



Gravesham Borough Council  
**Parking Services**  
**Annual Report**  
2019-20



# Gravesham Borough Council

# **Parking Services**

# **Annual Report 2019-2020**

The Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions states that local authorities should produce annual reports on their enforcement activities. It is also considered good practice to produce an annual report to offer the public information about the general parking provisions within the borough.

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## 1. The Borough of Gravesham

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Centrally located in the Thames Gateway, Gravesham Borough Council provides a range of services to over 106,000 people and 3,000 businesses.

The Borough of Gravesham, situated in the north west corner of Kent, covers 25,000 acres of the most varied countryside in south east England.

Bordered by the River Thames to the north, it is at the heart of Thames Gateway and has a significant role to play in the regeneration of a major government growth area.

Gravesend has a busy Town Centre and the parking provisions are mainly used by Commuters, Town Centre workers and shoppers/visitors. Gravesham is also made up of several villages the main ones being Meopham, Cobham, & Shorne. Our aim is to make driving and parking as trouble free as possible ensuring the free flow of traffic and aiding to congestion-free towns and villages.

We recognise the need to prioritise parking enforcement in areas where there is a potential danger or obstruction to road users and we also realise the importance of supplying 'fit for purpose' parking provisions together with the right restrictions is equally important to a viable enforcement strategy.



## 2. Introduction

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Gravesham Borough Council has an in house parking services team who are responsible for the enforcement, and subsequent administration of parking restrictions across the Borough which is split in to two distinct areas:

- On-street (public highway)
- Off-street (council owned car parks)

Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) has been responsible for the on-street enforcement since January 2000, acting as agents for the Highway Authority, Kent County Council using the Traffic Management Act 2004 legislation.

Prior to January 2000, parking illegally was a criminal offence and therefore enforced by Traffic Wardens, employed by Kent Police. However, since the change in January 2000 parking offences become civil offences, known as decriminalisation. However the Police did retain responsibility for enforcing other parking offences (that do not fall under the Traffic Management Act 2004) the main offences are dangerous parking and obstructions. The Police are also responsible for a wide range of moving traffic offences.

New parking enforcement related legislation was introduced, within the Traffic Management Act 2004. The main changes this legislation brought were:

- Parking attendants became known as Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's)
- Higher and lower bands of penalty charges were introduced. Higher charge for the more serious parking contraventions and a lower charge for the less serious contraventions (a list of contraventions and bands are detailed in section 5.3)
- introducing the ability to post a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) to the registered owner or keeper of a vehicle if a CEO had been prevented from issuing it at the time, e.g. if the motorist had driven away before the CEO was able to serve the PCN to the vehicle.

More information on this legislation is available from our website at **[www.gravesham.gov.uk](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk)**

### **3. Parking Services Objectives**

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We aim to-

1. Maintain the free flow of traffic across the borough through enforcement of parking restrictions.
  2. Effectively manage and maintain on-street and off-street parking spaces throughout the borough.
  3. Ensure that there are sufficient accessible disabled bays to assist motorists that hold a blue badge.
  4. Process Disabled Bay application forms efficiently and consistently so those persons with mobility issues can apply and if accepted have a disabled bay in the close proximity to their property.
  5. Working with the Highway Authority (Kent County Council), ensure loading bays are effectively managed so vehicles are able to load and unload in the close proximity of where they are delivering to.
  6. Working with the Highway Authority (Kent County Council), ensure that bus stops are located in the most convenient locations and are enforced efficiently.
  7. Maintain the residents parking and controlled parking zone schemes, including the back office management of the permits.
  8. Ensure all appeals are processed with a fair and consistent approach and responses are sent in a timely manner. Ensure every case is dealt with on its own merits whilst following the guidelines set out for cancellations.
  9. Effectively manage the Notice processing function and ensure that all correspondence is sent as per the legislation time frames.
  10. Regularly inspect our car parks to ensure that all signs & lines are in place and any potential defects that could cause injury are repaired immediately.
  11. Maintain the on-street parking signs and lines and repaint or replace any missing signs/lines.
  12. Ensure that pay & display machines are maintained and any faults are dealt with urgently.
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## 4. [www.gravesham.gov.uk](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk)

Gravesham Borough Council's dedicated parking website promotes self-service and is the easiest and quickest way for motorists to find out where they can park in the borough and what the tariffs are, apply for a permit or waiver, obtain general parking information, pay or appeal a Penalty Charge Notice and check the map based Traffic Regulation Order to see what restrictions are located in a certain street. The website also provides useful links to Kent County Councils website to report on street defects.

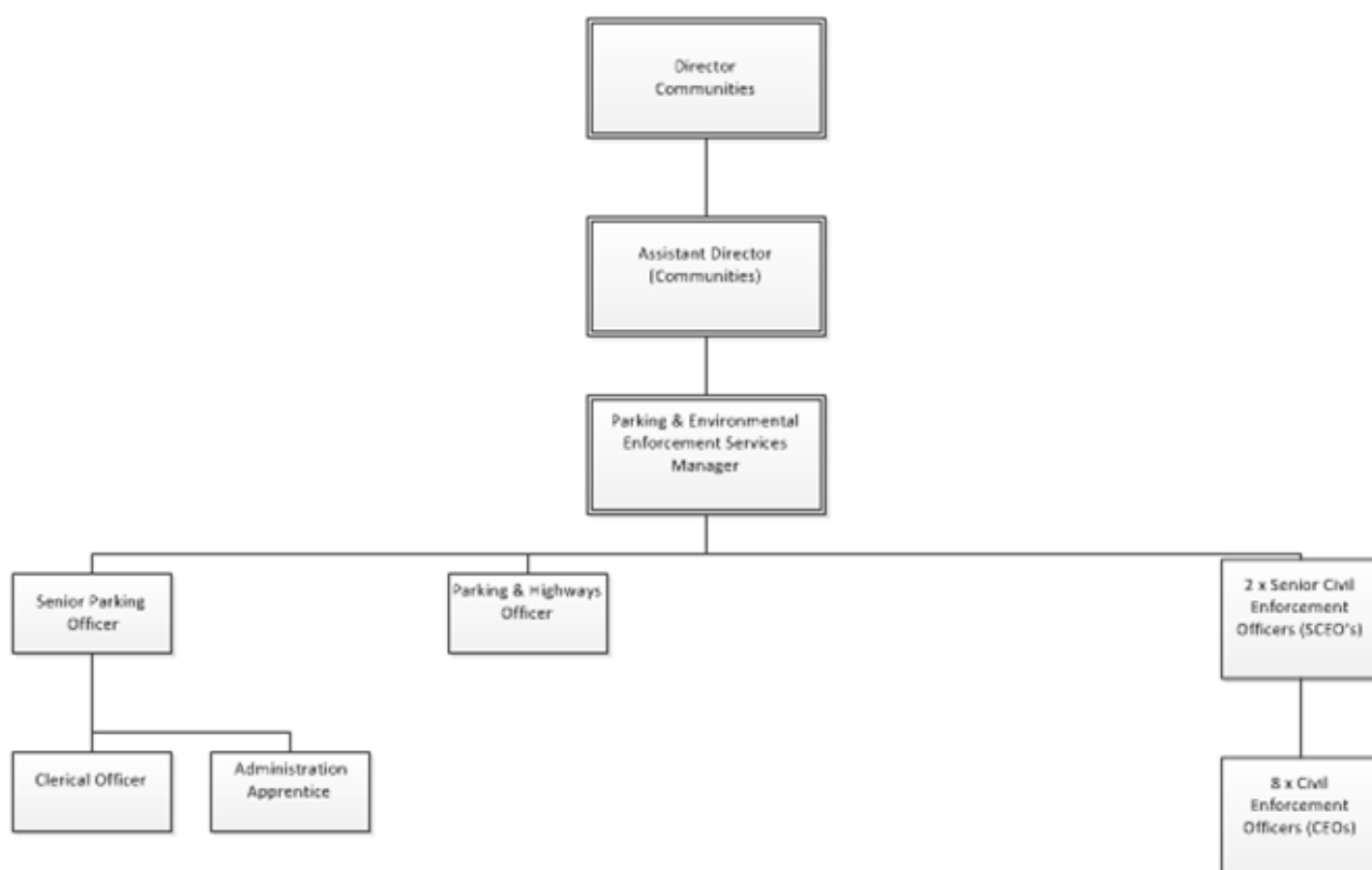


## 5. Parking Services

Parking Services is within the Communities directorate and is based at the Civic Centre.. The service is split in to two teams; enforcement and administration and is made up of 15 full time posts.

The administration team operates Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and manages all correspondence relating to a penalty charge notices (PCN's), on and off street parking permits and the debt recovery process. This team is managed by the Senior Parking Officer and has two members of staff; a Parking Assistant and an Administration Apprentice. The Parking & Highways Officer, who is responsible for the on and off Street Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) also sits within the administration team. The Civil Enforcement Officers work across 7 days a week.

Below is the current staffing structure of the service:





### **5.1 – Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's)**

Enforcement is conducted both on street and in council owned car parks by in-house members of staff. Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) are fully trained and either hold:

1. City and Guilds Roles and responsibilities of a Civil Enforcement officer
2. WAMITAB Level 2 Award for Parking enforcement Officers

Our CEO's are salaried and are not part of any incentive scheme on the number of tickets they issue, they are not paid any commission and are not paid based on the number of Penalty Charge Notices they issue. They are also not set targets on the number of tickets they are required to issue in a working day/ week. CEO's are deployed with the aim of ensuring the free flow of traffic is maintained. CEO's act as ambassadors by providing help to the public and they often offer directions or assist the public with local knowledge of the area. They also act as the council's 'eyes and ears' and report on-street defects or issues such as faulty street lights, abandoned vehicles and graffiti.

Enforcement operates over seven days a week, including evenings, over various shifts. The Borough is split into five enforcement areas, including a mobile patrol for rural areas. GBC employs eight full time CEO's and two full time Senior Civil Enforcement Officers (SCEO's) who manage this part of the operation.

CEO's issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) using smart phone technology to input all of the evidence necessary to issue a PCN including taking photographs of the vehicle. CEO's also wear body worn CCTV video cameras which assist in the evidence gathering but also to act as a deterrent against verbal and physical abuse against them.



## 5.2 – Penalty Charge Notices and Contravention Codes

Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) are issued when a vehicle is parked whilst contravening a parking restriction. PCN's are either a higher level or lower level depending upon the seriousness of the contravention; which is set out by the Traffic Management Act 2004. Higher level PCN's for more serious breaches are £70 and are issued for more serious contraventions such as parking on double yellow lines. Lower level PCN's are £50 and are issued for less serious breaches such as parked with an expired pay & display ticket. Both levels can be paid at a 50% discount if the payment is received within 14 days of the PCN being issued.

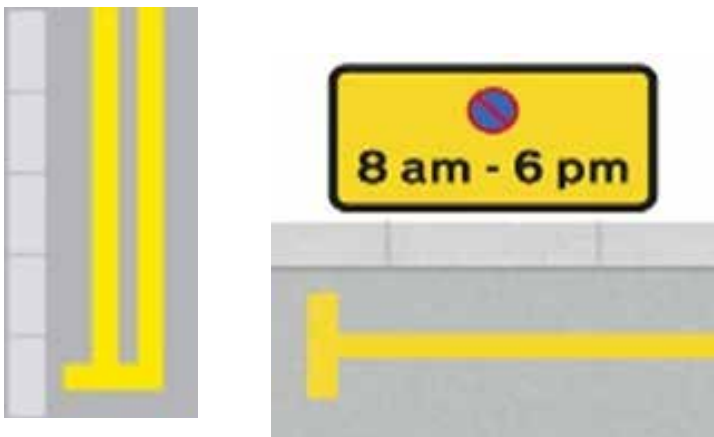
Road markings and nearby signs will explain the parking restrictions within a road. Tariff boards located within the off street car parks will explain where and how you can park. If motorists park contravening the restrictions they may receive a PCN. Please ensure you check the signs and lines prior to leaving your vehicle. For on-street restrictions you can refer to our online map based Traffic Regulation Order <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/traffic-regulation-orders/overview> Please see item 8 for more information on Map Based Traffic Regulation Order.

## 5.3 – On-Street Restrictions

Below are the various restrictions that Gravesham Borough Council's Civil Enforcement Officers are responsible for enforcing, including the cost of a PCN (higher or lower charge) and what signs/lines you will see to indicate there is a restriction in place.

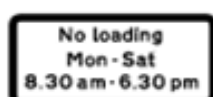
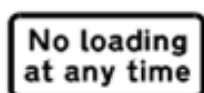
### 5.3.1 – Yellow line restrictions

A PCN may be issued if a vehicle is seen to be parked in a restricted street during prescribed hours. Single and double yellow lines are in place for safety reasons where parking would cause an obstruction and a disruption to traffic. Disabled badge holders are allowed to park on a single or double yellow line for 3 hours as long as the badge is displayed correctly. Double yellow lines are enforced 24/7 so do not need a sign. Single yellow lines are restricted at certain times and days and these are indicated on a nearby sign. Higher Charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.2 – Loading prohibition

Parked or loading/unloading in a restricted street where waiting and loading/unloading restrictions are in force. The restriction is shown by yellow lines on the road and markings (blips) on the kerb. Disabled badge holders are not permitted to park on a loading ban restriction. Double kerb marking indicates no loading or unloading at any time. Single kerb markings indicate no loading or unloading at the times shown. Signs will be in place at the restrictions. Higher charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.3 – On-Street pay and display areas

We provide several on street pay and display areas in and around Gravesend Town Centre, some are shared use with residents permit areas (please see 5.3.5) and some are pay & display only. Signs will be on street to indicate the times of restriction and the pay and display machine will show the tariffs and conditions that apply. Disabled badge holders are exempt from the parking charge as long as the disabled badge is displayed and there are no time limits for badge holders. Lower charge £50, £25 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.4 – Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ)

CPZ's are a short term parking control that is restricted for certain hours of the day only and are used in urban areas to prevent all day parking by commuters.

CPZ's are mainly in operation in Gravesend Town Centre but are also in place in Meopham, Northfleet and Higham. CPZs are marked by a single yellow line within the affected area and signs are in place at each entry to the zone informing motorists of the times the restriction applies, zone end signs are placed at the end of the CPZ area. Separate signs throughout the zone are not required.

The CPZ restriction times are different in each zone. Residents within CPZs are permitted to apply for waiver permits for themselves and visitors vehicles. Waiver permits are only valid on the CPZ restriction and are not valid on other restrictions within the zone, such as double yellow lines and timed bay restrictions.

Vehicles that are not displaying a valid waiver permit or visitor waiver permit and are parked in the CPZ during the restriction may receive a PCN. Higher charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days

If you would like to know the times that a CPZ restriction applies, please use our street name search on our website [www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/resident-and-visitor-permits/overview](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/resident-and-visitor-permits/overview). Please note that the search will only show streets where a CPZ is in place.



### 5.3.5 – Resident Parking Schemes

Residents parking schemes provide a long term restriction to prioritise parking for residents. They are mainly based in and around town centres & visitor attractions to deter shoppers & visitors from parking all day in residential streets.

Gravesham Borough Council provides seven residents parking schemes in the borough. Zones A, B, C, D, F, G, and H. Restrictions vary from road to road during the day, for example pay & display parking or time limited free parking, although most share a similar resident permit holders only restriction between 6.30pm through to 8am, seven days a week.

Residents can apply for resident and visitor permits. Permits are only valid on the marked zone bays and are not valid on other restrictions in the zones, such as single and double yellow lines. If parked in a resident or shared use parking place without clearly displaying either a valid permit or visitor permit or a pay & display ticket (shared use only) a PCN may be issued. Signs on street will show when the restrictions are in force and the conditions of the parking restrictions.

If you would like to know the restrictions that apply in a particular street within our residents parking scheme, please use our street name search on the website - <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/resident-and-visitor-permits/overview> Please note that the search will only show streets where a Residential Parking Scheme is in place. Higher charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.6 – Pedestrian Areas

A pedestrian area is in place throughout the main Town Centre in New Road, High Street, King Street and part of Windmill Street for the safety of pedestrians during the core hours. The restriction does not require any road markings and is signposted at each entry point to the zone and at intermittent points throughout the zone.

No parking is permitted at any time, and between 10am to 6pm no vehicles are permitted. During these times, the gates to the zone are closed. Between 6pm through to 10am, the gates are open and this is for drive through access only and no parking is permitted unless the vehicles are loading or unloading. Disabled badge holders are permitted to park for 3 hours between 6pm to 10am but not between 10am to 6pm. Higher charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.7 – Loading Bays

Shown by a white marked bay along with lettering on the road. There will also be a sign to indicate the times the loading bay applies. If a sign does not detail any timings, this indicates that the loading bay applies 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Some of our loading bays become Taxi Ranks overnight. Signs next to the bay will show this.

Loading bays are for goods vehicles only. A 'goods vehicle' is a motor vehicle or trailer constructed for the carriage of goods or haulage. Higher Charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.8 – Disabled Bays

Disabled bays can be identified by the below sign and a white bay with 'Disabled' painted on the road. It is a requirement to display a valid blue badge at all times whilst parked in a disabled bay. There is no time constraint on how long a vehicle displaying a valid badge can park.

Please visit our website for more information on disabled parking bays [www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/disabled-parking-and-bays/overview](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/disabled-parking-and-bays/overview)

Any vehicle parked in the bay without a valid blue badge can be issued with a PCN. Higher charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.9 – Clearways

Clearways in the borough are a 24 hour restriction which means no stopping at any time, not even to drop off or pick up passengers. The 24 hour restriction does not need to have any road markings but the below signs are located at the entrance and exit to the Clearway and repeater signs are placed at intervals along the carriageway. No parking is permitted at any time in a clearway. The only Clearway restriction in the borough is on Thames Way. Higher Charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days





### 5.3.10 – Pedestrian Dropped Kerbs

Gravesham Borough Council recognises the inconvenience caused to pedestrians when a vehicle is parked across a dropped kerb with tactile paving. Parking in this manner can cause dangers to all pedestrians but especially, wheel chair users, people pushing prams and the elderly. There are no exemptions from parking across a dropped kerb. There are no signs or lines needed to enforce this restriction. Higher charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days



### 5.3.11 – Parked 50cm from the kerb

This contravention is designed to stop double parking by making it an offense to park 50cm or more from the kerb. Double parking in the road has implications to the free flow of traffic, can cause obstructions to other road users including the emergency services and it also makes it more difficult for pedestrians to cross the road. There are no signs or lines needed for this contravention. Higher contravention £70, £35 if paid within 14 days

### 5.3.12 – School Zig Zag Markings

Yellow School keep clear markings are provided outside schools to ensure that children and parents can see clearly when crossing the road. You should not stop on a zig zag, not even to drop off or pick up children. Adjacent to the zig zag markings there will be a sign informing motorists of the restricted times.

Gravesham Borough Council understands the importance of enforcing restrictions around schools to help keep the restrictions clear. We patrol various schools each day but due to staff resources and the amount of schools in the borough (many with parking related issues) it is not possible to have officers enforcing all schools daily. If vehicles are parked on a school 'keep clear' a PCN will be issued.

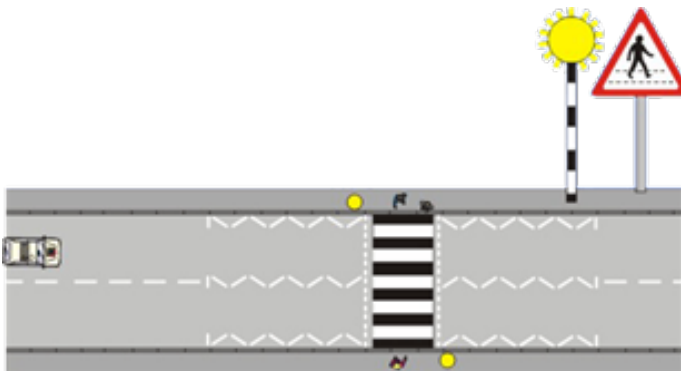
**Higher Charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days**



We also work with Kent County Council to promote safer schools campaigns and have produced an educational assembly where a Senior Civil Enforcement Officer attends schools to explain to the pupils the dangers it causes when parents park on the restrictions at schools. The assembly talk also offers advice and guidance on how to travel to and from school safely. It is a fun and interactive assembly presentation which has gained positive feedback from Teachers, school staff and pupils.

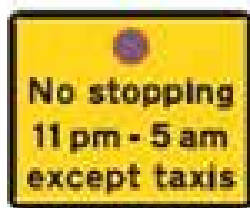
### 5.3.13 – Pedestrian Crossings

Are enforceable 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The restriction is marked by white zig-zag lines leading up to the crossing area. Parking on the footpath/verge behind the crossing is also prohibited, the restriction is in place to ensure clear view for pedestrians using the crossing, as well as motorists approaching the crossing. **Higher charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days**



### 5.3.14 – Taxi Ranks

Are marked by a yellow bay with the word 'TAXI' written adjacent to the bay on the road. A sign will indicate the times the taxi rank applies. If a sign does not detail any times, this indicates that the taxi rank applies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Taxi Ranks are provided to enable hackney carriages to wait for customers. Non-Hackney Carriage vehicles should not park in the Taxi Rank and taxis should not be left unattended. Higher Charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days.



### 5.3.15 – Bus Stops

Are for buses only and no other vehicles are permitted to park at any time. The bay will be marked on the road in yellow and a sign will be displayed showing the time the bus stop restrictions is in place. The sign will say 'No stopping at any time' if it is a 24 hour, 7 day a week restriction. Higher Charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days.



### 5.3.16 – Footway or verge parking

This restriction does not require line markings, but signs are located within the affected area. Outside of London, parking on the verge / footway is only enforceable if a verge / footway restriction is in place.

It is important to think of the safety of not only drivers, but also pedestrians when parking. Whilst you may think you are doing vehicles a favour by parking on the footpath, you may be restricting access for pedestrians, and in particular wheelchair and push chair users.

We are also able to enforce pavement parking where there are single or double yellow lines located in the road as these restrictions cover the footway as well as the road. We cannot enforce footway or verge parking if there isn't a ban in place or yellow lines in the road. **Higher Charge £70, £35 if paid within 14 days.**



### 5.3.17 – Limited Waiting parking

Normally located outside business premises and shops to allow for customers to park and ensure the turnaround of free spaces. The Limited waiting bays have white markings and an adjacent sign show the maximum amount of time you can park. The sign will also include a No Return Time. Lower Charge £50, £25 if paid within 14 days.



### 5.4 Off street (car parks) restrictions

Code	Charge	Description – Off Street
80	£50/£25	To be used when a car is parked longer than permitted.
81	£70/£35	To be used if a vehicle is parked in a restricted area of a car park (this will be indicated by yellow hatched markings)
82	£50/£25	To be used when a vehicle is parked in a car park with an expired pay & display ticket on display
83	£50/£25	To be used when a vehicle is parked in a car park without displaying a valid pay & display ticket
86	£50/£25	To be used when a vehicle is parked in a car park but not fully within a marked bay
87	£70/£35	To be used when a vehicle is parked in a disabled bay in a car park without displaying valid disabled badges
91	£70/£35	To be used for when a vehicle is parked in a car park or area not designated for that class of vehicle
92	£70/£35	To be used if a vehicle is parked in a car park causing an obstruction e.g. in the middle of a road way



## 6. Penalty Charge Notice data and statistics

Each local authority has a duty to supply figures to various Government departments on the levels of PCN's that the authority has issued in a year. The Department for Transport requires a breakdown on the number of on and off street PCN's issued. Questions around PCN issue levels is a frequently asked Freedom of Information request. The below table shows, how many PCN's have been issued and the break down between on and off street as well as the split between higher and lower level PCN's.

PCN's Issued	On Street		Off Street		Total
	Higher Level	Lower Level	Higher Level	Lower Level	
2015/16	11,988	992	515	2,802	16,297
2016/17	11,168	893	603	1,716	14,380
2017/18	13,360	1,013	143	2,821	17,337
2018/19	15,991	1,068	538	3,691	21,288*
2019/20	17,304	1,518	480	3,382	22,684

\*In 2018/19 we increased the number of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) from 9 Officers to 10, which is the main contributory factor to the increase in Penalty Charge Notices in 2018/19 compared to previous years.

### 6.1 Appealing a PCN

If a motorist has been issued with a PCN which they feel they should not have received they have the right to appeal the ticket. Appeals can be made in writing to our postal address, via email [parking.office@gravesham.gov.uk](mailto:parking.office@gravesham.gov.uk) or online at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/parking-tickets/overview> the website also has useful information about the appeals process and you can view the evidence and photographs of the PCN. The website is also the quickest and easiest way to submit an appeal.

There are 3 stages to the appeals process:

**1. Stage 1 – Challenge (informal appeal).** GBC has a legal obligation to consider all informal challenges received. If an informal challenge is received within 14 days of the PCN being issued the ticket will go on hold until a decision letter is sent. If the challenge is accepted the PCN will be cancelled. If the challenge is rejected a letter explaining the decision will be sent, it will also offer a further 14 days (from the date of the letter) for the motorist to pay at the reduced amount. If the appeal was received after 14 days of the PCN being issued and the challenge is rejected the full charge of the PCN will still stand.

**2. Stage 2 – Representation (formal appeal)** – Under the Traffic Management Act 2004 representations can only be made upon receipt of a Notice to Owner. The Notice to Owner will be sent to the registered keeper 28 days after the PCN was issued. The registered keeper has 28 days from the date of the Notice to Owner to submit their representations. The council has a legal obligation to respond to respond within 56 days of receiving the representation (GBC aims to respond within 5 workings days). If the representation is accepted the fine will be cancelled and no payment will be outstanding. If the appeal is rejected a letter will be sent explaining our reasons and the registered keeper will be liable to pay the PCN at the full rate. The letter will also outline how the registered keeper can appeal to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (see overleaf for more information on the Tribunal Service). The below table shows how many Challenges and Representation GBC has received and the outcome of these appeals.

Year	Number of Challenges Accepted	Number of Challenges Rejected	Total Received	% Accepted	% Rejected	Number of Representations Accepted	No. of Representations Rejected	Total Representations Received	% Accepted	% Rejected
2015/16	1,251	1,216	2,467	51%	49%	250	246	496	50%	50%
2016/17	818	969	1,787	46%	54%	191	273	464	41%	59%
2017/18	1,016	1,007	2,023	50%	50%	144	193	337	43%	57%
2018/19	1,125	1,285	2,410	47%	53%	164	273	437	38%	62%
2019/20	1,258	1,414	2,673	47%	53%	274	303	577	47%	53%

### 3. Stage 3 - Appealing to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT)

The Traffic Penalty Tribunal is an independent body. Adjudicators are individually appointed legal persons who review evidence for appeals against PCN's. The decision of the adjudicator is binding on both the Council and the appellant. An appeal to the tribunal is the final stage in the challenge process. So you can appeal to TPT only when you have gone all the way through the challenge process (stages 1 & 2 above) and have had a formal Notice of Rejection of Representations. If a tribunal appeal is submitted the Council has a choice to contest the appeal (so the adjudicator makes the final decision) or to 'No Contest' the appeal which means the PCN is cancelled and the adjudicator will not have to make a decision.

The below table shows how many Traffic Penalty Appeals have been submitted by appellants and the outcome of the appeals:

Year	Number of PCN's issued	Number of appeals received (percentage of PCN's issued)	Number accepted by the adjudicator	Number rejected by the adjudicator	Number 'Not Contested' by the Council
2015/16	16,297	19 (0.12%)	6	5	8
2016/17	14,380	19 (0.13%)	7	5	7
2017/18	17,337	15 (0.09%)	3	10	2
2018/19	21,288	13 (0.06%)	3	5	5
2019/20	22,684	21(0.009%)	7	9	5

Further information concerning the Traffic Penalty Tribunal can be found on the tribunals website:  
[www.trafficpenaltytribunal.gov.uk](http://www.trafficpenaltytribunal.gov.uk)



## 6.2 Paying a PCN

PCN's can be paid either online, which is the quickest and easiest way to make payment, by phone, by post or in person at the Civic Centre, Gravesend. Once the payment has been made liability has been accepted by the motorist for the penalty charge and therefore the right to make a challenge or representation is lost.

Therefore, we suggest you look at the evidence first and read our 'Reasons we'll reject an appeal' page [www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/parking-tickets/overview](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/parking-tickets/overview) before deciding whether to appeal the PCN or pay the PCN.



## 7. Enforcement Agents

If a PCN remains unpaid after the Council has issued the necessary notices a Warrant may be issued to an Enforcement Agent (formally known as bailiff) to recover the debt. In April 2014 Parliament introduced new legislative arrangements for enforcement agents. One of the main changes was simplifying the fees payable and setting out the costs that are incurred at each stage of recovery. The below table specifies the stages and fees that will be added by the enforcement agent (in addition to the outstanding PCN debt)

Stage	Fee	Processes of stage
Compliance stage	£75	Writing to you about your debt
Enforcement Stage	£235	An enforcement Agent visiting your home
Sale/disposal stage	£110	Taking and selling your belongings

Passing the debt to an Enforcement Agent is always a last resort for GBC and we would advise that if you are struggling to pay the PCN please speak to an officer from the Parking Services Department who will offer advice and in some cases may put measures in place to assist with the payment i.e. setting up an instalment arrangement.

## 8. Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's)

A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is a legal document that allows us to regulate the parking controls in the borough. A TRO includes a lot of information, including but not limited to, the type of restrictions that are in place, the times they apply, if any exemptions are available (for example, parking permits) and if so, who can apply.

GBC recently consolidated our on-street traffic regulations orders into one order. During this process we moved from a 'text based' TRO to a 'map based' TRO which makes it easier for the public to access and view online. The Map based TRO is very clear and straight forward to understand, whereas the text based TRO was a large document that was difficult to understand given the jargon and terminology.

Gravesham Traffweb is our new online service that allows you to view our map-based TRO so you can check exactly where parking restrictions are located and see what type of parking restrictions are in place in the borough.

Please view Traffweb on **[www.graveshamtraffweb.co.uk](http://www.graveshamtraffweb.co.uk)**

We also have an off-street Traffic Regulation Order. This is still a text based TRO and outline the tariffs and terms of conditions of usage within our off-street car parks. The on-street TRO and off-street TRO are best kept as separate Orders and the off-street Order is better suited to a text based Order so there are not currently plans to move the off-street Order to map-based..

## 9. Blue Badges & on street disabled bays

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The Blue Badge Scheme is a national arrangement of parking concessions for people with disabilities who travel as drivers or passengers. The scheme allows badge holders to park nearer to their destination.

The national concessions only apply to on street parking but locally GBC allows blue badge holders to park free of charge without time limit in all of our off street car parks whether parked in a disabled bay or not.

For more information on the concessions of a blue badge please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-blue-badge-scheme-rights-and-responsibilities-in-england/the-blue-badge-scheme-rights-and-responsibilities-in-england>

For information on applying for a blue badge please visit Kent County Councils website

**[www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/disability/apply-for-a-blue-badge#tab-1](http://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/disability/apply-for-a-blue-badge#tab-1)**

If you have difficulties walking and you need to park as close to your property as possible, you can apply to GBC for a residential Disabled Parking Bay to be marked on the road. Currently there is no charge for this service.

Each case is looked at on its own merits. Here are some things we will consider as part of your application:

- You have a disability which prevents you from walking between your house and the nearest available parking space unaided
- You are the driver, or you are driven by a person living at the same address as you
- You hold a current and valid Disabled Blue Badge
- You have no allocated or off road parking which you can readily access
- There are no physical constraints on safe parking in the road

You'll also need to provide us with a photocopy of your disabled badge and proof that you get the Higher Rate Disability Allowance.

Please see our website for more information

**[www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/disabled-parking-and-bays/apply-for-a-disabled-bay](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/disabled-parking-and-bays/apply-for-a-disabled-bay)**

## **10. Residents Schemes, Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) & Permit Parking Areas**

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### Resident Schemes

There are six residents' schemes in operation within Gravesham. Residents parking schemes provide a long term restriction to prioritise parking for residents. They are mainly based in and around town centres & visitor attractions to deter shoppers & visitors from parking all day in residential streets. Resident parking schemes have been introduced (after consultation with residents) to ensure preferential parking for residents but also allowing all users time limited or pay & display parking. This promotes a turnover of vehicles and frees up kerb space for residents so they are more likely able to find a space near their property. Residents can apply for a permit to exempt them from the time restriction or pay & display parking and providing they are eligible and submit the necessary proof of residency documents a permit will be issued at a cost of £40 per year.

### Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)

There are five CPZ areas in the borough:

- Higham
- Meopham
- Northfleet
- Sole Street
- St James Avenue

CPZ's are a short term parking control that is restricted for certain hours of the day only and are used in urban areas to prevent all day parking by commuters, workers and shoppers.

In Gravesham the CPZ control is between 30 minutes and 1 hour of no parking at various times (depending on which scheme). Residents are exempt from the restriction if they are displaying a valid waiver permit in their vehicle. Residents can apply for a waiver permit and providing they are eligible and submit the necessary proof of residency documents a permit will be issued at a cost of £15 per year.

### Permit Parking Areas (PPA's)

From January 2018 to March 2019 we conducted a review of the large Town Centre CPZ and following extensive consultation with residents it was decided that the CPZ scheme would be replaced with 10 smaller PPA's.

PPA's work in the same way as CPZ's and provide a short restriction for certain hours of the day to prevent all day parking by commuters, workers or visitors to the town centre.

The main difference between the two schemes is PPA's do not need any road markings painted on the road and just need entry and exit signs (in larger roads/zones we also placed repeater signs). As with CPZ's residents are exempt from the restriction if they are displaying a valid waiver permit.

**Resident Permits and CPZ Waiver Permits Issued**

The below table shows the number of CPZ waiver Permits & Residents permits that are issued per annum by the Parking Services department.

<b>Year</b>	<b>CPZ Waiver Permit</b>	<b>Residents Permits</b>	<b>Permit Parking Area (PPA)</b>	<b>Total</b>
2015/16	1,106	1,480	-	2,586
2016/17	786	1,901	-	2,687
2017/18	1,166	1,784	-	2,950
2018/19	927	1,926	-	2,853
2019/20	202	709	1,055	1,966

\*PPA scheme went live on 13 May 2019 so PPA issue figure will be included in the 2019/20 Annual Parking Report.

For more information on CPZ's or residents schemes, please see

[www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/resident-and-visitor-permits/overview](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/resident-and-visitor-permits/overview)

**11. On-Street Pay & Display areas**

Gravesham Borough Council introduced on-street pay and display in and around the Gravesend Town Centre to provide alternative short term parking for shoppers and visitors to the town and to encourage motorists that require longer stays to use the off street car parks and therefore reducing road congestion and ensuring the turnover of vehicles.

The pay & display areas are a mixture of:

- Pay & display only – Monday to Saturday 8am – 6.30pm. Maximum stay is for 2 hours, with no return for 1 hour
- Shared Residents & pay & display – Monday to Saturday 8am – 6.30pm. Maximum stay is 2 hours, with no return for 1 hour. Residents displaying a valid permit would be exempt from payment.

On April 01 2019 Linear tariff charges were introduced in all On-Street pay & display areas. Linear charging means that, subject to a minimum charge, customers get the exact amount of parking time for the money they have put into the pay & display machine. The current tariffs are 70p for 30 minutes and then 2p per minute thereafter, up to a maximum stay of 2 hours. This equates to-

<b>Time</b>	<b>Charge</b>
30 minutes	70p
45 minutes	£1.00
1 hour	£1.30
1 hour 15 minutes	£1.60
1 hour 30 minutes	£1.90
1 hour 45 minutes	£2.20
2 hours	£2.50

21 Pay and display machines are in operation for use in the on-street pay & display areas, which are cash only machines. The machines can take coins from 5p - £2, the machines do not take notes nor can you use a debit/credit card in the machine. RingGo cashless parking solution is in operation in all on street pay & display areas (for more information on RingGo please see item 13)

## 12. Pay & Display Car Parks

The council manages and maintains nine car parks in Gravesend. Eight of these car parks are pay & display, where charges apply Monday – Saturday 8am – 6pm (including bank holidays). Lord Street car park is a permit holders only car park.

The car park tariffs are designed to promote longer stays than On-Street parking to help ease congestion in residential roads in the town. We have also introduced parking concessions to incentivise visitors to the town centre and shopping locally. Car park users can park for free on a Sunday and also get up to 2 hours free parking on Saturdays. Tariffs are reviewed annually and any changes would be advertised in the local paper and notices placed within the car park.

There are also several free car parks in the Borough including Echo Square, The Hill & May Avenue which we are also responsible for.

For more information on the car parks

**[www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/car-parks/overview](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/car-parks/overview)**

The below table shows pay & display car parks the council are responsible for and how many spaces are available.

<b>Car Park Spaces</b>	<b>Number of disabled Spaces</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Long Stay / Short Stay</b>
Parrock Street	648	16	664	Short Stay
Rathmore Road	58	6	64	Short Stay
Gurdwara	231	0	231	Long Stay
Ordnance Road	29	0	29	Long Stay
Milton Place	148	7	155	Long Stay
Market Square	123	6	129	Short Stay
Horn Yard	88	4	92	Short Stay
West Street	76	4	80	Short Stay



## 12.1 Tariffs

There are two tariff types in operation within the car parks:

### LONG STAY

**Gurdwara\***

**Ordnance Road\***

**Milton Place\***

#### **Monday to Friday - 8am to 6pm (including Bank Holidays)**

Up to 1 hour £1.30

Up to 2 hours £2.00

Up to 3 hours £2.80

Up to 4 hours £3.80

Over 4 hours (max 24 hours) £5.00

#### **Saturday - 8am to 6pm**

First two hours (applies once per vehicle) FREE

Additional 1 hour £1.30

Additional 2 hours £2.00

Over 4 hours (max 24 hours) £5.00

#### **Sunday – All Day FREE**

### SHORT STAY

**Parrock Street\***

**Rathmore Road\***

**Market Square\***

**Horn Yard\***

**West Street\***

#### **Monday to Friday - 8am to 6pm (including Bank Holidays)**

Up to 1 hour £1.30

Up to 2 hours £2.00

Up to 3 hours £2.80

Up to 4 hours £3.80

Over 4 hours (max 24 hours) £7.50

#### **Saturday - 8am to 6pm**

First two hours (applies once per vehicle) FREE

Additional 1 hour £1.30

Additional 2 hours £2.00

Over 4 hours (max 24 hours) £7.50

#### **Sunday – All Day FREE**

\* Park Mark award – see page 27, item 14

## 12.2 Season Permits & Town Centre Worker Permits

### Season Permits

If you use any of our car parks in Gravesend on a regular basis, you could save up to 20% by getting a season permit for that car park rather than purchasing daily pay & display tickets:

	Charge based on 230 days usage a year no discount	One month charge – 5% discount	Three month charge – 10% discount	Six month charge – 15% discount	1 Year charge – 20% discount
Long Stay	£1,150	£91	£259	£489	£920
Short Stay	£1,725	£137	£388	£733	£1,380

### Town Centre Worker Permits

If you work in Gravesend Town Centre, you can apply for a Town Centre Worker (TCW) Permit which allows you to park in Gravesend at a cheaper rate. Applications forms need to be submitted with proof of employment and vehicle ownership.

We have two schemes:

#### Scheme 1 - Milton Place, Ordnance Road and Gurdwara Car Parks

This is for use in Milton Place, Ordnance Road and Gurdwara Car Parks. In this scheme you apply for a free permit and you then purchase Pay and Display tickets from the machines every day you want to park. The Pay and Display tickets cost £1.15 for five hours parking and £2.15 for 10 hours. You then have to display both the permit and Pay and Display ticket in/on your windscreen or dashboard.

#### Scheme 2 - Lord Street Temporary Car Park

This is for use in the Lord Street Temporary Car Park. In this scheme you apply for a season permit, which is £40 per month. It's 50% off the standard fee of £80 per month. Permits must be paid for in advance and can be issued for up to six months. Lord Street car park has 220 spaces and is currently running at full capacity so there is a waiting list for new applicants.

### Total Permits Issued

The table below shows how many Season Permits, TCW permits & Lord Street permits have been issued per year:

Year	Season Permits	TCW Permits	Lord Street	Total
2015/16	288	577	1,025	1,890
2016/17	175	453	1,089	1,717
2017/18	347	434	995	1,776
2018/19	352	512	781	1,645
2019/20	355	492	624	1,471

For more information on season permits and TCW permits

[www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/season-ticket-permits/overview](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/season-ticket-permits/overview)

## 13. RingGo

All of the On Street pay & display areas and Off Street pay & display car parks have RingGo in operation.

The cashless service is provided by an external supplier RingGo enables motorists to pay for parking on a debit or credit card on their smartphone, via the App, Online or by calling RingGo direct.

Signs are located in all of our pay & display areas with directions of use, telephone numbers and unique 5 digit 'location code' that needs to be entered when purchasing parking time. The first time you use RingGo you need to register your vehicles registration numbers and payment card details. Once registered RingGo is very convenient and an easy way to pay for parking especially when you do not have change for the pay & display machine.

In May 2019 we changed our cashless parking provider from Parkmobile to RingGo. Both Parkmobile and RingGo brands are operated by the same parent company – Cobalt Telephone Technologies. As RingGo is the superior service and is more widely used, Cobalt have made the decision to only provide updates and service improvements to the RingGo brand whilst eventually bringing the Parkmobile solution to end-of-life.

Therefore GBC changed suppliers and the RingGo system offers the below benefits (over Parkmobile)-

- Real-time occupancy data to the motorist via the App
- Apple Pay & Google Pay
- Google Maps provides Navigation to parking zones
- RingGo Corporate allows businesses to register multiple vehicles on their accounts, current users include, Virgin media, BT Openreach and British Gas.

RingGo (or Parkmobile previously) is a popular method of paying for parking time amongst the customers and the below figures show the increase in popularity and usage year on year within our car parks.

Year	% of car park ticket sales by RingGo
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2015/16	9%
2016/17	10%
2017/18	13%
2018/19	19%
2019/20	33%



**RingGo**



## 14. Safer Parking Awards

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This is an award scheme known as Park Mark® run by the British Parking Association (BPA) with the support of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The award is given to those car parks that have a low crime rate and which demonstrate good management practices.

Independent assessors from the police and the BPA inspect the car parks and decide whether or not each car park meets the necessary criteria for the award. More information on the scheme and a list of all car parks that have been accredited with the Park Mark® are listed on their website

**[www.parkmark.co.uk/car-park-finder](http://www.parkmark.co.uk/car-park-finder)**

The below GBC run car parks are all part of this scheme and have been awarded the Park Mark Certificates and signs are in place throughout the car parks to show the award.

- Parrock Street,
- Rathmore Road
- Milton Place
- West Street
- Gurdwara
- Market Square & Horn Yard
- Ordnance Road





## 15. Financial Information

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The purpose of Penalty Charge Notices is to assist the free flow of traffic by deterring motorists from contravening the parking restrictions. Raising revenue from parking related functions is not the objective of the Parking Department. Our CEO's are salaried and are not part of any incentive scheme on the number of tickets they issue, they are not paid any commission and are not paid based on the number of Penalty Charge Notices they issue. They are also not set targets on the number of tickets they are required to issue in a working day/week.

The Parking Service has various streams of income to fund and improve the service, and depending on how the money was generated, it will dictate as to what the money can be spent on.

Any money generated on public highway (on-street), which will include any money generated through PCN's, pay & display charges and parking permits is ring-fenced and is used to meet the cost of providing the service and maintaining the parking facilities and other transport-related projects, schemes and initiatives. Any surplus revenue must be set aside and used for transport and parking-related projects. The Council operates a dedicated account to allow for the ring-fenced income and expenditure to be accounted for in accordance with legislation.

Income that is generated through car park fees and charges, season permits & penalty charge notices issued in car parks (off-street) is not ring-fenced in the same way and any surplus made after management fees from the car parks goes in to the council's general fund, which finances various services across the Council and throughout the Borough.

A breakdown of the on and off street parking accounts for the 2018/19 financial year is available to view on our website using the following link:

**[www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/about-the-council/policies-strategies-open-data/transparency-and-open-data/parking-account-information](http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/about-the-council/policies-strategies-open-data/transparency-and-open-data/parking-account-information)**



## 16. Current Projects

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The Parking Services team started four large projects in 2019/20 and due to the nature of the projects will continue into 2020/21. The details of the four projects are highlighted below. These are standalone projects and not part of the standard day-to-day functions of running the Parking Services Department.

### 16.1 – Remaining Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) Review

Gravesham Borough Council currently operates five CPZs at –

- Higham
- Meopham
- Northfleet
- Sole Street
- St James Avenue

These schemes were designed to protect residents from outside influences, such as commuters, from parking all day or for long periods of time in residential areas. The rural CPZ's have a 30 minute or 1 hour resident permit holders only restriction during the day (Mon-Fri).

These CPZ's have been in place for a number of years (some more than 10 years) and therefore we felt the time was right to conduct a review. The first part of which was sending surveys to all properties that fall within the current schemes to determine whether-

1. The CPZ is still considered necessary;
2. The CPZ area or the start/finish times of control should be changed; or
3. The CPZ should be removed or replaced with another parking scheme.

The feedback received will help us to ascertain the majority viewpoint of the residents and what changes, if any, the residents would like to see implemented.

Due to the size of the schemes and differing parking behaviours of residents there were some conflicting feedback across the schemes so it was decided that the proposed changes to the schemes would be presented to residents through an informal consultation. Whilst informal consultations are not a statutory requirement we felt that it would be beneficial to use the informal consultation as a 'market testing' tool to see if the changes we were proposing had captured the majority viewpoint of residents following the initial surveys.

The responses from the informal consultation will then be used to conduct the formal consultations with residents. This is a statutory requirement when making an Amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order and it is anticipated that the formal consultation will commence in September 2020 with the review completed early 2021.



## 16.2 – Review Pay & Display payment solutions

The current pay & display machines in operation in our car parks and on street pay & display areas were installed 10 years ago and offer a coin only payment solution. Whilst they are currently still in a good working order in recent years there has been notable developments in pay & display machine technology and in particular payment methods. Machines can now accept a mixture of cash (coins and notes), debit/credit cards by either chip or pin or contactless or all three methods.

In addition to the pay & display machines, the cashless parking solution, RingGo, is increasing in usage month on month and now equates to 33% of total pay & display purchases and continues to grow, mainly due to the convenience of paying by card and also not having to obtain a pay & display ticket to display in the vehicle.

In recent years the use of cash across all payment transactions (not just parking charges) has been decreasing and many members of the public state that they never carry cash. Therefore, we need to look at payment solutions and determine:

- Whether to upgrade the current pay & display machines to include card payments and continue with RingGo as it currently operates.
- Replace the pay & display machines with cash only solutions and promote the RingGo option for the cashless solution and introduce incentives to customers using this service.
- Implement a totally new ‘pay on foot’ system with barrier controls which offers a unique solution to the user. Payments can be made by cash & card at the machine or customers can register their bank account details and payments are automatically deducted from their account.

During 2019/20 there has been extensive market research conducted to ascertain what different suppliers can offer. The new payment solutions will be in place for at least the next ten years so we need to ensure that the solution is right for today but is also a system that customers will want to continue to use in the coming years.

We are confident that the supplier/solution will be identified and work on implementation will start in 200/21.



### **16.3 – Virtual Permit Solutions**

Currently parking permit applications are received via the online form or paper applications and residents then send payment and copies of their identification documents by post or email. This process has been in place for several years and whilst the procedures work, they could be more user friendly and the process could be easier for the customer to apply and more importantly receive their permit quicker.

Virtual permits remove the need for displaying a physical (paper) permit in the vehicle windscreen and customers manage their own permit account online. In their account they can -

- Apply and pay for new permits
- Re-apply and pay for expiring permits
- Upload required proof of residency/vehicle ownership
- Amend vehicle details when they have changed vehicles
- Amend personal data such as email addresses and phone numbers
- Cancel Permits

With the virtual permit system, when any changes are made to current permits i.e. change of vehicle or when a new application or renewal is completed online the permit is 'live' from the moment the payment is made or the changes have been submitted.

Customers can use the permit to park straight away rather than having to wait 3-5 days for their paper permit to arrive in the post and there will no longer be the need to issue temporary permits whilst the Parking Department is waiting for the customers documents.

Not only will the virtual permit system offer a much improved service to the customer (the current permit process can be confusing, long winded and not very user friendly) it will also offer a near Carbon Neutral online application which will eliminate the need for use of permit paper and the carbon footprint that it takes to deliver the paper permits in the post.

In 2019/20, a software provider was identified for the back office parking system, virtual permit solution and enforcement applications. Imperial Civil Enforcement Solutions are a market leading enforcement software provider and offer a complete back office software solution. In 2020/21 we will be working with the Imperial to build and configure the system for our specific needs. It is anticipated that the system will go live in March/April 2021.

### **16.4 – Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

With the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030 and the number of Gravesham residents and visitors using an Electric Vehicle (EV) increasing year in year, the Council needs to find potential solutions and locations to install EVCP.

We have been investigating suitable suppliers and have found that there are numerous suppliers all offering different type of charges, different fee structures and costs to the customer and authority. Some suppliers specialise in home or rapid chargers only (for motorway service stations) and others suppliers offer Charge Points more suited public car parks.

BPCM have by far the biggest network of charging points across the Country and are already in operation in several Kent Authorities and we will now be working with BPCM to install suitable chargers in three of our off street car parks.

## 17. Freedom of Information Requests

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The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities. It does this in two ways:

- Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and;
- Members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

The Freedom of Information Act requires Gravesham Borough Council respond to requests within 20 working days. However if a request requires work that exceeds £450 (which represents 18 hours of staff time) to find and extract the information, this may make the request exempt.

Many of the requests we receive centre around financial information, number and locations of PCN's issued and how many have been paid or cancelled.

The below table shows how many Freedom of Information requests the Parking Services Department have received in the last three financial years:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of FOI requests</b>
2015/16	13
2016/17	19
2017/18	17
2018/19	13
2019/20	11

The Parking Services Annual Report will be published online and may help reduce the number of FOI requests we receive as information will be easily accessible. We will also be able to direct FOI requests to the Annual Report in future if applicable.



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