
Subject:	ANNUAL WRITE OFF REPORT FOR PARKING SERVICES
Meeting and Date:	Governance Committee 28th September 2023
Report of:	Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Finance & Housing)
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Sue Beer, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance, and Climate Change
Decision Type:	Non-Executive
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report:	To advise Members of the value of income collected and write offs for the financial year 2022/23.
Recommendation:	Members are asked to note the value of income collected and write-offs for each type of income, as set out in the report below.

1. Summary

- 1.1 DDC's constitution requires reports of write-offs to be presented to Members periodically by the s151 Officer. This report from the Strategic Director (Finance & Housing) provides Members with an overview of the write-off position of Penalty Charge Notices issued by Parking Services.
- 1.2 It is the s151 Officer's view that, rather than provide details in a committee report of all the individual write-offs, it is better to provide Members with an overview covering the overall level of write-offs proposed.
- 1.3 Specific individual debts and write-offs will only be reported to Members where they are of special significance to the Council. This could arise due to factors such as a sufficiently high value which may have financial implications for the Council, or if they relate to parties with a close relationship with the Council. In these circumstances any reporting will respect the privacy of the debtor as well as the interests of the Council, and so if any such reports to Members are required, they will be made on a suitably confidential basis.
- 1.4 The most important aspects of Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) collection are that:
 - All amounts due are through the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices to vehicles contravening the parking restrictions in place.
 - All Penalty Charge Notices may be appealed and are subject to cancellation if the appeal is upheld.
 - Penalty Charge Notice income collection is subject to the Penalty Charge Notice process outlined in the Traffic Management Act 2004.

2. The Arrangements for the Collection of Debt

- 2.1 Once a PCN is issued the Parking Services Team seeks to collect all debts due following the regulations set out in the Traffic Management Act 2004. Penalty Charge Notices still outstanding after a certain stage of the enforcement stage will be sent to external Enforcement Agents for collection.

3. The Arrangements for Managing Write-Offs

3.1 Write-offs are not always completed “in-year”. They are managed on a day-to-day basis by the Parking Services Team and will normally occur for one of the following reasons:

- The DVLA were unable to provide keeper details for the vehicle receiving the PCN and therefore the PCN cannot progress through the process.
- The DVLA keeper has moved from their registered address.
- The vehicle is registered in a foreign country where we do not have access to the vehicle keeper database.
- The PCN has been passed to Enforcement Agents who have been unable to secure payment from the debtor within the time allowed in the regulations.
- The PCN has been unable to progress due to being out of time according to regulations. A PCN has strict timelines that must be adhered to at each stage of the enforcement process. If payment, cancellation or progression does not occur during these timelines then the PCN must be written off. Appendix 1 shows the flow process of a PCN.

3.2 Internal Audit will periodically review write-offs as part of the audit programme to ensure that they have been properly approved and that significant write-offs have been reported to the S151 officer.

3.3 Write-offs processed in the financial year 2022/23 total £159,589.

Write Off Reason	Quantity	Value £
Addressee Moved	32	3,055
Foreign Vehicle	239	15,960
General Reason (includes out of time and returned from Enforcement Agents)	452	46,307
Unable to Pursue (includes where no DVLA details held, cases returned from Enforcement Agents and out of time)	904	94,267
Totals	1,627	159,589

3.4 There were no cases written off over £10k.

3.5 The above equates to 136 PCN write offs per month in 2022/23 and 4.5 PCNs per day, with an average of 1,048 PCNs being issued per month. The number of PCNs written off in 2021/22 was 3,073, equating to 256 PCNs per month and 8 PCNs per day.

3.6 Following on from an Audit in April 2023, the write offs are being recorded and checked on a monthly basis by the Transport & Parking Services Manager and assigned to a specific write off reason as per 3.1 above. This is a more robust approach which will allow for any potential out of time cases to be progressed quickly before their requirement to be written off and also for write offs to be processed as near to “in year” as possible. In addition, Parking Services have instructed an additional enforcement agency for collection of PCNs where warrants have been issued, with a clear plan of action to target persistent evaders. This should aid in reducing the amount of PCNs returned by enforcement agents following the expiry of the warrant.

4. Corporate Implications

- 4.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: The Head of Finance & Investment has been consulted on this report and has no further comments to add. (HL)

5. Background Papers

Traffic Management Act 2004

6. Attachments

Appendix 1 Penalty Charge Notice Flowchart

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