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**To: Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board [4]**

27 March 2019

**Subject: Civil Parking Enforcement**

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## **1 Purpose of report**

The purpose of the Briefing Note is to inform the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board of current activities and arrangements in respect of the Council's Parking Enforcement operation and to provide an overview of performance and the key priorities.

## **2 Recommendations**

Members of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board are recommended to:

- i. Note the actions and initiatives in place to tackle the key parking enforcement priorities.
- ii. Make recommendations as appropriate to the Cabinet Member (Policing and Equalities) and the Cabinet Member (City Services).

## **3 Background**

The Council has been responsible for parking enforcement in Coventry since April 2005 when the function was decriminalised and transferred from the West Midlands Police.

Since March 2008, Civil Parking Enforcement has operated under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. Amongst other things, the legislation requires the Council to review its parking policies on a regular basis to ensure that they are effective, appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent. The legislation also states that any financial surpluses that are generated from Civil Parking Enforcement are 'ring fenced' and can only be used to fund the service and other highway improvements and traffic safety schemes. Parking Enforcement should not therefore, be used as a means for raising revenue for the Council

The Council's Parking Service comprises 4 main functions, namely:

- Civil parking enforcement operation
- Bus lane enforcement operation
- The appeals service
- Car park management

In July 2015, the Appeals function transferred to the Council's Customer Services from Parking Services.

Parking activities are integral to the Council's transport strategies but getting the balance right between the demands for parking and the needs of Coventry's growing population is a challenge.

Historically, the car park management and parking enforcement functions were completely separate and undertaken by two different groups of staff. The two functions were amalgamated in November 2012 in order to remove duplication of effort and to deliver significant cost and efficiency savings. As a result, management of the Council's car parks and civil parking enforcement duties are now both undertaken by the in-house Parking team.

#### **4 Civil Parking Enforcement**

Civil Parking enforcement is not always popular with some people but it is absolutely vital to improve road safety, traffic flow and access for essential public and emergency services.

##### **4.1 Staff Resources**

Coventry's Parking Services are delivered by an in-house team comprising 32 posts as follows:

- Parking Manager [1]
- Parking Supervisors [3]
- Civil Enforcement Officers [27]
- Business Analyst [1]

In addition to the above, the Parking Appeals team within Customer Services comprises a further 11 officers and the Bus Lane Enforcement team comprises 2 officers.

##### **4.2 Operational Arrangements**

The 27 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), formerly known as Traffic Wardens, are organised into 3 teams of 9 under the day to day line management of the 3 Parking Supervisors. The officers work a rotating shift pattern during Monday to Sunday between 07:30am to 19:15pm.

Traditionally, late evening and night time enforcement, (i.e. during 'out of hours'), has been undertaken on an ad hoc basis. The current shift arrangements need revisiting in order to ensure more routine coverage during the evening and night time to tackle illegal parking across the city, both in residential areas and within the city centre.

Measures are currently being explored with the aim of restructuring the service and providing sufficient additional staff resources to carry out regular and routine enforcement during the evening through to 10:00pm.

##### **4.3 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs)**

The CEOs are the public face of parking enforcement and the way that the staff perform their duties is crucial to its success and the public's perception.

CEOs need to be professional and efficient, often in difficult circumstances. Regrettably they are regularly on the receiving end of verbal and physical assaults whilst carrying out their role. Nowadays the officers use body worn video cameras to help reduce the number of assaults and to capture video evidence to assist with prosecutions where it's necessary.

The overarching aim of the CEO is to ensure that parking regulations are observed and enforced in a professional, fair, accurate and consistent manner.

Their main duties and responsibilities are:

- To monitor vehicle parking in relation to the restrictions.
- Encourage considerate parking and discourage inconsiderate parking behaviour.
- Educate the public to improve parking habits.
- Minimise illegal parking through enforcement measures where required.

- Inspecting and repairing parking equipment.

#### 4.4 Performance Levels

The CEOs enforce illegal parking by issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to offending vehicles. The level of PCNs issued during the past few years is shown in the table below:

Year	Penalty Charge Notices Issued		
	Parking Enforcement	Bus Lane Enforcement	Total
2018/19 (projected)	45,000	65,000	110,000
2017/18	40,000	72,000	112,000
2016/17	41,000	52,000	93,000
2015/16	37,000	49,000	86,000
2014/15	34,000	39,000	73,000
2013/14	31,000	38,000	69,000
2012/13	33,000	15,000	48,000
2011/12	40,000	7,000	47,000
2010/11	38,000	-	38,000
2009/10	36,000	-	36,000

The numbers above show that the level of parking offences continues to increase year on year which is a worrying trend, especially given that there is limited enforcement during the evening / night time. Consequently, the appointment of additional enforcement officers to tackle parking problems during the evening is likely to result in a further increase in the number of PCNs issued.

The revenue generated through parking enforcement is used to fund the service (e.g. staff salaries, equipment, uniforms, computer systems, professional fees etc.).

The cost to deliver the parking enforcement operation is £1.2million.

#### 4.5 Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Camera Enforcement

The relevant legislation allows the Council to enforce some parking restrictions using CCTV cameras where enforcement using the traditional methods is difficult.

During the past few years, Parking Services has operated an enforcement car fitted with an ANPR camera. The car was owned and provided to the Council by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party supplier to assist with the enforcement of parking restrictions outside of some schools. Over time the supplier has withdrawn the use of the car which has meant that Parking Services hasn't been in a position to effectively enforce these restrictions which in turn compromises the safety of school children. To combat this Parking Services has recently bought its own ANPR enforcement car and this is currently being commissioned. It is expected that it will be ready for deployment early in the new financial year.

There are 115 schools in Coventry and many of them have more than one entrance to the school site. As such there are about two hundred school access points that need to be kept clear and regularly enforced. The ANPR enforcement car will provide an effective means of enforcing the school keep clear restrictions and identifying parking 'hotspots'.

Ultimately, it will also be used to enforce the red-route along the A4600, bus stops, taxi ranks and locations where there is a loading / unloading ban. It will also be used to assist with the enforcement of residents' parking schemes where 'digital' permits have been issued.

#### 4.6 City Centre Restricted Parking Zone

During 2012, the Council introduced a restricted parking zone across the city centre. At that time, all double and single yellow lines were removed. In some streets the restrictions were replaced with designated parking bays and at that juncture it became illegal to park anywhere on-street in the city centre other than in clearly marked bays.

Traffic signs are located at the start and end of the restricted parking zone to indicate that on-street parking is controlled and that restrictions apply. Smaller repeater signs are located on-street throughout the zone.

Most on-street parking bays are metered and drivers must pay the relevant fee when parked in a metered bay.

#### 4.7 Residents' Parking Schemes

There are currently twenty-five existing Residents' Parking Schemes throughout Coventry, some of which were introduced many years ago.

Residents' Parking Schemes are a way of controlling on-street parking by people such as commuters and shoppers with the aim of ensuring that residents are able to park near to their homes. Commuter parking in residential areas affects the local environment and quality of life of residents.

The schemes that have been implemented during the past few years have been introduced in line with the Council's Resident Parking Policy (2017) which provides a framework and a consistent approach for future schemes.

The Council is phasing out traditional paper permits and where possible all permits will be digital and issued through an online system that gives the resident the ability to self-manage their permits either online or by phone. There are still several legacy schemes that operate using paper permits (e.g. Walsgrave and Charterhouse) which will be transferred to digital during the coming months.

Parking Services will use the ANPR enforcement car to assist with the enforcement of the digital permit schemes which is expected to be far more efficient than the traditional approach using foot patrolling officers.

#### 4.8 Penalty Charge Notice Recovery Process

Penalty charge levels are regulated by central government rather than locally.

There are approx. 60 different types of parking offences and each of these is classified as either a higher or lower level contravention. The more serious offences incur a £70 penalty charge whereas the less serious ones incur the lower level charge of £50. In either instance, the charge is reduced by 50% (to either £35 or £25) if paid within the first 14 days. [A bus lane penalty charge incurs a charge of £60 which is also reduced by 50% to £30 if paid in 14 days].

The process of recovering a PCN can range from being very simple and straightforward to being very complex. The administration of appeals and the penalty charge recovery process currently sits within Customer Services albeit that it is integral to the effectiveness of Parking Services. The team consists of 10 Appeals Officers under the day-to-day management of a Team Leader. The Team is responsible for processing payments, administering the PCN recovery process, serving statutory notices, dealing with informal / formal representations and appeals against the PCN and administering the legacy Resident Parking Schemes.

Parking Services management are currently working closely with colleagues in Customer Services with the aim of improving PCN debt recovery.

#### 4.9 Car Park Management

The responsibility for the management of the Council's car parks was transferred back in-house in April 2011 from CV One. The function includes the day to day operation of car parks, the maintenance of associated equipment, the administration of car park passes, cash collection and the reconciliation of car park income.

Parking Services is responsible for the management of 24 public and private car parks across the city. The cost of off-street parking differs between car parks and depends on whether the car park is classified as either long or short stay.

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