

CABINET RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

Operation of Civil Parking Enforcement in Surrey

- a) That the introduction of new agency agreements be supported in line with the terms specified within the report. However, the Committee expresses concern at the 60/20/20 split of surplus and asks for clarification of its justification and purpose.
- b) That the Assistant Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, be authorised to enter into suitable alternative short-term arrangements to ensure continuation of on-street parking enforcement.
- c) That the ability for Local Committees to have a formal scrutiny role for on-street parking enforcement within their area be supported.

Reply

On-street parking is important for our residents and ensuring we provide a high quality and effective service is one of my key priorities. Therefore I am grateful for the thoughtful and thorough consideration the Environment and Transport Select Committee has given to the Operation of Civil Parking Enforcement both at their meeting in September and prior to this through the parking task group.

My reply below is in the same order as the recommendations endorsed by the Select Committee

a) The County Council, working with our Agents (Districts & Boroughs) have made substantial improvements in reducing the financial deficit generated from on-street parking. It must be recognised that parking enforcement is not a mechanism for generating income and based on the financial outturns for 2011/12 the future surpluses for most areas will be low, if anything at all. The intention is for the bulk of any surplus (60%) to be allocated to the Local Committee who will be able to use this for the betterment of their residents as the Committee determine a priority (provided it complies with the legislation governing how it can be used). Therefore, if for sound reasons a Local Committee chooses to introduce additional on-street charging and this results in a financial surplus, the majority of this will be used as per the wishes of the Local Committee. If the Local Committee wish to ring fence this to the specific division or location where it is generated this is something they will be able to do.

20% will be provided to the enforcement agent as recognition of the risk they have accepted in underwriting any deficit and to provide a further incentive for operational efficiency. If they so choose, the agent (District or Borough) could ask the Local Committee to determine how their "share" is to be used. If the County Council were to enter into an arrangement with the private sector, there would be an element of profit within any contractual relationship.

The final 20% will return to the County Council. On-street parking is a County Council function and ultimately the County Council is responsible for ensuring the service is provided. Any surpluses returned to the County Council will be used to support the general highways budget, including the County Council's parking team.

The Cabinet report provides the flexibility for the split to be amended to suit any local negotiations, but before this is agreed the relevant Local Committee Chairman will be consulted.

b) This is noted and it is hoped that long term arrangements can be entered into as per our intended timeframe. However, we need to have the flexibility to ensure continued service in the event that one of our agents chooses to not be involved.

c) The Cabinet report makes specific reference to the oversight and monitoring role of the Local Committee. It is my view that the role of the Local Committee is essential to ensure the parking enforcement service meets the needs of an area. Operational management will be the responsibility of our agents but the Local Committee will have a structured role in monitoring performance and be presented with clear performance data. The County Council's parking team will be working with our agents and the Local Committee to agree formal arrangements which best suit the relevant Local Committee.

John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
23 October 2012