



ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'C' (i)

East Herts Council Parking Enforcement Contract Task & Finish Group 20th June 2017

NOTES

1	Attendance
	<p>Task & Finish Group Members: Chairman: Cllr Kaye Cllrs: Cutting, Devonshire, Drake, Jones, Pope, Woodward</p> <p>Contact Officers: Andrew Pulham: Parking Manager</p> <p>Support: Fiona Corcoran: Scrutiny Officer</p>
2	Background - Andrew Pulham
2.1	The group heard that EHC is responsible for civil parking enforcement, since the police withdrew and decriminalised parking enforcement. With regard to on-street parking, EHC enforces on behalf of HCC (The Highway Authority), which means EHC is more constrained in terms of what it can do. EHC is also responsible for the management and enforcement of its off-street car parks, which it has more control over. The role of a local authority in parking enforcement is clearly defined in law and this needs to be considered when looking at options for enforcement.
2.2	The purpose of parking enforcement is effective traffic management rather than revenue generation. It also serves as a disincentive for law-breaking. Due to the mostly rural nature of East Herts, it does not generate a surplus from parking enforcement. EHC outsources parking enforcement, currently to NSL.
3	Discussion on key themes/issues/options for change
	The following points were raised in discussion:
3.1	It is essential to be clear on what is the responsibility of the Police and what is the responsibility of the Council. The Council enforces under the civic law, hence 'penalty notices' rather than 'fines. The Police retained some criminal charges, one of which is obstruction.
3.2	EHC cannot enforce parking on grass verges or pavements. As per page 11, para 1 of the EHC Report on Parking Enforcement 2015/16, the option of implementing targeted, local bans on an experimental basis, was proposed but the number of areas identified by Members was not sufficient to take this forward. If

3.3	Members wished to revisit this option, this was unlikely to fall within the remit of this task and finish group so it was suggested they consult with the Executive Member.
3.4	Blue Badge fraud needs to be taken seriously and enforced robustly. The government gives a blue badge holder the right to park on double yellow lines. There was discussion over whether we could use the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) for this. It was noted that the SAFS approach to blue badge fraud was more reactive, whereas a more proactive approach could be gained from new contract.
3.5	The Group discussed charging for parking at night and did not feel this was the best option.
3.6	Altering the nature of single/double yellow lines would be within the remit of the County Council and likely to be prohibitively expensive.
3.7	Grace periods – The Government requires a 10 minute grace period following time expired in a permitted parking bay. People parked on yellow lines are not entitled to a grace period but EHC give one of 5 mins, which is considered best practice. The purpose of this is to allow officers to check whether an exempt activity such as loading or unloading is taking place is enforceable so that there is less likelihood of the decision being overturned should a ticket be issued. EHC can withdraw the grace period if they are aware of abuse taking place.
3.8	Residents' Parking Zones (RPZ) were discussed and the group heard that they could create a number of problems as well as solutions, as the parking problem may be dispersed elsewhere rather than resolved. Under new policy it is more difficult to set RPZs, with stringent requirements to be met.
3.9	Members discussed whether existing RPZs could be used by businesses during the day and heard that officers have found two areas in Bishop's Stortford where a managed number of business permit holders use RPZ bays. If successful, a similar approach could be implemented in other areas. Cllr Cutting expressed his disappointment that fewer RPZs will be created going forward and highlighted the problem of residential roads being used for airport parking. It was suggested that stopping people parking in certain roads for a set 1 hour period during each day would prevent commuters and holiday-makers using residential roads to park in, but this would need to be implemented by the County Council.
3.10	Members raised issues around people parking in Bishop's Stortford for Stansted Airport, including the potential to use town centre car parks and top up daily via the pay by phone service for an extended time period. The question of whether the pay by phone service could be modified to put in a restriction, such as a break between sessions, was raised. Members heard that officers did not have evidence of this being a problem currently.
3.11	Members felt that more enforcement was needed near schools

	<p>at pick up and drop off times. The group heard that a random enforcement programme is currently in place and agreed that was a good approach. Members noted that the ways to increase enforcement outside schools would be either to significantly increase staff resources or to use ANPR. Members felt it would be important to address this and for parking enforcement officers to take a proactive approach, as cars parking inappropriately for school pick up and drop off had a significant impact on traffic flow.</p>
3.12	<p>Currently parking enforcement officers spend less than 60% on street. The group felt that this was not the right balance and that 70% on street/30% off street would be more effective, with a focus on schools at certain times.</p>
3.13	<p>Members asked whether school crossing staff could be used to help keep traffic moving. The group heard that EHC officers would be willing to engage with schools, perhaps attending an assembly to communicate the message about parking near the school at pick up and drop off time. It was noted that some work was being done by the County Council to engage and communicate with schools but not all schools engage. Members suggested that EHC Comms produce an advert to go in school newsletters or a flyer.</p>
3.14	<p>Members raised the issue of people not being able to report a parking offence after 6:30pm or on a Sunday. It was suggested that Councillors could be given direct access to the enforcement officers hotline.</p>
3.15	<p>The Group discussed the need for more parking enforcement in the evenings, particularly in areas with a busy night time economy but also noted the need to consider the costs as civil enforcement officers needed to be double-staffed for safety and paid at an enhanced rate in the evenings.</p>
3.16	<p>There was discussion of parking in taxi ranks and it was noted that they need a high level of enforcement in the evening but they cease to be taxi ranks during the day.</p>
3.17	<p>The Group heard about the potential for using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and noted that the resource and cost could be shared with Welwyn Hatfield and Stevenage Councils. ANPR can only be used for parking enforcement in specific places such as zig-zags outside schools and restricted bus stops. It is possible to use ANPR to identify parking breaches and issue the tickets automatically by post. Members highlighted the need to consider cost and resource implications of introducing ANPR. It was noted that if ANPR were to be introduced, it would require strong buy-in from Members as some people are strongly opposed to it.</p>
3.18	<p>The Group heard that if a car is parked across a dropped curb and a resident complains, they will look into it but on some occasions officers are being called to respond to requests for enforcement as a result of a neighbours' dispute. It was suggested that this group could develop a framework around</p>

	when officers are required to respond and when they are not.
4	Potential recommendations emerging
4.1	Buy in anti-fraud service as part of enforcement contract. Include the provision of a blue badge enforcement service in contract. This can be bought in as 1 day per month for example, which would act as a deterrent.
4.2	Members suggested increasing evening enforcement, particularly in areas where there is a significant night time economy
4.3	More enforcement near schools at pick up and drop off times. Civil enforcement officers to be taken out of car parks between 7:30am – 9am and 3pm – 4pm and moved to schools at for this time period.
4.4	Adjust the balance of on street and off street parking to 70% on street/30% off street, with a focus on schools at certain times around drop off in the morning and pick up in the afternoon.
4.5	Members suggested that EHC Comms produce an advert to go in school newsletters or a flyer to be given to all new families with their school induction materials.
4.6	It was suggested that Councillors could be given direct access to the enforcement officers' hotline so that they could report parking offences at any time.
5.	Actions
5.1	The Parking Manager to provide the group with data on SAFS actions relating to blue badge fraud
5.2	The Parking Manager to confer on this matter with other district councils in Hertfordshire (via Herts Forum) and also other district councils nationally.
5.3	The Parking Manager to arrange for Councillors to go out with enforcement officers in Bishop's Stortford as had been agreed previously.
5.4	The Parking Manager to obtain a quote for the introduction of ANPR as an extra to the parking enforcement contract (rather than a core offer)
5.5	The Parking Manager to provide statistics on the number of complaints from residents involved in disputes with neighbours requesting parking enforcement.
5	Date and time (and location) of future meeting(s) of this group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 21st June 2017, 2:30pm – 4pm: County Council Witnesses Q&A • Monday 3rd July 2017, 7pm – 9pm

- Monday 17th July 2017, 7pm – 9pm (Peter Lowe, Consultant to attend)

The meeting concluded at 20:30