

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

# Parking Services

## Annual Report 2013/2014



Bath and North East Somerset  
- *The place to live, work and visit*

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# Introduction

## **Councillor Caroline Roberts – Executive Member for Transport**



Welcome to the first Parking Services Annual Report. My role as Cabinet Member for Transport includes the responsibility for Parking Services, and therefore I know first-hand the positive contribution made by each team member to ensure that this important service provides a real and practical contribution in ensuring that parking is managed for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses alike.

On a daily basis the Parking Services team face a number of challenges; however, its role is vital to the economic and social cohesion of the whole area. The service provides management of our road network to ensure that it is free of congestion, thus allowing residents, commuters, visitors and tradespersons within the Authority's urban areas to be able to find adequate parking whilst ensuring the continual rotation of available parking spaces in support of the local economy.

It will become evident on reading this report that Parking Services has changed considerably during the last few years. These changes were necessary to ensure that our service remains fit for purpose and can react swiftly in its delivery.

As with many other local authorities, we are facing challenging times with the overall Council budget, however the income from our Service does allow us to continue to fund transport schemes and try to encourage people to move towards sustainable travel where possible. All of the activities detailed in this plan help ensure that we deliver our local vision and objectives through effective and efficient Services for the benefit of our local communities.

***Cllr Caroline Roberts***  
***October 2014***

# Service Overview

## Chris Major Group Manager Transport and Parking



### Introduction

It is the recommendation of the Department for Transport (DfT) that all Local Authorities engaged in parking enforcement under the Traffic Management Act 2004 produce an annual report.

This Report takes a similar approach to our Service Plan, it covers a number of similar themes but provides more detail. The Secretary of State for Transport's 'Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Regulations' suggests what a local authority's annual report might contain; this document endeavours to adhere to this guidance where possible.

What do you think of when you think of Parking Services? I imagine that for some of you, your first thoughts are those relating to a ticket stuck to the windscreen of your car when you have just stopped on a Double Yellow Line, or overstayed your time in a car park as a result of being delayed on return to your vehicle. This is certainly the view of many people to whom I speak. The truth is that the percentage of time spent dealing with Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) equates to less than 10% of the total working day, every day, for our On-Street Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO). The majority of the time is spent talking to people, providing a uniformed and visible presence on-street representing both the Council and the area. Parking Services also provide many other services designed to prevent the public from receiving PCNs, such as the issue of parking permits, the provision of car parks and on street parking areas, and the administration of the Blue Badge scheme that enables members of the community who have mobility issues to park legitimately close to local amenities.

It is recognised that Parking Services may not be the most popular service provided by this Authority, with recent press coverage using the PCN enforcement element helping to generate cheap headlines without, in most cases, having looked further into the service that is provided and how we help the public, the community and the local economy. Yes, parking does cost or is restricted in many areas, but charging policies do help support transport strategies as well as supporting many services provided by the Council and without doubt contributes to the overall economic vibrancy and vitality of this area.

I give my assurance that we do not issue targets for the numbers of PCNs issued. All staff are directly employed by the Council, the emphasis on their deployment is to ensure that they are in the right place at the right time, acting at all times as a visible deterrent to illegal parking.

The delivery of parking services is a team effort with its different elements coming together to ensure that road users have an opportunity to move around Bath and North East Somerset safely, with as little delay as possible.

Over the last three years my Parking Services Team has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to improve many elements of the service. Specifically during the period of this report the service underwent a significant change program, this had little or no detrimental effect on the performance of staff or the output provided to the customer. We are committed to consolidating the improvements introduced this year so as to ensure that we are in a strong position for the future.

Do we get it right every time? Unfortunately not, but I can assure you of the commitment of the Parking Services Team who are working hard to improve this service. This is evidenced by the many improvements seen and highlighted below.

### What this report provides

This report provides an opportunity for the Service to look back on what was committed for delivery and an opportunity to look forward to what is still left to do. Within this report you will find details on the improvements made and the statistics around those changes.

As a result of the government's current austerity measures it is challenging to find the resources to be able to continue to develop the Service, especially when significant investment is necessary. That is why I am particularly proud of the service improvements made year on year.

### Back Office Improvement

New back office Information Technology (IT) applications have been introduced that increases the level of direct customer self-service and provides additional benefits such as virtual parking permits, online evidence viewing and appeals for PCN Representations. These applications, as well as delivering a financial saving in the region of £250k per annum when compared to the previous systems, have provided an accurate management information system that enables better decision making with regard to staff deployment and process change.

In particular, the introduction of virtual parking permits has led to a new way for residents and businesses to purchase and process their permits. The new application is designed to be more customer friendly providing a self-service capability. In addition, Pay & Stay customers are also able to activate parking via their mobile phone by text message at their standard message rate.

Our parking suspension process has been redesigned and re-launched to allow access to our congested streets for those who need them. The service has received significant praise from users and improved the ability for essential services like removals, building works and community events to proceed with ease.

### Events

We applied for and were granted a parking suspension sign by the DfT that is now used for all suspension requirements and events. The Team is the first point of contact in the planning of significant events such as the Olympic Torch Relay and the annual Bath Half Marathon. Staff are provided on the ground to support the event organiser and provide the necessary vehicle lifting service, which is used as a last resort to ensure that events can take place successfully and safely. This change has been recognised both internally

with staff excellence awards, and externally with much improved working relationships with event organisers.

### Car Park Improvements

All Pay & Display machines in our off street car parks have been renewed, removing technology that in some areas was nearly 30 years old and therefore, unreliable and unauditible. These new machines are connected to mobile networks allowing a greater understanding of the usage of each car park, together with improved machine security against vandalism.

Cashless parking has been introduced (payment by mobile phone SMS text message) in all car parks, as well as for our on street locations. This functionality is part of our permit and enforcement system that allows our customers to phone, go online, text or use a smartphone app to activate parking. Therefore increasing access, payment flexibility and convenience for our customers.



Electric vehicle charging points have also been installed within a number of our car parks. This has helped and supported the development of the wider national network of charging points, making the ownership and day to day use of such vehicles possible with the long term benefit of the reduction of CO2 levels in the environment.

### Enforcement Team Improvements

The service provided by our Enforcement Team has been re-launched. The team has relocated to a new office base that provides fit for purpose accommodation and offices and includes a dedicated training facility. This improvement will enable us to continually develop the skills of all

our on street staff and maintain the professional standards of the team so as to ensure that the service we provide is of a standard we expect.

All staff have been issued with new uniforms with a new colour scheme. This new look is designed to increase CEOs visibility on street, reduce instances of illegal parking, and make them a point of contact for the public. Furthermore, to deter personal assault and to enhance the evidence capturing process, all CEOs now wear body worn cameras with audio facilities; officers have worn such equipment since January 2014.

To improve and expand the ambassadorial role of the on street team, we have worked with the Bath Business Improvement District in a number of joint training sessions. Further training is planned with our colleagues in Heritage Services to increase staff knowledge about the City of Bath.

During the year we purchased and used an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) vehicle for use as a parking deterrent at high priority areas such as schools. The development of the service has also allowed us to use the technology to survey areas for consideration in the development of Residents Parking Areas, allowing such schemes to be designed based on accurate up to date information.

### **Residents Parking Purpose and Guidance Documents**

New documents entitled 'The Purpose of Residents Parking Schemes' and 'Guidance on the Introduction of Residents Parking Schemes' have been published to provide further clarity to residents on the Council's approach to Residents Parking Schemes and how they will develop in future. We have previously been criticised for not providing such information and have often found ourselves defending both sides of an argument around such schemes.

These documents are published on our website and allow members of the public to see both the positives and the negatives associated with such schemes. They also provide guidance on how we assess and design such schemes and the criteria used to decide if a request will go forward, in an open and transparent way.

### **Blue Badge Service Improvements**

Following the Blue Badge improvement service changes in January 2012, we have worked hard to improve the delivery of Blue Badge services. It is something that I am committed to personally, along with my team.

As an example, we have implemented Independent Mobility Assessments (IMA) ensuring that approximately 40% of all applications where appropriate, are reviewed by a trained Physiotherapist on a face to face basis. This is a significant improvement on previous years where no applicants were independently assessed, with all information taken at face value. This service is funded by a dedicated Blue Badge grant from the Department of Health.

A new appeals process has also been implemented to ensure that all applicants who have been refused a badge following an IMA have the opportunity to challenge the decision taken. This provides reassurance to all applicants that we are both rigorous in our decision making processes and are compliant with the guidance instructions.



From October 2013 we have introduced an enforcement process to ensure that Blue Badges are used in accordance with the scheme's "rights and responsibilities in England". This has resulted in 14 seized badges. Subsequent convictions outside the period of this report have resulted in fines and costs averaging over £600. Due to changes in the legislation we will be increasing the amount of time our Enforcement Team spend on patrol, this will enhance the number of checks we can perform. As always, as an Authority, we would prefer to have zero convictions with all badges



being used correctly; unfortunately, increasing evidence both nationally and locally suggests that this may not be the case. The view of this Council is that increased enforcement will help to ensure that those who need to access facilities with this concession are able to do so.

### **Map Based Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)**

Since the start of 2014 we have introduced a programme to move all of our TROs to a map based system to increase the ability of the general public to understand the relevant restrictions within their area. The information will be online so that by logging into the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) all current TROs will be visible. As part of the process we have taken the opportunity to review the wording within all of our Orders and harmonise all articles.

### **The Mystery Shopper**

As the enforcement of parking is often a subjective issue, we appointed Parking Associates to conduct a Mystery Shopper exercise to benchmark our service. This process removes any financial impacts around the issue of a PCN and allows a dispassionate look at how processes are followed, both on-street and within the back office, highlighting areas with improvement opportunities. The use of a "critical friend" ensures that we can be open and transparent about what can go wrong, allowing us to raise standards where necessary.

Overall the results were pleasing with positive praise for our on-street staff regarding their interactions with the public and the 'mystery shopper'. Highlights include praise on the standard of dress and professionalism displayed. Issues were raised regarding patrol areas, these concerns will feed into a review that will be undertaken in 2014/2015.

Contact with the Back Office Team was equally positive with a number of small points raised concerning the improvement of staff knowledge and ultimately the information given. I acknowledge that some responses to PCN challenges and representations were not up to the expected standard; this review has allowed us to implement a formal audit process to monitor closely the responses.

My intention is to employ the Mystery Shopper exercise again next year to provide a direct year on year comparison to ensure that the issues raised this year have not reoccurred.

### **Looking Forward – 2014/2015**

Due to the significant change program we have undertaken over the last three years our plan for next year is to consolidate our achievements which will ensure a strong foundation for the future. Our intention is to further utilise the data we now hold to develop efficient ways of service provision to boost customer satisfaction levels.

### **Staff Training**

All staff within the Parking Services back office are expected to pass the City and Guilds Award (Level 3) in Parking Notice Processing. This investment will continue despite reduced training budgets. Further customer service training will also be undertaken to ensure that customer contact becomes a point of excellence.

Staff who deal with Blue Badges are expected to undertake additional training regarding the issues faced by those members of the community who have disabilities; this will ensure such staff are able to empathise with customers by fully understanding the importance of a Blue Badge in maintaining independence.

Senior members of the Enforcement Team will be trained to provide formal certificated training to new recruits, additionally ensuring that the current training standards we apply are formally recognised.

I am also committed to existing staff development. A number of staff are currently performing roles at a higher level due to promotion opportunities; these staff continue to require support so as to ensure the long term future of the team is safe. Additionally my Management Team are committed to working towards higher level qualifications over the next 24 months to improve their skill sets.

### **Blue Badge Enforcement**

I have already mentioned the investment we have made in the Blue Badge Service and this will continue. I expect to increase the amount of enforcement checks undertaken. Parking Services

staff will spend more time on the ground with the Enforcement Team increasing the patrol areas covered, and the times of day that checks are undertaken. At present I expect the number of seizures and prosecutions to remain broadly similar to this year, however the team is aware that the level of abuse is significant which re-enforces our determination to further reduce such abuses.

### Staff Deployment & Smarter Patrols

Historically Enforcement Staff were deployed based on local knowledge and convenience, with a prime focus on the centre of Bath. Due to the increased data from our parking applications the team are now able to use staff resources more flexibly. As a consequence increasing coverage to those areas that in the past may not have received a sufficient number of patrols.

I would like to remind readers that there are no set targets for the issue of PCNs, but we do record staff deployment hours; without staff on the ground there may be network issues relating to Pay & Display machines or virtual permits which potentially could generate customer frustration. Similarly further deployment will lessen the abuse of parking spaces restricted for use by residents or shoppers. If we can help encourage the correct parking behaviours, I believe that this action will play some part in supporting the vitality and economic vibrancy of the area.

Further work with our ANPR vehicle will focus on resident's only areas; the vehicle will ensure a greater coverage across all residential parking zones with the ability to identify vehicles without permits quicker and easier.

We will review and update where necessary the discretionary cancellation policies for Bus Lane and Off/On Street PCNs ensuring that the public are able to understand how the Council undertakes enforcement.

### Special Event: Bath Christmas Market Coach Permits

A new booking arrangement will be in place for 2014/2015, all permits will be virtual, with purchase made through an online booking portal. Visiting coaches will book their own slots for dropping

off and picking up passengers, thereby reducing administration overheads. A new layover area for coaches at Weston Island has been agreed with First Bus which will be used for the first time this year. This arrangement links to the longer term re-development strategy of the current coach park which is situated within Bath's Enterprise Zone. Future developments of the system will allow us to offer discounts for early booking and incentives for attending on the quieter days.

### Conclusion

The Local Authority area of Bath and North East Somerset covers a diverse landscape, from the historic mining areas around Radstock to the rich rural area of the Chew Valley. However, a key area of attention for Parking Services is of course the multi-faceted World Heritage Site of Bath which by its very nature requires a significant share of the Authority's resources and as a consequence, warrants a major focus within this Annual Report.

I hope that you find this report of interest and informative. If you have any particular comments on any of its content, please email or write to the following address –

**email: [parking@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:parking@bathnes.gov.uk)**

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# 1: Location & Service Summary

## Location

Bath is situated in the heart of the West Country and is recognised as a place of international cultural significance, being designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city itself contains many aspects representing the history of England.

Primary visitor attractions are the Roman Baths (including Celtic Presence), Bath Abbey where the first King of England (Edgar) was crowned in 973, the Royal Crescent, designed by John Wood the younger and built between 1767 and 1774, and the world famous Thermae Spa. These attractions alone ensure thousands of visitors each year.

Other major towns and areas within the Bath and North East Somerset Authority are Keynsham (an historic Market Town listed in the Domesday Book, believed to be named after Saint Keyne), Radstock (one of the best preserved coal-mining towns in England which is the basis of its conservation area status), Midsomer Norton (a Market Town, with close historic links with the local area's coal-mining heritage, characterised by the River Somer which runs the length of the town centre) and the Chew Valley Area (an area of rich arable and dairy farmland, located to the south-west of the Authority area, interspersed with a number of historic villages).

Total population of the Authority as recorded by the Office of National Statistics 2011 census was 176,015 (169,040 in 2001).

The City of Bath itself is situated on or close to major road and rail transport links and is 13 miles south-east from Bristol. Other major cities in the region include Gloucester, Salisbury, Wells, Bournemouth, Taunton, Exeter and Plymouth.

Given the City's population, together with increasing numbers of visitors, parking control is an integral part of the networked management duty requirements of this Authority. Parking Services comprises of a series of teams that work seamlessly

together to ensure that residents, visitors and other road users can move around freely with as little congestion as possible caused by inconsiderate or poor parking, and are able to access the services and attractions that Bath and North East Somerset holds. To do this and protect our local heritage, Parking Services makes use of all the necessary powers granted to the Authority that includes bus lane and bus gate enforcement, as well as other restrictions that reduces the impact of vehicles especially in Bath's city centre.

Interestingly the 2011 census reported that the number of cars and vans owned by Authority residents has increased by 6,958 since 2001 to 92,628; this means that there are now 125 cars and vans per 100 households. This is greater than the average figure of 116 cars and vans per 100 households for England.



## Civil Parking Enforcement in Bath & North East Somerset: Service Summary

The introduction of the Road Traffic Act of 1991 (RTA 1991) decriminalised parking restrictions, with the Police no longer enforcing parking restrictions and passing the responsibility to the Local Authority (the Enforcement Authority).

Following the creation of the unitary district authority of Bath & North East Somerset Council in 1996, the Authority looked to take up new civil enforcement powers introduced for parking that enabled the Council to become an Enforcement Authority. Following this approval the Parking Services Team was established (currently led by Andrew Dunn as Team Manager) and is responsible

for all enforcement. Overall the team is part of the combined Transport and Parking Group, within the Authority's Environmental Services division.

The team also undertakes management of the residents parking permit scheme, as well as the issue of other permits that allow parking in a controlled zone during restricted hours, these include Medical Permits, Hotel Permits and Trade Pay & Stay accounts. The team also administers the issue of Blue Badges. Parking Services is a multi-disciplined team incorporating CEOs and Supervisors who essentially patrol the streets, provide help to the public, and ensure traffic flow. Additionally, our front line patrol officers are supported by qualified maintenance staff. To facilitate the Authority's green parking and transport strategy Parking Services also has team members located at each of Bath's Park & Ride car parks.

Our back office team is organised into two separate but complimentary sections (Business Support and Business Performance & Projects). These staff deal with all correspondence and telephone enquiries relating to the issue of PCNs, as well as service requests for parking suspensions, the review of residents parking schemes and other projects in relation to the delivery and enhancement of the service. The service is dedicated to delivering an efficient and effective service to the residents of Bath & North East Somerset.

## 2: Parking Provision – On and Off-Street

### Residents Parking

As per the situation in many urban areas the majority of parking spaces, especially in Bath, is restricted for use by residents only. However, due to the compact nature of the city and the high density of the properties, capacity issues still exist (see Fig 1). For example, if all households entitled to a permit in both the Central Zone and Zone 1 were to request permits then significant parking issues would arise. Hopefully the fact that these residents are living in the centre of one of the most prestigious cities in the world, with many attractions and facilities that such a position offers, the necessity to own a car is negated by excellent public transport links.

Further work is to start shortly on a review of the existing parking arrangements in the Central Zone. The aim is to resolve a series of problems that have been brought to the attention of Parking Services by residents since the implementation of controlled parking in 2000.

#### Residents Parking - Total Permits x Spaces x Properties

Zone	Total Spaces (Est - based on 5m kerb per space)	Residents Permits	2 <sup>nd</sup> Residents Permits	% Permit Holders with 2nd Permit	Business Permits	Total	Parking Demand and Pressure (Permits issued / Spaces available)	Residential Properties	Commercial Properties	Total	% Res Properties with at least 1 Permit	% Res Properties with a 2nd Permit
Central Zone	936	1189	0	0.00%	40	1229	131.30%	2912	2298	5210	40.83%	0.00%
Zone 1	629	517	110	21.28%	112	739	117.49%	1673	340	2013	30.90%	6.58%
Zone 2	470	224	54	24.11%	29	307	65.32%	537	56	593	41.71%	10.06%
Zone 3	564	220	57	25.91%	2	279	49.47%	556	109	665	39.57%	10.25%
Zone 4	234	102	22	21.57%	10	134	57.26%	297	39	336	34.34%	7.41%
Zone 5	584	219	48	21.92%	3	270	46.23%	631	164	795	34.71%	7.61%
Zone 6	338	237	42	17.72%	26	305	90.24%	700	125	825	33.86%	6.00%
Zone 7	695	449	116	25.84%	31	596	85.76%	853	152	1005	52.64%	13.60%
Zone 8	278	71	32	45.07%	23	126	45.32%	147	8	155	48.30%	21.77%
Zone 9	386	32	13	40.63%	0	45	11.66%	231	6	237	13.85%	5.63%
Zone 10	699	153	44	28.76%	4	201	28.76%	410	4	414	37.32%	10.73%
Zone 11	388	127	42	33.07%	2	171	44.07%	188	59	247	67.55%	22.34%
Zone 12	150	82	24	29.27%	8	114	76.00%	132	13	145	62.12%	18.18%
Zone 14	211	18	5	27.78%	0	23	10.90%	75	0	75	24.00%	6.67%
Zone 15	279	254	65	25.59%	0	319	114.34%	530	0	530	47.92%	12.26%
Zone 16	110	104	19	18.27%	0	123	111.82%	273	0	273	38.10%	6.96%
Zone A	115	27	5	18.52%	0	32	27.83%	81	0	81	33.33%	6.17%
Zone B	121	35	11	31.43%	0	46	38.02%	141	0	141	24.82%	7.80%
Zone C	80	38	5	13.16%	0	43	53.75%	112	9	121	33.93%	4.46%
Crown Hill	5	0	0	0.00%	2	2	40.00%	0	4	4	0.00%	0.00%

Fig 1 - Provision of Residents and Business permits within each controlled parking zone and associated parking demand.

\*Data is based on bays only during controlled hours and does not factor in availability of Single Yellow Line parking after the controlled hours end.

A second review that focuses on the parking arrangements in the locality of Bath's Royal United Hospital is to be completed. As with any facility located primarily in a residential area there is limited parking available on site; as a consequence of high staff numbers and visitors, this inevitably leads to the overspill of vehicles into the surrounding streets, causing a number of issues for residents.

In Bath the standard annual charge for a first permit is £100 with a second permit costing £160. This price reflects the Authority's requirement to make all zones self-financing by reflecting the true cost of implementation and control. However, as a result of significant savings made this year in our administration software systems a decision was made not to increase our permit prices.

Figure 2 details the true cost of maintaining controlled parking for residents with expenditure still exceeding permit income.

Item	Annual Cost (Est)	Total
Enforcement	£555,353.00	£555,353.00
System Cost	£0.00	£0.00
Activation of Permits	£30,000.00	£30,000.00
Permit holders	£500.00	£500.00
Permit Paper	£5,389.00	£5,389.00
Renewal letters	£5,417.00	£5,417.00
Maintenance	£44,218.00	£44,218.00
Admin	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>£660,877.00</b>
Permit Income		<b>-£570,000.00</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>		<b>£90,877.00</b>

Fig 2 - Income and expenditure for Residents Parking Schemes in Bath & North East Somerset, 2013/14.

## Permits

In addition to resident permits, there are other permits that support local business, medical, and social care services within the Authority's area (see Fig 3) that allow parking within a controlled zone. Additionally, a pay and stay Trade Permit scheme is operated. These accounts again allow parking in a controlled zone by registered traders such as building contractors, plumbers, garden maintenance and estate agents.

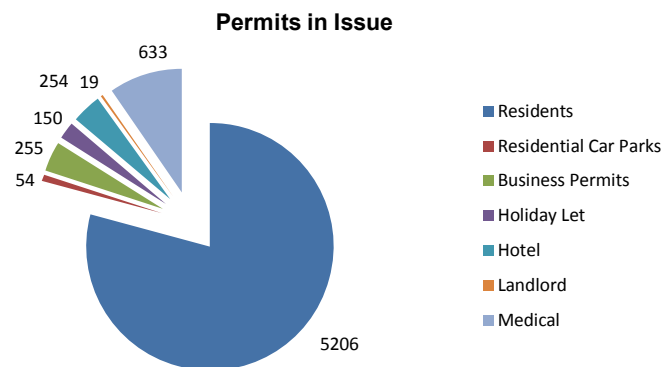


Fig 3 - Permits issued to allow parking within a controlled parking zone in Bath 2013/14.

## On-Street - Premium Charging and Behavioural Change

As part of its February 2013 budget the Council increased the charges at 24 premium on street Pay and Display locations within Bath City Centre in January 2014, following a freeze in charges since 2010. This increase was aimed at establishing a behavioural change in motorists by ensuring the balance of charges across the city centre continued to support the charging hierarchy, and ultimately the Council's transportation policies. This policy encourages motorists to use the Park & Ride service and our off street car parks where prices are more attractive.

An "ultra-premium tariff" was introduced in a number of high profile locations within Bath City Centre where other parking options such as off street car parks, are readily available. This policy retains on street parking for those who wish to use it, but with a higher charge to match the location and its convenience. A secondary reason for its implementation is to discourage lengthy stays and promote space turnover so as to benefit the local economy. Example locations include Milsom Street and Laura Place; previously both were charged at the same rate as an outer zone location despite their highly desirable and convenient position close to the city centre. In addition this policy should deter excessive road use in and around such architecturally significant areas of central Bath, such as the Circus and the Royal Crescent.

Since implementation of the ultra-premium charges initial figures reveal that the number of transactions at these locations has fallen by an average of 25%



compared to the same period (January – March) 12 months ago; as a result income has fallen by 11%. The loss of these transactions has been offset by the consequential rise in income from off street parking; however, at present it is not possible to directly correlate this with the fall in on street usage. Although this action has confirmed the expectation of the increased availability of convenient spaces within the city centre for those willing to pay a premium charge for a short stay. In support of these changes, city centre footfall figures for the period in question did not reduce.

### Off Street - Charging Comparison

During the year we conducted a short survey to see how Bath's parking charges compare to other similar sized cities across the country. It revealed that our charges compare favourably with the average tariff. National comparisons indicate that some local authorities have increased parking charges to balance budgets. In contrast, Bath & North East Somerset Council has focused on avoiding an increase in parking charges as such action has a direct impact on local businesses and its customers. The exception to this is the introduction of the "ultra-premium tariff".

Parking fees in urban centres are always a hot topic for discussion by businesses and residents. However, it is important to realise that charges must reflect the needs of the city. Bath has limited and narrow roads compounded by the fact that it is a major tourist centre; if parking charges are set too low, this results in extra congestion. The Council, under its environmental policy, has a responsibility to ensure that parking tariffs direct drivers towards sustainable habits. In that aim, Park & Ride services are actively promoted with attractive pricing; parking and a return bus fare starts from £2.60.

### Park and Ride

The receipt of funds from central government to deliver the Bath Transport Package has enabled the creation of 800 extra parking spaces at the Lansdown and Odd Down sites. Our Park and Ride option continues to offer visitors and commuters the best value for money, with parking and travel to the city centre on low emission diesel/electric buses. Work continues to increase the number of spaces at Newbridge, with the completion of all work expected by November 2014. Our service runs 7 days a week.

## 3: Parking Enforcement

### Our Approach

The approach to enforcement is simple; our outcomes are measured by deployment and not by the number of PCNs issued. Enforcement Officers on the ground encourage good behaviour by motorists to park in legitimate areas rather than in contravention; this helps prevent congestion and ultimately reduces the delay to other drivers. To educate and increase compliance from drivers, our on-street staff must be deployed in the right areas at the right time.

Obviously, we do issue PCNs to vehicles in contravention (Fig 4). However, this does not happen if a driver is with a vehicle and is reasonable to a request from a CEO to move the vehicle. To help with this visual deterrent, we have introduced a new CEO uniform to ensure our

*Fig 4 - Breakdown of PCNs issued by location and by contravention level.*

	Number of PCNs issued	% of PCNs	Number issued at the Higher Level	% of issued Higher PCNs	Number issued at the Lower Level	% of issued Lower PCNs
<b>Off-Street</b>	10818	13.3%	606	5.6%	10212	94.4%
<b>On-Street</b>	27309	33.6%	20139	73.7%	7170	26.3%
<b>Bus Lane</b>	43094	53.0%	43094	100.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Sub Total</b>	81221	99.9%	63839	78.6%	17382	21.4%
<b>ANPR vehicle</b>	108	0.1%	108	100.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	81329	100.0%	63947	78.6%	17382	21.4%

officers are readily recognisable by the general public. Our full time officers work 7 days a week between 7am and 8pm and at other times as dictated by need or public request.



The issue of PCNs is approximately 10% of an individual Officers duty time each day, the remaining percentage of time is spent representing the Council by acting as front line Customer Service Agents. This time, which has been historically overlooked, can make a difference to the many visitors and tourists to the area, as officers provide an encyclopaedic knowledge of the many sites of interest in the locality. As an indicator, over 5 million visitors came to Bath in 2013, and the only representative of the Council that many will see are our CEOs.

The Mystery Shopper exercise has allowed us to gain a true understanding and reflection of the patrol service. Overall the report provided a positive stance and in particular praising our officers for the high standards of dress, professionalism and friendliness. Such reports allow us to counter, but not dismiss, negative perceptions and comments.

## Grace Periods

This Authority implements a common sense approach to enforcement and this is reflected by the grace periods we use. These are generally set within the software used on the handheld computer carried by enforcement staff as this removes the uncertainty of manual timing and therefore provides a consistent approach.

For Pay and Display bays and time limited parking the Council allows a minimum of 5 minutes grace after the expiry time. This allows the motorist the opportunity to return to the vehicle and remove it within a reasonable tolerance of the restriction. In reality the period after expiry on many occasions is far longer.

A minimum 5 minute observation period is also used for Double and Single Yellow Line contraventions (code 01). However, this period is used to allow the Enforcement Officer the opportunity to confirm whether or not a vehicle is exempt from the regulations (loading and unloading or other similar exemptions). Furthermore, this period is extended for commercial vehicles which are likely to be using a permitted exemption.

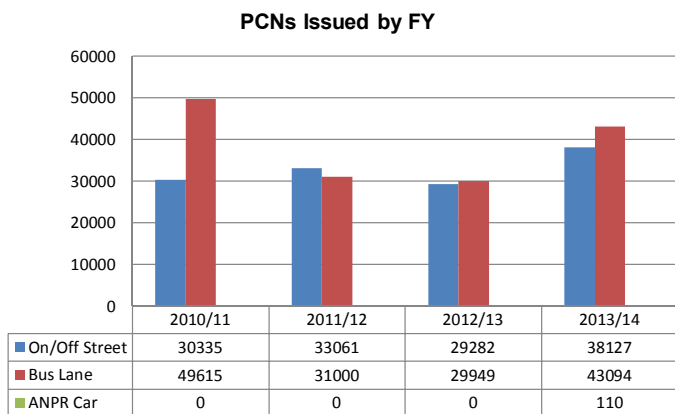
Of course, even with such observation periods it is possible that a vehicle is exempt, but once a PCN is issued it is required that the motorist follows the written appeals procedure. This prevents Enforcement Officers being pressured into removing or cancelling a PCN and is in accordance with guidance set by the Secretary of State for Transport.

## On-Street Enforcement Overview

As expected, two contraventions account for the majority of PCNs issued on street (see Fig 5):

01 - Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours (commonly known as parking on Double or Single Yellow Lines) – 7,871 PCNs issued (29% of total on-street PCNs issued)

12 - Parked in a resident's or shared use parking place without clearly displaying either a permit or pay & display ticket – 8,283 PCNs issued (30% of total on-street PCNs issued)



*Fig 5 - PCN issue for across the last four years*

In a city as congested as Bath, with the majority of the centre restricted to residents parking only or dual use bays, it is not a surprise that these contraventions are the most common (see Annex A), as drivers take the risk and park in contravention. With the limited resources available our Enforcement Staff cannot patrol all of our streets at the same time, however, enforcement is always about proportionality. Therefore, our approach is to endeavour to hit the right balance between the numbers of vehicles parking in contravention and the numbers of staff on patrol.

### Off-Street Enforcement Overview

There are no real surprises in the types of contraventions that account for the majority of PCNs issued within our car parks:-

83 - Parked without clear display of a valid pay & display ticket – 6,368 PCNs issued (59% of total off-street PCNs issued)

82 - Parked after payment expiry – 3,337 PCNs issued (31% of total off-street PCNs issued)

The number of people who do not display a ticket when parked is disappointing but when compared to the overall number of annual transactions (approximately 3 million) the level of motorists in contravention is low.

Parking after the expiry of paid time should be easy to avoid. However, there are numerous reasons for a delayed return to a vehicle. To combat this, the Council will continue to advertise and promote the use of our cashless parking service which allows the extension of a stay through mobile text

messaging in a quick and convenient way without returning to the vehicle.

### Challenges, Representations & Appeals

The Appeals process is designed to be accessible to all and does not require legal counsel. There are three fundamental stages of appeal that are open to the recipient of a PCN:-

**Informal Challenge** – these must be made within 28 days of the service of a PCN.

**Formal Representations** – if the Penalty Charge is not paid within 28 days a Notice to Owner (NTO) is sent out to the registered keeper of the vehicle. If the recipient then wishes to make a Representation, they must do so within 28 days of receipt of the NTO.

**Appeals** – if a Representation is rejected by the Authority and the appellant is unhappy with the decision of the Authority, they can appeal to the independent adjudication service – the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT). This must be made within 28 days of the service of the rejection of the Representation by the Authority.

Each appeal is considered on its own merits and the Authority will always consider carefully the details provided by the appellant and relevant mitigating circumstances, in a sympathetic way. As reported at Annex D, of the 109 Appeals that were reviewed by TPT, 70 were upheld in the Authority's favour. This is particularly positive in light of the level of overall correspondence received by Parking Services over the year.

## 4: The Blue Badge Scheme

Bath & North East Somerset Council is committed to its policy of ensuring that people with mobility problems are supported to live full and active lives. The scheme allows a dispensation for badge holders to obtain free parking at certain on-street locations together with the exemption from time limits in some locations; time limited stays are also permissible on yellow lines.



In our car parks, it is the Council's policy to levy a charge displayed on the tariff board for all Blue Badge holders that use either a disabled or standard bay. Collectively across all of our car parks the Authority has 143 disabled parking spaces; this is equivalent to 1.9 spaces for every 100. It is recognised that this figure is below the best practice recommendation of 6%. However, the Authority closely monitors the need for adequate levels of disabled parking, and to this end the ratio between standard parking bays and disabled bays is higher than the 1.9 in 100 within some of our car parks. This reflects our determination to target car parks where the need for disabled parking is at its greatest.

Annex B shows the ratio of disabled spaces to standard bays across all our car parks as divided into our three key regions for enforcement purposes (Bath, Keynsham, and Rural).

Figure 6 highlights how the Authority has looked to target the areas of greatest need in terms of disabled parking spaces, when considering 10 of the Authority's largest car parks (see Fig 6).

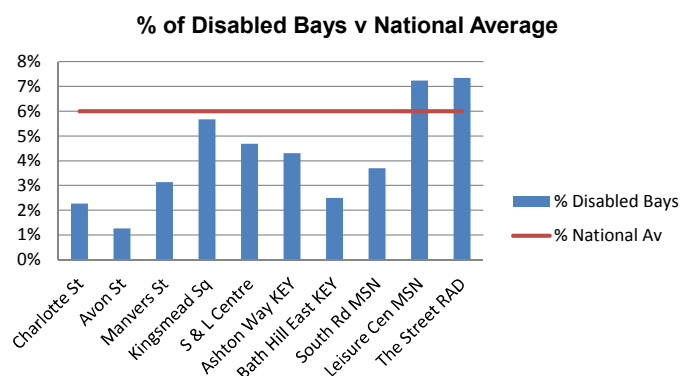


Fig 6 – Provision of disabled parking spaces, as a proportion of total spaces, within the Councils largest car parks

A Blue Badge in the majority of cases, is a lifeline for those with a disability and enables the holder to access services that may not be possible without a parking concession. During the period of this report Parking Services has continued to monitor and improve on its delivery of services to customers by –

**Introducing a new hosting application that is now used by all local authorities in England and Wales, that guarantees that all applications received are recorded immediately on receipt**

**Use of the Blue Badge Scheme Local Guidance for assessing all applications as best practice**

**The introduction of a new appeals process**

**Increasing the number of Independent Mobility Assessors to 3 to ensure that only those applications that meet the eligibility criteria are issued a badge**

**Continuously monitoring all applicable legislation, reacting to changes as quickly as practicable**

At present levels we continue to process almost 3,000 applications per year with an average timeline to issue of 6 weeks. The Authority now has a total of 6,000 of the new style badges on issue (see Fig 7).

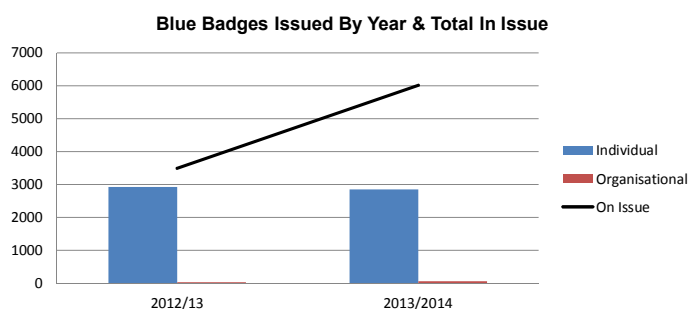


Fig 7 – Number of Blue badges issued and total in circulation

We have introduced Independent Mobility Assessments (IMA) for applications where appropriate, with 40% of all those received now reviewed by a physiotherapist on a face to face basis. Our new appeals process allows all applicants that have been refused a badge following the outcome of an IMA the right to challenge that decision.

From October 2013 the Authority introduced a rigorous on-street process of enforcement to ensure that all displayed badges are being used in accordance with the issue rights in England. During the short period before the end of this reporting year 14 badges were seized and each of these badge holders is now subject to prosecution. The Authority's position remains resolute in that it would prefer not to introduce such measures. However, there is increasing evidence from across the country that suggests that Blue Badge fraud is a continuing issue.

# 5: Why Parking Suspensions?

We provide a comprehensive parking suspension service across the area serving residents, businesses and contractors. Typical suspensions include those for house moves, utility works and special events (Figures 8 & 9). As a result of the Council's application to the DfT approval was given for use of a parking suspension sign which is now used for all requests that includes special events.

## Parking Suspension % of Total Income By Activity

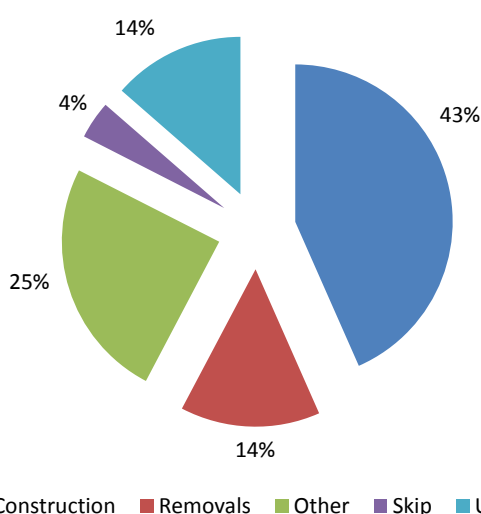


Fig 8 – Total parking suspension income by customer activity

## Parking Suspension Requests By Reason

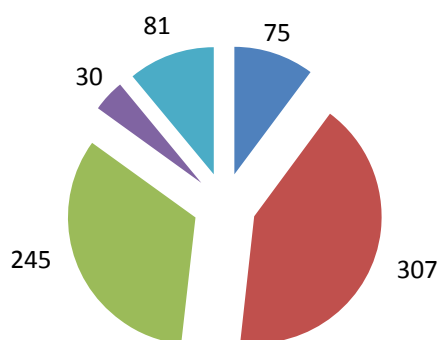


Fig 9 – Total number of suspensions by customer activity

This service was also re-designed and re-launched this year and allows greater access to already congested streets within Bath City Centre. This enhancement produced a strict order of customer booking, a clear pricing strategy and payment terms in accordance with our terms and conditions of service.

This service regularly receives praise from customers who are pleasantly surprised that such a service is offered by the Council at a reasonable price. We expect this service to grow given the challenging parking environment particularly in the city centre. Total Parking Suspension revenue this year was £142,655 (Fig 10). A full breakdown of the Annual Accounts is at Section 7 along with associated income & expenditure for Parking Services referenced in Annex C.

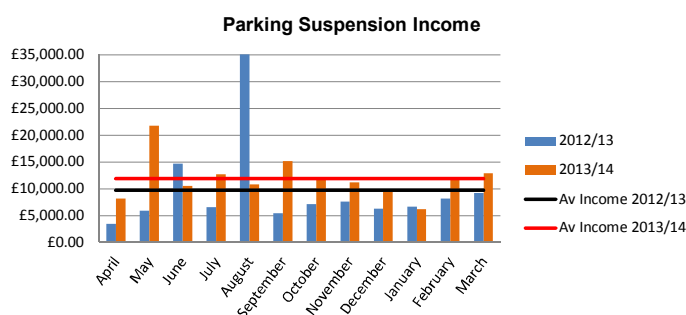


Fig 10 – Total income by month from parking suspensions

# 6: Forward Look – 2014/2015

## Blue Badge Improvements

The Authority is committed to further reducing the occurrence of Blue Badge fraud by adopting closer scrutiny and investigation methods which continues our policy of zero tolerance.

Improvements to our Blue Badge scheme will continue through improved staff training and further investing in our systems. Our goal is to allow for an increase in the current number of applications processed each year whilst improving on the average turnaround time of 6 weeks.

## Brown Bay Scheme

As a Council our focus on improving the mobility of local residents and visitors with access to easy parking close to local amenities continues. A recent advice note from the DfT reminded local authorities of its power to help meet the needs of people with severe temporary mobility issues (such issues being outside of the Blue Badge Scheme). A working party has reviewed the possibility of introducing a disability parking permit and

“brown bays” close to key exit points or payment machines in our car parks. Its conclusions and recommendations are currently under review.

### **CEO Body Worn Video Cameras**

From January 2014 all CEOs have been issued with body worn cameras that include an audio facility. This innovation will be subject to review after the first year of operation in terms of personnel safety and improved evidence gathering.

Initial indications suggest that the number of verbal and physical assaults has reduced significantly. The Council has a zero tolerance towards such abuse.

### **Staff Training**

Parking Services is committed to the continuous improvement of its staff through training and seminars. As an example, it is now a requirement that all back office staff attain the City and Guilds Level 3 award in Parking Notice Processing.

The development of staff allows us to future proof our service and provides the assurance of our capability to produce the next generation of parking experts and managers, as well as driving up standards. Historically, the public perceived the industry as poor, driven by a mixture of closed decision making, a lack of customer service, and at times an attitude of “we know best”. This situation is changing and as a Council we wish to be at the forefront of driving improvement.

### **Staff Deployment & Smarter Patrols**

Experience and time dictates the effective deployment of staff. The Authority is committed to a review of existing patrol routes and the trial of new ones to increase efficiency. It may transpire that our Enforcement Officers are already patrolling in the most efficient manner; however, we propose to increase the visual deterrent to drivers on street to ensure vehicles are not parked in contravention and therefore improve the movement of through traffic.

### **Christmas Market**

A new self-service virtual permits scheme for the 2014 event is to be implemented and will be administered by our virtual permit provider. This approach will streamline the process of managing

the sizeable influx of coaches into central Bath as well as introducing increased efficiency into the booking process.

In conjunction with the new permit scheme, the Authority has established a working relationship with local bus operator, First Bus, for use of their Western Island bus depot for overspill coach parking during this busy event.





# 7: Annual Accounts

## BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

### PARKING ACCOUNT AS REQUIRED BY S.55 OF THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATIONS ACT OF 1984 (AS AMENDED)

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
	£,000	£,000	£,000
<b>ON STREET</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
Pay & Display	1,132	837	897
Residents & Visitors Permits	746	423	343
Other Permits	36	432	515
Other non-PCN Income	124	87	29
PCN income	804	699	784
<b>Total income</b>	<b>2,841</b>	<b>2,478</b>	<b>2,567</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	809	722	806
Other	344	343	356
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>1,066</b>	<b>1,162</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>1,688</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>1,405</b>
<b>OFF STREET</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
Pay & Display	5,444	4,947	5,043
Permits	473	659	615
Other non-PCN Income	13	26	2
PCN income	199	167	205
<b>Total income</b>	<b>6,129</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>5,866</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	449	432	384
Other	1,130	1,182	1,437
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,578</b>	<b>1,614</b>	<b>1,821</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>4,551</b>	<b>4,185</b>	<b>4,045</b>
<b>BUS LANE ENFORCEMENT</b>			
PCN income	784	736	760
<b>Total income</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>760</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	285	221	300
Other	226	198	359
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>659</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>TOTAL ON / OFF STREET &amp; BUS LANE</b>			
<b>Income</b>	<b>9,755</b>	<b>9,013</b>	<b>9,193</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>3,243</b>	<b>3,099</b>	<b>3,641</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>6,512</b>	<b>5,914</b>	<b>5,552</b>

# Annex A

## Penalty Charge Notices Issued By Contravention Code

### On Street

Code	Description	PCNs	% issued On Street	% issued all PCNs	Charge Level
1	Parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours	7871	28.8%	9.7%	Higher
2	Parked or loading/unloading in a restricted street where loading/unloading restrictions are in force	398	1.5%	0.5%	Higher
5	Parked after the expiry of paid time at a P&D bay	1959	7.2%	2.4%	Lower
6	Parked without clearly displaying a P&D ticket	1444	5.3%	1.8%	Lower
7	Parked with payment made to extend stay beyond initial time (meter feeding)	3	0.0%	0.0%	Lower
12	Parked in a resident's or shared use parking place without clearly displaying either a permit or pay & display ticket	8283	30.3%	10.2%	Higher
16	Parked in a permit space without displaying a valid permit	95	0.3%	0.1%	Higher
19	Parked in a resident's or shared use parking space displaying an invalid permit or pay & display ticket	1102	4.0%	1.4%	Lower
20	Parked in a loading gap marked by a double yellow line	1	0.0%	0.0%	Higher
21	Parked in a suspended bay or space	214	0.8%	0.3%	Higher
22	Re-parked in the same parking space within one hour (or other specified time) of leaving	31	0.1%	0.0%	Lower
23	Parked in a parking place or area not designated for that class of vehicle	1084	4.0%	1.3%	Higher
24	Not parked correctly within the markings of the bay or space	250	0.9%	0.3%	Lower
25	Parked in a loading place during restricted hours without loading	402	1.5%	0.5%	Higher
26	Double parked in a special enforcement area	34	0.1%	0.0%	Higher
27	Parked in a special enforcement area adjacent to a dropped footway	255	0.9%	0.3%	Higher
30	Parked for longer than permitted	2381	8.7%	2.9%	Lower
40	Parked in a designated person's place without clearly displaying a valid disabled badge	696	2.5%	0.9%	Higher
45	Parked in a taxi rank	304	1.1%	0.4%	Higher
46	Parked in a clearway	4	0.0%	0.0%	Higher
47	Parked in a restricted bus stop or stand	291	1.1%	0.4%	Higher
48	Parked in a restricted area outside a school	26	0.1%	0.0%	Higher
49	Parked wholly or partly on a cycle track	3	0.0%	0.0%	Higher
61	A heavy commercial vehicle parked wholly or partly on a footway, verge or between two carriageways	11	0.0%	0.0%	Higher
62	Parked wholly or partly on a footpath	2	0.0%	0.0%	Higher
99	Stopped on a pedestrian crossing and/or crossing area marked by zigzags	165	0.6%	0.2%	Higher
<b>Total</b>		<b>27309</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Off &amp; On Street</b>	<b>38127</b>		<b>46.9%</b>	

## Off Street

Code	Description	PCNs	% issued Off Street	% issued all PCNs	Charge Level
70	Parked in a loading bay	1	0.0%	0.0%	Higher
80	Parked longer than permitted	87	0.8%	0.1%	Lower
81	Parked in a restricted area	28	0.3%	0.0%	Higher
82	Parked after payment expiry	3337	30.8%	4.1%	Lower
83	Parked without clear display of a valid pay & display ticket	6368	58.9%	7.8%	Lower
84	Parked with additional payment made to extend the stay beyond time first purchased	5	0.0%	0.0%	Lower
85	Parked in a permit holders only bay	280	2.6%	0.3%	Higher
86	Parked beyond the bay markings	414	3.8%	0.5%	Lower
87	Parked in a disabled person's parking space	148	1.4%	0.2%	Higher
89	Vehicle parked exceeds max weight and or height permitted in the area	47	0.4%	0.1%	Higher
90	Re-parked in the same place within one hour (or other specified time) of leaving a bay or space in a car park	1	0.0%	0.0%	Lower
91	Parked in an area not designated for that class of vehicle	95	0.9%	0.1%	Higher
92	Parked causing an obstruction	7	0.1%	0.0%	Higher
<b>Total</b>		<b>10818</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	

## Bus Gate/Lane

	Description	PCNs	% issued Bus gate/lane	% issued all PCNs
<b>Total</b>		<b>43094</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>53.0%</b>

## ANPR Camera Car

	Description	PCNs	% issued Bus gate/lane	% issued all PCNs
<b>Total</b>	<b>PCNs issued for contraventions incurred whilst parked within a Restricted School Area, Restriced Bus Stop or Stand, or Taxi Rank</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

<b>Total All Contraventions</b>	<b>81329</b>
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# Annex B

## Car Park Space Count

### Car Park Overview By Area

#### Bath

Central Pay & Display	Total Spaces 2832	Disabled Bays 54
Charlotte Street	1056	24
Avon Street	630	
- Multi storey	425	
- Open surface	205	8
Manvers Street	159	5
Kingsmead Square	88	5
Saw Close	24	2
Broad Street	51	3
Cattle Market/Walcot St	38	0
Claverton Street	11	1
Sports & Leisure Centre	128	6
Guildhall (Sat Only)	17	0

Park & Ride	Total Spaces 2650	Disabled Bays 45
Lansdown	860	16
Odd Down	1320	26
Newbridge	470	3

Coach Parking	Total Spaces 43	Disabled Bays 0
Riverside	43	0

Local Shoppers Free - Time Restricted	Total Spaces 128	Disabled Bays 3
Caledonian Road	17	0
Church Road	9	0
Dafford Street	11	0
Dorset Street	8	0
Larkhall Square	18	2
Batheaston/London Rd	33	1
South View Road	20	0
Weymouth Street	12	0

Residential Permit Holders Only	Total Spaces 67	Disabled Bays 0
Lorne Road	5	0
Bedford Street	12	0
James Street West	11	0
London Street	23	0
Brougham Hayes	16	0

#### Keynsham

Pay & Display	Total Spaces 683	Disabled Bays 18
The Labbotts	68	1
Bath Hill East	160	4
Station Road	37	0
Fox & Hounds	26	0
Ashton Way	232	10
Ashton Way East	39	0
Civic Centre	121	3

Keynsham Free	Total Spaces 72	Disabled Bays 0
Station Road Free	44	0
The Picnic Site	28	0

#### Rural

Free	Total Spaces 951	Disabled Bays 23
<b>Midsomer Norton</b>		
South Rd/Excelsior Terrace	243	9
Leisure Centre	69	5
Pows Orchard	9	0
The Hollies	76	0

Radstock	Total Spaces	Disabled Bays
Victoria Hall	10	1
Victoria Square	46	2
Waterloo Road	190	0
The Street	68	5

Saltford	Total Spaces	Disabled Bays
Wedmore Road	29	0
The Shallows	41	0

Chew Magna - The Pelican	32	1
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Paulton - High Street	56	0
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Timsbury - High Street	12	0
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Peasedown - Greenlands	25	0
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Wellow - Station Road	45	0
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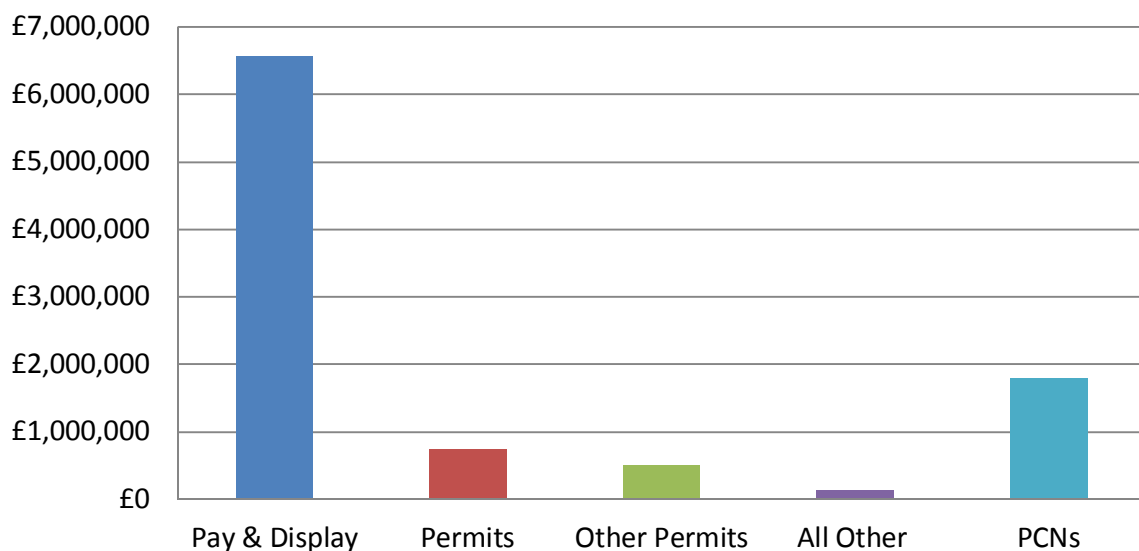
# Annex C

## Annual Accounts – Income & Expenditure

### Income

Pay & Display	£6,575,587
Permits	£746,273
Other Permits	£508,572
All Other	£136,800
PCNs	£1,787,361
	£9,754,593

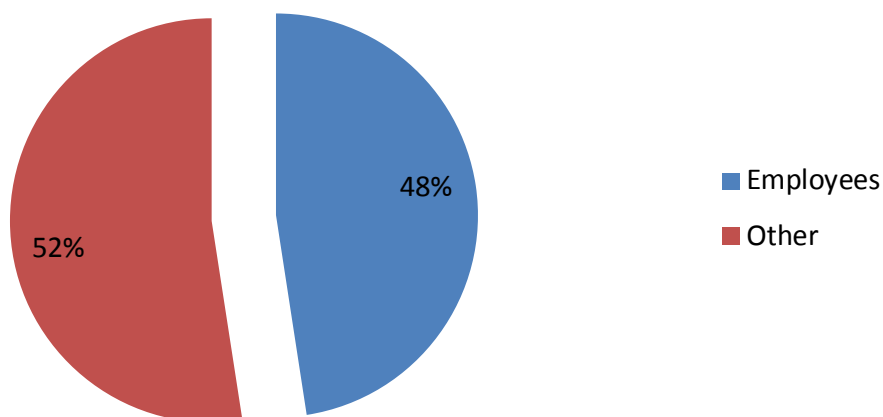
### Income



### Expenditure

Employees	£1,542,854
Other	£1,699,974

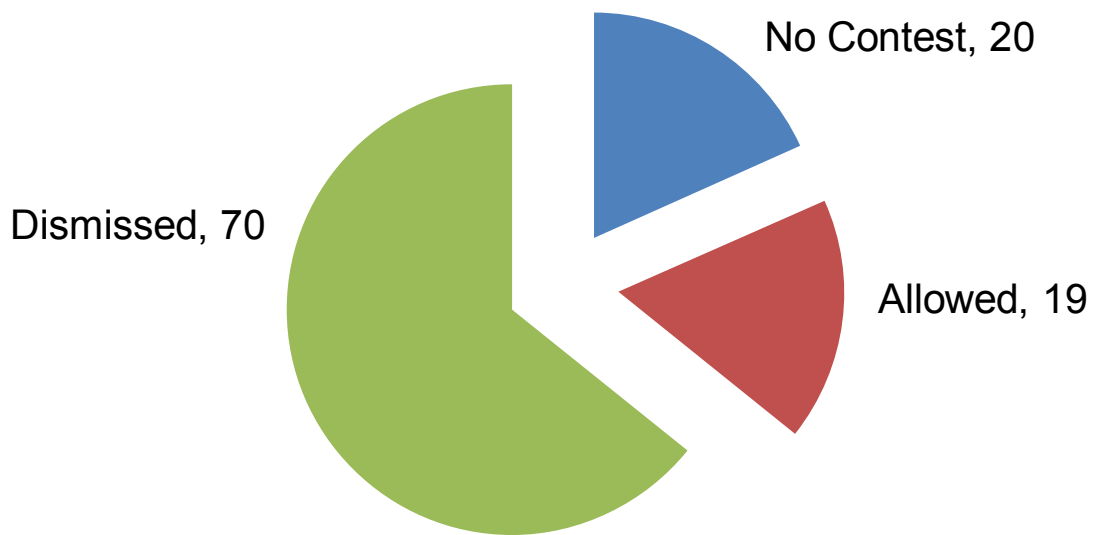
### Expenditure



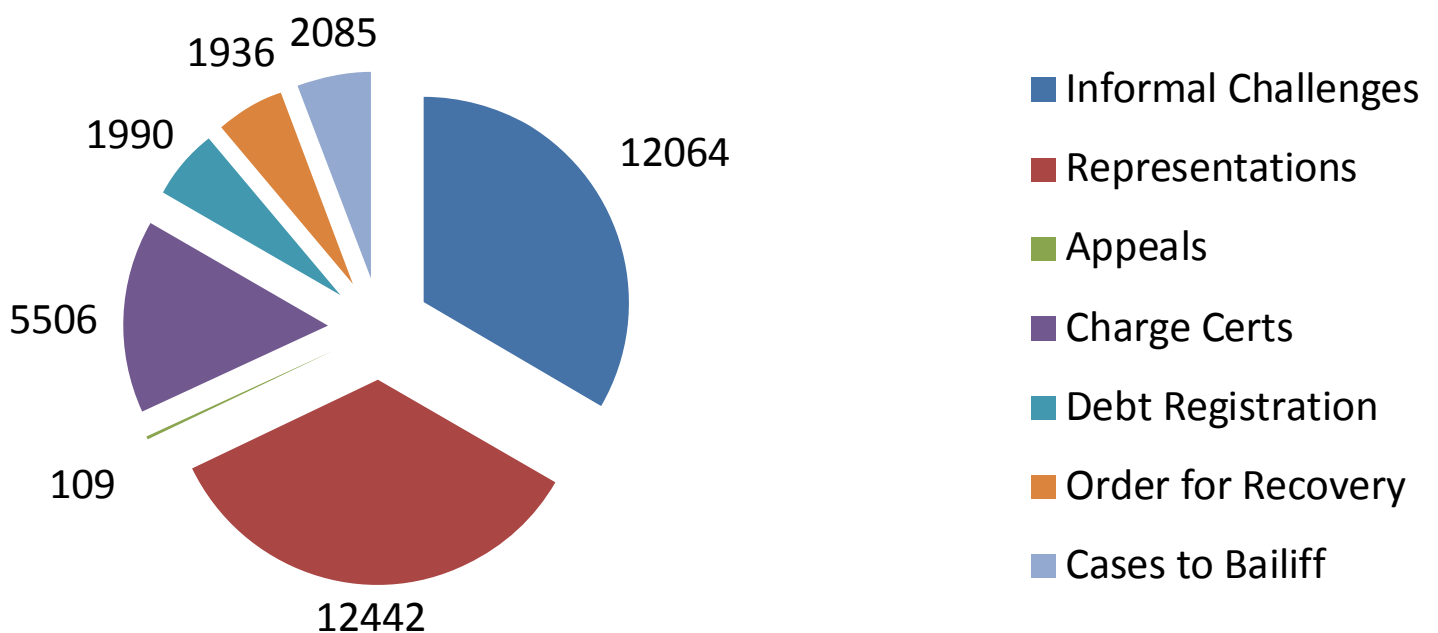
# Annex D

## Challenges, Representations & Appeals

### Appeals to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal



### PCN Correspondence







## Contacts and Further information

Parking Services, PO Box 122, Bristol BS31 9AE  
Email [parking@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:parking@bathnes.gov.uk) Telephone: 01225 477133/4