

Off Street Annual Parking Report 2015/16

Introduction

The Traffic Management Act 2004 introduced a requirement for Enforcement Authorities to report on their Parking Enforcement Activities on an annual basis.

This has been supplemented by the Government's 2015 Transparency Code that requires, annually, the Council to report:

- a breakdown of income and expenditure on the authority's parking account, to include details of revenue collected from off-street parking and Penalty Charge Notices
- a breakdown of how the authority has spent a surplus on its parking account
- the number of marked out controlled off-street parking spaces within their area, or an estimate of the number of spaces where controlled parking space is not marked out in individual parking bays or spaces.

Boston Borough Council operates a number of 'Off Street' car parks which are operated under a 'Pay and Display' charging system. Enforcement activity is undertaken in these car parks by Civil Enforcement Officers directly employed by Boston Borough Council.

Lincolnshire County Council carries out 'On Street' parking enforcement in Lincolnshire using a third party contractor and, as the Enforcement Authority for on-street car parking, produce a report to cover their activities across the county.

Legal Provisions

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) lays down the requirements under which Civil Parking Enforcement is carried out. These provisions apply to 'off street' car parks as well as on the roads. The car parks in Boston are subject to a Traffic Regulation Order.

This order and its amendments detail the car park regulations in car parks. The order also allows for the issue of Penalty Charge Notices for certain contraventions of the order. The issue of these notices and the procedures which follow their issue are laid down by the TMA and regulations made under it.

Patrol and enforcement activities in the council owned and operated car parks are carried out by Civil Enforcement Officers employed by Boston Borough Council.

Section 55 of the Traffic Management Act defines the purposes for which income specifically from charges and Penalty Charge Notices for on-street car parking and Penalty Charge Notices for off-street car parking can be used.

These purposes are for:

- all operational costs in delivering a car parking service (including capital repair and maintenance in addition to staffing)
- supporting public transport passenger services
- supporting road or highway improvement projects
- environmental improvements which includes improving or maintaining the appearance or amenity of -

(i) a road or land in the vicinity of a road, or

(ii) open land or water to which the general public has access; and

(iii) the provision of outdoor recreational facilities available to the general public without charge.

Boston Borough Council Car Parks

There are 16 pay and display car parks with a total of 1106 parking spaces within the Boston Borough operated by the Council. These are located within the town centre to service the needs of residents and visitors to the areas.

These car parks are

- Artillery Row,
- Bargate Green,
- Botolph Street,
- Buoy Yard,
- Cattle Market,
- Custom House Quay,
- Doughty Quay,
- George Street,
- Maud Street,
- Municipal Buildings,
- Spayne Road,
- Staniland,
- St George's Road,
- Tunnard Street,
- Victoria Place
- West End.

In addition there are further five car parks that are deemed to be "on street" car parks. These are owned by Lincolnshire County Council and enforced by the County Council's appointed enforcement contractor. Under current arrangements, Boston Borough Council retains the income derived from these five "on street" car parks.

These car parks are

- Market Place
- Pump Square
- Station Approach
- South Square
- Wide Bargate

Boston Borough Council reviewed its charging policy in regard to its car parks in 2015 (having not previously reviewed such arrangements for a number of years).

The main objectives in the making of charges for parking in the council's car parks are:

- To cover the costs of their maintenance, infrastructure and management of car parks, including those areas of associated land and nearby facilities that are available to the public.
- To ensure that parking is available for people using the facilities in the town by ensuring a turnover of spaces in the car parks. This is particularly important in the car parks supporting the shops in the town centres.

Parking machines were replaced in 2015/16. These new machines are networked via digital connection enabling monitoring to be undertaken remotely thus introducing more efficiencies into the service and ensuring that faults can be identified and rectified promptly. In addition, pay by phone parking has also been introduced at all car parking locations that are owned and operated by Boston Borough Council.

Enforcement Activities

The Council employs 3 uniformed Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) to patrol and enforce off street parking matters. As well as ensuring the charging regime in the car parks is complied with, staff also help to ensure that any defects or other issues affecting the car parks are reported and rectified. The Officers are all trained to nationally recognised standards and receive refresher training when necessary.

Penalty Charge Notices

Vehicles appearing to be parked in contravention of certain aspects of the Traffic Order can be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) which is normally attached to the vehicle or handed to the driver by the CEO. The level of the charges, set by central government, is currently £50 for a lower level contravention, and £70 for a higher level contravention. The charges can be settled at a reduced charge of £25 or £35 respectively if paid within 14 days of issue.

The level of the charge is designed to reflect the severity of the contravention. For example if someone was to remain in the car park for a longer period than they had paid for then they would receive a lower level charge. Those who park in a disabled person's bay, when not holding the appropriate badge, which is considered to be a more serious contravention, would receive a higher level charge.

Once a PCN has been issued, the driver can challenge the issue of the notice with the Central Processing Unit. Trained members of staff will consider the circumstances and any mitigation given by the driver. While the challenge is being considered the case will be placed on hold so that, even if the challenge is rejected, the motorist can still settle the matter at the reduced charge.

When a challenge is made and rejected, or no payment made, the owner of the vehicle is sent a 'Notice to Owner'. This is the driver's opportunity to make formal representations against the issue of the Penalty Charge Notice. Consideration of these representations is carried out by the Central Processing Unit.

Should the representations be rejected a driver then has an opportunity to appeal against that decision to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal. This is an independent body where Adjudicators will consider the case and whose decision is binding on both the Council and the Motorist.

Statistics – April 2015 – March 2016

Total PCN's issued	1169
Higher level PCN's issued	188
Lower level PCN's issued	981
Paid at discount	671
Paid at full (or above)	122
PCN's paid	793
PCN's against which formal or informal representations made	384
PCN's cancelled as a result of formal or informal representations	215
PCN's cancelled for other reasons	206
PCN's written off	1

Contraventions

The table below shows the PCN issue figures for all contraventions:

Code	Off Street National Contravention Description	Amount Issued
80	Parked for longer than the maximum period permitted	40
82	Parked after the expiry of paid for time	235
83	Parked in a car park without clearly displaying a valid pay & display ticket or voucher or parking clock	605
85	Parked in a permit bay without clearly displaying a valid permit	80
86	Parked beyond the bay markings	129
87	Parked in a disabled person's parking space without clearly displaying a valid disabled person's badge	62
91	Parked in a car park or area not designated for that class of vehicle	5
92	Parked causing an obstruction	1
93	Parked in a car park when closed	2
94	Parked in a pay & display car park without clearly displaying two valid pay & display tickets when required	10

Adjudication Statistics

During the year 2 cases were appealed to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal by motorists, with the following outcomes:

No hearing outcome	0
Appeal allowed	0
Appeal not contested	0
Appeal rejected	2

Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure in relation to off street parking activities:

Expenditure: £386,958.65

Income: £808,341.46

Surplus: £421,382.81 (is used to cover costs such as car park lighting, relining, resurfacing, signage and in some cases CCTV and public toilets).

This completes the annual report for off street car parking activities in Boston Borough.

Duncan Hollingworth

Team Leader (Town Centre Services)