

Item 17

**DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT
IN SURREY HEATH
FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT & PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE IN
SURREY HEATH**

22nd September 2005

KEY ISSUE:

To advise members of the financial assessment for the introduction and subsequent operation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) in Surrey Heath and to approve, for consultation, a draft parking management plan.

SUMMARY:

The Local Transportation Office has continued to develop DPE in Surrey Heath with the Borough Council. As part of the DPE submission document to the Department for Transport (DfT) a financial appraisal for the initial set up and subsequent operation of DPE has been produced. The financial appraisal is shown in Annex A to the report and is the best forecast currently available. Based on the forecast this shows that the setting up and ongoing operation of DPE in Surrey Heath will not produce a surplus or break even in the first 5-years of operation.

The Parking Management Plan is attached as Annex B to this report and has again been developed with officers from the Borough Council. The draft parking management plan forms part of the DPE submission document to the DfT and will be sent to them shortly in its draft form. If approved by the Committee consultation on the Parking Management Plan will be undertaken with relevant stakeholders before submitting a final version for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Local Committee in Surrey Heath:

- i) note the financial forecast for the introduction and subsequent operation of DPE in Surrey Heath as shown in Annex A to the report.
- ii) approve, for consultation, the draft parking management plan as shown in Annex B to the report.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. In March 2001 Surrey's Executive resolved that agreement be given in principle to proceed with DPE in Surrey and to be introduced in line with the principles set out in that report.
2. A further report in February 2003 indicated that the inability to agree a uniform approach across the County with Borough and District Councils meant that Surrey's programme of implementation could be in doubt. As a result, the Leader of the County Council Mr Nick Skellett wrote to all Borough Councils in September 2003 proposing a simplified arrangement to assist with DPE implementation.
3. This resulted in a further report to Surrey's Executive in October 2003 and resolved that DPE should continue to be progressed with Borough and Districts. The revised agreement outlined that the County Council would meet all capital and revenue start up costs; meet all revenue costs of administering DPE for an initial period of two years and to receive all of the income from penalties and County Court action for the initial period. Both authorities would then review the provisions of the agreement after a period of two years once reliable costs, income and the effectiveness of the arrangements were established.
4. The Local Transportation Office has continued to develop DPE in Surrey Heath in partnership with the Borough Council.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

Financial Appraisal

5. As part of the DPE submission document to the DfT a financial appraisal for the initial set up and subsequent operation of DPE is required. The financial appraisal is shown in Annex A to the report. The appraisal has been developed with officers from the Borough Council and is the best estimate currently available. Some of the data used is estimated, as this is not available for all relevant tasks. The estimates include:
 - i) The likely number of penalty charge notices (PCN's) to be issued annually:

The number of tickets to be issued has been estimated for the first full year based on two parking wardens working full time. In line with the approach of other Surrey Districts, this estimate is on the cautious side. Subsequent years also show a reduction year on year of PCN's issued as it is predicted that the rate of parking offences would diminish with regular and consistent enforcement.
 - ii) The number of PCN's waived/paid and at which rate:

Surrey's PCN rate is currently £60, reduced to £30 for payment within 14 days. The charge is increased to £90 where no payment has been made beyond 28 days. The number of PCN's waived and the income derived from those paid is estimated based on historical data.

- iii) The proportion of time spent by parking Service staff and wardens on each parking activity:
The cost of operating DPE naturally incurs additional operational costs and distribution of overheads. The Borough Council have agreed to undertake the daily operation of DPE under an agency agreement provided this is at no cost to the Council. This has resulted in the need to revise the parking services budget to reflect the new parking activity. The Surrey Heath Parking Service does not currently allocate its time to individual parking tasks or activities that it undertakes. As a result assumptions have been made in relation to the proportion of the budget chargeable to the DPE account. These costs include a proportion of the parking services managers time, the equivalent of one full time administrator and two parking wardens. In addition a percentage of the Borough Councils operating overheads is included and covers such things as Corporate, Legal, Human Resource, Financial and IT Support. A 4.5% increase has also been applied to all revenue expenses year on year.

Parking Management Plan

6. The Parking Management Plan is attached as Annex B to this report and has been developed with officers from the Borough Council. The draft parking management plan forms part of the DPE submission document to the DfT and will be sent to them shortly in its draft form.

CONSULTATION

7. If approved by the Committee, consultation on the Parking Management Plan will be undertaken with relevant stakeholders before submitting a final version for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8. Based on the forecast, shown in Annex A, it clearly shows that the setting up and ongoing operation of DPE in Surrey Heath will not produce a surplus or break in the first 5-years of operation. This forecast is likely to represent the worse case scenario and it is apparent, based on the experience of other Surrey Districts already operating DPE, that their initial predictions on the number of PCN's issued has generally been exceeded.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8. Through DPE regular and consistent enforcement should encourage a greater observance of restrictions thereby seeking to minimise contraventions.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

9. Surrey has embraced the concept of sustainable development, which is the foundation of Surrey's Local Transport Plan and is committed to the vision of making Surrey a better place. Funding from the integrated transport budget will be expended on projects and schemes in line with this vision whilst fulfilling its key commitments.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10. Across the range of transportation issues and problems to be addressed the needs of all highway users require equal consideration. Proposals may benefit a particular group or individuals but it is important to consider and address how one impact may worsen others.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11. Unless DPE is provided there will continue to be no active enforcement of waiting restrictions. The District is already too familiar with traffic problems through the lack of regular enforcement and the introduction of DPE is paramount. Whilst the deficit for the District will require careful monitoring, the County Council's Executive has approved its operational policy for DPE on a countywide basis to enable a balance of its surpluses and deficits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Local Committee in Surrey Heath:

- i) note the financial appraisal for the introduction and subsequent operation of DPE in Surrey Heath as shown in Annex A to the report.
- ii) approve, for consultation, the draft parking management plan as shown in Annex B to the report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None
Number of Annexes:	2

SURREY HEATH PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

Surrey Heath Borough covers 36.5 square miles and is situated in the northwestern part of Surrey with a population of just over 80,000. The Borough is a mix of urban settlements to the west bordering Hampshire and Berkshire and six rural villages to the east. The two principal urban areas are Camberley and Frimley.

Average household incomes in Surrey are higher than in any other County and car ownership is 26% above the national average. Surrey Heath has strong commercial and industrial centres providing a vibrant economy and unemployment is low.

Surrey has some of the most congested roads in the country and this is a major concern to the business and commercial sectors. Pollution is also a concern attributable in part to frequently high levels of traffic in town centres. However, it is impossible to provide additional road space, particularly in town centres to combat congestion or take account of growth. As a result solutions are needed to discourage private vehicle usage in areas where accessibility is good.

Parking Strategy

National, Regional and Local Policies exist to help achieve this and these include the tighter regulation of parking provision. The County Council has responded to concerns by developing a parking strategy in conjunction with the Surrey District Councils. This aims to:

- **Manage travel demand through integrated planning**, i.e. improving the transport network inclusively through travel plans, passenger transport, cycling and walking initiatives to offset parking restraint and help manage travel as a result of development.
- **Reduce the need to travel**, i.e. encourage through policy, development in town centres and other areas where public transport accessibility is good.
- **Introduce restraint-based parking standards**, i.e. avoid over provision and control the supply of parking in new developments, where accessibility to public transport is good and in urban areas limit parking within larger residential developments to facilitate quality development at higher densities.
- **Sustain and enhance the vitality of the town centres**, i.e. regulate the cost and availability of public parking, giving higher priority to short stay, reducing congestion through parking management and promoting initiatives to aid accessibility.
- **Effectively manage the total parking supply**, i.e. address all issues of competing demand, regulation, charging and enforcement through a parking management plan, which is regularly reviewed.

Parking Management Overview

The development of this District Parking Management Plan is a key element of Surrey's Parking strategy and amongst other initiatives seeks to help address the growth in congestion and pollution. It summarises how parking provision will be managed within the District, commensurate with key policies, local need and the influences of local opinion. It defines the Districts approach to:

- On and off street parking provision and charging for Camberley Town Centre and its other village and local centres.
 - Development related parking standards.
 - Service standards for parking management and enforcement.
- Initiatives that help to support the policy.

Camberley Town Centre Parking

Camberley is the main commercial and shopping centre in the District. Within the town the Borough Council manages 2 multi storey car parks and five surface car parks one of which is only available to the public on Saturdays. Network Rail also operates one car park in the town centre. The two multi-storey car parks have over the last couple of years been converted to 'pay on foot' payment systems.

Major proposals to develop a new town centre shopping and leisure complex including some housing is currently being considered. If approved this will effect both on and off street parking within the town requiring careful management. The existing three surface car parks to the west of the town centre would be replaced by the development, which will also includes a privately managed multi-decked car park.

Aim: To ensure the vitality of the town centre is maintained and can be enhanced through integrated planning policies and restraint based parking methods. This will be achieved by:

- Reviewing both on and off street parking provision every two years, waiting restrictions every five years, and charging strategies annually.
- Maintaining the existing level of public parking in order to ensure adequate access to the town centre for private vehicle users and only seek to increased additional public parking, through planned growth, where additional demand cannot be met by alternative measures.
- Improvements to car parks particularly to enhance the perception of safety within them.
- Where appropriate consider securing the use of any private car parking areas for the public at weekends and working with private car park operators to help manage parking demand.
- Limiting on-street spaces in the immediate vicinity of the town to 30 minute parking.
- Providing cheaper season tickets in the Knoll Road multi-storey car park.

Parking Charges

Parking charges are reviewed annually and these reflect that the car parking service must operate at no financial cost to the Council taxpayer. Charges reflect, the ongoing revenue maintenance and capital investment costs and the operation

of the parking service and in setting its Car Parking Charges the Council will ensure a return rate to cover these costs and help maintain the commercial viability of Camberley town and its other local centres. It will achieve this by:

- Town Centre charges continuing to support free parking in other villages and local centres.
- The charging structures to stay broadly comparable with other competing centres.
- The charges support the maintenance and refurbishment of the parking asset.
- The charging structures for each car park are influential in managing demand.
- Long stay charges should remain higher than the equivalent local passenger transport journey.

Camberley Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone

Camberley town centre has a mix of both commercial and residential premises and parking is managed via a controlled parking zone. There is no charge for on street parking and there is a mix of parking durations ranging from 30 minute stay in the immediate vicinity of the shopping centre, with a 2 hour maximum time limit beyond that and lastly parking places without time limit on the periphery of the zone. A resident's permit scheme is also operated although this does not include facilities for visitors. There is a need to help ensure the vitality and commercial success of the town centre is maintained and that the needs of resident's are continued to be met. This will be achieved by:

- Retention of a Controlled Parking Zone in and around the town centre maintaining the principle of short, then medium and finally long stay durations radiating for the centre of the town.
- A review of the resident's permit scheme within the first year following implementation of DPE and to consider the need to include facilities for visitors, carers and businesses.
- Manage closely a review of the parking requirements within and on the outskirts of the zone should the major town centre development proceed.
- Review annually the commercial viability of the Controlled Parking Zone and consider the appropriateness of on street charging.

Parking Enforcement

Illegal parking is inconsiderate and can be dangerous. The enforcement of restrictions in the District following implementation of DPE will be the responsibility of the Borough Council, as agents for Surrey County Council, with the exception of those roads agreed with the Police to retain control. The aim of enforcement will be to maximise compliance with the regulations to make the roads safer for all road users, to prevent obstruction and delays, to ensure that parking bays are available for their intended use and improve the environment that we live, work and travel in. A draft operational parking policy has been produced which contains procedures for Parking Attendants and Administration Staff to ensure the parking service is well managed. This operational parking policy will be reviewed regularly.

Parking in other Village and Local Centres

The viability of village and local district centres is influenced by suitable parking provision. Within the District parking is provided free of charge in such situations and their operation and maintenance supported by income generated from Camberley Town Centre and Yorktown Car Parks. It is considered that additional short term parking provision is required in Frimley and Bagshot village centres whilst similar shortfalls also exist in Lightwater and Windlesham. The aim is to:

- Continue to support free parking in village and local centres.
- Pursue further short term parking in Frimley through the management of privately owned parking areas and the provision of new short stay facilities.
- Through development related opportunities pursue further short term parking in Bagshot.
- Consider initiatives to assist the provision of short stay parking in all other village and local centres, where problems are encountered.

Improving Access

Parking management and the accessibility of parking facilities must be inclusive to all sectors of the Community and those needs considered as part of maintaining and improving service provision. This will be achieved by:

- Providing for the needs of the mobility impaired, undertaking consultations as required.
- Providing for the needs of those with babies and young children.

Improving accessibility to the car parks for vehicular traffic and pedestrians also requires regular consideration and will be helped by:

- Seeking to implement car park variable message signing on approaches to the town to assist access to car parks.
- Ensuring safe and suitable pedestrian access to car parks are maintained.

Park & Ride

There are currently no park & Ride facilities in Surrey Heath. No sites have been identified but potential facilities will be reviewed periodically. As part of the major town centre redevelopment the developer has outlined his intention to provide Park & Ride facilities for site staff during the construction phases of the development.

New Development

Revised parking standards to be applied to new developments will be set out in future supplementary planning guidance and the Local Development Framework. This will support the National and Regional planning policies. To ensure parking is provided in accordance with parking standards and in the town centre where areas are well served by public transport the Council will work towards a progressive reduction in the maximum parking standards by:

- Applying Surrey Parking Standards across the Borough.
- Applying reduction in these standards for all developments in Camberley Town Centre to a level reflecting the quality of public transport in the locality.

Safer Parking Scheme 'Park Mark'

The safety and security of customers, their vehicles and possessions is a key priority. This will be achieved by:

- Monitoring its car parks with closed circuit television or patrol staff or both. Customer service points are located to provide quick and easy access to car park personnel. Where service points are not available a telephone number to contact response personnel is displayed.
- Surrey Heath Borough Council will undertake to reduce levels of crime within its car parks through accurately recording incidents of crime with specific details and locations. This will allow preventive actions to be taken in conjunction with the Local Police Crime Prevention Officer.
- Continue to seek annual accreditation of the 'Park Mark' award for its Car Parks. Currently both Camberley town centre multi-storey car parks have been assessed under the Park Mark scheme. The Main Square car park has current accreditation whilst the Knoll Road car park requires a further assessment in due course.

Car Parks Service Charter

The Surrey Heath Parking Service operates a charter for its service standards. Staff are trained in their responsibilities under the requirements of the car park management system and an ongoing training programme ensures that this policy statement and associated policies, procedures and working practices are fully understood and can be implemented. All management and staff are responsible for ensuring that the system is effectively implemented within their sphere of operation.

Our Service Aims - Your Rights - The wider role of the Council

1. Your Council agrees to Provide:
 - a) a safe, clean, parking area;
 - b) affordable parking to meet our customers requirements;
 - c) serviceable Pay & Display machines in an area with good lighting and lifts to upper levels;
 - d) the ability for users to comment on the service provided;
 - e) to enforce the Councils Parking Regulations.

2. You have the Right:
 - a) to be treated courteously by Car Parks Staff;
 - b) to be provided with clear information of the service, tariffs and penalties;
 - c) to have your Service complaint investigated and to be told of the finding;
 - d) to have the issue of a penalty notice adjudicated within the guidelines shown below by a senior officer of the Council and if necessary by the courts.

3. The Council also undertakes:
 - a) to provide management of its facilities in the public car parks throughout the Borough;
 - b) to make adequate provision for car park users;
 - c) to work with private sector in provision of parking.

4. The Car Parks Staff promise:
 - a) to provide an inquiry point at the Council office during office hours. (Monday - Thursday 08.30 - 17.30, & Friday 08.30 - 17.00)
 - b) to respond to written inquiries within 10 working days.

GUIDELINES REQUIRED FOR ADJUDICATION

- a) Clarify the offence.
- b) Is offence relevant in that car park?
- c) Are the details, date and vehicle registration number correct?
- d) Are there signs at the entrance, tariff board, or adjacent to offence area to indicate what is expected of the motorist?
- e) Are there markings on the ground at that point, which are clear and visible to indicate what is required of the motorist?
- f) Investigate any other mitigating circumstances brought to the Councils attention.

Also, where areas of a car park have been defaced with graffiti, actions will be taken to remove the graffiti within a reasonable time.

Travel Plans

Both Surrey County Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council will continue to secure travel plans where appropriate as part of the development process. All schools, both state and private, have also been approached and partnership initiatives continue to be pursued with a number of them to assist in the development of travel plans.

Monitoring

It is important to monitor the effectiveness of the Parking Management Plan and its impact on the achievement of LTP objectives.

Performance indicators will be established to provide measurable data. Among those indicators to be considered are occupancy rates for Borough Council car parks and other public car parks such as Network Rail. In addition, on a priority basis there will be monitoring of on-street parking demand; illegal parking trends; the availability of public transport services; and the on-street impact of company transport plans.