

Civil Parking Enforcement

Introduction

1. Members will be aware that a review of CPE started at the end of 2012 and since that time there have been two Members workshops and the Officer working group has met monthly since the beginning of 2013.

The background

2. Civil Parking Enforcement, supports the network management duty which is about making best use of the existing network, improving traffic flows to reduce wasteful traffic delays and providing a viable sustainable alternative to single occupancy car travel.
3. Civil Parking Enforcement, when carried out sensitively, gives local communities the ability to manage parking for the benefit of many. It can greatly enhance the quality of life for people living in town centres, improve conditions for pedestrians (particularly the elderly and disabled people), ease traffic flow, improve short-term accessibility of the town centres, support public transport, make deliveries easier and boost the local economy.
4. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) was introduced under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and transferred the responsibility for the enforcement of non-endorse able on-street parking offences from the police to the local traffic authority. DPE was introduced in Staffordshire in two phases. The first, Tranche 1 covering the Districts of East Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and Staffordshire Moorlands was introduced in 2007. Tranche 2, covered the remaining Districts of Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Tamworth was introduced in 2009. Prior to the introduction of Tranche 2, DPE was nationally renamed as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).
5. Back office processing of notices is undertaken by Stoke-on-Trent City Council on behalf of all the District Councils. The Districts provide the enforcement services through a variety of methods including in-house and via external contracts. Front line enforcement in all of the Tranche 2 Districts is undertaken via a contract with APCOA Parking UK Limited.

Where are we now?

6. The review has investigated all aspects of the service with some work on finances ongoing following the final accounts for 2012-13 being submitted and agreed at the Joint Parking Board today.
 - Clear Streets has achieved its objectives, motorists are now more compliant in the way they park. Numbers of penalty charge notices issued have reduced from over 63,000 in 2009-10 to just over 45,500 in

2012-13 i.e. 71% of the first year of CPE across the whole of Staffordshire..

- Residents in Staffordshire are more satisfied with measures to tackle illegal on street parking than they were in 2008 (NHT annual Satisfaction survey) 44% in 2012 compared to 37% in 2008
- Residents in Staffordshire are more satisfied with restrictions of parking on busy roads (NHT Survey) 49% in 2012 compared to 43% in 2008
- The service is in line with statutory requirements and best practice and is generally delivered effectively with a clear commitment to service delivery and good customer service from officers and providers involved.
- The service continues to operate at a net cost (£209.1k in 2012-13
- The Districts that regularly operate at a net surplus are those that operate on street charging i.e. East Staffordshire Borough Council and Newcastle Borough Council. For comparison, East Staffordshire would have made a 67.8k loss in 2013-13 without on street charging, Newcastle Borough a £50.5k loss.)
- Whilst 'Clear Streets' has a clear set of objectives, there is no overall joint parking strategy that brings together on-street and off-street provision.
- Where the service has consistently operated at a surplus and with no rolling deficit (East Staffordshire), the local Joint Parking Committee has been able to invest in additional parking related traffic orders above the rolling programme of four per year in each District. Since the introduction of on-street charging, Newcastle has operated at an annual surplus and is now paying back the deficit.

29. Outcomes from Member workshop 26th March 2013.

- Implement more parking related Traffic Regulation Orders
- Allow more discretion on the issue of Penalty Charge Notices by Civil Enforcement Officers to reduce the number of cancellations
- Process and implement more Residents Parking Zone
- Better informed highway users in relation to parking
- Governance – do we get out of the local Joint Parking Committees and Parking Board what was expected?
- Develop a Parking Strategy that brings together on-street and off – street provision and management linked to the Local Transport Plan and Local Development Framework

30. There are a number of different delivery models that could be considered and further work is now required to define the outcome that is required for the service.

31. It is however, unlikely that the current annual deficit for the service can be significantly reduced without changes to the current service. If the key driver is

to deliver financial savings to reduce the operational deficit, it is likely that this can only be achieved through changing existing service levels or, delivery arrangements.

32. This is consistent with evidence recently given to the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee which is currently looking at local authority parking enforcement. The Chair of the British Parking Association, Patrick Troy, indicated that “Despite what the media might have us believe, very few councils are in surplus on their parking, many councils subsidising parking enforcement from paid-parking revenues”.
33. Whilst the review has yet to go through the political process within each District, informal discussions with members and officers suggests that it is unlikely that any of the of the District Councils will wish to take on the financial risk of operating the on-street enforcement service and any change is likely to require the changing or, ending of the current agreements with the District Councils. This does not however rule out the possibility of the creation of new and more effective agreements. This could include
 - Establishing a single management structure to direct the service in order to achieve efficiency and service improvement outcomes
 - Centralising the co-ordination of enforcement, including reviewing beat patterns, to ensure effective and efficient on-street enforcement - but recognising that on-street enforcement needs to be undertaken by CEOs based locally
 - Combined procurement arrangements for enforcement services
 - Taking advantage of new technology such as ANPR ‘Smart’ Cars
 - Place Infrastructure+

Next steps

34. Currently work is ongoing to establish the financial baseline for the service before moving on to examine how the service could be commissioned in the future and, the estimated costs of the different options.
35. Next steps also need to take account of the political processes of all the organisations that are involved in managing and delivering the service.
36. Parking Enforcement is within scope of Place Infrastructure+ and there is therefore further opportunities to examine options as part of the procurement process for this arrangement over the forthcoming months.
37. The County Council will be taking a report to Cabinet in October 2013 [confirm after discussion with Cllr Lawrence]