

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)****DATE: 3 JULY 2014****LEAD OFFICER: DAVID CURL, PARKING MANAGER****SUBJECT: PETITION RESPONSE – A30 SLIP ROAD****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Local Committee received a petition at its meeting on 13 March 2014.

The petition stated that “We the undersigned petition Surrey County Council to refund parking charges incurred due to inadequate signs”

The petition's details read: SHBC have received a windfall that they were not expecting. Several hundred people have been caught out by new parking regulations in Camberley; they were parking in a Permit Holders Only area believing it still to be a 30 minutes area. The changes seem to have been introduced quite properly but had the effect of catching people out in areas where they have always parked. This was because the signs were very small, placed quite high, and looked very similar to the signs they replaced. Now that SCC are improving the signs, which is perhaps an admission, it is time to draw a line and refund people who have been fined during the period between the changes being made and the signs being permanently improved.”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to note the report and the measures that have been put in place since the parking issue arose.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The provision of clear and effective parking restrictions in and around the town centre is a very important aspect in making Camberley a welcoming and desirable place to visit.

The Local Area Committee do not have the remit to force Surrey Heath Borough Council to make refunds. However, as a joint Committee, they are assured that procedures have been followed correctly and members of the public have been given the right to appeal.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The process of initiating the changes to parking controls in Camberley started with proposals being put by the public, local authorities, businesses or local Councillors to the Surrey County Council Parking Team for their 2013 annual review. In the case of the A30 slip road changes, these were passed to the Parking Team through Surrey Heath Council staff in May 2012.
- 1.2 The Parking Team consolidated the Borough wide proposals and presented recommendations to the Surrey Heath Local Area Committee (LAC) for authorisation on 14 March 2013.
- 1.3 There were 22 changes considered (plus another 23 which were deferred for re-assessment). The A30 slip road changes were amongst those 22 measures, which were unanimously agreed by the LAC.
- 1.4 After authorisation by the LAC, the proposals were then advertised by the Surrey County Council Parking Team for public consultation. There were no objections received by the Parking Team during the consultation period from July to September 2013.
- 1.5 In mid October 2013, the scheme was implemented with collaboration and consultation between the Surrey County Council Parking Team and the Borough Parking Team. Once in place, the new parking regulations were enforced by Surrey Heath Borough Parking Team.
- 1.6 The size and appearance of road signs, including those used for parking restrictions, is governed by Department for Transport regulations. This is to ensure consistency across the UK and help motorists understand them so improving compliance. The signs that were put up in the A30 slip road were of a size and type consistent with the prevailing regulations and consistent with those elsewhere in the UK and Camberley.
- 1.7 Following the introduction of the permit bay and the apparent lack of public understanding, the Member for Camberley West met with the Parking Team to investigate whether changes to the permanent signing should be made to help improve their conspicuity. A number of changes were legally agreed and approved and these were introduced in mid-January.

2. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 2.1 The Parking Team is mindful of its needs within this area and attempts to treat all members of the public with equality and understanding.

3. LOCALISM:

- 3.1 Through the views and needs expressed by local communities, and accommodating where possible the involvement of local communities in looking after parking on the public highway, localism is routinely considered as part of the consultation for parking related works.
- 3.2 This report responds to concerns raised by members of the local community.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report.
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 5.1 The decision by the LAC to implement the residents parking only bay was taken for the right reasons, with universal agreement. However, there were some lessons to be learnt in the case, which have been followed up as outlined:-
- 5.2 Consultation. The strict requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, whilst legally necessary, do not always adequately engage members of the public about new parking restrictions. On top of the statutory press notice, the Parking Team do put up more 'user friendly' street notices and make extensive use of the website to allow access to detailed documents and plans showing the changes. The Parking Team have further been asked to consider the use of social media to publicise any consultation period in Surrey Heath. In addition, local Councillors will be kept fully in the picture before changes are due and they can further disseminate information to their residents.
- 5.3 A joint County / Borough Working Group will also provide an oversight role and perhaps provide better engagement with the public and business community in the development of new restrictions, particularly around the town centre.
- 5.4 Information and Communication. The LAC have requested clearer information from the Parking Team in advance of the implementation of new restrictions. Again, the use of social media will help to publicise the changes and the Working Group can help identify and overcome potential problems.
- 5.5 Implementation. The co-ordination of permanent and temporary signing is very important and further clarity is needed over who should deal with temporary warning signs as well as the process for a 'grace' period. Not all restrictions (for example double yellow lines on a junction) will require a grace period, however there is a case for a longer one when making more subtle changes to parking restrictions. In this case, SHBC gave a two week grace period. This is an advisory matter and one for future Working Group consideration on a case by case basis.
- 5.7 Enforcement. Although the County Council are the highway authority, through contract agreements, SHBC are responsible for the on street parking enforcement service. The County rely on their operational experience to deal with parking enforcement in a dedicated, fair and responsive manner. SHBC

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have a process for enforcement, which allows for an appeal to the Borough, followed up by an appeal process with an independent adjudicator.

6. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 6.1 The Surrey Heath Local Committee are asked to note the recommendations in the report. The lessons learnt will be reflected in the 2014 Annual Parking Review.
- 6.2 The Parking Task Group will convene to look at the recommendations and will ensure that good practice is followed in introducing any future schemes or changes.

Contact Officer:

David Curl, Parking Team

Consulted:

Surrey Heath Borough Council Parking Team

Annexes:

None

Sources/background papers:

Petition presented to Local Committee on 13 March 2014.
