic contraventions under the Traffic Management Act 2004. The tribunal will be providing adjudication.



The tribunal will also be providing adjudication for penalties issued in Durhams Congestion Charging Zone.

## BECK Roll-out

- **September 2014**  
Brighton & Hove City Council
- **October 2014**  
Highways Agency - Dartford River Crossing
- **November 2014**  
Durham Council - Congestion Charging
- **January - March 2015**  
Pathfinder Parking and Bus Lane Councils
- **April 2015 onwards**  
Wider roll-out to councils

## System BECK

The Traffic Penalty Tribunal provides independent adjudication to over 300 councils in England and Wales in respect of civil parking and bus lane enforcement.

The tribunal and many councils already embrace digital case files and electronic document delivery. The natural next step is to adopt a 'digital by default' strategy which will transform the handling of appeals to improve the user experience for both the appellants and councils through the introduction of a web based appeals portal - BECK (Best Evidence Cloud Knowledge).

### Key features of BECK include:

- Appeals submitted online
- Validation of appeals by respondent councils
- Evidence submitted online by both parties who may each comment on evidence
- A council dashboard to manage cases
- All parties and the adjudicator can view evidence online
- Instant messaging and directions
- Decisions presented online to both parties
- BECK will be accessible on smart phones, tablets, laptops and PCs

### Guidance

BECK will guide users through the process and provide a one-stop, self-service appeal portal which will replace the existing paper appeal form. For the tribunal it will mean less focus on data entry and document scanning and more time for customer service, particularly for those who are unable or unwilling to engage digitally or who need support and guidance through the process. The tribunal will also provide guidance to the councils to ensure that they are able to use the portal effectively.

### Beyond the technology

BECK is made possible through the combination of technology, design and content. The project has been built upon a fundamental review of business processes which will see the removal of the paper appeal form by councils (with consequent savings in printing and postage costs) and the deferral of the appellant request for a hearing until the council evidence has been received, with the aim of having fewer 'no shows' at hearings.

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# PATROL

Parking And Traffic Regulations Outside London

## Government Traffic Signs Consultation

*"Great Britain is widely acknowledged to have one of the best traffic signing systems in the world."*

*The signs, in use since 1964, have become instantly recognisable and a familiar part of our everyday lives."*

This statement is taken from the forward to the recent consultation on the draft Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2015.

The consultation covers a range of practical issues including illumination, sign clutter, cycle schemes, pelican crossings, signing boundaries and tourist destinations.

There are specific proposals relating to parking such as allowing changes to yellow lines restrictions to be made without an associated traffic order and removing the requirement



to complement lines with signs.

PATROL welcomes increased flexibility for councils but public understanding of what is required of them should continue to be the yardstick against which the quality of signing is measured.

Consideration must also be given to the needs of both residents and visitors with signing equally understandable to both groups.

The Joint Committee and the Adjudicators of the Traffic Penalty Tribunal have formally responded.

The Government's consultation period is now closed.

## PATROL Joint Committee 2014/15

**Chair Cllr:** Cllr Jamie Macrae

Cheshire East Council

**Vice Chair:** Cllr Mike Carver

East Hertfordshire District Council

**Assistant Vice Chair:**

Cllr Stuart Hughes

Devon County Council

**Assistant Vice Chair Wales:**

Cllr Peter Cooper

Carmarthenshire County Council

## Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee

**Chair Cllr:** Cllr Tony Page

Reading Borough Council

**Vice Chair:** Cllr Ian Davey

Brighton & Hove City Council

### Cllr Jamie Macrae talks about Parking Reports:

*"Setting out the challenges of managing local demand can result in greater understanding of what you are trying to achieve and member involvement in this is key."*

*"Some of the best reports we have seen have engaging member forewords which are used to deliver the report's key messages. An expensive, glossy report is not always the most successful but a document which engages with the local community should be the goal."*

## Parking Annual Reports 2013/14

Parking Enforcement Annual Reports help to improve local transparency

The Government has recently announced that it is taking steps to increase parking transparency with councils being required to publish how income from parking charges is being used, including the publication of a new statutory Transparency Code.

The PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) Joint Committee is one of the largest in the UK with over 300 member local authorities. Its primary purpose is to make provision for an independent tribunal to consider appeals against parking tickets - Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

PATROL has also made a commitment to improving public information on Civil Parking Enforcement, through its website, research projects and other published literature.

Earlier this year PATROL's Head of Service, Louise Hutchinson, gave evidence to the Government Transport Committee enquiry into Local Authority Parking Enforcement where she championed the Joint Committees Annual Report Award which promotes best practice in council reporting.

The Select Committee's subsequent report has called on all councils to produce an annual parking report.

### So why produce a parking annual report?

Parking enforcement is a complex issue and reporting gives an opportunity to talk about parking locally, whether that is policies, provision, challenges or statistics. It also provides councils with the opportunity for a bit of myth-busting around parking enforcement.

Press coverage of parking issues is often less than favourable for councils and I am sure all councils have heard 'You're only in it for the money' plenty of times over the years. The figures often tell a different story.

Previous winners of the PATROL Award include Brighton & Hove, Sheffield, Stoke, York and Torbay and can be found on the PATROL website.

### Worcester City & Ceredigion County Council Winners for 2012/13

This year the review group decided to give two awards; Worcester City Council won the award for the most comprehensive and in-depth annual report whilst Ceredigion County Council won the award for best short, concise, and readable report.

Chair of the Review Group, Peter Bayless, said "both of the reports were presented in a clear way with good use of photographs and tables and took the opportunity to combine detailed background information on parking policy and local arrangements with practical information to assist drivers. These reports are worthy winners of this year's award."

Andy Chinn, Parking & Enforcement Services Manager at Worcester City Council said "Our annual parking report isn't just a set of facts and figures; we have made every effort to clearly set out all the services we offer, along with open and transparent analysis of our performance," he added "We are delighted that our efforts to engage with the public have been recognised."

Ceredigion's County Council Parking Services Manager Katy Spain commented "The style and approach of the first annual Parking Report produced by Ceredigion County Council was developed with a view of making it as readable, interesting and as user friendly as possible. The report is seen as the key document that helps to promote the principles of transparency and fairness which underpin the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement in Ceredigion. With this in mind we are delighted that the report has been recognised in this way at a UK level. The Award is especially well received by members of the Parking Services Team, who work in what is often a difficult and challenging environment, and reaffirms their, and other stakeholders belief, that the approach adopted is valid and robust."

## Key Statistics

The Traffic Penalty Tribunal saw increases in Parking and Bus Lane appeals during 2013/14 in comparison to 2012/13.

### 2013/14 Appeals



15,631 Parking - up 3%

4139 Bus Lane - up 76%

99% of all appeals are acknowledged within 2 working days.

### Adjudication Hearings



61% Without Hearing

24% Telephone

16% Face to Face

During 2013/14 appellants participated in 90% of telephone hearings and 80% of face to face hearings.

Councils participated in 65% of telephone hearings compared to 49% of face to face hearings.

The average number of weeks between registration of a parking appeal and decision issued is:

- Without a Hearing (5 weeks)
- Telephone Hearings (9 weeks)
- Face to Face Hearings (13 weeks)

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