



Report of the Director of City Services

Report to North West Area Committee

Date: 29th June 2006

Subject: Decriminalised Parking Enforcement

Electoral Wards Affected:

Headingley
Hyde Park & Woodhouse
Kirkstall
Weetwood

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities
Women
Disabled people
Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared at the Committee's request to provide information on the Council's Parking Enforcement operation. It summarises progress made since the implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement and provides some information on parking enforcement activities in the North West Inner Area.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To summarise the first full year of operation of the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) scheme in Leeds, which began on 1st March 2005. Under the scheme, the council assumes responsibility for the enforcement of many traffic restrictions previously enforced by Police Traffic Wardens, through the issue of Penalty Charge notices. A further key difference is that disputed tickets are dealt with by an independent adjudicator rather than through the courts.
- 1.2 At a recent meeting of the Committee, Members asked for information on the progress made by the Parking Service and on the parking enforcement activities in the North West Inner Area.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 The decision to apply for DPE was taken by Executive Board on 10th December 2003. A Project Board was established to oversee a complete reorganisation of the service, which doubled in size and assumed responsibility for enforcement outside the city centre pay & display areas for the first time. Changes included an application to the Secretary of State to implement DPE, the transfer of Police Traffic Wardens, implementation of a new staffing structure, recruitment and training of a large number of staff, planning and implementation of new operational systems, new IT systems, new uniforms and equipment. The new service went live, as planned on 1st March 2005.
- 2.2 The Parking Service is responsible for enforcing the restrictions that have been made through the City's traffic regulation orders. These are legal orders made in accordance with the decisions of the Highways Division. The Parking service is responsible for enforcing these orders but not for developing new orders. These are planned and implemented after consultation by Traffic Engineers in the Highways Division.
- 2.3 The key aim of DPE is to increase compliance with these traffic orders. This reduction in illegal parking should improve traffic flows and road safety. In addition, a high quality enforcement scheme is needed, with rules applied reasonably with a "firm but fair" approach and excellent customer service.
- 2.4 The service makes extensive use of IT, beginning with the issue of tickets through handheld computers. This reduces the administrative tasks in creating the record and allows extensive data analysis to identify priorities, by both area and time of day. Deployment of Parking Attendants is carried out in line with this analysis rather than set patterns, allowing a flexible and responsive service which directly relates to offending patterns.

3.0 Main issues

3.1 Reducing illegal parking

- 3.1.1 A pre – DPE survey in November 2004 assessed levels of illegal parking in 4 key sites. The exercise was repeated on the corresponding week in November 2005, with results as follows :



- 3.1.2 Instances of illegal parking fell by 70 %, from 1097 in 2004 to 333 in 2005. The time spent by each illegally parked vehicle also fell – 30% of those in the commuter area (Clarendon Road) parked all day in 2004 but none did in 2005. Whereas 322 people without a permit used the residents bays in 2004, only 77 did so in 2005.
- 3.1.3 Measuring congestion is extremely complicated and the impact of the service would have to be weighted to take account of other factors such as rising traffic levels and new road schemes. However, comments from Urban Traffic Control and Metro (the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive) have indicated that there has been an improvement, with Metro commenting that “both Metro and the bus operators have noticed an improvement in traffic flow and less congestion.”
- 3.1.4 The numbers of PCNs issued in the first year was 115,367. This compares with about 60,000 before DPE. However, this does not indicate a rise in offences. The smaller amount of tickets before DPE was largely caused by the fact that the Police did not allocate enough resources to the traffic wardens, with the result that many traffic orders were basically not enforced for most of the time. The Police did not retain the income from parking tickets and understandably had higher priorities than parking.
- 3.1.5 A better comparison is with other core cities carrying out DPE. The figures are as follows :

Local authority	Population	PCN numbers	PCNs per head
Birmingham	977,097	175,925	0.18
Leeds	715,402	115,367	0.16
Liverpool	439,473	114,268	0.26
Manchester	392,819	131,374	0.33
Nottingham	266,988	95,116	0.34

3.2 Quality issues

- 3.2.1 A good measure of the quality of the service is the number of appeals won and lost. Rather than being heard at magistrates Court as before, disputed parking tickets are now considered by the National Parking Adjudication Service (NPAS). They consider not just the validity of the ticket but also how the statutory back office processes have been handled, including replies to letters, notebook entries, case papers etc. The adjudicator publishes an annual report which makes benchmarking straightforward. As the report from 2005 has not been published yet, the table below compares Leeds performance in 05/06 with the published figures for 2004/05.

Council	Tickets issued	Appeals received	Appeal rate	% appeals won
All DPE councils	2,853,089	10,441	0.37%	38%
Birmingham	174,852	1260	0.72%	19%
Liverpool	109,869	222	0.2%	26%
Manchester	135,9760	867	0.64%	44%
Nottingham	90,808	398	0.44%	39%
Bristol	54,592	227	0.42%	30%
Core cities average	113,165	595	0.48%	39.2%
Leeds	115,883	180	0.15%	53%

- 3.2.2 The team dealt with a huge increase in correspondence – 25,920 items were received during the financial year 2005/06, and 94% received a reply within 10 days.
- 3.2.3 Due to deficiencies in vehicle records, the owners of some vehicles are untraceable and there is also a significant number of people who simply will not pay the tickets. Because of this, about 25% of tickets are unrecoverable. The highest payment rate in the UK is 78% (in Tunbridge Wells), and most authorities achieve between 50% – 70%. Exact figures are not available as there is no requirement to publish them. In Leeds, the payment rate at the end of the year was 64%. However payments are received up to 1 year after the ticket is issued as the statutory processes are followed through and so many tickets issued in 2005 will be paid this year. The payment rate for tickets issued in April 2005 is over 70% and this compares well to other cities.
- 3.2.4 The success of the team in its first year was recognised at the British Parking Awards, where the team were judged second place in national category of Parking Team of the year.

4.0 Matters raised by the Inner North West Committee

A number of specific questions were raised by Area Management Officers relating to parking enforcement in the North West Inner Committee area and these are addressed below.

4.1 In terms of parking enforcement what control does Leeds City Council have, what control do the West Yorkshire Police have?

The council can issue tickets in the following areas :

- Double & single yellow lines
- Residents Permit zones
- Loading bays
- Disabled spaces
- Offences in Council owned car parks
- On street pay parking areas
- Limited waiting
- Pedestrian areas

The Police retain responsibility for:

- Obstructive or dangerous parking
- Pavement parking
- Parking on verges and green spaces
- Moving traffic offences (e.g. access only orders etc)
- Parking on zigzags (near schools or zebra crossings)

4.2 What is deemed inconsiderate parking but not illegal ?

The common thread for all council offences is that the restriction must be in a traffic order. If its not in the order we can't issue a ticket. So parking in areas with "Keep clear" markings or on green space can't be tackled.

4.3 What enforcement resources are there in the Inner North West (including how many positions, what hours do they work day/evening, what areas do they cover, how are they controlled/managed) ?

Attendants are deployed to various beats which reflect the traffic restrictions and offending patterns rather than area boundaries. For this reason it is not possible to give an exact figure on deployment. Hours of work are 7am – 8pm, with later work on occasion for particular projects. They are controlled through Senior Parking Attendants using the data analysis. As all tickets are issued by handheld computer, detailed analysis is possible. We analyse locations by time of offence, type of offence, PA performance, payment rates and cancellation rates. This work is done every day and then used to adjust deployment patterns and manage staff.

The inner North West area is the second busiest after the city centre and would receive 8 – 10 patrols per day on average out of a total of about 35 – 40 patrols in the whole district.

4.4 How is intelligence on problem areas and offenders feed through ?

The main tool is the data analysis above, but we also receive information from the public and Councillors, through correspondence and a telephone helpline, which we act on. The attendants have a daily briefing which includes details of particular problems.

4.5 Figures indicating the number of fines issued, the spread across the area, how much revenue this amounts to and where the money goes to

The DPE database is organised by street and Parking Attendant beat area. An analysis of offences in the North West Inner area is given below. As the service is not set up on Area Management lines, exact figures for financial year 2005/06 are not possible, but the figures below have been produced by analysing the main areas of offences in the area.

Woodhouse – University area, Archeries, Marlboroughs

Sheepscar – Oatlands, Lovell Parks, Carltons

West Park – Becketts Park, Drummonds, Church Woods, St Anne’s Road

	Woodhouse	West Park	Sheepscar	Headingley	Total
Number of offences	19,959	1215	2688	2322	26,184

About half the offences are for parking in residents zones without a permit. This is higher than the city average and reflects the large number of zones in the area (14).

The total income expected is approximately £28 per ticket issued so this represents a gross income of about £730,000. Under the legislation, this money can only be used for highways expenditure, so once enforcement costs have been deducted the surplus contributes towards the Council’s highways improvement programme.

5.0 Recommendations

The committee are asked to note the contents of this report.