

Thurrock Council
Annual parking report 2018

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1. Introduction

Thurrock Council provides parking services and has operated decriminalised parking enforcement since 1 April 2005. It enforces waiting and loading restrictions in the borough, both on-street and in the car parks under its management.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 requires the council to publish an annual parking report explaining how it operates and the uses of any surplus income on transportation-related schemes.

The provision and enforcement of parking supports the delivery of the objectives of the Thurrock Transport Strategy 2008-2021 – accessibility; tackling congestion; improving air quality; safer roads; and facilitating regeneration.

2. Parking objectives

The Thurrock Parking Strategy and Policies were reviewed and endorsed by Cabinet on the 12 October 2016.

The main objectives of the Parking Services team is to help maintain the free flow of traffic on our roads to support the safety of all road users and council-managed car parks; assist the efficient movement of traffic; increase compliance, and to maintain

access to services and amenities; Additionally, there is a special focus on tackling HGV parking in and around residential areas.

3. Parking services

During 2017/18, Thurrock Council employed seven full-time Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to patrol fixed beats to ensure enforcement is undertaken on a regular basis. Additionally, three full-time CEOs were employed to work on a twilight shift to increase enforcement of illegal HGV parking.

CEOs are also deployed in a vehicle on a mobile beat to cover locations that are not suitable to be carried out on foot. This includes morning and afternoon visits to enforce restrictions in the local surrounding areas of schools in the borough on a rota basis and on occasions, evening visits to enforce commercial vehicle restrictions.

The Officers use hand-held computers to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and to make detailed notes of the circumstances. The hand held computers incorporate digital cameras which were separate previously. For safety reasons, body worn video cameras are issued to all CEOs.

The notes and evidence gathered by the CEOs is used to ensure that challenges against the issue of PCNs are assessed objectively and consistently.

A statutory independent review process for PCNs is available through the Traffic Penalty Tribunal. Details of the grounds for appeal can be found at www.patrol-uk.info

The Parking Services team also deal with changes to parking policy, respond to enquiries and complaints and ensure parking information is kept up to date on the council's website.

It is also responsible for ensuring parking signs, markings and pay-and-display machines are maintained and for granting dispensations where appropriate.

4. Performance

Within the borough, there are two controlled parking zones (CPZs), one in Grays and one in Stanford-le-Hope and four permit parking area's (PPAs), in Grays, South Ockendon and Purfleet as well as 8 off-street car parks throughout the borough.

There are in the region of 1,280 marked bays for off street parking, and 1,250 for on street parking.

The council also enforces the car park at the Morrisons supermarket in Grays by agreement. An annual fee is paid by Morrisons' for enforcement and revenue from Penalty Charge Notices is paid to the council.

The following table provides the numbers of Penalty Charge Notices issued for contraventions in Thurrock, on and off street. It also provides details of the numbers of resident, business and visitor permits issued for its CPZs and PPAs.

Civil Parking Enforcement statistical information	2016/17	2017/18
On-street penalty charge notices issued	15,552	14,766
Off-street penalty charge notices issued	1,686	1,251
Residents' permits issued	3,588	2,748
Business permits issued	55	61
Visitor permits issued (valid for 20 visits up to 5 hours)	4,745	2,606
Blue Badges issued	2,861	2,936
PCNs issued in Morrisons' car park	1,222	767

The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued on-street decreased by approximately 5% with the number of PCNs issued being 15,552 in 2016/17 compared to 14,766 in 2017/18.

The number of Penalty Charge Notices issued at off-street parking places decreased by approximately 26.0% from 1,686 in 2016/17 to 1,251 in 2017/18. The figures for Morrisons' car park are shown separately in the table above.

The number of resident and visitor permits decreased although business parking permits had a slight increase.

The tables on the next page provide details of the most common parking contraventions for which Penalty Charge Notices were issued both on-street and off-street in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

The provision of parking enforcement has helped to support local retailers by ensuring that there is a regular turnover of parking spaces in and around town centres.

On-street – most common contraventions based on PCNs	2016/17	2017/18
Parked in restricted street during prescribed hours	3,873	4,947
Parked or loading/unloading in restricted street where waiting and loading/unloading restrictions are in force	225	246
Parked after expiry of paid for time in pay and display bay	320	273

On-street – most common contraventions based on PCNs	2016/17	2017/18
Parked without clearly displaying valid pay and display ticket	269	169
Parked in residents' or shared use parking place without displaying either a permit or voucher or pay and display ticket issue for that place	1,109	785
Parked in a permit space without displaying a valid permit	687	689
Parked in residents' or shared use parking place displaying an invalid permit, an invalid voucher or an invalid pay and display ticket	411	379
Parked in a loading place during restricted hours without loading	821	772
Parked adjacent to a dropped footway	92	101
Parked for longer than permitted	213	136
Parked in a designated disabled person' parking space without clearly displaying a valid disabled person's badge	281	328
Parked on a taxi rank 283 263		
Stopped where prohibited (on a clearway)	859	1,240
Stopped in a restricted area outside a school	44	59
Parked in contravention of a commercial vehicle waiting restriction	3,461	1,908
A heavy commercial vehicle wholly or partly parked on a footway, verge or land between two carriageways	1,633	2,156
Parked with payment made to extend the stay beyond initial time	2	0
Parked in a suspended bay/space or part of bay/space	7	1
Using a vehicle in a parking place in connection with the sale or offering or exposing for sale of goods	148	5
Stopped on a pedestrian crossing and/or crossing area marked	36	28
A commercial vehicle parked in a restricted street in contravention of the overnight waiting ban	23	14
Non-commercial parked on footpath/verge	78	15
Re-parked in the same parking place within an hour of leaving	1	6
Parked in a parking place or area not designated for that class	95	93
Not parked correctly within the bay marking of the bay or space	24	35
Vehicle parked more than 50cm from the kerb and not within a designated parking place	78	73
Parked on a restricted bus stop / stand	62	45
Other on-street PCNs	417	0
Total on-street PCNs	15,552	14,766

Off-street – most common contraventions based on PCNs	2016/17	2017/18
Parked after the expiry of time paid for in pay and display car park	497	353
Parked in a pay and display car park without clearly displaying a valid pay and display ticket or voucher or parking clock	1,046	682
Parked with additional payment made to extend the stay beyond the first time purchased	3	6
Parked beyond the bay markings	83	162
Parked causing an obstruction	7	19
Parked in a restricted area in a car park	39	15
Parked in a disabled persons parking space without permit	3	3
Parked in an area not designated for that class of vehicle	8	10
Other off-street PCNs (parked longer than permitted)	0	1
Total off-street PCNs	1,686	1,251

5. Finance

Civil parking enforcement income is from pay-and-display parking, permit fees and penalty charge notices, and an agreement to undertake civil enforcement in the Morrisons' supermarket car park in Grays Town Centre. The main areas of expenditure are on enforcement administration, parking infrastructure maintenance and debt recovery.

The following tables provide comparative figures for the parking income by source and the direct costs of civil parking enforcement in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

On and off-street parking income by source	2016/17	2017/18
On-street/Off-street parking charges	£446,812	£445,349
Permit income	£34,021	£38,940
Penalty charge notices	£336,515	£521,413
Other income	£824	£200
Total	£818,172	£1,005,902

Direct costs of Civil Parking Enforcement	2016/17	2017/18
Enforcement	-£579,169	-£551,861
Administration, appeals, debt recovery	-£12,313	-£20,549
Infrastructure maintenance	-£8,705	-£7,969
Capital charges	0	-£32,492
Total	-£600,187	-£612,871

Summary	2016/17	2017/18
Total parking income	£818,172	£1,005,902
Total direct costs of CPE	-£597,187	-£612,871
Outturn – net income	£217,985	£393,031

The parking service should be cost neutral. In a year of standard expenditure, an income of over £615,000 should produce a surplus. The use of any surplus income from civil parking enforcement is restricted to transport-related issues like the operation of public passenger transport services, highway or traffic improvement projects, and certain types of environmental improvement along with the maintenance of parking restrictions. The value of PCN income received can vary depending on which stage of the debt process payment is received.

6. Analysis and issues 2017/18

2017/18 was a year of minimal change for the Parking Services Team. Regular enforcement has continued with increased focus on monitoring HGV parking in the borough. There was a need to replace some of the parking machines as the ageing stock was falling into a state of disrepair.

7. Support for businesses

To help encourage people to shop locally, support was given to local businesses by providing free weekend parking throughout December 2017 in all on and off-street pay and display parking places controlled by the council.

8. Residents' parking

As a result of requests from residents, surveys and investigations have been carried out in order to determine the need to extend existing or introduce new resident parking schemes within the borough. The result is, subject to consultation, additional schemes are likely to be introduced during 2018/19.

9. Penalty Charge debt recovery

The council continued to take steps to increase its debt recovery for parking penalties in 2017/18 by registering more outstanding charges with the courts as debts and by appointing bailiffs to recover these debts, particularly in the cases of unpaid parking penalties issued to persistent evaders. The debt recovery process is being managed by the council's Debt Management Team and is being conducted in accordance with the fair debt policy.

The council's Debt Management Team continues to work with partners throughout Europe to trace the keepers of foreign-registered vehicles. This enables those individuals who have received a PCN to be pursued for their outstanding parking debt.

In 2017/18 the council received a payment of £38k for debt owed to the council in relation to foreign vehicles. This was as a result of the increased focus on HGV parking enforcement.

10. Plans for the year ahead

Increased focus on HGV enforcement will continue throughout 2018/19 in order to minimise inconvenience to residents and road users.

The remaining aged stock of parking machines will be renewed. This will enable card payments to be taken for parking charges at all pay to park parking places.

Further analysis will be carried out where appropriate to determine the need for additional Parking Permit Areas and / or Controlled Parking Zones to be introduced.

10.1 Parking tariff review

Parking charges in Thurrock are relatively low. Limited increases to tariffs for on and off street car parking areas and permits are reviewed annually.

10.2 Lorry parks

It is clear that although we have a small number of lorry parks in the borough it is extremely difficult to encourage drivers to use these facilities. The new twilight shift will continue not only to enforce illegal parking but, by the offering out of leaflets to drivers, will try and continue to educate those on the benefits of parking in the designated areas.

The council is in continued dialogue with Essex Police, the Port of Tilbury Police and DP World to monitor the situation and plan possible interventions. Reducing the impact of vehicle emissions in Thurrock is a high priority and therefore we are working to reduce on street lorry parking across the borough and encourage the use of these lorry parks. A new scheme will be piloted with an external provider to carry out sporadic night enforcements with a more robust action of clamping those illegally parked with a view to recovering all costs owed to the council by the company or individual.

10.3 Car parks

The number of off street car parks within Thurrock has remained the same as the previous year.

10.4 Freight action plan

The Thurrock Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) has ongoing work to develop an action plan in relation to HGV movements within the borough. The Group will link in with the Parking Team to look at ways to minimise the negative impact that freight movements have in the borough recognising that they are essential for local businesses.

10.5 Controlled Parking Zones and Residents Parking Areas

The council investigated the feasibility of introducing a CPZ in Tilbury in 2017/18.

The design and consultation was carried out in 2017/18 and implementation is planned for 2018/19.

10.6 Cashless Parking

The council purchased 14 new pay and display machines which incorporated a cash and card payment facility. This enables commuters to make cashless payments for their parking fees. The remaining 18 pay and display machines that do not have the cashless facility are likely to be replaced in 2018/19.

10.7 Staff Changes

Service improvements were sought throughout this year and the decision was made to transfer the Parking Services Team to the Environment and Highways Directorate as part of a directorate service review.

10.8 Permits

It is envisaged that the council will investigate the possibility of introducing season tickets to commuters who might prefer to pay for their parking permit on an annual basis and to consider the option of implementing chargeable contract parking permits for those who are in contract with the council and need wish to pay for parking.

Glossary

Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs)

Formerly known under the Road Traffic Act 1991 as Parking Attendants, the Traffic Management Act 2004 re-classified those responsible for taking civil enforcement action in relation to civil parking and traffic control contraventions as Civil Enforcement Officers

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

Refers to the enforcement of parking controls under regulations set down in the Traffic Management Act 2004

Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)

The Notice served directly (as set down in the Traffic Management Act 2004) by Civil Enforcement Officers to motorists for allegedly contravening civil parking controls within a Civil Enforcement Area.

Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) / Permit Parking Area (PPA)

A zone or area where parking is controlled through the provision of permits and other on street controls in order to manage kerb space and ensure that residents are not unduly inconvenienced by poor parking behaviour.