

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)

DATE: 8 December 2017

LEAD OFFICER: David Curl – Parking Team Manager (SCC)
Jacquie Joseph Parking Services Manager, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

SUBJECT: On Street Parking Enforcement Update

DIVISION: All inTandridge District Council



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Local Committees have a scrutiny role for the on street parking enforcement service in their area and a share of any surplus income that is raised.

This report sets out the background for these arrangements and provides an overview of the enforcement operation in Tandridge.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Waiting and parking restrictions that are suitably/adequately enforced will help to:

- Improve road safety
- Increase access for emergency vehicles
- Improve access to shops, facilities and businesses
- Increase access for refuse vehicles and service vehicles
- Ease traffic congestion
- Better regulate parking

The Local Committee can contribute towards these objectives in partnership with the borough enforcement team.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 On the 23 October 2012, the Surrey Cabinet agreed the framework for new on street parking enforcement agency agreements with the majority of Surrey district and borough councils. This followed 2 years of discussion and negotiation how

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enforcement could be carried out more efficiently and what should happen to any surplus income.

- 1.2 In terms of governance and scrutiny, the Cabinet agreed that Local Committees would have an oversight role in terms of on street parking enforcement.
- 1.3 Local Committees already make decisions about new parking restrictions and this will continue. Parking reviews will involve a separate report.
- 1.4 The aim of parking enforcement is to achieve compliance with the restrictions that are in place across the district. Restrictions must be enforced fairly and in accordance with the operational guidance for Civil Parking Enforcement contained in the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 1.5 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (R&BBC) undertake parking enforcement activities within Tandridge District under an agency agreement with Surrey County Council. The Borough Council is currently solely liable for any financial deficit.
- 1.6 R&BBC aim to achieve operational efficiency and value for money providing a fair and adequate enforcement service if possible at no net cost. I.e. the income from fines covers the cost of providing the service. This has proved difficult to achieve in recent years and under the agency agreement with the County Council the deficit is met by R&BBC.
- 1.7 Until recently R&BBC also enforced Tandridge off street car parks. However earlier this year a procurement exercise was conducted by Tandridge District Council for the enforcement of their off-street car parks which resulted in Sevenoaks BC being awarded an enforcement contract from the beginning of September 2017.

2. ON STREET ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council undertakes a range of enforcement activities under the agency agreement.
- 2.2 Enforcement officers are deployed across the district, covering core enforcement hours from 8:30am until 6:00pm. Any enforcement activity outside of these hours is possible through staff overtime, which is at a higher cost.
- 2.3 Some restrictions, such as yellow lines and residential permits, can be enforced immediately; the vehicle will need to be in clear violation of a restriction by parking on a yellow line or failing to display a valid parking permit.
- 2.4 Limited waiting bays are used in commercial and residential areas to ensure turnover and deter commuter parking. Enforcement cannot be undertaken immediately as no ticket is displayed to show the arrival time for each vehicle. Instead the Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) is required to log all the vehicles in a particular area and then return later in the day. Only then can they undertake enforcement if it is clear that the vehicle has overstayed the waiting limit. This is a time consuming process for the CEO's.
- 2.5 There are now four dedicated Civil Enforcement Officers allocated to Tandridge District and so at least three are deployed on most days, focusing on the main towns throughout the core enforcement hours and ad-hoc weekends.

Town centres (Oxted, Caterham, Whyteleafe, Lingfield, Woldingham)

- 2.6 This is where the majority of enforcement is undertaken because there are a higher proportion of restrictions in the town centres and these consequently require a larger proportion of enforcement resource in the District.
- 2.7 Parking enforcement is carried out in the town centres to achieve compliance with parking and waiting restrictions that will help maintain traffic flows and support access to businesses and services. This service is particularly valued by small business owners, as the restrictions ensure turnover in parking spaces along the main high streets.

Villages or local shopping parades

- 2.8 Parking enforcement in outlying areas and villages is important; however the greater travelling time required means less frequent enforcement is possible.
- 2.9 As these areas do not have the same level of resources as the town centres, it is recognised that there is a perception that they are forgotten. Each area receives regular visits and the times and roads visited are logged by the enforcing officer. Additional targeted enforcement is also undertaken when evidence of any parking issues are reported to the team.
- 2.10 However, it is important that resources are targeted where they are most effective, in order to increase income and minimise the cost of enforcement activities. The ability to deploy staff more easily without having an impact of normal enforcement duties will assist in reducing the perception of lack of enforcement.

Schools

- 2.11 We work with schools, the Surrey Highways and Surrey Police whenever possible to target parking enforcement outside schools where it is needed.
- 2.12 The team seeks to provide advice and guidance when visiting schools. However, penalty charge notices will be issued where appropriate, particularly where vehicles are parked on zig zag markings.
- 2.13 School enforcement has some unique challenges. The presence of the enforcement officers often disrupts usual parking patterns, which resume when the team is not present. It is not possible to provide enforcement outside every school, every day, due to other enforcement commitments. However, when there are issues that have been highlighted, the enforcement team will work with Surrey County Council to identify wider issues and potential solutions (travel plans, alternative travel transport).
- 2.14 Other methods of enforcing school keep clears are being considered. However, there is a cost that would need to be considered to ensure that the improvements in equipment or other products did not place an unbalanced financial burden on the stakeholders.

Residential areas

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- 2.15 Parking restrictions in residential areas, including permit areas, will be patrolled as required or in response to reported problems. Councillors and residents are encouraged to report any hot spots to the Council.
- 2.16 CEO's can enforce obstruction of 'official' drop kerb crossings and pedestrian crossing points. This will require the permission of the property owner to request enforcement action. If the property owner does not contact the Council to request enforcement action, the Council is unable to take any action. The Council seeks to respond to these requests as soon as possible.
- 2.17 The Council have improved the communication with residents to ensure that they are clear what can be enforced by the Council and giving them the options to contact the Police where the use greater or immediate powers of enforcement are required.

Suspensions and Waivers

- 2.18 There may be occasions, such as utility works or home improvement schemes, where a company or individual requires an existing parking restriction to be suspended or waived for a fixed period.
- 2.19 R&BBC undertakes all the administration in relation to these requests, including application, payment and issuing of suspensions and waivers. These are being processed in a timely manner and the Council are continually looking to improve the method in which customers apply, pay and have the approval for suspensions and waivers processed.
- 2.20 This is undertaken in accordance with the scale of charges set out in the county councils parking strategy.
- 2.21 In order to operate this process effectively a notice period is needed. The Council therefore requires a minimum period of 10 working days from request of application to allow processing and cleared payment prior to the suspension period.

Events affecting the highway

- 2.22 Where community events are arranged that will affect parking on the highway, the enforcement team will work with the organiser or highways to assist with traffic management arrangements.
- 2.23 Event organisers may be charged for this assistance if it requires out of hours working or distracts from the normal day to day enforcement activity in the District. Clear requirements of the time required to assist in this is necessary to ensure adequate staff are available.

Lines and Signs

- 2.24 It is the responsibility of Surrey County Council to ensure that the lines and signs are enforceable. Reigate and Banstead Council will undertake unforeseen emergency work on behalf of Surrey County Council.
- 2.25 Enforcement activity cannot be taken if the lines and signs are not visible (i.e. faded or covered by detritus). This is particularly challenging in the autumn when leaf fall occurs district-wide in a very short space of time.

3. ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS

- 3.1 Two extra CEO's have been allocated to enforce in Tandridge since the beginning of March 2017, bringing the total to four. This effectively means there are have been at least three CEO's on duty most days, allowing for leave etc. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of PCN's being issued and fewer complaints about poor compliance with parking restrictions. A number of locations nominated by the Committee have been also given priority:
- Woldingham – The Crescent
 - Caterham – Croydon Road (centre, at shops- co-op and Waitrose service Road)
 - Caterham – Parking on roundabout/centre square (outside dry cleaners)
 - Caterham – Railway station (taxi parking)
 - Caterham – Harestone Valley Road (taxi parking)
 - Caterham – Croydon Road (by Wapses Lodge roundabout outside Marden Lodge School)
 - A25 Obstructive parking blocking pedestrian access
 - A22 Blindley Heath – (between Smith & Western pub and j/w Ray Lane)
 - Godstone Green
 - Bletchingley – A25 Barfields junction with Castle St (parked vehicles obstructing sight lines)
 - Warlingham Green
- 3.2 The additional CEO's were initially taken on as a trial in March 2017 but given the positive early results this will be carried on indefinitely. In the six months since March, 2515 PCN's were issued, twice as many as the equivalent period March-September 2016 when 1221 were issued. The total number of PCN's issued in Tandridge over the last 12 months is shown in Annex 2.
- 3.3 The additional PCN's provide additional income to cover the cost of the extra resources, however this should be a factor in the 2017/18 accounts rather than the 2016/17 data reported here.
- 3.4 Sunday enforcement remains a demand in areas such as in Limpsfield Rd (and some side roads) between Warlingham and the Croydon boundary (Tithepitshaw Lane). We are working with stakeholders to ensure that enforcement deployment meets the demands in these areas. Therefore, intelligence surround the times when matches etc are on become paramount to ensuring effective enforcement

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- 3.5 Requests have been made for an additional enforcement officer which could be paid for via Parish Council contributions. This is being evaluated at the moment to see what could be possible.
- 3.6 Reigate & Banstead introduced new ways of improving the enforcement service. This included:
- Using additional enforcement officers as described above.
 - Purchasing new vehicles. This may include the introduction of small motorbikes to enable faster, more flexible deployment of enforcement resources.
 - Increasing the enforcement activity undertaken outside of 'normal' operating hours. This is in response to feedback that a number of double yellow line locations require enforcement in the early mornings and more frequently during the evenings. At present the effectiveness of the enforcement during these times are heavily dependent on whether people are willing to volunteer for overtime, but the additional resource referenced above will mean the service can respond more frequently and flexibly.
 - A review and improvement of the back office systems to enable a more efficient service. Improved information and guidance has been provided on the website and the wording on penalty charge notices has been reviewed to promote online appeals above other channels. Reigate & Banstead also offer online and automated telephone payments services, which are available 24 hours a day.
 - The online system enables customers to view their cases in real time and appeal on-line. It also enables the customer to appeal on-line. However, this has a higher application costs to the service.
- 3.7 The efficiency of the on street enforcement service would increase significantly if vehicles were required to display a ticket showing their arrival time, in the same way as parking in off street car parks. This would enable enforcement offers to immediately determine if vehicles had overstayed and carry out enforcement. At present at least two visits are required, and as stated earlier in the report, the process is resource intensive.
- 3.8 There is an ongoing review of the parking enforcement arrangement in the county that could also lead to greater efficiency benefits. These could start to materialise during 2018/19 with the introduction of new parking enforcement agency agreements.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Feedback and intelligence from local Councillors is extremely helpful in identifying enforcement priorities. The fastest way to report illegal or inconsiderate parking, and request enforcement activity, is through the online form, with information sent immediately to the parking enforcement team:
http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20150/parking/465/report_inconsiderate_parking

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The purpose of enforcing waiting restrictions is to help achieve compliance with restrictions and not to raise income although we try to manage the service with without operating at a deficit.
- 5.2 If a surplus is generated for the district parking account it has been agreed that it will be split:
- 60% to the local committee
 - 20% to the enforcement authority (district council)
 - 20% to the county council
- 5.3 Any surplus generated from managing on street parking can only be used as defined under S55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended). This restricts use of any surplus for the maintenance and/or improvement of the Highway including environmental works or additional parking provision.
- 5.4 There was no surplus generated in 2016/17. The outturn summary for the on street parking account in Tandridge District Council and is shown in Annex 2.
- 5.5 There are a number of challenges that impact on the costs and income of on street enforcement in Tandridge, most significantly it is a large, rural district with towns spread across the district.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 Effective parking restrictions and enforcement can assist accessibility for those with visual or mobility impairment by reducing instances of obstructive parking. Parking restrictions also allow blue badge holders better access to shops and services through the provision and enforcement of disabled bays.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 Communities are represented by local Councillors, who are involved in the decision making process to change or introduce new parking restrictions.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATION:

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)

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

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- 9.1 Changes to the use of the highway network, the built environment and society mean that parking behaviour changes. It is necessary for a Highway Authority to carry out regular reviews of waiting and parking restrictions on the highway network and provide adequate enforcement. This will help to:
- Improve road safety
 - Increase access for emergency vehicles
 - improve access to shops, facilities and businesses
 - Increase access for refuse vehicles and service vehicles
 - Ease traffic congestion
 - Better regulate parking
 - Increase on-street compliance
- 9.2 This report provides a summary of the enforcement activities undertaken by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, under agreement with the County Council. The report focuses on the performance during 2016/17 and the Local Committee is asked to note the report.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Local Committee can consider these arrangements and set up a further meetings to interact with the enforcement team as appropriate.

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Annex 1 – Annual On Street Parking Return
Annex 2 – On Street Parking Key Performance Indicators
Background paper:
