



**Presentation to the Irish Parking Association's
Annual Seminar and Exhibition**

'Managing On-Street Parking in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

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Radisson Hotel, Dublin Airport

Tuesday, 6 November, 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I was somewhat surprised but very pleased nonetheless to have been invited by the Irish Parking Association to make a presentation to the Association's Biannual Conference and Exhibition. Surprised, because I no longer have a front line role in the parking industry, since my appointment as County Manager of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council in early 2006. Delighted, because the invitation gives me an opportunity to renew old acquaintances in the parking business and to view at first hand the latest developments in parking technology.

In terms of my presentation today I thought it might be of interest to you if I was to outline the approach being taken by DLRCoCo to the management of on-street parking in the County and to highlight some of the changes the Council is seeking to achieve on foot of a detailed review which it has carried out of its parking operations.

DLRCoCo's Parking Control Regime

DLRCoCo operates pay and display parking controls in the main towns in the County with Residents' Parking Permit schemes in residential areas in these towns. The Council also operates a small number of off-street surface car parks.

Since August 2007 the following on-street parking tariffs and charges for Residents Parking Permits etc. have applied:

On Street Parking Tariffs			
Zone	Location	Hourly Tariff	Daily Tariff
A	Centre of Dun Laoghaire & Centre of Dundrum	€2.00	n/a
B	Balance of Dun Laoghaire & Dundrum and other major towns	€1.50	€5.00
C	All Other Areas	€1.00	€5.00 & €3.00*
*Certain locations			
Charges for Residents' Permits Etc			
Residents Parking Permit One Year		€40	
Residents Parking Permit Two-Year		€75	
Visitor Parking Permit (per permit)		€1.50	

Some statistics on the scale of the Council's parking operation are set out below:

Scale of DLRCoCo's Parking Operations	
Est. Number of Pay & Display Tickets issued per annum	4.0m
Number of Parking Tickets issued per annum	47,000
Est. Number of 'Live' Residents Parking Permits	3,500
Estimated Revenue in 2007 from parking	€5.4m*
*includes revenue from payment of parking tickets, Residents Parking Permits etc.	

An important difference I have noticed in the area of parking policy in DLRCoCo relative to the City Council is the difficulty in getting the approval of the Elected Members for the implementation of paid parking controls. Decisions in relation to paid parking controls are a matter for the Elected Members of the Council and not the management of the Council.

Despite the arguments in favour of implementing paid parking especially in areas where there is excess demand for limited on-street parking and/or where there is evidence of all day 'commuter' parking reducing the availability of spaces for short stay parkers there is still a marked reluctance on the part of Councillors in DLR to impose charges for on-street parking. In my opinion this reflects a misplaced concern for motorists and an erroneous view of the impact of paid parking controls on businesses.

I believe that on balance, motorists and businesses generally benefit from the operation of paid parking controls. This is primarily because of greatly increased availability of on-street parking spaces and the reduced search time required to locate a parking space. Paid parking controls also facilitate short stay parkers at the expense of all day commuters, which is undoubtedly good for business. The operation of Resident Parking Permit Schemes ensures that householders have a greater prospect of accessing parking at or adjacent to their homes. There is also a wider community benefit in that the revenue generated from paid parking is used to finance a range of traffic management, road safety and roads maintenance measures.

Clearly a price has to be paid for these benefits. However, I do not think this is a major concern for the majority of motorists. After all it is of little or no consolation to a motorist who cannot find an on-street parking space to know that had he or she been able to locate a space it would have been free.

Review of DLRCoCo's Parking Control Regime

An independent assessment of the parking enforcement regime in the County was undertaken as part the '*Dun Laoghaire & Environs Traffic Management Plan*' report prepared by the Consultants ILTP. This report drew attention to the extent of the problem of illegal on-street parking and poor enforcement in Dun Laoghaire Town Centre, in the suburban area around Dun Laoghaire and in Dalkey Village (the three areas covered by the study). The lack of parking control measures and/or the lack of enforcement was also highlighted in submissions received as part of the public consultation process associated with the study. Casual observation suggested that ILTP's findings in relation to poor compliance with parking restrictions and inadequate enforcement applied generally throughout the County.

In the light of the findings in the ILTP report and the fact that the parking enforcement contract was due to go to tender the Council undertook a detailed review of its parking control regime during 2006.

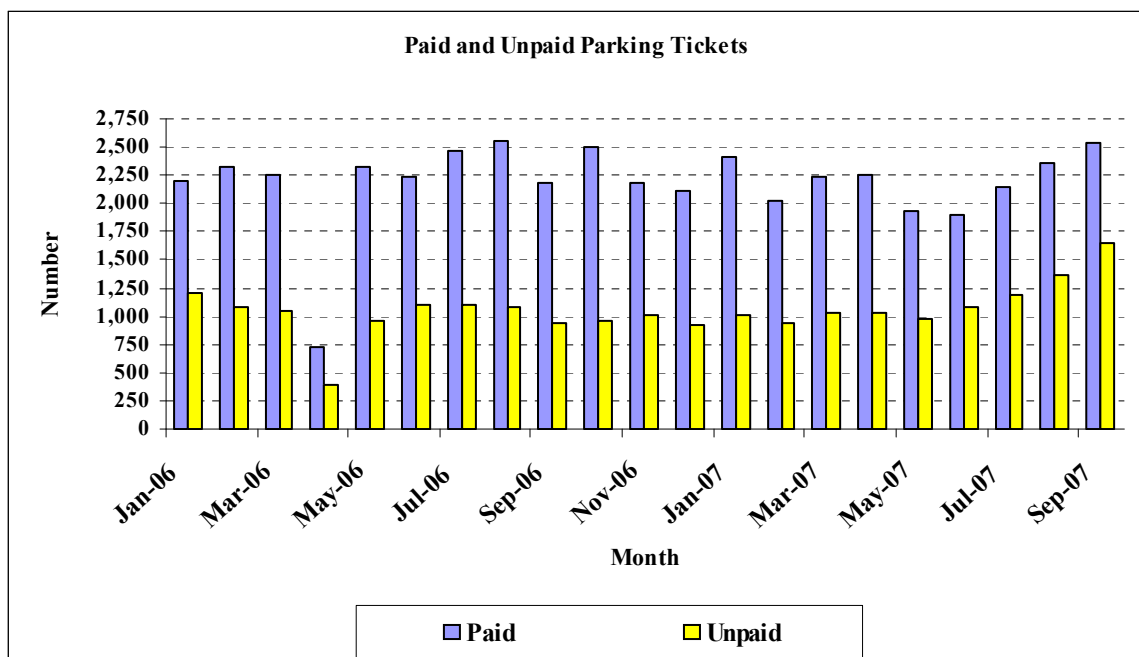
The main issues that emerged from that review are set out below:

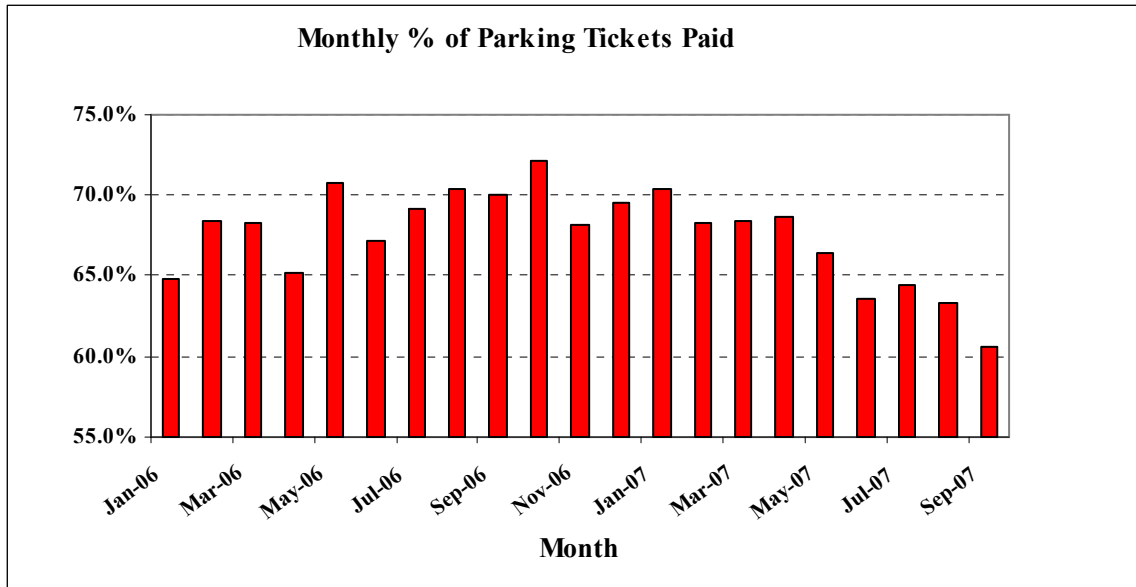
Enforcement

Since November 2004, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council has operated a parking enforcement service based on the issue of on-the-spot parking tickets. The ticket issuing service is provided on a contract basis by Central Parking Services (CPS). Initially, enforcement was confined to paid parking offences (non display of a valid pay and display ticket or permit) but it was subsequently extended to cover all parking offences. Since April 2006, motorists can either pay €40 within 28 days of the ticket being issued (or €60 after 28 days) or risk a fine of €60 plus costs on conviction in the District Court.

Information on the number of parking tickets issued in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown by CPS in each month since January 2006 that were paid and that remain unpaid is given in the charts below. (Parking tickets that were cancelled as a result of an appeal have been excluded.)

On average over the period January 2006 to September 2007, 67.5% of all tickets issued and not subsequently cancelled on appeal have been paid and 32.5% remain unpaid.





In summary, just over 32% of all parking tickets issued by CPS, the Council's parking enforcement contractor, remain unpaid. The loss of revenue to the Council associated with unpaid parking tickets is estimated at just over €600,000 per annum based on €40 per ticket.

Persistent Offenders

Information on serious persistent offenders based on the number of parking tickets issued in respect of the same vehicle over the period January to October 2006 which were unpaid at 31 October 2006 is given in the table below:

Persistent Parking Offenders Jan to Oct 2006*	
No of Unpaid Tickets	No of Vehicles
6 to 10	344
11 to 15	81
15 to 20	46
21 to 25	21
26 to 30	12
31 to 40	8
41 to 50	5
51 to 60	4
61 to 70	2
71 to 80	2
81 to 90	2
	527

** Based on Parking Tickets issued Jan to Oct 2006*

It was clear from this data that there were a significant number of motorists who are serious persistent offenders in relation to parking

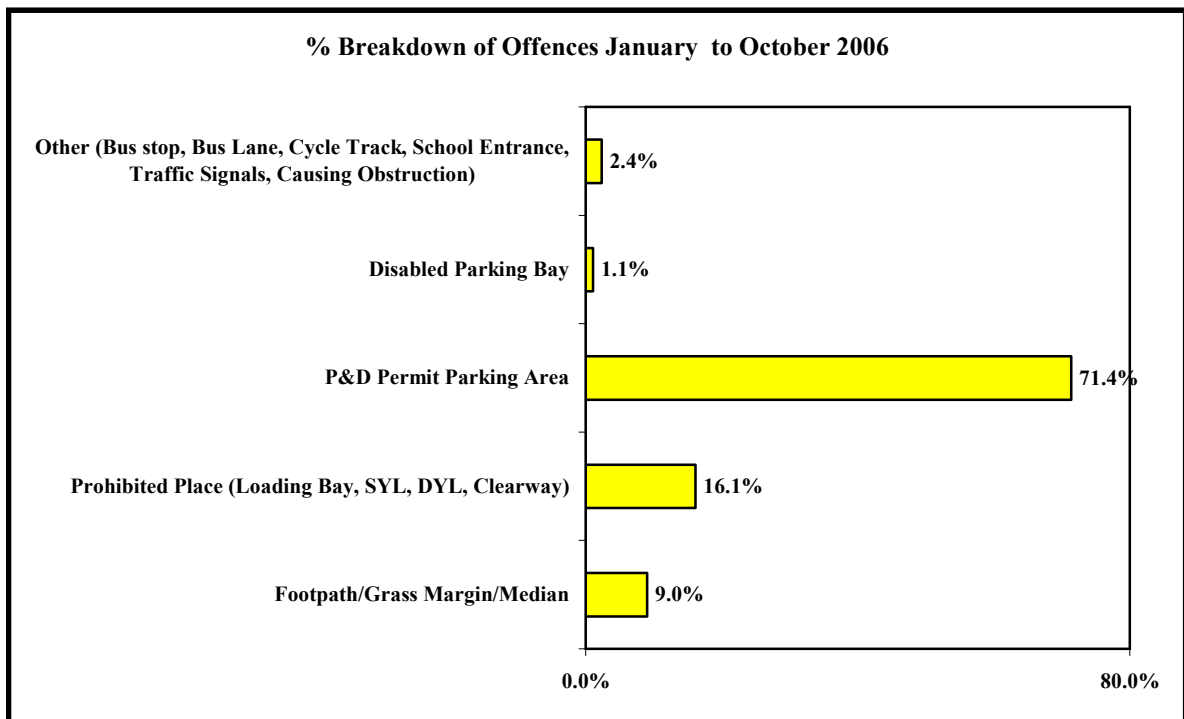
violations and who did not appear to be deterred by the Council's enforcement regime.

Breakdown of Parking Offences

The breakdown of parking offences in respect of which parking tickets were issued by CPS in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, between January and October 2006, is given in the chart on the following page.

Just over 71% of the tickets issued were in respect of paid parking offences (i.e. vehicles parking without displaying a valid pay and display ticket or permit). The balance of the tickets were issued in respect of vehicles parked in a prohibited place (e.g. loading bay, single yellow line, double yellow line, clearway, disabled parking bay, bus stop, bus lane, footpath, grass margin of median etc.).

The analysis suggested that the concentration of parking enforcement activity on paid parking offences relative to other parking offences was excessive.



Operating Hours

CPS provided a parking enforcement service on Monday to Saturday from 8am to 7pm. There was no service on Sundays and in the evenings after 7pm.

The need to extend the operating hours of the parking enforcement service to include evenings and Sundays was recognised.

Operating Procedures

The Council had not developed a set of detailed operating procedures to be followed by CPS in carrying out parking enforcement activity in the County and by the Council itself in determining appeals. Operating procedures cover issues such as the priority to be attached to enforcement action in respect of different parking

offences, the 'grace' periods to be allowed in respect of different parking offences and the basis on which appeals are to be determined.

The Council acknowledged that there was a need to develop operating procedures to cover key aspects of its parking enforcement service.

Appeals Procedure

Motorists who wished to appeal against the ticketing of a vehicle submitted a written appeal to the Council, which was adjudicated on by an officer of the Council. No reasons for appeal decisions were given.

The Council accepted that it would be preferable if an Independent Appeals Officer was appointed to deal with all appeals including complaints regarding the behaviour of staff engaged in parking enforcement activity. The Independent Appeals Officer would be required to determine all appeals, to give reasoned decisions, to report on the performance of the parking enforcement contractor and also to report on a regular basis to the Council's Transportation S.P.C. on the Council's parking enforcement operations.

Geographic Coverage

The Council's parking enforcement service was concentrated in the main centres in the county and in other areas where there were paid parking controls in operation. There were significant areas of the county where the Council did not provide a parking enforcement service.

It was accepted that the geographic coverage of the Council's parking enforcement service needed to be extended to the entire County

Vehicle Removal

The Council's parking enforcement service relied on the issue of parking tickets. There was no facility for the removal of vehicles that were causing obstruction or blocking entrances etc.

It was agreed that the Council's parking enforcement service should include some provision for the removal of vehicles causing serious obstruction and blocking entrances.

Changes in DLRCoCo's Parking Control Regime

In the light of the review some changes have already been made in the Council's enforcement service. The operating hours have been extended, new operating procedures have been prepared and published, and Independent Appeals Officer has been appointed.

A new tender for the appointment of a parking enforcement contractor will shortly be advertised by the Council which will make provision for the following changes in addition to the changes that have already been implemented:

- the provision of a ticketing service (ticketing will remain the primary enforcement instrument) together with a vehicle removal serviced. The

tender will also make provision for the possible introduction of a vehicle clamping service targeted at persistent offenders,

- the contractor will be obliged to give additional weight to enforcement of non 'paid' parking offences and
- the geographic coverage of the service will be extended to the entire County.

The last remaining area where I believe change is necessary is in relation to follow up on unpaid parking tickets. To be effective an enforcement regime that relies on the issue of parking tickets depends on being in a position to pursue motorists who do not pay in the Courts. Prior to April 2007 unpaid parking tickets were not being adequately pursued in the District Court by DLRCoCo due in part to a shortage of available Court time and to serious concerns on the Council's part about the effectiveness of relying on the Courts system to pursue motorists with unpaid parking tickets.

In this regard it is worth outlining the steps that have to be completed in prosecuting a parking ticket case. They are as follows:

1. Obtain ownership details of the vehicle
2. Issue reminder notice
3. Confirm status of payment
4. If unpaid issue a Solicitor's letter asking for payment of the ticket and warning that in default of payment, prosecution proceedings will be issued
5. Reserve time in the District Court
6. Check information again to establish status of payment
7. Arrange for Summons to be issued and served by registered post
8. If not served three times, obtain an order from District Court for substituted service by way of ordinary post.
9. Arrange the attendance of the Parking Warden/Wardens in Court.

It is obvious that the system is rigged in favour of the offending motorist. Even in the event of a successful prosecution there is no certainty that any fine imposed will be paid or that the Council will be able to recover its costs.

Based on these considerations I recommended to the Council that issuing parking tickets should remain the primary instrument of the Council's enforcement service. However, in order to protect the integrity of the service I also recommended that a limited vehicle clamping facility should be introduced targeted at persistent offenders. A persistent offender was to be defined as a vehicle in respect of which there are three or more outstanding parking tickets unpaid after 8 weeks. Unfortunately, a Section 140 motion was passed by the Council, which directed me not to introduce vehicle clamping. So much for the notion a local authority Manager is all powerful!

The opposition to the introduction of limited clamping came primarily from the Dún Laoghaire Business Association. They argue that any clamping of vehicles, irrespective of how limited, would be bad for business in Dún Laoghaire. I do not accept that this concern was valid. If clamping is bad for business then Dublin City Centre, which has a very rigorous parking enforcement regime (which relies entirely on the clamping of illegally parked vehicles) would be in terminal decline from a commercial perspective. All the evidence suggests that compared to Dún Laoghaire Dublin City Centre is thriving.

Since April 2007, when limited clamping was ruled out the Council has sought to fully utilise the three District Court dates it secured for parking ticket cases. In general, the experience to date has confirmed the Council's concerns regarding the effectiveness of pursuing unpaid parking tickets in the Courts. Typically, a conviction was secured or payment of the outstanding parking ticket was forthcoming in about 40% of the cases in

respect of which the Council served or attempted to serve a summons. However, only a minority of cases could be brought to Court due to restrictions on the availability of Court time. In addition, in cases where a conviction was secured the majority of the fines imposed remain unpaid and the costs awarded to the Council are still outstanding. Overall, while the Council's efforts have resulted in some improvement in the percentage of parking tickets that are being paid the additional revenue to the Council has been offset by the additional costs we are incurring.

All in all I am convinced that the Council will have no option but to agree to the introduction of limited clamping to deal with persistent offenders.