

## RAC Foundation for Motoring

### Local Authority Parking Finances in Wales 2016-17

#### 1. Introduction

This note covers parking finances for the 22 local authorities in Wales. As in England and Scotland, Welsh local authorities are required to submit details of their finances to the Welsh Government in a standard format. They are normally published in October, seven months after the financial year end. This report looks at the section on parking income and expenditure for 2016-17 and compares it with previous years going back to 2012-13.

The published data is less comprehensive than in England and does not split on- and off-street parking or show penalty income separately. The figures do not include any commercial off-street parking.

In 2016-17, 19 councils showed surpluses and 3 showed deficits (the same three councils as 2015-16). All councils are now receiving income from parking, although councils such as Blaenau Gwent (Ebbw Vale and Abertillery) and Torfaen (Pontypool and Cwmbran) offer free parking but still issue penalty charge notices.

#### 2. Summary

Table 1 below shows the summary accounts for local authorities in Wales.

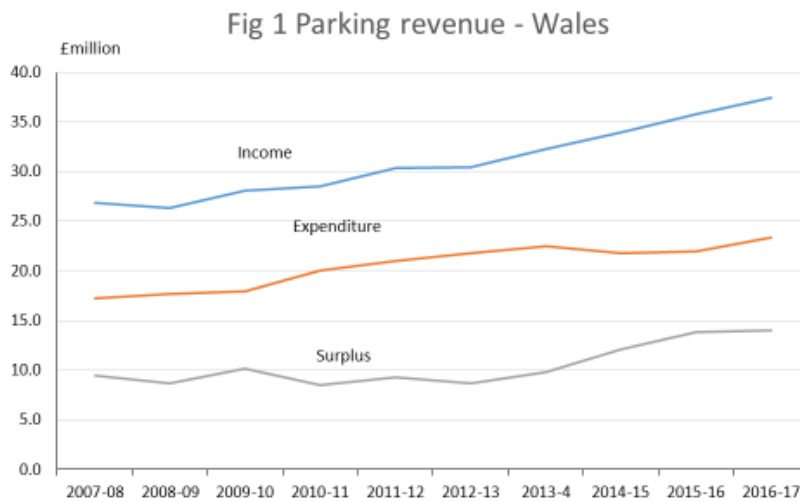
Table 1: Summary of parking accounts for Wales

£million		2012-13	2013-4	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Change 2016-17 on 2015-16
Parking	Income	30.4	32.3	33.9	35.8	37.4	4.5%
	Expenditure	21.8	22.5	21.8	22.0	23.4	6.4%
	Surplus	8.7	9.8	12.1	13.8	14.0	1.4%
All transport	Net cost	314.7	306.8	278.9	271.2	270.5	-0.3%
	Parking surplus as % of all transport costs	2.8%	3.2%	4.3%	5.1%	5.2%	

Income (meter and penalty income for both on- and off-street parking) has risen by 4.5% over the past year but expenditure on parking activities has risen by 6.4%, producing a year-on-year net surplus rise of 1.4%. Total transport expenditure has fallen by 0.3% so the surplus now represents 5.2% of transport costs. Parking makes

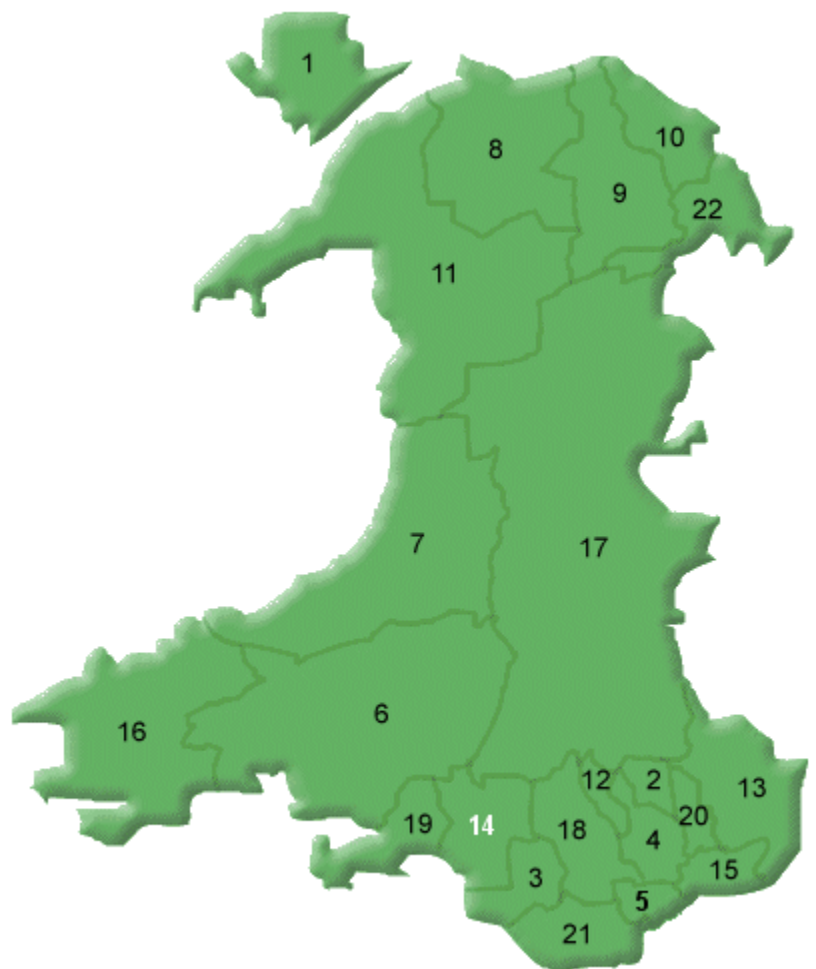
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a much smaller contribution to overall transport costs in Wales compared with England where it is around 12% of total transport.



1. Anglesey\*
2. Blaenau Gwent
3. Bridgend\*
4. Caerphilly
5. Cardiff
6. Carmarthenshire
7. Ceredigion\*
8. Conwy
9. Denbighshire\*
10. Flintshire\*
11. Gwynedd\*
12. Merthyr Tydfil
13. Monmouthshire
14. Neath Port Talbot
15. Newport
16. Pembrokeshire\*
17. Powys\*
18. Rhondda Cynon Taff
19. Swansea
20. Torfaen
21. Vale of Glamorgan\*
22. Wrexham\*

\* These councils participate in the Wales Penalty Processing Partnership



**3. Income**

Total parking income from all sources in 2016-17 was £37.4m, 4.5% higher than 2015-16. Note, this includes penalty income, which is not shown separately, but does not include off-street income received by commercial off-street parking facilities. Fifteen councils saw their parking income increase over the past year, four had income unchanged and three saw decreases. Income in Denbighshire and Flintshire increased by over 30% while in Merthyr Tydfil income reduced by 12%, the fifth consecutive annual decrease. Cardiff, Swansea and Carmarthen account for 44% of Welsh parking income, although the authorities only represent 25% of Wales's population.

As a rough measure of parking intensity, the 2016-17 income has been divided by the 2016 population estimate for each authority to give income per person, although this does not allow for any commuters<sup>1</sup>. The average is £12 per head but the two larger cities are nearly double this. For comparison, in London the equivalent figure is £72, the rest of England £19 and Scotland £15.

**Table 2: Parking income**

		INCOME						Population '000 (2016)	Income per head of population £
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Change 2016-17 on 2015-16		
£'000									
1	Cardiff	6,178	6,613	6,900	7,257	7,599	5%	361	21
2	Swansea	4,422	4,618	5,171	5,446	5,666	4%	245	23
3	Carmarthenshire	2,137	2,448	2,815	3,106	3,092	0%	186	17
4	Gwynedd	2,098	2,097	2,027	2,538	2,490	-2%	124	20
5	Conwy	1,368	1,392	1,419	1,886	1,935	3%	117	17
6	Pembrokeshire	1,297	1,360	1,521	1,783	1,867	5%	124	15
7	Denbighshire	1,458	1,300	1,251	1,300	1,711	32%	95	18
8	Powys	1,207	1,196	1,363	1,602	1,684	5%	132	13
9	Monmouthshire	1,147	1,183	1,250	1,421	1,522	7%	93	16
10	Neath Port Talbot	1,736	1,507	1,494	1,376	1,375	0%	142	10
11	Rhondda Cynon Taf	1,290	1,384	1,410	1,291	1,322	2%	238	6
12	Bridgend	1,138	1,357	1,268	1,220	1,127	-8%	143	8
13	Ceredigion	1,032	1,123	1,150	980	1,109	13%	74	15
14	Wrexham	847	889	1,045	896	974	9%	137	7
15	Vale of Glamorgan	318	955	788	686	764	11%	128	6
16	Caerphilly	659	702	721	702	675	-4%	180	4
17	Newport	660	605	621	640	643	0%	149	4
18	Merthyr Tydfil	885	832	745	690	608	-12%	60	10
19	Isle of Anglesey	330	388	456	523	605	16%	70	9
20	Flintshire	209	296	450	439	599	36%	154	4
21	Blaenau Gwent	0	30	38	30	30	0%	70	0.4
22	Torfaen	7	9	12	5	15	200%	92	0.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30,423</b>	<b>32,283</b>	<b>33,915</b>	<b>35,817</b>	<b>37,410</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>3,113</b>	<b>12</b>

<sup>1</sup> Cardiff's residents account for 62% of commuters into the city according to the Annual Population Survey, 2014)

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Table 3 below shows the number of penalty charge notices issued (as published by PATROL<sup>2</sup> for 2015-16, the latest data available) and the estimated income from them as a proportion of the total parking income (from on- and off-street charges, permits etc.). Broadly, an estimated one third (29%) of the total parking income is likely to come from penalty charges. This is compared with 42% in London and 12% outside London.

**Table 3: Penalty charge notices (based on 2015-16 data)**

2015-16	Total parking income £'000	PCNs issued	Est PCN income £'000	PCN income as % of total income
Blaenau Gwent		*		
Bridgend	1,220	10,426	469	38%
Caerphilly		*		
Cardiff	7,257	58,046	2,612	36%
Carmarthenshire	3,106	11,032	496	16%
Ceredigion	980	3,304	149	15%
Conwy	1,886	14,459	651	34%
Denbighshire	1,300	9,709	437	34%
Flintshire	439	2,314	104	24%
Gwynedd	2,538	11,147	502	20%
Isle of Anglesey	523	935	42	8%
MerthyrTydfil	690	4,886	220	32%
Monmouthshire		*		
Neath Port Talbot	1,376	10,607	477	35%
Newport		*		
Pembrokeshire	1,783	13,278	598	34%
Powys	1,602	7,078	319	20%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1,291	8,886	400	31%
Swansea	5,446	42,347	1,906	35%
Torfaen		*		
Vale of Glamorgan	686	6,807	306	45%
Wrexham	896	4,071	183	20%
<b>TOTAL (excl *)</b>	<b>33,019</b>	<b>219,332</b>	<b>9,870</b>	<b>30%</b>

\*Does not participate in PATROL

Assumes equal mix of higher rate (£70) and lower rate (£50) penalties and 75% recovery rate. Latest available data from PATROL.

<sup>2</sup> PATROL – The Joint Committee of England and Wales for the civil enforcement of Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London -

**4. Expenditure**

Table 4 below ranks councils in terms of expenditure on parking.

Overall expenditure rose by £1.4m (6.5%) between 2015-16 and 2016-17, after a rise of £0.2m between 2014-15 and 2015-16, with 17 out of the 22 councils having increased and 5 reduced their costs. Blaenau Gwent increased its expenditure by £0.5m but retains free parking which it considers essential for the prosperity of the region (Ebbw Vale, Abertillery, Tredegar). Ceredigion reduced its expenditure by £0.4m; the authority removed traffic wardens in 2011 but had to restore them in 2012 after the area suffered severe traffic congestion

The table also shows the proportion of income taken up by costs in 2016-17. Nationally in Wales it is 63%.

**Table 4: Total expenditure**

£'000		EXPENDITURE					% of income
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2016-17
1	Cardiff	3,592	3,688	3,474	3,763	3,941	52%
2	Swansea	3,166	3,362	3,220	3,044	3,199	56%
3	Carmarthenshire	1,650	1,652	2,026	1,712	1,764	57%
4	Pembrokeshire	1,033	984	1,029	1,200	1,270	68%
5	Neath Port Talbot	1,489	1,262	1,308	1,168	1,256	91%
6	Gwynedd	1,294	1,300	1,100	1,130	1,135	46%
7	Denbighshire	781	759	767	842	1,053	62%
8	Conwy	808	812	760	828	916	47%
9	Blaenau Gwent	311	274	262	340	866	2887%
10	Wrexham	607	304	580	580	838	86%
11	Bridgend	838	861	1,156	988	833	74%
12	Rhondda Cynon Taf	812	991	864	794	791	60%
13	Powys	849	761	748	763	789	47%
14	Flintshire	309	807	458	862	726	121%
15	Caerphilly	497	491	523	512	658	97%
16	Newport	867	589	556	503	633	99%
17	Vale of Glamorgan	556	902	637	578	632	83%
18	Monmouthshire	686	598	510	490	594	39%
19	Ceredigion	745	845	825	964	589	53%
20	Merthyr Tydfil	545	631	651	519	504	83%
21	Isle of Anglesey	275	303	299	337	358	59%
22	Torfaen	46	77	63	86	87	580%
	<b>Total</b>	21,755	22,253	21,816	22,003	23,431	<b>63%</b>

## 5. Surpluses

Table 5 below shows the parking surpluses from 2012-13 to 2016-17 and the change from 2015-16 to 2016-17. It also shows the proportion that parking surpluses represent of total transport expenditure.

**Table 5: Parking surpluses**

£'000		SURPLUS					% change in surplus 2016-17 on 2015-16	% change in deficit 2016-17 on 2015-16	Surplus as % of total transport expenditure 2016-17
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17			
1	Cardiff	2,586	2,924	3,426	3,494	3,658	5%		15%
2	Swansea	1,256	1,256	1,951	2,402	2,467	3%		10%
3	Gwynedd	804	797	927	1,408	1,355	-4%		8%
4	Carmarthenshire	487	795	790	1,394	1,328	-5%		8%
5	Conwy	560	580	659	1,058	1,019	-4%		12%
6	Monmouthshire	461	585	741	931	929	0%		15%
7	Powys	358	436	616	839	895	7%		8%
8	Denbighshire	677	541	484	458	658	44%		8%
9	Pembrokeshire	264	376	492	583	597	2%		6%
10	Rhondda Cynon Taf	478	393	545	497	531	7%		3%
11	Ceredigion	287	278	325	16	520	3178%		5%
12	Bridgend	300	496	111	232	295	27%		3%
13	Isle of Anglesey	55	85	157	186	247	33%		3%
14	Wrexham	240	- 149	465	316	136	-57%		1%
15	Vale of Glamorgan	- 238	53	151	108	132	22%		1%
16	Neath Port Talbot	247	245	186	208	118	-43%		1%
17	Merthyr Tydfil	340	201	93	171	104	-39%		2%
18	Caerphilly	162	211	198	190	17	-91%		0%
19	Newport	- 206	16	65	137	9	-93%		0%
20	Torfaen	- 39	- 68	- 51	- 81	- 72		-11%	-1%
21	Flintshire	- 100	- 511	-8	- 423	- 127		-70%	-1%
22	Blaenau Gwent	- 311	- 244	- 223	- 310	- 836		169%	-13%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,668</b>	<b>9,296</b>	<b>12,100</b>	<b>13,814</b>	<b>13,979</b>	<b>1.2%</b>		<b>5.2%</b>

Total parking *surpluses* amount to £15.0 m between 19 authorities of which Cardiff, Swansea and Gwynedd contribute 50%. Ceredigion increased its surplus significantly because of the sharp reduction in cost. Only three councils made a loss with the total of parking *deficits* rising to £1.0m from £0.8m last year, mainly because of a large loss in Blaenau Gwent with its big increase in expenditure.

Cardiff's parking surplus of £3.7m provides 15% of Cardiff's total transport expenditure (contrast Edinburgh where it was 60% in 2015-6) while Swansea's covers 10%. For the rest of Wales, excluding Cardiff and Swansea, parking surpluses/deficits of £7.9 m provide only 5% of total transport expenditure.

## 6. Reporting on Parking

Councils are required to report on the number of PCNs issued and their income and expenditure, preferably via an annual report. A search of the councils' websites showed that as at October 2017, only two councils, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, had published an annual report for 2016-17. Several councils had published annual reports at some time, often three or four years previously, and not since. Neath Port Talbot also produces a Parking Services Service Report Card which reports on how well they had performed against their objectives as well as giving financial figures.

**Table 6: Comparison of Published parking reports and financial data supplied to the Welsh Government**

£'000		2016-17		
		Income	Expenditure	Surplus
Neath Port Talbot	Annual Report	1,168	919	249
	<i>Finance statistics</i>	<i>1,374</i>	<i>1,256</i>	<i>118</i>
Swansea	Annual Report*	4,560	3,246	1,314
	<i>Finance statistics</i>	<i>5,666</i>	<i>3,199</i>	<i>2,467</i>

\*Excluding Park and Ride which had a deficit of £490,000

Financial data in the Neath Port Talbot annual report showed lower expenditure and therefore a higher surplus than in their statutory financial returns. Swansea reported lower parking income and similar expenditure so the surplus shown was half that in the statutory returns.

Greater transparency is essential.

David Leibling 27 October 2017

Full tables: <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Local-Government/Finance/Revenue/Transport/RoadsAndTransportRevenueExpenditure-by-authority>