

Parking Report 2014 - 2015



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Annual Parking Report - 2014/2015

Introduction

Under the terms of the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for the Department for Transport under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 the parking enforcement authority should produce an annual report detailing its enforcement activities. This is to promote openness and a better understanding of enforcement and why it is carried out. The Traffic Management Act 2004 came into effect on the 31 March 2008.

This third annual report covers the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Background

The County Council adopted Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers on the 11 June 2012.

In respect of on-street parking enforcement Somerset County Council acts as the Enforcement Authority being the Highway Authority for the County.

The County Council also enforces off-street (car parks) parking controls for Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset District Council.

Enforcement for the District Councils is undertaken by way of an agency agreement covering the provision of enforcement services, processing of penalty charge notices and where required cash collection and meter maintenance services.

These powers to undertake such duties coincided with the signing of a 5 year contract with NSL to provide a number of parking related services to the County Council.

The Purpose of Civil Parking Enforcement

Historically on-street parking enforcement was undertaken by police officers or traffic wardens employed by the police service. Over the last 20 years or so the operation of parking enforcement has been provided by Local Authorities, following the decriminalisation of parking. Initially this was known as Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE), since 2008 DPE has been replaced by Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).

The key aims of CPE, as detailed within the Secretary of States, Statutory Guidance is to assist Highway Authorities deliver their transport objectives and the management of the road network (its Network Management Duty) in the following areas;

- To enable the efficient movement of all traffic. The movement of traffic includes pedestrians and cyclists.
- Improvement of road safety
- Improving the local environment
- Improvement of the quality and accessibility of public transport
- Meeting the needs of people with disabilities, whether they are able to use public transport or totally reliant upon the use of a car.
- The management and reconciliation of the competing demands for limited parking.

These objectives can be met by undertaking CPE operations and are achieved by the encouragement of drivers to comply with the relevant restriction.

It can be difficult at times to establish that CPE has had a positive impact. For example a successful CPE operation is unlikely to be in the drivers mind as they drive along a free flowing and uncongested road en-route to their home or place or work.

Likewise, the ability to find an available parking space either on-street or in a car park is often taken for granted.

Whilst the Local Authority can decide upon its objectives for CPE, the Government is very clear on what CPE cannot be.

The legislation is very clear in stating that parking enforcement cannot be undertaken solely to raise income and must not be seen as a revenue raising process.

All authorities undertaking CPE should aim to ensure the operation covers its costs.

However, where the demand for parking is high, the delivery of transport objectives with realistic demand management of prices for parking may result in surplus income. In such cases, local authorities **MUST** ensure that any on street revenue not used for enforcement is used for legitimate purposes only and that its main use is to improve, by whatever means, transport provision in the area so that road users benefit.

Full details of the Somerset County Council Transport Strategy, Road Safety Strategy and Parking Strategy are available on our website.

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/strategies/transport-strategy/>

Traffic Management Act 2004

The Traffic Management Act 2004 replaced the Road Traffic Act 1991 under which Local Authorities had enforced until October 2004.

The County Council, through its contractor NSL employs Civil Enforcement Officers (previously known as parking attendants, commonly called traffic wardens) to enforce all yellow lines and other parking restrictions and parking places throughout the County.

Within the District car parks the Civil Enforcement Officers patrol in accordance with the District Council's requirements and enforce the relevant restrictions within the car park.

This includes the major towns of each District as shown below.

Mendip	Sedgemoor	South Somerset	Taunton Deane	West Somerset
Wells	Axbridge	Bruton	Taunton	Dulverton
Frome	Bridgwater	Chard	Wellington	Dunster
Glastonbury	Burnham on Sea	Crewkerne	Wiveliscombe	Minehead
Street	Cheddar	Ilminster		
Shepton Mallet	Highbridge	Langport		
		Martock		
		Somerton		
		Wincanton		
		Yeovil		

The impact on motorists who park in contravention of the regulations under the Traffic Management Act are:

1. Differential charging of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN). There are two different levels of PCN, for example a vehicle parked on a yellow line restriction will be issued a PCN at the higher rate of £70 (£35 if paid within 14 days) whilst a vehicle parked over time on street or in a car park is not deemed to be as serious a contravention and would therefore be issued with a PCN at the lower rate of £50 (£25 if paid within 14 days).
2. The other effect of the Traffic Management Act 2004 is that a PCN may be served through the post if the driver prevents it being served or drives away.

Transport Act 2000

The County Council using powers under the Transport 2000 Act undertakes CCTV enforcement in two areas where bus lanes/gates are present.

The two locations being the Old Ilminster Road in the Blackbrook Park area and Mountway Road, both within Taunton.

CCTV enforcement is undertaken to deter drivers using the bus lanes/gates as these are present to improve local buses and the park and ride services within Taunton.

Drivers who contravene the regulation by driving in the bus lane/gate are liable for a penalty charge notice. The penalty will be sent to the registered keeper who will have 14 days to make payment at the discounted amount of £30, after 14 days the discount will be removed and the full amount of £60 will be payable.



Statistical Information Relating to Penalty Charge Notices

For the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 the following Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were served to vehicles in contravention of the relevant restriction.

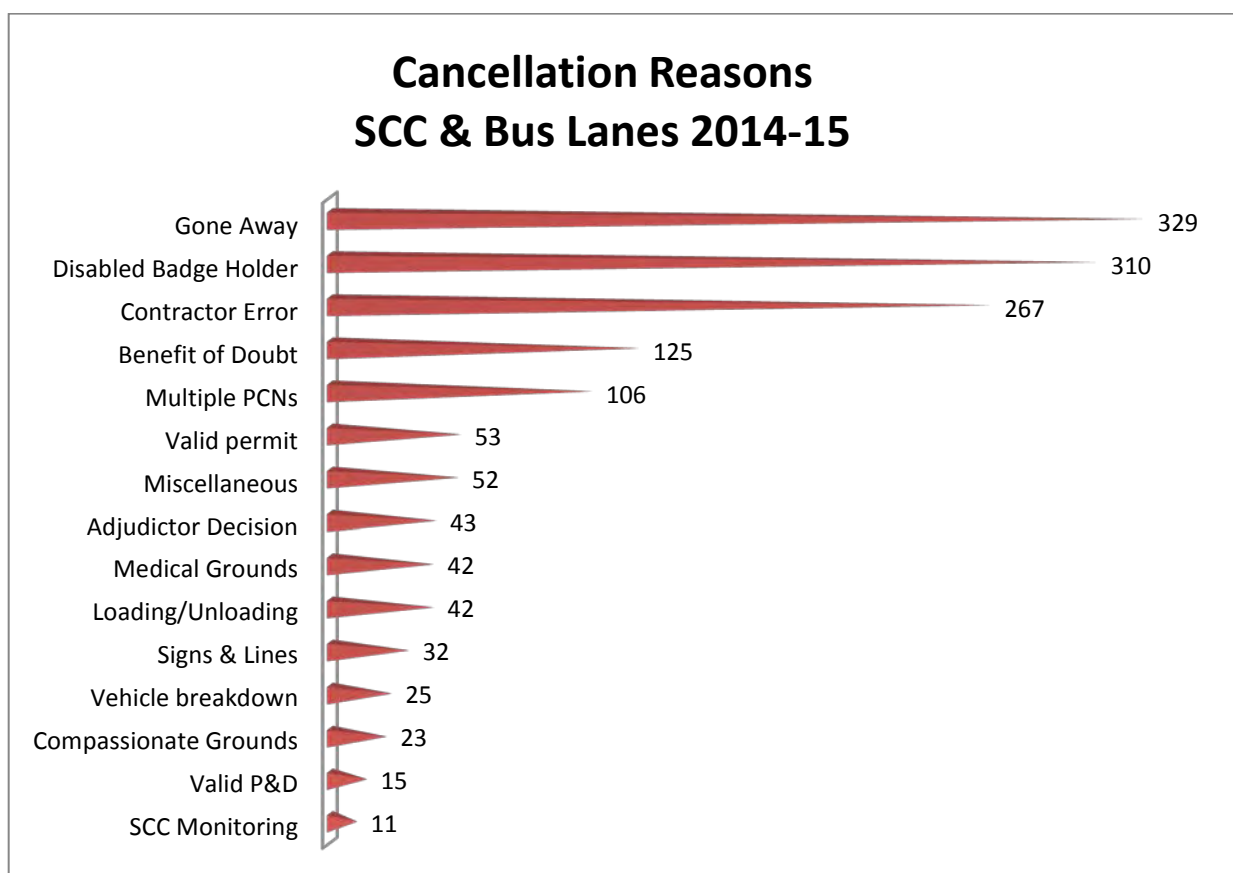
	Somerset On-Street	Somerset Bus Lanes	Mendip Car Parks	Sedgemoor Car Parks	Taunton Deane Car Parks	West Somerset Car Parks
Higher Level PCNs served	12,771	n/a	475	250	374	76
Lower Level PCNs served	9,024	5,456	3,283	2,283	5725	545
Number of PCNs paid	17,806	4,553	3,123	1,767	4324	406
Payment rate	82%	83%	83%	70%	71%	65%
PCNs paid at discount rate	14,948	4,226	2,592	1,516	3,484	350
PCNs paid at full charge before Charge Certificate	1,874	170	361	168	579	36
PCNs paid after service of Charge certificate	925	140	168	82	259	20
PCNs paid after issue of Warrant	59	17	2	1	2	0
Number of PCNs against which an informal or formal representation was made	3,533	726	966	884	2,128	218
Number of PCNs subject to adjudication at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal	100	Within on-street	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
Number of PCNs cancelled as a result of an informal or formal representation	1,044	139	273	516	1,262	121
Number of PCNs registered at the Traffic Enforcement Centre	1,746	539	114	64	118	0
Number of PCNs written off	551	145	80	35	67	6
Number of vehicles immobilised or removed	-	-	-	-	-	-

Reasons for Cancellation

Drivers who receive a penalty charge notice who consider there are mitigating circumstances as to why it should be cancelled are encouraged to contact Somerset County Council via our contractor NSL. The contact details are shown on the penalty or via our website.

All challenges and representations will be considered in accordance with our Guidelines for Dealing with Challenges and Representations; this extensive guidance document is available on the Council's website;

www.somerset.gov.uk/parking



Financial Reporting

The income and expenditure of local authorities in connection with their on-street charging and their on-street and off-street (car parks) enforcement activities are Governed by section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).

This means that all of our income and expenditure related to parking services and income from PCNs in respect of off-street parking is covered by section 55 of the Act.

Details of the income and expenditure relating to section 55 is detailed below.

	01/04/2014 to 31/03/2015
Total Expenditure £**	
NSL Contract	1,663,691
Agency	914
Traffic Penalty Tribunal	15,210
Council Officer Costs	166,245
Travel	2,559
General Office	4,092
Subscriptions	631
Maintenance	1,605
Central Services	90,905
Total	1,945,852

Total Income £**	
On Street P&D income	311,265
Off Street PCN Income	1,660
On Street PCN Income	722,221
Agency Income	615,961
Bus Gate PCN Income	164,163
Permit Income	122,033
Misc.	3,000
Total	1,940,303

** The total income and expenditure represents the consolidated figures for all enforcement activity. Internally, off street and on street activity is allocated in line with the level of enforcement activity.

The modest shortfall (£5,549) will have been covered from previous accumulated surpluses.

Local Government Transparency Code 2014

The above transparency code requires the publication by local authorities details of the revenue collected from on street and off street parking activities along with information relating to penalty charge notices.

Parking Income

Details of the cost of enforcement, income from on street parking and penalty charges are shown within the report.

Details of how any surplus revenue is used are also contained.

Parking Resources

Local authorities should also publish the number of marked out spaces that are controlled and within their area.

Details of the number and location of on street parking spaces across Somerset County Council are shown below.

Number of on street parking spaces across Somerset County Council

Mendip	Limited Waiting (Free) eg 1 hour maximum	Pay & Display	Resident Parking
Frome	127	-	-
Glastonbury	94	-	-
Shepton Mallet	111	-	-
Street	69	-	-
Wells	205	-	-
South Somerset			
Bruton	55	-	-
Chard	236	-	-
Crewkerne	66	-	-
Ilminster	104	-	-
Langport	19	-	-
Somerton	20	-	-
Wincanton	86	-	-
Yeovil	284	43	650
Others	138	-	-
Sedgemoor			
Bridgwater	619	-	-
Burnham	229	344	-
Cheddar & Axbridge	49	-	-
Villages	9	-	-
Taunton Deane			
Taunton	514	178	2,062
Wellington	85	-	-
Wiveliscombe	26	-	-
West Somerset			
Minehead	254	370	-
Watchet	13	-	-
Williton	56	-	-
Villages	45	-	-

Car Parks

The County Council has responsibility for a number of car parks that are subject to parking controls and charges.

County Hall, Shire Hill, A & B Block car parks, consists of 144 spaces that are available for use by the public without charge overnight and Sundays. Payment is required during Saturday.

West Somerset Railway, Minehead car park, is situated adjacent to the West Somerset heritage rail service. The car park consists of 114 pay and display spaces.

Milestones relating to Parking Services

During the period covered by this report there have been a number of milestones relating to Parking Services that impact on residents and visitors across the County.

New Resident Parking Schemes

Discussions in Bridgwater and Wells have continued with local Councillors, residents and scheme champions regarding new resident parking areas. These schemes will progress to the publication of a Traffic Regulation Order to introduce new resident parking controls during the period covered by next year's report.

Introduction of Cashless Parking

Following the appointment of Bemrose Mobile as the County Council's provider for 'cashless parking' services; Mendip District Council, West Somerset District Council and Sedgemoor District Council are all now able to take payment for parking (or top up/extend) by mobile phone.

Taunton Deane Borough Council will go live in April 2015, once the notice period for their existing provider expires.

Permit arrangements

Following a review and consultation of permits arrangements across the County a number of new permits have been introduced to support business;

- Non-resident landlord permits
- Loading permits
- Business permits

full details are available on the Council's website.

www.somerset.gov.uk/parking

Resident parking permits, dispensations and suspensions have also been reviewed to ensure their costs are fully recovered.

Further details are available on the Council's website at the following link.

<http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/council/portfolio%2046/Additional%20parking%20permits,%20charges%20and%20other%20matters.pdf>



West Somerset District Council

Following extensive discussions with West Somerset District Council, it has been agreed they will now make use of the Somerset County Council service to enforce parking restrictions within their car parks.

On line Permits

Implementation of the facility to enable residents to purchase or renew their annual resident permit is well advanced with testing being undertaken. It is anticipated the service will be available to residents during the period covered by next years report.

For further information relating to parking within Somerset County Council

please contact:

**Somerset Parking Services
Somerset County Council
Po Box 167
Sheffield
S98 1JN**

Telephone 0333 999 888 9

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/parking>

somerset@parkingenquiry.co.uk