



Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 14 December 2021

Parking Policy, Control and Enforcement

Purpose	To provide a briefing to the Scrutiny Programme Committee relating to Parking Policy, Control and Enforcement undertaken by Parking Services, Highways and Transportation.
Content	This report sets out the functions, standards and operational activities of Parking Services in relation to Parking Policy, Control and Enforcement. It also gives an explanation of Car Park and Park and Ride Operations which also fall within the remit of Parking Services.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the report, to give their views and make recommendations to Cabinet Member as necessary
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement and Infrastructure Management
Lead Officer(s)	Stuart Davies, Head of Highways and Transportation
Report Author	Gavin Newman, Parking Services Manager Mark Thomas, Transport Infrastructure Group Leader
Legal Officer	Debbie Smith
Finance Officer	Paul Roach/Aimee Dyer

1. General Description

1.1 Parking Services consists of the management of:

- Off Street Car Parks
- Civil Parking Enforcement (on street parking restrictions)
- Park and Ride Sites
- Abandoned Vehicle Service.

- 1.2 Under the Traffic Management Act 2004 the Council has a statutory duty to manage the highway network in a way to minimise congestion and reduce air pollution. Parking Services are key to meeting this statutory duty. This function is carried out by the Council but on street enforcement could be carried out by a private enforcement contractor, on behalf of the Council.
- 1.3 The Council currently operates 48 public use car parks throughout the City & County area. The car parks include three multi-story car parks and two park and ride sites. The location and details of the car parks can also be viewed on-line at <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/carparkssearch>.
- 1.4 As part of the Copr Bae regeneration project, two new Multi Storey Car Parks are due to open, Copr Bae North and South. The North Car Park will have 630 spaces and the South 355. This development has resulted in the loss of two surface car parks (St Mary's and Oystermouth Road car parks) plus St David's MSCP will soon be lost to make way for future development as part of the City Centre Regeneration Strategy. Overall the net impact on available car parking spaces is negligible with a reduction of only 15 spaces.

2 Operational Requirements

Parking management and enforcement is undertaken for three key reasons:

- 2.1 **Safety**
On street enforcement discourages vehicles from stopping and parking in areas which could compromise for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- 2.2 **Congestion**
On street enforcement and effective car park management will deter indiscriminate parking and stopping on the highway which restricts the movement of traffic. In addition to this effective car park management ensures that motorists can access and egress workplace and retail premises in the most efficient way.
- 2.3 **Economy**
Effective management of on street and off street parking facilities will increase the availability of spaces through ensuring there is an appropriate turnover of spaces. This ensures that a greater number of people can access the business which is crucial to the economy.
- 2.4 The provision of off-street car parks provides suitable places for motorists to park their vehicles which will relieve congestion on the public highway and therefore improve road safety and reduce pollution. Within The City Centre and other shopping areas, it is intended that the provision of well maintained, easily accessible car parks with attractive charging rates will encourage users and therefore lead to an improvement in the economic viability of the areas.
- 2.5 By providing off street parking and managing the turnover of available on street parking we are ensuring that the road network continues to operate to its maximum efficiency by ensuring that parked vehicles do not affect the free flow of traffic and park safely in accordance with the parking restrictions. It is important that we

continue to enforce on street to ensure that not only are the waiting and loading restrictions correctly enforced but also that the residents parking bays are enforced so that residents can park near to where they live.

3. Management and Support

3.1 Parking Services forms an integral part of the wider Transport Infrastructure group, which sits within the Highways & Transportation Service.

Parking Services is led by a Parking Services Manager, responsible for 51 other members of staff, split into two main areas:

Car Parks Team – responsible for

- the management of on and off street parking provision
- Asset management and first line maintenance of car park equipment
- cash collection and reconciliation
- Management of the two Park & Ride sites.

The team consists of fourteen staff :

- A Car Parking Manager
- One car parks supervisor (focusing on day to day operational issues)
- One Senior Civil Parking Enforcement Officer/Cashier
- Six Civil Parking Enforcement Officer/Cashiers (cash collection, reconciliation and front line maintenance of car park equipment)
- Three car parking officers (patrolling car parks, assisting with customer queries, monitoring pay on foot operating.
- Two car Park attendants – security patrols, general cleaning / maintenance of car parks

3.2 The Civil Parking Enforcement Team – responsible for:

- enforcement of on-street parking restrictions
- processing of Penalty Charge Notices and Appeals
- Issuing of Season tickets and permits to staff and traders
- Financial monitoring Enforcement of Abandoned Vehicles

The team consists of thirty seven staff :

- A Civil Parking Enforcement Manager.
- An on-street enforcement section consisting of one Supervisor, three Senior Civil Parking Enforcement officers and twenty Civil Parking Enforcement officers, covering two foot patrol shifts and operation of the camera car.
- A back office PCN processing section consisting of a Supervisor and eleven PCN processing officers.
- An Abandoned Vehicle Officer.
- 22 Civil Enforcement Officers including two Senior Civil Enforcement Officers and one Supervisor.

3.3 Operational Periods

Since returning back to work after the Covid pandemic, Civil Parking Enforcement officers are currently operating on a two shift rotation pattern, seven days a week. The hours of enforcement are currently 07:00 to 15:00 and 12:00 to 20:00. In addition the Council's camera enforcement vehicle patrols between 07:00 – 20:00. Officers do work later on Fridays and Saturdays or when there are special events on such as football matches or city centre events. There are a number of patrol beats that officers regularly patrol, plus officers will target areas where the council has received complaints from the public or requests from councillors.

The car parks are managed between 07:00 and 20:00, with the two MSCP's (High Street and St David's) open to the public twenty hour hours a day, are patrolled by contract security staff during the night time.

4. Stakeholders

4.1 All Council services have stakeholders however the following groups have a higher level of interest.

- BID and the City Centre Traders.
- Community Councils
- ENTE – City Centre Group
- Beaches Management Group
- Emergency services
- Parks and Cleansing
- Housing
- Corporate Property
- Public Transport Companies
- DVLA

5. Finance

5.1 Details of Parking Services Operational Budgets, income targets and actual income can be seen in the following tables. Civil parking Enforcement is a self financing operation. Any revenue received from Penalty Charge Notices is ring fenced within strict parameters to support Environmental and Transportation service areas. No council funding stream is used to support Civil Parking Enforcement.

CPE

Year	Operating Budget	Income Target	Actual Income
20/21	1,389,900	1,352,200	1,771,652
19/20	1,360,300	1,352,200	1,908,360
18/19	1,334,500	1,332,200	1,947,351
17/18	1,248,200	1,332,200	1,433,209
16/17	1,305,500	1,332,200	1,525,418

CAR PARKS

Year	Operating Budget	Income Target *	Actual Income*
20/21	1,046,400	4,246,000	3,998,883 (excludes £11K inter service credits)
19/20	1,106,600	4,246,000	4,133,612
18/19	1,042,300	4,246,000	4,633,951
17/18	1,007,600**	3,778,400	3,709,696
16/17	1,388,500	3,169,400	3,220,994

* Includes Car Parks income, Staff Parking, Season Tickets and Abandoned Vehicles

** changes and centralising of certain expenditure e.g. electricity, NNDR,

PARK AND RIDE

Year	Operating Budget	Income Target	Actual Income
20/21	642,200	666,500	147,915
19/20	632,900	666,500	289,795
18/19	642,600	666,500	360,583
17/18	625,800***	646,500	425,611
16/17	1,075,100	646,500	428,828

***Changes to bus operator payments

6. Current Performance and Trends

6.1 The table below shows the number of PCN's issued, appealed and accepted over the past five years

19/20 and 20/21 figures may have been affected as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns.

	2020/2021*	2019/2020*	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Number of parking tickets issued	25,908	55,360	57,286	42,348	43,712	42,342	36,311
Number of parking tickets appealed	7,349 (28%)	17,425 (31%)	15,497 (27%)	15,299 (36%)	13,835 (31%)	11,607 (27%)	9,539 (26%)
Number of appeals accepted	2,681 (10%)	3,888 (7%)	6,706 (11%)	4,747 (11%)	5,247 (12%)	5,234 (12%)	4,390 (12%)

Upon taking on Civil Parking Enforcement powers, the advice from the British Parking Association was that the expected rate of appeals to PCN's issued was around a third. However, the service is not content to deal with such high numbers of appeals as is not an efficient use of resources. Further, a Systems Thinking initiative was undertaken to assess the reasons for appeals and also the reasons why appeals were successful. A significant number of successive appeals were granted due to the appeal meeting our established mitigating circumstances which were established to ensure that genuine cases were considered in a compassionate manner. Some of the mitigating circumstances are, medical emergency, mechanical breakdown or the appellant being established as a vulnerable person. Work is underway to improve the information to motorists when considering whether to appeal, to explain the limited instances where appeals will be considered, with the intention of reducing unjustified appeals.

- 6.2 The overarching objective within the group's business plan is to reduce the number of road safety casualties within the City and County of Swansea by managing the highway network optimising traffic throughput in a safe and efficient manner.

In particular the Performance Indicators that relate to the Parking service are:

PI Ref		Result 20/21	Target 21/22
ETE8	Increase number of cars using park and ride services	No % increase	50% this target is no longer viable for last year as P&R operation was suspended at the end of 19-20 and remained closed until 1 st August 2020, due to restrictions on usage of public transport
ETE23	Percentage of new reports of abandoned / untaxed vehicles investigated within 5 days of notification	96%	100%
ETE26	Percentage of abandoned / untaxed vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle	100%	100%

T9	Percentage of PCNs overturned		
	a) Officer Error	0.05%	0%
	b) Incorrect lines and signs	0.01%	0%
T10	Percentage of lining and signing errors reported and addressed	95%	100%
T12	Percentage of Car Parks inspections carried out on a monthly basis	100%	100%

Car Parks and CPE Internal Audits

In spring of this year our internal audit teams carried out audits on both our Car Parks and CPE operations. Both Audits came back with the 2nd highest level of assurance, Substantial. This was an improvement on the previous audits where only Moderate assurance level was given.

7. Notable Management Practices

7.1 Asset Management Plan

In order to assist with the management of departmental spending, Asset Management Plans for the next five years were produced for Car Parks, CPE and Park and Ride. These plans help officers to identify when large spend is expected to help with financial planning and resource levels. It also enables us to spread cost over a five year period rather than have peaks of spending pressures fall within one year.

7.2 Car Park Surveys and condition reports

Regular Car Park Condition Surveys are carried out in order to monitor the condition of the car park and identify any maintenance works that are required. The works can then be prioritised and progressed according to urgency and cost. They will assist the service in maintaining operational efficiency of the assets and forward planning of capital finance requirements.

7.3 Parking Strategy and City Centre Transportation Strategy

In March 2018 a consultant was commissioned to produce a Parking Strategy. The Strategy would consider existing and future requirements for City Centre and, our Beach and Foreshore Car Parks. The commission also produced a parking model which could be used to predict the parking capacity and resultant demand within the City Centre based on a number of planned City Centre regeneration scenarios.

7.4 Cashless parking and new machinery

During the past 18 months the Council have invested £600k on replacing pay on foot equipment in two multi storey Car Parks and both Park and Ride Sites. In addition the council has replaced all Pay and Display Machines within council surface car parks. These upgrades will be paid for over the next five years and will ensure we have the reliable modern equipment allowing us to adapt offers and payment methods to meet the future needs of our customers. In 2018 the Council introduced the MiPermit cashless Parking solution which enabled customers to pay for their parking via mobile phone or using the MiPermit App. The introduction of this facility was to offer an alternative method of payment for customers. During the

COVID 19 pandemic there was an increase in the total MiPermit transactions from 20% to 70% against traditional cash payments.

7.5 **Work During the Pandemic.**

During periods of lockdown our car parks and park and ride sites all stayed closed with many of our staff helping out other front line services such as delivering meals and Test Track and Protect. Our Senior CEO's remained in work and responded to issues of dangerous and inconsiderate parking. They also used the time to review enforcement operations and review rotas and patrol beats. Since the easing of lockdown and the reopening of the City Centre our car parks and park and ride sites have reopened.

We are currently running offers to support local businesses recover from the effects of the pandemic. The deal are:-

City Centre Car Parks, after 9:30am

£1 for 2 hours

£2 all day

This compares with the normal tariff of

£1.20 for 1 hour

£2.40 for 2 hours

£3.50 for 3 hours

£5.00 for 4 hours

£7.00 all day

Mumbles

£4 all day (was £6)

Park and Ride

£1 all day per vehicle. (was £2.50)

8. **Future Challenges & Opportunities**

8.1 **City centre prosperity –**

Car park income is roughly split between 40% generated from foreshore car parks and 60% from city centre car parks. Therefore, the success of the car parking operation is inextricably linked to the economic prosperity of the city centre. Car parks both serve as an arrival point for many visitors to the city centre and indeed our coastal areas but also are reliant on the city centre and other attractions to bring customers to the car park. Therefore, whilst car parking tariffs alone cannot be considered as a mechanism for revitalising a city centre, they can be used to support tentative shoot of economic recovery, especially post pandemic.

8.2 **Support of future regeneration projects –**

With the majority of surface car parks within the city centre being identified development sites, it is crucial that parking provision is considered as part of the transport assessment linked to any major development to ensure that car parks are available in the correct location to not only support ongoing city centre regeneration, but to cater for existing demand. However, such an approach can only be effective

if considered as part of a wider Transportation Strategy for the county as a whole. A study has been commissioned to help inform the future planning for car park provision in the city centre.

8.3 Changing travel choices –

One of the future challenges is the growing demand to reduce carbon emissions which in turn will drive greater uptake of electric vehicles and more sustainable modes of transport. Hence car parks must adapt to provide more electric charge points but also function as travel mode hubs, providing more than just car parking, accommodating more quality and secure cycle parking close to popular destinations.

This approach is also being considered at the Park & Ride sites where consideration is given to customers being able to park their vehicles at the sites and complete their journey by bicycle to reach destination where perhaps vehicles are discouraged or the final leg of their journey may be quicker by bicycle or simply customer wish to undertake a limited part of their journey whilst taking exercise, with the obvious benefits to health, wellbeing and the environment.

8.4 Parking Restraint –

With the anticipated economic prosperity within the city centre, as with other prosperous city centres, demand for car parking spaces will eventually outstrip demand and without controls put in place the city's transport infrastructure will become clogged, with increases in journey times, air pollution, subsequent risk to future inward investments and continued economic prosperity. Effectively the rejuvenated city centre becomes a victim of its own success. Therefore, an integrated transport policy is vital and within that strategy consideration will be given to the principle of parking restraint. This principle simply places a premium on car parking spaces close to or within the city centre, whilst car parks located further away and close to or linked to more sustainable transport choices, such as Park & Ride, Park & Cycle, Park & Walk, rail stations, public transport hubs will provide a cheaper option, in addition to avoiding any residual congestion that occurs within any city centre during peak traffic hours.

8.5 Park & Ride locations -

The current location of the Landore Park & Ride site is under review given the fact that exciting new developments such as the SkyLine and other commercial, retail and Leisure developments are being considered in the area. Therefore, the land currently occupied by the Landore Park & Ride may well become sought after development land, not well suited to accommodate a Park & Ride site. A commission is underway to consider any alternative locations for a Park & Ride site to serve the lower Swansea Valley.

Future studies will be necessary to determine the feasibility of potential park and ride sites to the north west and west of the city.

9. Assessment

- 9.1 Parking Services has adopted an important function in Civil Parking Enforcement, which has been significantly disrupted during the pandemic, its officers transferred to assist in support the pandemic response including some staff still seconded to Test Trace and Protect. It has taken a number of years to establish a consistent and reliable approach to delivering the duties under the Traffic Management Act, not helped by a change in the service management personnel from its inception in 2008. However, work is ongoing to refine and constantly improve the system from the aspect of customer service, improved information and assistance to what can be termed as reluctant customers, through to more efficient patrolling and back office systems and methods of working.

The Park & Ride operation has been hard hit during the pandemic, with concern amongst customers over the risks of sharing a bus with strangers and infection. It is uncertain over the rate of return of Park & Ride patronage at this time.

With the advent of two purpose built multi storey car parks to support the Arena and wider city centre regeneration it is important that careful consideration is given to the purpose, location and offered services within our car parks to ensure they meet the needs and aspirations of our future customers and support the ongoing economic regeneration of the city and wider county.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report other than those set out in the body of the report.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.