

Parking Service Review

1. Introduction

- This paper provides an update on the parking review and seeks approval to employ an additional Civil Enforcement Officer and to merge the posts of Senior Civil Enforcement Officer and Office Manager to create a Parking Operations Manager.
- The aim of the systems thinking review was to enable customers to park easily in a safe and accessible location. The review was customer led and has informed the introduction of new technology, which is providing easier ways for the customer to secure services and pay. With more, up to date and faster processing of information this is leading to improved efficiency and providing better responses to parking issues around the Borough.
- The new radio system is providing more reliable coverage and safer working enabling a move away from proximity working in pairs to single working which will provide a more visible and comprehensive coverage, encouraging more people to park with due consideration and lawfully. The provision of an Operations Manager and additional Civil Enforcement Officer along with improved working patterns will significantly improve the effectiveness of patrols particularly at peak times around schools, resident parking schemes and the town centres.

2. Service Improvements:

Information Technology:

- In support of our channel shift programme the new IT system introduced in April 2015, allows customers to view, challenge, pay for Penalty Charge Notices, and apply for permits online. With customers self-serving, it will reduce the number of challenges, lead to speedier payment and a smoother permit application process. Since its introduction last year, cash payments have reduced by a third, to around 1,000 pa, with cheques either posted or hand delivered by half, to around 600 pa.
- The new smart phones are providing intelligence-led data, which is enabling the Civil Enforcement Officers to work more efficiently and speedily when checking vehicles and processing Penalty Charge Notices by scanning permit barcodes, providing real-time transfer of data and identification of persistent offenders that have not paid. To prevent their fines escalating and an increase in debt, the vehicle would be removed, as was the case on 9 occasions last year and on 2 occasions so far this year.
- The new phones will enable the Civil Enforcement Officers to provide real time information including photographs on a range of issues such as, usage of parking bays, unclear signs and lines, defective lighting, graffiti, bins overflowing, fly tipping and

cleanliness of car parks and streets, with information relayed straight to the contractors iPad and / or the Council Offices.

- With customers able to check information online as shown on the penalty charge notice and up to date information provided to the Council Offices from the Civil Enforcement Officers on all aspects of parking in the Borough, this will reduce the level of direct contact needed with the Administrative Assistants (to be renamed Parking Support Officers) and the Customer Services Unit, enabling time to be allocated to work that is more important. The real-time GPS tracking module also allows speedier deployment of the nearest Civil Enforcement Officer to respond to an issue or customer enquiry.
- The next phase will involve the replacement of our outdated and unreliable pay and display machines with the latest systems on the market, by the summer 2016, following which a wider range of payment methods will be offered, including cashless parking and pay by phone. The latter will provide customers with the ability to stay longer at their destination without having to return to their car.
- The new machines will provide improved data around levels and types of usage to help ensure the Council is making the best use of its parking and being more reliable will reduce breakdowns and inconvenience to the customer.

Staffing:

- With 7 Civil Enforcement Officers and a senior Civil Enforcement Officer, adopting proximity working in pairs and taking into account absences due to long term ill health, annual leave and vacancies (3 posts) held pending the outcome of the review, it has not been possible to provide comprehensive coverage of the Borough.
- With the new digital radio system, the patrols were re-designed for single working and successfully introduced last year. This, along with the new information technology has resulted in an increase in both coverage and the number of Penalty Charge Notices being issued from an average of 9 per day per officer to around 22 per day per officer.
- A new rota requiring 8 Civil Enforcement Officers will be introduced to ensure sufficient coverage across the week and weekend, particularly at peak times when customers require support in particular early morning for schools and commuters, mid-afternoon for schools and late afternoon / evenings for coverage of both town centres and residential roads. They will also provide patterns of working and sufficient rest days that take into account the welfare of the staff.
- With empowerment of staff and more effective IT systems and in order to increase team working and resilience, it is proposed that the roles of Office Manager and Senior Civil Enforcement Officer be merged to create a new role of Parking Operations Manager to oversee both the Civil Enforcement Officers and Parking Support Officers. The Parking Operations Manager will spend a significant amount of time patrolling the Borough ensuring that issues are being effectively resolved. To provide 8 Civil Enforcement Officers we will need to create an additional post.

- There are currently three Parking Support Officers of which one has been seconded until May 2016, and there are no changes proposed at this time.
- With the improved Information technology, more customers will self-serve reducing the level of contact with the Parking Support Officers. However, there will be additional work for the Parking Support Officers as the wider coverage by the Civil Enforcement Officers will result in an increase in the number of Parking Charge Notices to be processed and the extrapolating of additional information being recorded on the hand helds, to ensure action is taken. There is also further work to do to encourage customers to channel shift and take up the new payment methods.
- The Parking Support Officers have recently taken back pay and display machine fault calls from Customer Services in order to provide a real time response to customers and remedy to any problems. Having three staff will also ensure there is resilience within the team to cover holidays and sickness. We will review the work towards the end of this financial year when the secondment is due to finish.
- Having benchmarked our staffing structure against our neighbouring authorities, the findings show that we are lean with our resources compared to others:

Local Authorities	No. of Civil Enforcement Officers	No. of Office Staff	No. Penalty Charge Notices Issued	No. of Challenges
Guildford:	19.5	11 FT & 4 PT	33,000	6,000
Winchester:	15	10	14,000	4,000
Surrey Heath:	7	4	11,000	2,000
Hart:	7	2.5	4,500	500
Basingstoke:	7	2	9,000	2,500
Waverley:	6	2	13,000 – off street only	3,000
Rushmoor:	6 #	3	10,000	4,500 *

*Rushmoor PCN challenges are high as we operate CCTV, unlike all of these other local authorities and customers' requests to view evidence, form part of the challenge figures. The actual number of appeals to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal was 6 last year.

staff available during the period of comparison

Blue Badge Scheme:

- The revised Blue Badge scheme, introduced in October 2014 with the provision of better signage and additional bays, is operating smoothly.
- The Civil Enforcement Officers have received specialist training to detect misuse of blue badges and in particular ensure wider bays are available for those that need them. This complements the partnership work we have in place with Portsmouth City Council, who are authorised by Hampshire County Council to also investigate and prosecute when required. There have been 16 badges seized in Rushmoor, due to misuse, so far this year.

CCTV Enforcement:

- Due to the changes in legislation, the Council is no longer issuing Penalty Charge Notices by CCTV and the areas previously surveyed, such as double yellow lines and on street disabled bays in the town centre, will be covered by the increase in staff and more effective working. We are still awaiting clarity on the legality of using mobile CCTV enforcement around schools.

Strategy:

- The Strategic Parking Group has been formed to ensure the council take a corporate view of its parking functions and assets and a broader customer-focused approach. A new parking strategy is currently being finalised.

Financial Implications:

The table below shows the current and proposed staffing along with the costings

Position	Current Budget	Proposed
Parking Manager – G6 (0.8fte)	£40k	£44k
Senior Civil Enforcement Officer– G5	£40k (vacant)	Post deleted
7 Civil Enforcement Officers – G3	£222k (2 vacant)	£205k *
Office Manager – G5 +	£36k (inc honorarium)	Post deleted
2 Parking Support Officers – G3	£50k (1 vacant)	£50k
Parking Support Officer secondment– G3	£26k	£26k#
Operations Manager – G5 mid point		£42k
Civil Enforcement Officer – G3 mid point		£28k
Total 2015/16	£414	£395
Total 2016/17		£371

* 2 vacant posts if appointed at mid-point and reduction in overtime with all posts filled

Costs will reduce by further £26k when secondment completed in May 2016.

+ Parking Support Officer temporarily covering this position.

- Due to the loss of Princes Mead and the previous Warburg Car Park, the Civil Enforcement Officers are spending more time on street. The allocation of parking service costs have therefore been adjusted from between 60% and 67% to the Civil Parking Enforcement Fund and 33% to 40% to the Council, to 75% to the Civil Enforcement Officer Fund and 25% to the Council. This has resulted in a £52k reduction in the transfer from the general fund into the Civil Parking Enforcement earmarked reserve.
- In 2015/16, the Council has budgeted £1,364 k for off street pay and display charges and fines and £670k for on street pay and display charges and fines. The proposed restructure will produce a saving of around £43k in a full year of which the Civil Parking Enforcement Fund will see a reduction of £32k and the Council car parks a reduction of £11k.
- There will also be savings in the time allocated by office staff handling customer queries, and dealing with financial transactions, and increased income from improved management of carparks through better use of data.

- With more Civil Enforcement Officers providing better coverage it is anticipated that the level of Penalty Charge Notice income is likely to increase (circa £100k plus) particularly in the initial years.
- The Borough will benefit from any surpluses in the Civil Parking Enforcement Fund, which initially, has to be allocated to the provision and maintenance of car parks and if not required can be used to deliver, other improvements related to the Highways.

Conclusion:

- This parking review has been developed to enable customers to park easily in a safe and accessible location. The review was customer led and through the introduction of improved information technology will provide a more up to date, reliable and streamlined service which meets their needs.
- In addition to helping customers park, we will be able to respond to customer demands in a more timely and appropriate manner providing assistance when they require it, rather than when we can fit it in.
- With more Civil Enforcement Officers patrolling on a daily basis, with single working, will help promote their presence and encourage customers to park with due consideration and lawfully. It will provide an opportunity to better engage with the community and gain a fuller understanding of problem areas, which will lead to more customers being helped.
- Having re-designed the patrols and the Civil Enforcement Officers rota`s, it will help us provide wider coverage and tackle priority areas, ensuring that traffic flows easily throughout the borough, especially in the known hot-spot areas or at times when the demand is at its greatest, such as morning and evening rush hour. It also allows us to be thorough and consistent within our enforcement by ensuring the permit areas and limited waiting zones are regularly checked. Any surpluses in the Civil Parking Enforcement Fund will continue to be used improve highway related facilities, payment methods and enhance the parking offer to customers.
- Parking is a high visible and complex service and this review, particularly with the proposed new staffing structure and information technology has identified how it can be significantly improved for the customer and sustained for the longer term.

Recommendations:

- Cabinet to approve the following:
 - The appointment of an additional Civil Enforcement Officer, and
 - The merger of the Senior Civil Enforcement Officer and Office Manager to create a new post, of Parking Operations Manager.