

PATROL

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For immediate release

PATROL PARC Awards recognise another year of informative, transparent Annual Reports by local authorities

The annual PATROL PARC (Parking Annual Reports by Councils) Awards took place during a reception at the House of Commons on Tuesday 16 July, hosted by Huw Merriman, MP for Bexhill and Battle, and a member of the Transport Committee.

The PARC Awards recognise local authorities for the publishing of informative, engaging and transparent Annual Reports on their civil parking and traffic enforcement activities.

Brighton & Hove City Council scooped the Overall Winner award, with Highly Commended for Reporting awards going to Cheshire East Council; Devon County Council; Durham County Council; North Essex Parking Partnership and South Lakeland District Council. Newcastle City Council were presented with a newly established award for Outstanding Digital Format. Sunderland City Council and Sedgemoor District Council were also shortlisted.

PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations outside London) is a Joint Committee comprising 316 local authorities that undertake civil parking enforcement in England (outside London) and Wales.

The principal function of the Joint Committee is to make provision for independent adjudication in respect of appeals against penalties issued for traffic contraventions by enforcement and charging authorities in England (outside London) and Wales. Adjudication is delivered through the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

The PARC Awards form part of PATROL's commitment to promoting best practice from its local authority members in communicating effectively the vital context of traffic management objectives that underpin civil enforcement, which are ultimately in place to better meet the needs and improve the lives of residents, businesses and visitors within a community.

The PARC Awards this year recognised Annual Reports produced by local authorities for the year 2017-18.

'An Annual Report – well structured, accessible and utilising the best available communication mediums – provides an opportunity to set out clearly and transparently the "what, why and how" of a local authority's civil enforcement activities,' said Louise Hutchinson, Director of PATROL.

Councillor Stuart Hughes (Devon County Council) and the recently appointed Chair of PATROL, introduced the PARC Awards.

Hughes said: *'PATROL congratulates Brighton & Hove City Council on its Overall Winner award this year, reflective of a clearly presented and informative report across the board, with the inclusion of innovative projects, transparent performance data and detailed information on finances, including – crucially - how the surplus is used.'*

'Those authorities Highly Commended for Reporting made great strides in presenting reports that inform and engage, with a rich variety of content that goes far beyond the basic requirements of reporting on facts and figures.'

'Finally, Newcastle City Council produced a compelling animated video as an introduction to their report, which provided a high-level overview of the key points. This was an impressive use of digital channels to aid the dissemination and accessibility of often complex information.'

During a keynote speech to the audience, Huw Merriman commended local authorities for the work they do through traffic management initiatives that ensure their community spaces are well managed and enjoyable places to live and interact. Mr Merriman also recounted the experiences of the Transport Committee's visit to Bexhill-on-Sea as part of the Committee's Pavement Parking Inquiry and highlighted the important role that civil enforcement plays in keeping traffic moving.

Other MPs in attendance at the event included Lilian Greenwood (Labour, Nottingham South; Chair of Transport Committee); Esther McVey (Conservatives, Tatton); Wendy Morton (Conservatives, Aldridge-Brownhills); Hugo Swire (Conservatives, East Devon) and Daniel Zeichner (Labour, Cambridge; Member of Transport Committee).

Also addressing the delegates, Caroline Sheppard OBE, Chief Adjudicator of the Traffic Penalty Tribunal, said: *'As adjudicators, we often never see the good work that you all do, because people only come to us when they have experienced a problem. Today allows us to really highlight the positive side of things for a change.'*

Caroline also discussed the recent passing of the *Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019* through Parliament, which is intended to bring in greater regulation of the private parking industry with the establishment of a new single Code of Practice for operators to ensure parking in private car parks is consistent, transparent and easier to understand.

Caroline highlighted the positive experience local authorities already provide in their own car parks; the provision of which she dubbed 'car parks as a service'.

In the coming months, PATROL will be bringing together local authorities to share their experience and best practice of providing such a service in their car parks. It is hoped the insights from these discussions may prove to be helpful in improving the experience of motorists in both public and private-sector car parks, moving forward.

Sarah McLean, Bill Manager & Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) also attended and addressed the audience, introducing a video address made by Rishi Sunak, MP for Richmond (Yorks) and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at MHCLG, which closed the formal proceedings.

Mr Sunak referred to the Annual Reports submitted for the PARC Awards as being testament to the fantastic work being done by PATROL's local authority members to engage around parking enforcement in their communities, bringing information together in one place – from data on parking spaces, to the general policy principles underlying the approach – in order to allow citizens to hold local government to account.

Annual Reports submitted for the PARC Awards are assessed for recognition under the below award categories. The awards are decided by the independent PATROL PARC Review Group, made up of senior and authoritative voices in the parking, motoring and communications space.

- **Overall Winner**

Where an authority has produced an informative, compelling and visually accessible Annual Report, which clearly sets out the broad spectrum of civil parking and traffic enforcement information against wider traffic management objectives for the given community.

- **Highly Commended for Reporting**

- **Customer Service**

Where authorities have reported on steps taken to proactively engage with their community in the delivery of schemes and services.

- **Innovation and New Services**

Where authorities have delivered one or more examples of an innovative approach or new scheme to improve traffic management, in order to better meet the needs of the community.

- **Finance and Statistics**

Where authorities have transparently and effectively conveyed income and expenditure around traffic management, including the use of any surplus, or have presented statistics on parking and traffic management in a visually compelling way.

- **Outstanding Digital Format**

Where authorities have harnessed digital channels to improve the accessibility to, impact of and engagement with parking and traffic management information – either as a total Annual Report, or element within a report.

- ENDS -

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About PATROL

The **PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations outside London)** Joint Committee comprises 316 local authorities that undertake civil parking enforcement in England (outside London) and Wales.

The principal function of the Joint Committee is to make provision for independent adjudication in respect of appeals against penalties issued for traffic contraventions by enforcement and charging authorities in England (outside London) and Wales. Adjudication is delivered through the **Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT)**.

TPT adjudicators are wholly independent lawyers, appointed with the consent of the Lord Chancellor, and are supported by a small team of administrative staff, who provide customer support. The TPT is the UK's first fully online tribunal and decides ~25,000 cases a year. Its Chief Adjudicator is Caroline Sheppard OBE.

The Adjudicators decide appeals against civil enforcement penalties issued by authorities for parking, bus lane, littering from vehicles and (in Wales only) moving traffic contraventions, as well as appeals arising from road user charging enforcement (including from the Dartford-Thurrock River Crossing, Mersey Gateway Bridge Crossings and the Durham Road User Charge Zone).

PATROL represents its member authorities on traffic management issues of mutual interest, whilst also taking into account the motorist's perspective – as seen through appeals to the TPT.

PATROL also promotes best practice in public information to increase understanding of traffic management objectives. This includes the annual PARC (Parking Annual Reports by Councils) Awards held at the House of Commons.

PATROL member authorities comprise each type of local authority and a spectrum of political allegiances – a representative voice on civil traffic enforcement outside London, through the sharing of issues, insight, evaluation and best practice from a broad and diverse geographic area.

Further information can be found at www.patrol-uk.info and www.trafficpenaltytribunal.gov.uk.