



**East Herts Council
Parking Enforcement Contract Task & Finish Group
17th July 2017 at 7pm**

NOTES

1	Attendance
	<p>Task & Finish Group Members: Chairman: Cllr Kaye Cllrs: Cutting, Devonshire, Drake, Jones, Pope, Woodward</p> <p>Apologies: None</p> <p>Contact Officers: Jess Khanom: Head of Operations Andrew Pulham: Parking Manager</p> <p>Support: Fiona Corcoran: Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Witnesses: Peter Lowe, RTA Associates</p>
2	Review of minutes of 3rd July 2017 Meeting
2.1	There was discussion of how best to tackle blue badge fraud, the role that East Herts should play in this and how it links in to the County Council.
.2.2	With regard to minute 3.5, it was agreed that the Parking Manager would provide an update for the group with a quote for ANPR as an extra to the parking enforcement contract (not part of the core offer.)
2.3	In relation to minute 3.8, it was noted that the general rule was that if the space left was less than 1.2 metres or the width of a push chair, it would be considered an obstruction. The challenge with cases of obstruction of the highway is that it is difficult to prove which car parked last and caused the obstruction. It was noted that where white lines are introduced to allow parking on pavement, the footpaths often needed to be strengthened.
2.4	In relation to paragraph 5.2, it was noted that 153 tickets had been cancelled in the last year on the basis of having a non-UK registration number and therefore not being able to be traced. The Council's current bailiff and enforcement contractors could offer the service of following up fine collection abroad and the Council would get £30 of each claim, with the collection

	company taking the balance. Statistics show this service to be 15/20% successful. The group commented that this was not purely a matter of finances but also a matter of fairness and deterrent and agreed to include this in the contract.
3	Presentation by Mr Peter Lowe, RTA Associates
3.1	Peter Lowe provided information about his background, including roles as the President of the British Parking Association and Chair of the Welsh Parking Association and informed the group of his specialism in writing specifications and procurement.
3.2	Peter Lowe highlighted that parking enforcement is a traffic management tool and not a cash generator as the cost of enforcement and administration outweighs the funds generated from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs.)
3.3	The model contract provided by Peter Lowe shows efficiencies and consistency of approach and is recommended as a basis for a parking enforcement contract.
3.4	In order to ensure increased evening and Sunday enforcement, it would be advised to extend core hours, for example to 7:30am – 10:00pm.
3.5	The group heard that, as a client the Council could have the final say as to how the contractor was used.
4.	Q&A Session
4.1	In terms of addressing issues around school drop-off and collection times, the group noted that education was key and should start with the children as they will pass the message on to their parents. Ensuring civil enforcement officers (CEOs) were not in car parks but around schools at drop-off and collection times was important but it was unlikely to result in the issuing of large numbers of tickets as parents will move on as soon as they see the CEOs in uniform. It was noted that the camera car used for ANPR would be marked and not covert. A day rate for the ANPR car could be agreed in the schedule or the resource could be shared with neighbouring authorities so it would not be necessary for the Council to purchase a vehicle to utilize ANPR. The Group discussed whether a lighter touch approach may need to be taken in some areas around schools where there is no alternative suitable place to park and it was noted that the Council operated a grace/observation period of up to 5 minutes for parking on a double or single yellow line but not for keep clear lines as they were in place for safety purposes.
4.2	The Group discussed the possibility of using the contractor to deliver an out of hours customer service hotline. It was noted that this could be between the hours of 5pm and 10pm. It was noted that the Parking Manager was currently working on this proposal to establish the details. The Group heard that St. Albans Council outsource their calls all day and evening. It was

	<p>noted that East Herts officers held a significant amount of local knowledge, which could contribute to resolution or response to complaints quickly and appropriately. The number of calls received by officers per week also needed to be considered and the Parking Manager agreed to investigate the option of outsourcing all calls or only out of hours. The group discussed the need to respond to calls out of hours in order to fall in line with the modern way of working in many sectors.</p>
4.3	<p>Members suggested the possibility of implementing an out of hours call centre service as a pilot, which could then be reviewed and the need to establish whether the number and severity of out of hours complaints justified the procurement of an out of hours call centre service was highlighted. It was noted that the call centre would need to triage cases with the use of targeted questioning and that the service would reserve the right to refuse service. In conjunction with the call centre service, there would need to be an appropriate number of CEOs on the ground who could take action based on the complaints received. It was noted that after a certain time at night CEOs were required to work in pairs (within line of sight of each other) due to personal safety reasons but this also resulted in higher cost to the Council.</p>
4.4	<p>It was agreed that the Parking Manager would ascertain the costings of the out of hours call centre service as an optional extra to the contract. The Group heard that it could be written in to the contract that the Council reserved the right to pull out with a certain period of notice (Eg 3 months) or the contract could work on a trial basis for the first 6 months.</p>
4.5	<p>With regard to Blue Badge Fraud, it was noted that consistency of assessment was the key to ensuring badges were issued only where appropriate but as far as action that East Herts could take, it was noted that one option would be to hire a Fraud Officer as many of the London Boroughs do, which could potentially be done in collaboration with neighbouring authorities. The Parking Manager agreed to find out the County's statistics for the number of people registered disabled and the number of blue badge holders as it would indicate how significant the issue may be. Members highlighted the need to consider whether this was an area worth pursuing as it could be difficult to enforce, time-consuming and may not be a priority in terms of traffic management. In discussion Members also made the point that prosecutions in this area would act as a deterrent. The Parking Manager agreed to explore this area further to establish whether this was a significant problem in the district or not. The Group noted that the Fraud Officer service could be added as an extra to the contract rather than core offer. The potential costs for these services were discussed and the Group considered whether East Herts' role should be more around influencing the County Council. It was noted that although the prosecution of Blue Badge fraud sat with the County Council, the District Council and CEOs were the 'eyes and ears' on the street, while the County Council provided the administrative role.</p>

4.6	Members suggested making more use of the Shared Anti-Fraud Service and it was agreed that this could be included in the report as a recommendation if it was decided that blue badge fraud was a significant issue needing to be addressed.
4.7	The Group heard that the situation regarding parking may be significantly different in 7 years' time with the move towards electric and even driverless vehicles but it was necessary to work on the basis of the current situation at this point as the future situation could not be known.
4.8	The Group discussed the price versus quality balance and heard that it was not advised to go above 60% as it would be likely to result in more money needing to be spent in order to address problems. The Group agreed that 60% price versus 40% quality balance was appropriate.
4.9	The Group discussed the tendering process and noted that the Council would be required to declare its priorities at the beginning via a scoring system.
4.10	The Group heard that officers had learnt from previous tendering processes and would be more prescriptive about the details of the contract than previously. It was noted that the technical part of the process and would be carried out by officers.
4.11	With regard to evening/Sunday enforcement, the Group noted that officers would establish the key areas to enforce and would not deploy resources when and where they were not needed. This enforcement work would be intelligence-led and pared down to that which was necessary. Members highlighted the importance of backing this up with adequate communications to avoid the incorrect public perception that it is about introducing parking charges.

5.	Responses from town councils
5.1	It was noted that responses from Bishop's Stortford Town Council and Stansted Abbots Parish Council were still awaited but the general consensus from all the Councils that had responded was in line with the stances of East Herts Council (see attached summary of responses.)
5.2	The Group agreed that any town/parish councils that had not yet responded could do so by email and it could be further discussed at the next meeting on 17 August. It was also suggested that Officers provide an update on the work of this Group to the next town clerks' meeting. Town and Parish Councils could also be engaged with post award of tender to highlight specific local concerns.
5.3	It was noted that a request for growth had been submitted by officers but it would not be known if this had been accepted within the Medium Term Financial Plan until early 2018. If this growth was not accepted, it may be necessary to cut back aspects of the contract and prioritise.
6	Summary of Findings and Recommendations
6.1	The Parking Manager agreed to circulate the report to the Group at least one week before the meeting on 17 August.
7.	Next Steps and Key Dates
7.1	Final T&F Group meeting 17/08/17 (draft scrutiny report to be circulated for comment to T&F Group on Thursday 10/08/17)
7.2	Submission of report to O&S Committee on Friday 25/08/17
7.3	O&S Committee on Tuesday, 12/09/17
7.4	Executive on Tuesday 31/10/17
7.5	Preparation of contract specification November 2017 – January 2018
The meeting concluded at 20:35	

1. N.B. A submission from the Manchester Airports Group, detailing its actions to reduce parking problems in the area of Stanstead Airport, was received on Tuesday, 18 July – too late for discussion at this meeting. An un-edited copy of this submission follows below.

Further to your below email, I can confirm the following action that London Stansted Airport has taken in the last 10 years.

Uttlesford District Council's planning policies are clear and longstanding, that airport parking should be within the operational boundaries of the airport. We consume all of our official parking operations within the confines of our airport

land. The local authority will not allow the operation of (or grant planning permission for) any off-airport parking operations outside the airport boundary.

As part of recent legal obligations associated with the airport's planning permissions, we monitor any reported 'off airport' parking activity through a Fly Parking hotline that residents can call into. Our Transport Forum Highways Group, which comprises of local authorities, Highways England and ourselves, then analyses this data and any hotspots are reviewed. We can then provide a contribution to a parking scheme if a local authority wishes to introduce a scheme to tackle a potential problem ie Permit scheme or 1 hour street parking ban. We successfully worked with Essex CC to provide a contribution for a parking ban in a specific area in Takeley.

As part of Sustainable Development Plan, we have a tremendous track record in encouraging air passengers to use public transport as their mode of choice to travel to and from the Airport. We currently have over 51% of our passengers use rail, coach or bus which is the best of any airport in the UK and one the best in Europe. This continues to grow from strength to strength with over 1800 bus and coach services a day operating from the Airport and over 27% of air passengers using rail.

Our Sustainable Development Plan is available on the Stansted Airport website – www.stanstedairport.com

- 2. In addition, the submission from Bishop's Stortford Town Council discussed in paragraph 5.1 has now been received and has been added to the table of Town and Parish Council responses presented at this meeting.*