

PATROL ANNUAL REPORT AWARD 2009/10
Findings of the Independent Review Group

Shortlisted Councils 2009-10

Following a successful first year, PATROL invited entries for the second year of the award. Disappointingly however, the number of reports received was of a similar number to the previous year of the award, with many of the same councils submitting reports for a second year. It is however important to note that the Review Group felt that standard of reporting, especially amongst the long-listed councils was of a much higher quality than that of the previous year. Clearly, a year's experience paid dividends for these Local Authorities. Due to the increase in quality of these reports a larger shortlist of six Local Authorities was selected by the Review Group for the 2009/10 award, they were:

Brighton & Hove
Durham County Council
Gloucestershire County Council
Sheffield City Council
Torbay Council
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council

Brighton & Hove City Council

Winners of the inaugural PATROL Annual Report Award, Brighton & Hove City Council again submitted a very strong report. A strong member foreword and retrospective policy outcomes provide a strong introduction. The report's excellent presentation has again been highlighted by the Review Group, with its easy to read style, use of chapters, and tables leading to an accessible report which the council also make available in a variety of languages and Braille.

Well presented and illustrated statistics and tables make understanding, what may be considered complex statistical and financial information a much more accessible task. The Review Group believe Brighton & Hove's comprehensive reporting should be commended, and it is hoped that reporting in such a fashion would help the Local Authority as well as its other stakeholders, when it comes to possible requests for information from the public, media or any other interested parties.

Despite winning last year's award it is clear that Brighton & Hove strived to improve their report further by encompassing elements of other shortlisted reports from the previous year. This is primarily evident through the reports 'Special Events' section – an element which Torbay used with some success in their report last year.

This report also successfully deals with the partnership working arrangements in which the council engages. The Review Group recognises it is important, when using service partners – particularly where they are carrying out enforcement on the local authority's behalf – that these arrangements are clearly explained. This report also outlines Brighton & Hove's commitment to providing public information; the report details various leaflets and their respective availability which the council hope will better help the general public understand the parking restriction and provisions within the city.

Durham County Council

Durham County Council have produced a clear, well presented report, demonstrating that a simple design can often prove as effective as its more complex counterparts. Again a member foreword provides context and a strong introduction to the report.

The Review Group feel that the report's mission statement and objectives were key in establishing the purpose of the report and 'what the public can expect' from the local authority in terms of its parking enforcement and how this fits it with the wider community, environment and economies aims and objectives. Along with setting out these objectives the report details how successful the council have been in achieving these objectives, providing performance measures and year on year comparisons. The Group felt this report should be commended for its self analysis.

The Review Group commend Durham for producing a report which greatly aids the transparency of the parking department, clear explanations of partnership working, the way in which challenges, representations and appeals are handled, the staff structure and training and development are all key elements of this report which convey positive messages to the reader,

While the report provides strong statistical and financial information it was felt that it may have benefited from more graphical representation and the use of colour to help aid the understanding of this information. It was felt that overall this report was a very informative and comprehensive document.

Gloucestershire County Council

The Review Group feel that this was an impressive effort from Gloucestershire County Council who had the added difficulty of reporting the two tier arrangements of the authority reporting on both the County as a whole for on street parking and individual districts relating to off street enforcement.

The Report managed to include strong explanatory localised information as well as statistical and financial information for each of the individual districts. It was felt the report had a strong design and each districts section could be read alone as well as in conjunction with the report as a whole. The group however feel one of the downsides to the style of presentation chosen was the size of the text, and while the group appreciate the scale of these task, reporting on such arrangements, it was felt the accessibility of the report may have suffered slightly as a result.

None the less, the group feel this was an outstanding attempt at reporting on two tier authorities and lends its self as an example to other authorities who may be looking to report on such arrangements.

Torbay Council

Another report which was last year nominated on the shortlist for this award. Torbay council have again produced an excellent, well presented and detailed report on parking enforcement, provision and its wider impact on the community. A strong sense of localism and community is prevalent thought the report in sections such as 'Geography and Demographics' and 'Supporting the Local Economy' these sections clearly engage with the local community and demonstrate how wide ranging the impact of parking enforcement can be.

The Review Group commented on the reports excellent layout, accessibility and ease of reading. Graphs interspersed throughout the report serve to break up text and illustrate successfully many of the points being made.

The group felt this report was also particularly successful in detailing the partnership working and day to day operations of the parking enforcement service and parking provision within Torbay.

Torbay manage to deal with the past, present and future throughout the report, the setting of key performance indicators allow for a measure of how far some of their objectives have been achieved and this works well coupled with the achievements section of the report which gives a more detailed perspective on projects which have been completed throughout the year. The report also deals successfully with the local authorities plans for the future and the developments which it feels will help benefit Traffic Management in the longer term.

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council

The Review Group felt that this was a very informative and interesting report, again, an example of where a simple layout can produce an effective Annual Report. Again this report was selected on last year's shortlist and has shown clear development. The group felt that there were perhaps longer, unbroken sections of text which may prove slightly difficult for the public to digest. It is clear, however, that where possible, the report seeks to illustrate any points being made with appropriate images and an effort has been made to bullet point information.

The report contains good statistical information which has been well illustrated with appropriate graphs and tables. The report also contains detailed and transparent financial information with regards to income and expenditure and what has been done in respect of any surplus. In addition to this, details of the previous year's finances have been provided to allow comparison.

A strong member foreword again provides the platform for a successful report. The report has been clearly divided into appropriate sections and was described by the review group as 'informative, interesting and with comprehensive levels of information and detail.

Winning Report

Sheffield City Council

Following on from last year's shortlisted annual report, Sheffield City Council has again produced an excellent report to win this year's award. The Review Group felt that this well structured and easy to read report addressed the weaknesses of last years document to produce a well rounded, honest, interesting and customer focused report.

Introduced by an exceptionally strong member foreword giving clear and concise messages as to the purpose of the report, the councils parking objectives and how these fit in with wider government recommendations including those laid out in the Department for Transport's guidance documents. The report is split into various chapters, each providing key public information around policy, enforcement, development, appeals and statistics.

It was felt that where Sheffield City Council's 2008/09 report, at times, appeared slightly disjointed and lacked graphical representation of statistics this report clearly added these features. Tables and graphs outline what can be quite complex statistical and financial information and present them in an accessible fashion. It is often the case that tables and graphs alone do not tell the entire story, equally, written text may be difficult to digest. This report has successfully struck a balance between illustrating explanatory text with appropriate graphs and tables.

The review group felt that the report was particularly strong in addressing the issues of enforcement, parking permits and clearly outlining the processes for appealing. This information is presented as simply as possible and discusses the arrangements for handling representations and appeals as well as the adopted parking policy of the council making it clear what is expected of both the authority and members of the public. Not only does this report highlight areas of good practice in terms of enforcement such as exercising discretion it also acknowledges enforcement issues and problems, whether it be in dealing

with correspondence or signage problems Sheffield City Council should be commended for raising these issues and proposing and implementing the various solutions.

In presenting the award to the Parking Team in Sheffield on behalf of the PATROL Joint Committee, Chair of the Review Group Peter Bayless said 'Sheffield City Council's parking department showed that it was possible to produce a report that gave a clear explanation of enforcement processes and service delivery as well as showing how the council engage with members of the public and strive to meet the community's needs'.

In response to the award, Kevan Butt, Sheffield City Council's Parking Manager said 'We are delighted that Sheffield City Council's Annual Report has been selected for this award. Our aim was to provide information that is helpful and to demonstrate that the way in which we approach Civil Parking Enforcement is fair, transparent and consistent'