

CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Parking Enforcement Annual Report



2017/18

Purpose of Annual Report

This report is intended to explain to residents, businesses and all other interested stakeholders how the service is managed in the Borough of Christchurch and to provide information regarding its performance in the 2017/18 financial year.

The Head of the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT) and Chief Adjudicator for England and Wales has strongly encouraged local authorities to openly report on their parking services. The Traffic Management Act has gone further by making the publication of annual reports mandatory.

The TPT is an independent tribunal that oversees the operation of CPE across the country and ensures that fairness and appropriate practices are maintained. To this end the TPT has meetings and seminars and publishes bulletins and reports, provides guidance on best practice in the enforcement realm and sets standards and seeks to make improvements in service delivery.

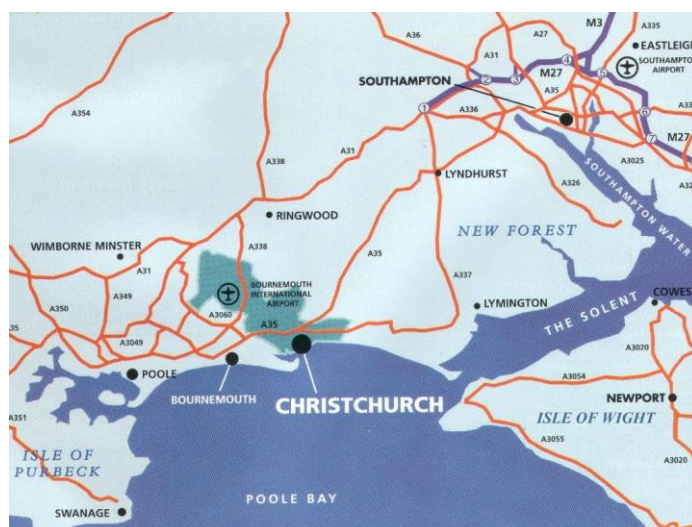
The Council recognises the need to preserve the special nature of its area, as well as the importance of tourism and the part which the car plays in personal mobility.

Although the Council has no statutory obligation to provide off street parking, it does so in order to:

- Maintain the economic viability of our town and village centres.
- Enhance accessibility to residents and visitors, particularly important in an area with relatively poor public transport links.
- Improve the safety and environment for pedestrians and motorists by providing parking off the highway.
- Reduce the environmental impact of parked vehicles by providing an alternative location other than the highway.

1. Introduction

Christchurch is a local government district which has borough status. It is the smallest of Dorset's six districts and one of the smallest boroughs in England by population. The borough was first established in 1297, but the current boundaries were created by the merger of the Municipal Borough of Christchurch with part of Ringwood and Fordingbridge Rural District in 1974. Since then it has been part of the non-metropolitan county of Dorset. It has some large rural areas including Bournemouth International Airport and the parishes of Burton and Hurn. For local elections the borough is divided into 12 wards containing 24 councilors.



Christchurch is the most easterly coastal town of Dorset. The town abuts Bournemouth to the west and is approximately 9 miles east of Poole, 20 miles west of Southampton, 23 miles south of Salisbury. The town centre lies between the rivers Avon and Stour which flow into Christchurch Harbour. The borough boundaries stretch to Hurn Forest in the north encompassing Bournemouth Airport and eastwards along the coast as far as Walkford. The River Stour forms a natural boundary to the west; the estuary, coast and harbour form the southern boundary.

The Council works in partnership with East Dorset District Council. The partnership's parking service manages off-street car parks in both council areas with a shared team of Civil Enforcement Officers.

2. Aims & Objectives of the Service

The Parking Service was established in 2003 under decriminalised arrangements with Dorset County Council as Highway Authority to ensure effective and efficient enforcement of parking regulations throughout the borough in accordance with the appropriate legislation and government guidance.

The Service aims to help deliver the Council's objectives as set out in its approved corporate, parking and transport strategies.

The Primary objectives of the service are:

- . To maintain public safety
- . To assist the free movement of traffic
- . To ensure compliance with parking regulations

The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) provide a service which is fair, consistent and transparent and one that acts as a deterrent to drivers who would normally seek to park in contravention of restrictions.

3. Christchurch Borough Council Parking Profile

3.1 Off-Street

There are a total of 22 pay and display car parks within Christchurch providing 3,300 spaces.

There are also other car parks owned and operated by the Council – Stanpit and Riverway Recreation Grounds, Nea Meadows and Wingfield which are not included in "The Order". A charging regime does not apply at these locations.

3.2 On-Street

On-street parking in the borough is managed by Dorset County Council.

4. Parking Income/Expenditure

	2016/17	2017/18
Off Street	(£)	(£)
<i>Off Street Car Parks Income</i>	2,544,618	2,591,149
<i>Off Street PCN Income</i>	75,113	103,837
<i>Off Street other income (car park permits etc)</i>	264,157	275,477
<i>Off Street Expenditure</i>	940,519	913,872
<i>Off Street Surplus</i>	1,943,369	2,060,590
On Street – DCC function	(£)	(£)
<i>On Street PCN Income</i>	0	0
<i>On Street Income (residents permits)</i>	0	0
<i>On Street other income (parking dispensations)</i>	0	0
<i>On Street Expenditure</i>	0	0
<i>On Street Surplus (Deficit)</i>	0	0

4.1 Cashless Parking - RingGo system

The RingGo system has been introduced to car parks in Christchurch; RingGo is a quick, easy to use mobile phone service, which lets you pay for your parking with a credit or debit card, rather than using cash at a machine. When you park your car in an area featuring the RingGo service, you simply contact RingGo by the smartphone app, calling, SMS or on-line, and pay for your parking by phone.

4.2 Virtual Permits

The new Virtual Permit system introduced by Christchurch Borough Council has transformed efficiencies in the allocation and verification of a complex range of parking permits throughout Christchurch. It has reduced issues associated with paper-based permits. Permit applications are completed by customers on the Dorset for You website and benefit from the convenience of 24/7 accessibility and a range of online payment options. Once the permit has been confirmed, the back office records are updated instantaneously. This ensures our patrolling Civil Enforcement Officers are in possession of the most up to date data.

4.3 Section 55 Statement.

Local authorities that operate Civil Parking Enforcement are required to keep an account of all their income and expenditure in connection with their on-street charging and on-street and off-street enforcement activities. As the Council is not a highway authority, it does not have any income or expenditure in connection with on-street charging or enforcement, so the Council's parking account only includes income and expenditure relating to off-street enforcement activities.

These finances are governed by Section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This legislation sets out provisions for dealing with any deficits or surpluses in the account at the end of the financial year. Any deficit must be made good out of the authority's general fund, whilst a surplus can either be carried forward in the account to the next financial year, or it can be appropriated to the carrying out of a specific project for one of the following purposes:

- meeting costs incurred on public passenger transport services
- highway or road improvement projects
- environmental improvements
 - with environmental improvements being defined as:
 - the reduction of environmental pollution
 - improving or maintaining the appearance or amenity of
 - a road or land in the vicinity of a road
 - open land or water to which the general public has access
 - the provision of outdoor recreational facilities available to the general public without charge.

The Council's parking account (income and expenditure relating to off-street enforcement activities) operates at a deficit, which is made good from the general fund.

5. Traffic Management Act

Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) deals specifically with civil enforcement and parking contraventions. The TMA has replaced the Road Traffic Act 1991; Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) has replaced (DPE) and Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) have replaced Parking Attendants (PAs). The above was duly implemented on 31 March 2008. The introduction of the TMA has meant a number of changes for Parking Enforcement Services across the country.

The Act has introduced a number of contraventions to be managed through the civil enforcement process; these have included enforcement of:

- Bus Lane
- Dropped Kerbs
- Double Parking
- Vehicle Drive Aways (VDAs) – drivers that leave the scene before a PCN can be issued by a CEO
- Pedestrian Crossing Zigzags
- Some moving traffic contraventions e.g. failure to comply with no entry sign / failure to comply with no right or left turn

The TMA has also, and importantly, introduced a system of differential parking charges based upon the severity of the contravention committed. The higher level contraventions are charged at £70 with the lower level at £50.

The TMA 2004 requires authorities to publish, in the form of an annual report, certain financial and statistical information, which should include the following:

- Total income and expenditure of the on and off-street parking accounts.
- A breakdown of income by source e.g. pays & display, permits, PCNs etc.
- The total surplus or deficit of the on street parking account (this money is ring-fenced for use on transport or environmental projects).
- Number of PCNs issued and at what rate.
- Number of PCNs paid and at what rate.
- Number of PCNs against which formal or informal representation has been made.
- Number of PCNs cancelled.
- Number of PCNs written off.
- Number of vehicles clamped
- Number of vehicles removed

These requirements have been introduced to make parking and traffic enforcement more accountable, open and transparent.

5.1 Targeted Enforcement

From time to time targeted enforcement activities take place to deal with a problem in a specific area. Typically these can last anything from a couple of days to several weeks with the results being reviewed at the end of that period.

5.2 Civil Enforcement Officers

There are 8 enforcement posts; staff deployment is undertaken in shifts using a system of “beats” to cover areas where enforcement is carried out. All beats are patrolled as often as possible, resources allowing, but with special attention always being given to priority areas e.g. town centre.

In addition to their core duty of parking enforcement the CEOs also engage in the enforcement of environmental offences such as littering and dog fouling and take part in local ‘Education & Awareness’ campaigns in tackling these issues. CEOs provide an “eyes and ears” monitoring and reporting service to the Council and the Police on issues relevant to specific neighbourhood management initiatives.

All CEOs undertake an NVQ or City & Guilds qualification in parking enforcement within 12 months of commencing their role. This is recognised as a minimum training requirement of the Traffic Management Act. Additional training in breakaway techniques, first aid and conflict management are also undertaken on an annual basis.

5.3 Times that Orders and Charges Apply.

Off-Street parking orders apply at all times in the Council’s amenity and shoppers car parks. Details of all on and off-street. TROs can be found in the “Consolidated Off-Street Parking Places Order” (The Order) which can be viewed upon request.

Off-street TROs are reviewed annually. Occasionally interim amendments are introduced within the year.

6. Prioritisation

6.1 Review Process

The prioritisation of enforcement activity is reviewed on a monthly basis and takes into account:

- Safety
- Freedom of traffic movement
- Problem schools
- Support for major events e.g. Mundeford Lifeboat Day / Christchurch Carnival
- The cost effectiveness of enforcement
- Continued assessment of performance
- Requests from Council Members and the public

6.2 Data Analysis

The monthly review referred to above includes an assessment of data including PCN issue rates at different locations, results of specially targeted areas, requests for enforcement and complaints from members of the public. To establish the cost effectiveness of enforcement it is necessary to assess levels of non-compliance and PCN issue. The identification of any “displaced” non-compliance is also analysed.

6.3 Cancellation Policy

The council operates a cancellation policy that has been agreed by Council Members and can be viewed by the public upon request.

6.4 Performance.

Details of Penalty Charge Notices Issued (Apr-Mar)

	2016/17		2017/18	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total Issued	4,500	100	4,988	100
<i>On-Street*</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Off-Street</i>	4,500	100	4,988	100
On-Street *				
<i>No. of PCNs issued at higher rate (£70)</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>No. of PCNs issued at lower rate (£50)</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>No. of PCNs paid</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>No. of PCNs paid at discounted rate (£35 or £25)</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>No. of informal and formal representations</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>No. of PCNs cancelled</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>No. of PCNs written off</i>	0	0	0	0
Off-Street				
<i>No. of PCNs issued at higher rate (£70)</i>	501	11.2	497	9.9
<i>No. of PCNs issued at lower rate (£50)</i>	3,999	88.8	4,491	90.1
<i>No. of PCNs paid</i>	2,166	48.1	3,008	60.3
<i>No. of PCNs paid at discounted rate</i>	1,966	43.7	2,519	50.5
<i>No. of PCNs subject to challenge</i>	1,989	42.2	1,772	35.5
<i>No. of PCNs cancelled</i>	1,443	32	1,223	24.5
<i>No. of PCNs written off</i>	191	4.2	259	5.2

* On-street enforcement is carried out by Dorset County Council

7. Formal Appeals to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal

	2016/17	2017/18
<i>Number of Appeals</i>	3	9
<i>Appeals Allowed</i>	3	5
<i>Appeals Dismissed</i>	0	1
<i>Appeals not contested</i>	0	3
<i>Cases Pending</i>	0	0

8. Acknowledgements

Peter Clements (Car Park Team Leader)
Ysanne Adamson-Snell (Accountant)