

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE
January 2012

PARKING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose of the report: To provide the Committee with the out-turns for the on-street parking service within Surrey for 2010/11

Introduction:

- 1 The County Council is responsible for the management of on-street parking enforcement. On the 31 March 2008, part 6 the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) was enacted. This introduced a number of additional powers and changed the terminology from Decriminalised to Civil Parking Enforcement. Surrey Police do not enforce waiting restrictions in the county and enforcement patrols are carried out by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) employed by the district / borough councils with the authority of the county council.
2. Within the Secretary of State's statutory guidance to local authorities on the civil enforcement of parking contraventions, it states that enforcement authorities should produce an annual report about their enforcement activities. The purpose of this report is fulfil this requirement and to update the Environment and Transport Select Committee.

Background

3. The County Council started operating Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE), in 2004. Since this time the enforcement of restrictions and associated administrative functions has been undertaken by the eleven district and borough councils on behalf of the County Council with localised agency agreements introduced on a staggered basis.
4. For the operation of CPE up to April 2011, the agency agreements stipulated that the County Council was responsible for all costs. Revised interim arrangements are in place for 2011/12.
5. The agency agreements developed since 2004 do vary, and in some, but not all areas, Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) are separately identified.

The agents identify any income from penalty charge notices, permits or on-street charging and also any expenditure from enforcement and back office functions specific to CPZs. In these instances any surplus or deficit is the responsibility of the relevant SCC Local Committee. This report also contains details of CPZ income and expenditure. This has changed for 2011/12 with CPE and CPZ accounts being merged.

6. Financial information has been reported by all eleven agents, and has been collated to give the total income / expenditure for on street parking enforcement for the 2010/11 financial year for the County Council as a whole.
7. Part 6 of the TMA states that an annual parking report should detail all on-street income / expenditure plus various other figures relating to performance and should be put in the public domain. This report contains the recommended data broken down by individual district in Annex 1.

Financial reporting

8. The introduction of the TMA created significant changes in the way parking enforcement is undertaken. A key change was the introduction of differential penalty charges, dependant on contravention. The reasoning behind this is that it is deemed some parking contraventions are more serious than others (such as parking on double yellow lines rather than overstaying your time in a parking bay) so the level of penalty charge should reflect this. There are two bands with the higher rate set at £70 and the lower at £50 (both discounted by 50% if paid within 14 days). Whether a contravention is a higher or lower rate is prescribed in the regulations and not subject to local discretion. Prior to these changes the standard charge was £60 (still discounted by 50% if paid within 14 days).
9. Within Elmbridge, Guildford, Surrey Heath and Woking, CPZs are separately accounted for, with any surplus or deficit being ring fenced to the Local Committee, which determines how this is used (within the constraints of the legislation).
10. The other borough / districts do not separately identify CPZs and have just one parking account for on-street CPE. Looked at as a whole across the county, CPZs operate at a surplus. However, the functions associated with CPE, generally all operate at a deficit, which is funded from a central county parking account.
11. The total cost of operating on-street parking in each district for 2010/11 is detailed in Annex 2. The figures are as supplied by our agents and the actual outturn in the county's accounts is slightly different due to the timing of payments and need for accruals at the end of each financial year (this will balance over time).
12. The overall cost of operating on street parking management in Surrey reduced from £382,671 in 2009/10 to £314,431 in 2010/11. Some of the reasons for this are explained in the operational report below.

13. The majority of the operating surplus for CPZs is generated within Guildford.
14. The purpose of operating a parking service is not to generate income but to provide a quality service for residents, businesses and motorists within Surrey, helping improve road safety and reduce congestion as well as access to local businesses.

Operational Report

15. Surrey is a varied county and consequently the number of PCNs issued is not consistent across the county. In simplistic terms the opportunity to undertake enforcement in a built up area is greater than in the countryside. The type of restriction can also have a significant impact. For example, limited waiting bays, where parking is permitted for a certain amount of time but then re-parking in the same place is not allowed for a set period (such as 1 hour, with no return allowed for 2 hours), while popular with residents and businesses, are difficult and require significant resources to enforce.
16. Parking is a pressure in many locations within Surrey. The Council receives many requests to increase or introduce restrictions, and for additional enforcement where controls already exist. Reviews of restrictions are ongoing throughout the County, in accordance with the priorities of the Local Committee for that area. If the funding is available the Parking Team aim to review each area on an annual basis, however this depends on the number of locations in the review.
17. There needs to be a fair enforcement regime if waiting restrictions are to be respected by motorists. This needs to be balanced against the cost of enforcement to ensure that any proposal is financially sound and does not generate unsustainable revenue commitments for the County or district. It is not always possible to provide levels of enforcement that some residents would like.
18. Annex 1 details operational parking data for the eleven boroughs / districts. It is laid out as recommended by the guidance, hence the inclusion of number of vehicles immobilised / removed. This is shown as not applicable because the county council and our agents do not immobilise or remove vehicles for parking contraventions, in line with the policy decision made by the former Executive.
19. It is reported that nationally that the economic downturn has led to a reduction in penalty charge notice (PCN) issue rates since 2008/09. The number of PCN's issued in Surrey has fluctuated around the 70,000 mark since this time. Some of the factors that influence the numbers of PCN's issued include the economic downturn and the rise in fuel prices (reduced activity). The increased profile of parking enforcement in the national media could also mean that many people are less likely to take a chance on receiving a PCN, improving compliance. The picture is not straight forward however as some district and boroughs have improved the

consistency and effectiveness of their parking enforcement operation leading to increased numbers of PCN's being issued.

20. The SCC and district/borough parking teams regularly assess and amend existing signs and lines on the ground to ensure that they meet the requirements of the legislation. This has helped make it clearer to drivers to understand what the restrictions are and helped remove any ambiguity.

Future operational arrangements

21. As stated earlier the agency agreements vary between the boroughs and districts, as do the costs of their enforcement operations. This is partly due to the localised nature of the agency agreements, how the enforcement operations are managed, as well as geographic factors.
22. This financial year (2011/12) it has been agreed that the district and borough Council's carrying out on street enforcement in Surrey are responsible for any deficit within their areas. Nine districts have agreed to this, with Tandridge and Waverley no longer involved with on-street parking enforcement. In these districts, it will be carried out by Reigate and Banstead and Guildford respectively.
23. Therefore in 2011/12, taking into account any termination or exceptional costs, on street parking enforcement -should operate at significantly lower cost to the County Council.
24. New, more permanent arrangements also are being discussed with the district and borough councils to continue the partnership agency arrangement beyond April 2012. These could see further improvements from in the future. Following on from the Select Committees report to the Cabinet in November 2011 on this subject, it is planned that a further report on the way forward will be presented to the Cabinet in early 2012.
25. The Secretary of State's statutory guidance states that it is a sensible aim for CPE operations to be self-financing, and that if they are not, the authorities should be certain that the operations can be paid for from within existing funding. With the reduction in funding in the coming years, it is therefore increasingly important for Surrey to try to run its CPE operation in a way that is at least cost neutral, as neither national nor local taxpayers should be expected to meet any deficit.
26. To further reduce the deficit the County has also reviewed the cost of resident parking permit charges. Until the review, permit charges were as low as £10 per year in some areas and varied considerably across the County. This did not reflect the true cost of administering a resident parking scheme and consequently a new charge of £50 was introduced from April 2011.

Financial and value for money implications

27. The report is for information on previous years expenditure and performance. It does not have a direct impact on expenditure for this coming financial year. However, the district and borough councils have agreed in principal to work with SCC to develop more efficient long term parking enforcement operations from April 2012. In addition, from April 2011 the districts and boroughs have agreed to accept reasonable liability for any on-street parking deficit within their areas. This will reduce the risk to the County Council and help encourage the districts and boroughs to provide the most efficient service.

Equalities Implications

28. Parking enforcement can assist accessibility those with visual or mobility impairment.

Risk Management Implications

29. None

Implications for the Council's Priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement Targets

30. On street enforcement contributes to objectives of the Surrey Transport Plan helping tackle congestion and improve accessibility, which can be hindered by inconsiderate parking.

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| Recommendations: |
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i) receive and note the parking services annual report

Report contact: David Curl, Parking Strategy & Implementation Team Manager

Contact details: parking@surreycc.gov.uk or call 0300 200 1003

Sources/background papers: None

Annex 2

Operating Costs for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in Surrey 2010/11

Notes

This table shows income and expenditure on a district by district basis 2010/11

CPZ is Controlled Parking Zone where residents permits can be issued

Income - income from PCNs, pay and display, permits etc

Expenditure - district staff costs / overheads. Note not all areas have the same number of CEOs

| District | Income - for CPE | Expenditure for CPE | Net cost for CPE | Income for CPZ | Expenditure for CPZs | Net cost for CPZ | Total income for all per district | Total expenditure for all per district | Total net cost |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Elmbridge | £193,612 | £376,812 | £183,200 | £250,290 | £167,192 | -£83,098 | £443,902 | £544,004 | £100,102 |
| Epsom & Ewell | £186,237 | £175,717 | -£10,520 | | | | £186,237 | £175,717 | -£10,520 |
| Guildford | £163,366 | £191,740 | £28,374 | £1,148,995 | £684,087 | -£464,908 | £1,312,361 | £875,827 | -£436,534 |
| Mole Valley | £100,413 | £183,035 | £82,622 | | | | £100,413 | £183,035 | £82,622 |
| Reigate & Banstead | £334,302 | £334,053 | -£249 | | | | £334,302 | £334,053 | -£249 |
| Runnymede | £85,828 | £128,198 | £42,370 | | | | £85,828 | £128,198 | £42,370 |
| Spelthorne | £123,756 | £128,362 | £4,606 | | | | £123,756 | £128,362 | £4,606 |
| Surrey Heath | £105,240 | £214,634 | £109,394 | £86,920 | £214,634 | £127,714 | £192,160 | £429,268 | £237,108 |
| Tandridge | £60,759 | £172,898 | £112,139 | | | | £60,759 | £172,898 | £112,139 |
| Waverley | £197,256 | £304,702 | £107,446 | | | | £197,256 | £304,702 | £107,446 |
| Woking | £95,221 | £208,610 | £113,390 | £499,577 | £461,528 | -£38,048 | £594,797 | £670,139 | £75,341 |
| TOTALS | £1,645,990 | £2,418,761 | £772,772 | £1,985,782 | £1,527,441 | -£458,340 | £3,631,771 | £3,946,203 | £314,431 |