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**To**

Public Services, Energy and Environment Scrutiny Board (4)

**Date**

26 November 2014

**Subject**

Enforcement techniques to improve journey times and keep traffic moving safely

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Note is to provide Scrutiny Board with an overview of Coventry's use of Civil Enforcement and other associated techniques in the effective management of the City's road network.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Public Services, Energy and Environment Scrutiny Board (4) note the contents of the report.

**3 Background**

**Legislation**

- 3.1 Government encourages local highway authorities to have a modern, efficient and sustainable transport system and road network. Effective management of the road network is a key part of this and under the Traffic Management Act 2004(TMA) the Council has a statutory duty to manage the road network with the aim of securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the city's road network and facilitating this on other authorities' road networks.
- 3.2 As part of the TMA authorities were required to introduce decriminalisation of parking offences using the powers in the Road Traffic Act 1991 (RTA). Coventry became a Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Authority in April 2005 and responsibility for parking enforcement transferred from the West Midlands Police to the Council.
- 3.3 In March 2008, specific parts of the RTA 1991 were superseded by the introduction of part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. The new legislation widened the scope of local authority parking enforcement and it aims to ensure greater openness, consistency, fairness and professionalism within parking operations.
- 3.4 The implementation of part 6 of the TMA 2004 resulted in Coventry becoming a Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) authority. The expectations of CPE are that parking enforcement operations are clearly aligned to the wider transport objectives and strategies for Coventry, particularly in regard to support the economic growth of the city, whilst helping to meet the Council's obligations to manage the transport network and congestion;

- 3.5 In June 2011 the Council commenced Bus Lane enforcement in order to ensure more reliable journey times for local bus services to and from the City Centre in order to promote public transport and sustainable travel.

#### **4 Direct Enforcement Activities on our road network**

- 4.1 Coventry City Council has adopted a range of enforcement measures to keep traffic moving in the city with the strain this puts on our strategic road network. The Council has taken proportionate steps to tackle this through enforcement which aims for:

- enhancing the efficiency, and reliability of our transport networks for the movement of people and freight;
- improving safety and security;
- effectively maintaining and managing our Highway and Street assets; and
- improved information on the network to improve public perception and help to plan their journey;

- 4.2 Some of these enforcement tools and the actions we take to manage our road network are highlighted below:

- **Civil Enforcement Officers**, we employ Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to enforce parking restrictions. These powers are issued by the Secretary of State under regulations within the Traffic Management Act 2004. This means parking enforcement is the responsibility of Coventry City Council, but the police remain responsible for illegal offences such as dangerous parking and obstruction. The main objectives of on-street parking enforcement are to maintain road safety and prevent congestion. Our CEOs patrol the public streets and local council car parks on foot or using a car, motorcycle or moped vehicle to travel between different areas.
- **Mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) CCTV enforcement** – Government is in the process of banning the Use of ANPR equipped vehicles on their own to enforce on-street parking. In early April 2015 we will be deploying and trailing an ANPR CCTV car to promote safety and tackle congestion around schools and stopping or parking in bus stops and bus lanes.
- **Tow Away powers** – this is currently exercised for when obstruction is experienced during Planned maintenance works.
- **Bus Lane ANPR enforcement on** Tile Hill Lane, Sky Blue Way, Stoney Road, Whittle Arch and Park Road. The advantage from the provision of enforcement is that it deters vehicles driving and causing queue back along bus lanes thus causing delays to buses and eroding the intended advantages of bus lanes.

- 4.3 The income and expenditure of local authorities in connection with parking and bus lane enforcement activities are governed by Section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 (RTRA). Any surpluses generated as a result of parking and bus lane enforcement activities must be used in accordance with the legislative restrictions in Section 55 (as amended) of the RTRA 1984.

## 5 Other Activities to influence better safety and lower congestion whilst achieving improved journey times

5.1 Coventry City Council is supporting the delivery of a number of transport schemes which will have a direct and positive impact on our safety and environmental objectives. Some of the projects will help to reduce congestion and at the same time influence behaviour that will improve safety. Some of these activities are briefly described below:

- **West Midlands trial of digital speed enforcement cameras.** Coventry City Council is a member of the West Midlands Road Safety Partnership. The trial of digital speed enforcement cameras is presently being led by Solihull and Birmingham City. The trial is expected to commence in spring 2015 and roll out across the West Midlands including Coventry may happen in the future subject to the trial outcome and funding being available.
- **Community Speed Watch,** the Community Speed Watch initiative allows members of the community to address the issue of speeding by becoming actively involved in road safety, monitoring speeds at safe locations with speed detection equipment. It can potentially address the problem of speeding through the joint working with PCC and West Midlands Road Safety Partnership, local forums and other community groups.
- **Permanent VAS,** These are permanently devices that typically display a recognisable sign, such as a speed regulatory sign. Following Department for Transport advice, these signs are used where there is a measured road casualty and traffic speed issue, and where no other suitable engineering measures can be provided. In Coventry in addition to the above we also use these devices to address local perceptions on safety.

**Investigation in to the use of traffic signals to ameliorate speeds.** There is compelling evidence that in a given set of road and traffic conditions the frequency of accidents increases with the speed of traffic, and the higher the speed the faster accident frequency can rise as would severity of accidents. The variation in speed and headways (gaps) between vehicles in the same lane and between lanes is often the cause of unstable traffic conditions under high traffic volumes. A minor incident may cause long traffic queues, congestion, and frustrated drivers, which in turn may lead to accidents and long travel times that entail a cost to individuals and the City alike. We are investigating means to control inappropriate vehicle speeds by changing traffic signal staging in “real-time”. This is expected to harmonise journey times and aid in the reduction of speeds on certain.

## 6 Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London (PATROL) Adjudication Joint Committee,

6.1 The PATROL Adjudication Joint Committee has been established to enable all Councils having Civil Enforcement Area Orders, enabling them to carry out civil enforcement of parking contraventions, to exercise their functions under Section 81 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and Regulations 17 of the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions.

6.2 The functions of PATROL, on behalf of its constituent councils, are,

- commissioning Independent Reviews and the provision of public information.
- appointing independent bus lane adjudicators to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (subject to the consent of the Lord Chancellor) and providing these adjudicators with administrative staff and accommodation and providing hearing venues. Its remit in relation to the Tribunal is limited to these matters.

6.3 Coventry City is an active member of the PATROL and the Cabinet Member (Public Services) close involvement with the Executive Sub Committee will ensure Coventry City Council's interest is maintained at the highest level.

## **7 Other enforcement strategies being deployed locally and nationally.**

7.1 At present in England (outside London) legislation does not permit enforcement of moving traffic offences except bus lanes.

7.2 The enforcement of dangerous parking or moving offences is currently carried out by the Police. In recent times, due to competing pressures and priorities, the Police have not been able to provide the necessary level of consistent enforcement. Despite a number of historic campaigns, a lack of continual and high profile enforcement can lead to a relatively high level of contravention. Some motorists now disregard the regulatory traffic signs associated with say yellow boxes or some of our One Way restrictions and therefore contraventions have increased.

7.3 Although Coventry City Council has the authority to enforce bus lanes, the enforcement of yellow box junctions, one ways, no entries and other similar restrictions remains the responsibility of the Police. The enforcement of these moving traffic offences is becoming ever more important in order to reduce congestion and promote safety. For example yellow box junctions are a particular issue during peak traffic flow times because there seems to be a growing impatience amongst some drivers and a lack of understanding about the rule for entering yellow box junctions, thus causing unnecessary congestion and delay to all affected motorists, both car borne and bus borne and can potentially be detrimental to local business and commerce.

7.4 Earlier in 2013, new legislation was made available in Wales to allow local authorities to enforce yellow box junctions and a range of other moving traffic contraventions. Cardiff and other towns in Wales are preparing to commence enforcement within the next few months.

7.5 We are hoping that in due course working in close partnership with the Department for Transport we can also acquire these additional powers in order to complement the current Civil Enforcement powers. This will provide a greater resource to address traffic congestion, and also that deploying Council based enforcement will contribute further towards the transportation policy of encouraging travel by modes other than private car.

7.6 By having access to these powers, Coventry City Council will be able to augment the basket of measures available to it for better control of enforcement in support of its transportation policies whilst proactively tackling traffic congestion, and so improve traffic flows.

## **8 Enforcement of City's Strategic Road Network Hierarchy**

- 8.1 A large number of people commute into Coventry from the surrounding areas in Warwickshire and further afield, and there is a proportionally high level of journeys by car into the City Centre, compared to public transport use.
- 8.2 Our strategic road network hierarchy is designated according to the sensitivity of local needs and potential for disruption to our road network. For example M6 and sections of A45 (Stonebridge Highway) come under the operational control of the Highways Agency. However, at local level roads like the Ring Road and the routes that radiate out from the Ring Road like London Road Holyhead Road, Sky Blue way and Walsgrave Road are commonly used by a greater number of users that travel longer distances. In contrast other roads like Leamington, Foleshill Road, Tamworth Road, Butts, Daventry Road and Gulson Road have the capability for localised disruption to local traffic.
- 8.3 In order to rationalise resources and manage the network economically, each street and road needs to be considered according to its importance and potential for disruption to the overall road network and this is reflected in the level of enforcement resources deployed to those areas in order to provide road users with a network that works safely and effectively, whilst bearing in mind the need for on-street parking and unimpeded access for public transport and emergency services.
- 8.4 Finally, the Council recognises that safeguarding routes for vehicular traffic, including goods vehicles, can support the growth and transformation of our road network and is a key enabler of economic prosperity, productivity and social wellbeing in Coventry.

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