

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL SUB-GROUP

17 August 2005

Present: Councillor Mrs Walsh (Chair), Mrs D Dickinson, Malpas, Russell, E Smith and Mrs J Snape.

01 DECRIMINALISATION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Panel considered information on the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) that had been cancelled. It was noted that a Parking Attendant (PA) could not cancel a PCN, this was to protect the PA from potential accusations. From each PCN issued £5 went in an administration fee to Lancashire, thus funding the Parkwise back office operation.,

The Panel noted that PCN's issued to drivers with a disabled badge were a high percentage. It was noted that the disabled badge was often displayed on the wrong side and therefore the vehicle was issued a PCN. The PCN would be cancelled on receipt of proof of the valid disabled badge. It was noted that drivers who had disabled badges might benefit from education on the correct way to display their badge.

The tariff boards would be amended to show how to display the badge correctly, although as drivers with disabled badges might not look at the tariff board as they did not need to purchase a pay and display ticket. Information was sent out with the disabled badge in the form of a blue booklet. A letter would be sent to the driver explaining why the PCH had been issued if the appeal was successful.

In response to a query it was noted that one in four PCN's issued were cancelled and that this figure was reasonable. A PA would issue a PCN if they believed that the vehicle was in contravention, for example if the ticket was obscured from view. The figure showed that the appeals procedure worked. It was noted that most people learnt from their mistake and ensured that their ticket was displayed in future. It was noted that pay and display tickets were not transferable to other vehicles.

The Panel discussed the downward trend for PA errors in issuing PCN's. The number of PA errors had decreased since the implementation of DPE. Members discussed the serious issue of PA's being verbally and physically abused by members of the public.

The number of PCN's in rural areas was considered. The computer system would collate a report per street. Members were invited to request specific streets they wished to view a report for.

Members considered the perception of the public in relation to DPE and noted that two reports had recently been published on this issue. Lancashire County Council had undertaken to produce some leaflets for the public by the end of the year.

In response to a query it as suggested that an officer from Finance be invited to a future meeting to outline the financial implications of DPE for Chorley Borough Council.

RESOLVED –

1. To request the following information for a future meeting:
 - The blue booklet sent out with the disabled badge,
 - The letter sent when a PCN was cancelled,
 - An overview of the appeals procedure,
 - A summary of the Childs report and University of Birmingham report,
 - That an officer from Finance be invited to a future meeting to outline the financial implications of DPE for Chorley Borough Council,

2. That the concept of mystery shoppers be considered further.

Chair