

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL



PARKING SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 – 2015

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INTRODUCTION

Dover District Council took on responsibility for the enforcement of on-street parking regulations from Kent Police on 23rd January 2001. This document reports on the performance of Dover District Council's Parking Services between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015.

Whilst parking in contravention of the parking regulations is no longer a criminal act, it nonetheless remains an illegal act. The legislation under which Dover District Council operates its parking services are:-

- Kent County Council (various roads, Dover District) (waiting restrictions and street parking places) Order March 2005 (with amendments); and
- Dover District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2014.

A copy of the KCC On-Street Order is available via: -

www.kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport/highway_maintenance/traffic_regulation_orders/made_tros/dover_made.aspx

A copy of the DDC Off-Street order is available on our website via:-

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/documents_policies/off-street_parking.aspx

Dover District Council acts as an agent on behalf of Kent County Council for enforcement of parking restrictions on the roads throughout the district. Any surplus made from this part of our service is ring-fenced and must be used for transport or environmental projects. A surplus of £36,287 was made on-street during 2014 – 2015.

On 31st March 2008, new parking enforcement related legislation was introduced, known as the Traffic Management Act 2004. Under this legislation, parking wardens became known as Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO), higher and lower bands of penalty charges were introduced and it became possible to post a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) to the registered owner or keeper of a vehicle if a CEO had been prevented from issuing it at the time, e.g. if the motorist had driven away before the CEO was able to serve the PCN, or the CEO had been threatened with violence, or the contravention had been recorded on an approved device. More information on this legislation is available from our website at:-

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/documents_policies/traffic_management_act.aspx, or

the Government Services website at <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving>

CAR PARKS

Dover District Council operates the majority of public car parks throughout the district. However, the following car parks, whilst available to the public, are managed by Dover District Council on behalf of the landowner:-

- Park Street and St. Ethelburga's, Deal: The Co-operative Group Limited;
- West Street, Deal: Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited; and
- Samphire Hoe: Euro Tunnel.

A full list of all the car parks operated by Dover District Council can be found at: -

www.dover.gov.uk/parking.aspx

Most car parks and roads in Dover district are free of charge to users on Sundays, apart from the following areas, which are "Pay and Display" seven days per week: -

- Camden Crescent car park, Dover;
- The Seafront, Dover;
- Beach Street car park, Deal;
- Beach Street on-street, Deal; and
- The Quay car park, Sandwich.

Linear charging is available in most Dover district public car parks and on-street. Linear charging is recognised as a fairer system for paying for parking as after a minimum charge (typically 30 minutes) customers are able to pay by the minute for the time they require. This eliminates the need for the correct change and the need to purchase parking by the hour when less time is required.

We continue to offer payment for parking by mobile telephone, using a system operated by RingGo. Details of this service are available on our website at: -

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/pay_by_phone.aspx

CURRENT OPERATION

Parking Services operates from bases in Dover and Deal, with enforcement carried out seven days a week including the evenings. The district is split into seven beats, four in Dover, two in Deal and one covering Sandwich and the rural areas. Two Civil Enforcement Officers are on duty most evenings and three are on duty on Sundays throughout the district subject to the availability of staff.

The Parking Administration section is operational from 9am until 5pm Monday to Friday. This section does not deal with personal callers although enquiries can be made in person at any of the Council's public offices. Addresses and opening hours of these offices are available on our web site at www.dover.gov.uk

Drivers who have been issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) are able to pay the charge or appeal on-line. A person appealing on-line is able to access any evidence obtained at the time, including photographs, to help them make an informed decision as to whether or not to continue with the appeal. Details on how to do this are shown on the PCN.

Parking Administration can be contacted on parking@dover.gov.uk

ITEMS OF NOTE

- During this reporting year, Central Government removed the requirement for motorists to display a road fund licence on their vehicle. The effect of this on parking services was that patrolling CEOs were no longer able to readily identify motorists who had not paid their road tax, and so no longer make reports to the DVLA.
- A new Parking Order, the Dover District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2014, has been introduced in place of the earlier Order dated 2010.
- In January 2014, the on- and off-street charging period was reduced from 9am - 6pm to 9am – 5pm on all days charges are in effect. Dover district has the shortest charging period across Kent.
- This reporting year also saw the introduction of Body Worn Video cameras for CEOs. The primary purpose of these video cameras is to protect CEOs from verbal and physical abuse, and to assist in any complaints made concerning a CEO's behaviour. They are not used to provide evidence of any breach of the parking regulations, although they may be used for that purpose in exceptional circumstances.
- In October 2014, Parking Services began standardising permit issue dates. This meant that parking permits will now be issued at a set time each year although motorists will still be able to apply at any time. Further details, together with details of individual schemes and permits, are available on the DDC website at www.dover.gov.uk This has enabled Parking Services to better assess capacity for second permits and enabled the team to manage workload planning.

PENALTY CHARGE NOTICES (PCN's)

In the financial year 2014-2015, 11,188 PCN's were issued; 7,415 on-street and 3,773 in car parks. This was 421 more than in 2013-2014.

The table below gives a breakdown of reasons for issuing PCN's, and whether they were on or off-street for 2014-2015: -

	On-Street	Off-Street	Total
All contraventions	7415	3773	11188
On Street			
Lower level	3307	0	3307
05 Parked after expiry of paid time	224	0	224
06 Parked without displaying valid pay and display ticket	942	0	942
07 Parked beyond expired time	0	0	0
22 Reparked in parking place before return time expired	20	0	20
24 Not parked within the markings of a bay or space	0	0	0
30 Parked longer than permitted in free parking place	2121	0	2121
Higher level	4108	0	4108
01 Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours	2680	0	2680
02 No waiting/loading	384	0	384
16 Parked in a permit bay without a valid permit	12	0	12
21 Parked in a suspended bay/space	37	0	37
23 Parked in an area not designated for that vehicle	89	0	89
25 Parked in loading space during prescribed hours	161	0	161
26 Double parked	23	0	23
27 Dropped footway	8	0	8
40 Parked in a disabled bay without displaying badge	168	0	168
45 Parked in a taxi rank	271	0	271
47 Parked in a restricted bus stop/stand	97	0	97
48 Stopped in a restricted area outside a school	32	0	32
61 Commercial vehicle	143	0	143
99 Pedestrian crossing	3	0	3
Off-Street			
Lower level	0	3380	3380
80 Parked for longer than maximum period permitted	0	32	32
82 Pay and Display ticket expired	0	1023	1023
83 No ticket displayed	0	2120	2120
86 Parked beyond the bay markings	0	198	198
93 Parked in a car park when closed	0	7	7
Higher level	0	393	393
70 Parked in a loading area without reasonable excuse	0	13	13
81 Parked in a restricted area in a car park	0	27	27
85 Parked in permit bay without valid permit	0	80	80
87 Parked in a disabled bay without displaying badge	0	143	143
91 Parked in an area not designated for that vehicle	0	130	130

When all attempts by Parking Services to recover outstanding charges have failed, Dover District Council utilises the services of three Enforcement Agencies (previously referred to as bailiffs) to recover this money. This is at no cost to the Council and so is not a demand upon public money. 796 cases were passed to the Enforcement Agencies in 2014 – 2015, 16 more than the previous financial year. Prior to passing any cases to Enforcement Agencies, where possible we will endeavour to reach a compromise on payment, including accepting payment by instalments. However, where all reasonable attempts to seek repayment have failed, we will have no hesitation in passing cases on in order that we can properly recover money owing to the public purse.

The Enforcement Agencies utilised by Parking Services do not operate under contract, but under a Service Level Agreement, which is renewed annually.

Penalty Charge Notices are issued to foreign registered vehicles parked in contravention of the regulations within Dover district. Many of these are paid. However, in cases where payment is not made, Dover District Council utilises the services of a company specialising in the recovery of debts from abroad. In 2014 – 2015, 848 cases were passed to this collection agency, 40 more than the previous reporting year. Of these, 60 payments were recovered.

STATISTICS

Civil Enforcement Officers experienced 2 cases of violence that were serious enough to record using the Council's violence at work procedures for the period 2014 – 2015. This was a decrease of 7 on the previous year and may well be accounted for by the introduction of Body Worn Video cameras, referred to earlier in this report.

Of the 11,188 Penalty Charge Notices issued during 2014 – 2015, 990 were subsequently cancelled or written off for a variety of reasons. It is important to stress that every case is treated individually and on its own merits and mitigating circumstances will always be considered. Along with other local authorities in Kent, Dover District Council has agreed and published its cancellation policy. This is in line with our aim to be open and transparent in parking matters. This policy and other parking related documents could be found at: -

www.dover.gov.uk/parking/documents_policies.aspx

The table below shows a breakdown of where PCNs were issued during 2014 – 2015:

	On-Street	Off-Street	Total
Dover	4386	1372	5758
Deal	2378	2077	4455
Sandwich	563	302	865
Rural	85	25	110
Total	7412	3776	11188

APPEALS AND CHALLENGES

Following the issue of a PCN, the vehicle owner may dispute its issue at three stages:

- An “informal challenge/representation” to the Local Authority prior to the issue of a Notice to Owner;
- Once a Notice to Owner has been issued, a formal representation to the Local Authority may be made; and
- If a formal representation is rejected the owner may appeal to an independent adjudicator at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

The process of considering challenges, representations and the defence of appeals is a legal process that requires officers dealing with these aspects to be trained in the relevant legislation and how to apply it. There must be a clear separation between the staff that decide on the issuing of PCN's and the staff that decide on representations. Within DDC, the issuing of PCN's is carried out by our own Civil Enforcement Officers, managed by a Parking Operations Manager and representations are considered by the Parking Administration staff managed by their own Manager to ensure that the required separation is in place.

6 formal representations were made to an independent adjudicator at the Traffic Penalty Tribunal during 2014 – 2015. Of these, 0 were found in favour of DDC, 3 were found in favour of the appellant and 1 was not contested. The other two cases were not heard during this reporting year.

As referred to above, not all appeals go to an Adjudicator. During the year, 1,758 appeals and challenges were received by Parking Services. Of these, 853 resulted in the cancellation of the charge and the remainder were pursued for payment.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Expenditure and Income in surface-paying car parks

	2014 - 2015
	£
Parking services administration	236,630.82
Repair and maintenance	21,946.14
Utilities	3,455.39
Rents payable	33,615.49
Business rates	153,751.94
Equipment	18,217.10
Printing	11,577.35
Computer software maintenance	10,637.78
Computer link telephones	5,057.05
Subscriptions	1,121.67
Insurance-not vehicles or building	965.43
Compensation payments	1,500.00
Agency payments	1,225.01
Publicity advert(not recruit)	1,747.99
Write-offs	0.00
Reimburse 3rd party car parks	45,135.58
Reimburse RingGo fees collected	4,746.98
Central support	38,510.09
Gain from revaluation	-1,387.00
Loss on revaluation	19,723.00
Miscellaneous licence income	-9682.02
Car park fee income	-1236105.31
Car park season tickets	-84,096.52
Penalty charge notices	-70,497.59
Builders permits	-894.43
Residents permits	-22,633.92
Rent income	-2,750.00
Wayleave rent income	-56,852.26
Miscellaneous income	-14,408.00
	-886,280.66
	<hr/>
Income	-1,497,920.05
Expenditure	318,162.48
Capital	18,336.00
Parking Services Administration	236,630.82
Central Service Administration	38,510.09
	-886,280.66
	<hr/>

Expenditure in free car parks

	2014 - 2015
	£
Parking operations and enforcement	23,404.95
Repair and maintenance	3,777.13
Rents payable	1.00
Business rates	6,205.44
Subscriptions	1,121.67
Central support	8,450.55
Wayleave rent income	-64.17
	<u>42,878.24</u>
Expenditure	11,105.24
Parking Services Administration	23,404.95
Central Service Administration	8,432.22
Income	-64.17
	<u>42,878.24</u>

Expenditure in multi-storey car park

	2014 - 2015
	£
Repair and maintenance	101.45
Water charges-metered	0.00
Rents payable	15,750.00
Business rates	4,193.40
Premises insurance	8,448.37
Central support	1,307.11
	<u>29,800.33</u>
Expenditure	28,493.22
Parking Services Administration	0
Central Service Administration	1,307.11
	<u>29,800.33</u>

Additional financial information, particularly in relation to on-street, can be found at

<http://www.dover.gov.uk/Transport,-Streets--Parking/Parking/Documents--Policies/Home.aspx>

CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Weekly briefings are held with all Civil Enforcement Officers during which they are updated with current legislation and regulations and informed of any particular issues. This ensures accurate, fair, transparent and consistent enforcement across the district.

In 2014 – 2015 DDC had an establishment of 2 CEO supervisors and 11 Civil Enforcement Officer's. We also employ three part-time Parking Assistants, whose role is to collect cash and undertake minor maintenance issues, freeing up the CEOs to undertake their enforcement role.

During this reporting year, due to resignations and difficulties in recruiting, CEOs generally operated at 3 members of staff under-strength. Also during this year, two Parking Assistants resigned.

SAFER PARKING

This is an award scheme known as Park Mark® run by the British Parking Association (BPA) with the support of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The award is given to those car parks that have a low crime rate and which demonstrate good management practices. Independent assessors from the police and the BPA inspect the car parks and decide whether or not each car park meets the necessary criteria for the award.

More information on the scheme is available on the BPA's website at www.britishparking.co.uk and a list of all car parks that have been accredited with the Park Mark® are listed on the Safer Parking website at www.saferparking.com

93% of the DDC car parks have the Park Mark® award.

TRANSPARENCY

Councils are required to publish annually the number of controlled parking spaces within their area. The table provides that information:

CONTROLLED OFF-STREET SPACES			
TOWN	P&D SPACES	DIS. SPACES	TOTAL
Dover	691	26	717
Deal	960	46	1006
Sandwich	427	12	439
Total	2078	84	2162

ESTIMATED CONTROLLED OFF-STREET SPACES	
TOWN	ESTIMATED SPACES
Dover	352
Deal	1073
Sandwich	191
Total	1616

If you have any questions relating to any part of this report, please do not hesitate to contact Christopher Allen, Head of Community Safety, CCTV and Parking, via e-mail at christopherallen@dover.gov.uk