



DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT

**LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR WOKING
22 OCTOBER 2003**

KEY ISSUE:

This report is for information, to report the actions of the Member Task Group to examine the potential for decriminalised parking enforcement within the Woking local area.

SUMMARY:

The Member Task Group, formed after the Local Committee meeting on 12 June 2003, has met on three occasions. There is a willingness to seek a mutually acceptable agreement for decriminalised parking enforcement.

Nick Skellett Leader of the County Council has recently consulted on an alternate proposal for decriminalised parking enforcement. The Task Group considered the alternate proposal on 13 October 2003. This report was prepared before that meeting. Therefore, the Local Committee will receive an oral report of the outcome from that Task Group meeting. However, Nick Skellett's letter is a positive move in the right direction that should assist the process.

CONSULTATIONS:

The Member Task Group is aware of the contents of this report.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to agree

that the contents of this report be noted.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. The Local Committee agreed at its meeting on 12 June 2003 that a Member Task Group with officer participation, consisting of County and Borough Councillors, be set up to examine the potential for decriminalised parking enforcement for the Woking area on behalf of the Local Committee and to report back to the Local Committee (transportation agenda) on 22 October 2003. It was agreed that Mr Marlow and Councillor Kingsbury be members of this group and they would agree outside the meeting which other members should be involved.
2. The Members of the Task Group comprise:

	SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL	WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL
Councillors	Geoff Marlow	John Kingsbury
	Margaret Hill	Philip Goldenberg
Officers	Stephen Child	Douglas Spinks
	Geoff Wallace	Geoff McManus

The Task Group has met on three occasions, 6 August 2003, 16 September 2003 and 13 October 2003.

TASK GROUP MEETINGS

6 AUGUST 2003

3. Woking Borough Council was in receipt in April 2003 of the County Council's proposed new agency agreement based on the financial framework agreed by the County Council's Executive on 17 February 2003.
4. The financial framework for agency agreements is based on:
 - i. existing Controlled Parking Zones being included within the new agency agreements for decriminalised parking enforcement but the existing financial arrangements be maintained and not added to the decriminalised parking enforcement financial arrangements;
 - ii. that each year an agreed target surplus or deficit is set based on forecast operational models and previous years outturn figures;
 - iii. where there is a targets surplus of income over expenditure in any one District/Borough it will be used by the County Council to reduce target deficits elsewhere in the county and, if at all possible, to eliminate those deficits;

- iv. performance better than target would be shared 50/50 between the County Council and the agent; and
 - v. that performance worse than the target surplus or deficit would be funded by the District/Borough.
5. Previously officers of Woking Borough Council had indicated that in principle they would be prepared to recommend that their Council enter into a new agency agreement for decriminalised parking, subject always to them being satisfied with the terms and conditions of such an agreement.
 6. Woking Borough Council tabled a proposal (Annex 1) for consideration having studied the County Council's proposed agency agreement.
 7. The significant areas of difference between Woking's proposal and the County Council's agency agreement are:
 - i. specify the service performance requirements;
 - ii. change which Council takes the financial risk;
 - iii. alter how any financial surplus would be used; and
 - iv. extend the length of any agreement and termination thereof.
 8. The Task Group agreed to consider the counter proposal and meet again.

16 SEPTEMBER 2003

9. County Council officers made the Task Group aware that they understood Nick Skellett Leader of the County Council was about to write to all District and Borough Council Chief Executives proposing a framework for an alternate agency agreement that would supersede the April 2003 document. The letter, dated 16 September 2003 (Annex 2), was received after the Task Group meeting; replies were requested before the end of September for consideration in October by the County's Executive.
10. Although the Task Group speculated on possible changes to the agency agreement, it was agreed that further discussion was premature until the letter had been received. Woking Borough Council's Executive would receive a report about decriminalised parking enforcement at their meeting on 2 October 2003 (Annex 3); observations on any letter received would also be included in that report.
11. There was a useful exchange of information about the number of potential parking attendants required, issuing and management of enforcement notices and specific service requirements to maintain traffic flows and reduced road danger and accidents.
12. The minutes of this meeting are attached as Annex 4.

Woking Borough Council's reply to Nick Skellett

13. Woking Borough Council's Executive agreed the decriminalised parking enforcement report presented to their meeting on 2 October 2003 (Annex 3). Councillor Jim Armitage Leader of the Executive wrote to Nick Skellett on 3

October 2003. (Annex 5).

14. Councillor Armitage indicates that Woking is pleased the County Council is reconsidering its original proposal, as this was unacceptable to Woking and the revisions are now similar to Woking's own position. Consequently Woking broadly supports the County Council and believes the local Member Task Group can reach agreement on this matter.

13 OCTOBER 2003

15. Although this meeting to discuss the content, responses and way forward, following receipt of Nick Skellett's letter was arranged, it had not taken place before this report was prepared. The Local Committee will receive an oral presentation of the outcome from this meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. Nick Skellett's letter proposes that District and Borough Councils employ an agreed number of parking attendants and administer decriminalised parking enforcement on behalf of the County Council. The County Council would then meet all the costs of the agreed scheme. All income from penalty charge notices and County Court action would go to the County Council. These arrangements would run for a proposed two-year trial period.
17. It is not known what the financial implication of Nick Skellett's proposal will have on the eleven Local Committee transportation budgets at this time.
18. It is assumed that the following will remain unchanged from the April 2003 proposed agency agreement:
 - i. central allocation from the Local Transport Plan will continue to fund the capital start-up costs. This financial year the Committee has a sum of £30,000 to commence the comprehensive review of existing traffic regulation orders and on-street lining and signing;
 - ii. the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices will be set countywide at £60;
 - iii. each Local Committee will report annually to the County Council's Executive outlining the financial position and seek approval to proposals to deal with any surplus or deficit;
 - iv. the on-going operational on-street parking places account, in any one local area, should be self-financing and management of this account will be the responsibility of the Local Committee;
 - v. where both on and off-street parking are included in a Special Parking Area, separate accounts will be maintained for each element. The off-street account will remain the responsibility of the Borough Council; and
 - vi. it is hoped to deliver a cost neutral scheme. The transportation budget will fund the revenue implications and any deficit which will have a detrimental effect on other transportation services.
19. Woking Borough Council propose that the County Council should operate the budget for the administration and enforcement of the Woking local area decriminalised parking enforcement independently from the remainder of the county, i.e. ring fence to the Borough of Woking, with the Local Committee

allocating any surplus monies to transportation schemes with a particular emphasis on supporting public transport. Provision should also be included for offsetting deficits in the on-street parking account from previous years.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

20. Enforcement of existing and proposed waiting and loading restrictions should reduce congestion and the dangers from illegally stopped vehicles bringing benefits to both the private and business communities.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

21. The implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement by the County Council will ensure waiting and loading restrictions continue to serve their purpose, thereby minimising potential illegal behaviour.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

22. The enforcement of waiting and loading restrictions should assist those with mobility problems and help manage facilities for disabled parking.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

23. Nick Skellett Leader of the County Council has reflected on the current countywide approach to introduce decriminalised parking enforcement. He wishes to introduce an agreed uniform approach that protects the interests of all parties. Consequently, he is proposing an alternate way forward that he believes is both pragmatic and sound in its policy context.
24. A simple agency agreement would see all District and Borough Councils employ an agreed number of parking attendants; Councils would then administer decriminalised parking enforcement on the County Council's behalf for a trial two year period. The County Council would meet all the costs of the agreed scheme and receive all the income from penalty charge notices and County Court actions.
25. Nick Skellett is consulting on the draft proposal. The County Executive should consider responses at its October meeting.
26. The Member Task Group has met and discussed the potential for decriminalised parking enforcement within the Woking local area and the way forward. There is a willingness to seek a mutually acceptable agreement for decriminalised parking enforcement. Nick Skellett's letter is a positive move in the right direction that will assist the process.

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