

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)****DATE:** 4 December 2017**SURREY****LEAD OFFICER:** Adrian Harris – Engineer, Parking Project Team**SUBJECT:** Future of parking reviews in Elmbridge**DIVISION:** All**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To consider how future parking reviews within the borough will be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The committee decides how it wishes to review parking in Elmbridge in future.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The existing three year review cycle is drawing to a close and the future direction of parking reviews needs to be decided.

1 <u>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:</u>
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- 1.1 At the meeting of 23 February 2015 the local committee agreed to adopt a new parking strategy for Elmbridge.
- 1.2 The new approach involves taking a longer term, more holistic and detailed look at parking and not just reacting to problems that have been brought to our attention, as was the case during reviews in previous years.
- 1.3 The aims of the strategy were to focus on providing parking, if possible, where it is needed. This included removing or amending existing restrictions. It will also look at introducing new controls if necessary.
- 1.4 As part of the new strategy, the committee agreed to carrying out more comprehensive reviews of different parts of the borough in turn on a three year rolling programme (from April 2015 - March 2018). This started with the Cobham area (including Stoke D'Abernon and Oxshott), followed by Weybridge in year 1, then the Moleseys and the Dittons, followed by Esher, Claygate and Hinchley Wood in year 2 and will finish with Walton and Hersham in year 3.
- 1.5 The current cycle ends at the end of June 2018. As such, the local committee may wish to consider how it would like to carry out reviews in future.
- 1.6 This topic was discussed briefly at the local committee meeting of 14 September 2017. This report is an updated version of the report presented previously, giving consideration for some of the comments made at that meeting.

2 ANALYSIS:

2.1 A list of pros and cons of the process of the three year cycle is provided below.

Pros	Cons
Much greater level of engagement with borough and parish councillors/councils when developing proposals. This allows the county council to better understand of problems, and therefore to more easily identify priorities and design more appropriate solutions to those problems.	Cost of dedicated engineer is around £40,000/year which is funded by the committee's portion of the surplus from the on street parking account (approx. £212,000 in 2015/16 financial year).
Much greater level of engagement with the public due to preliminary informal consultation stage, and indeed through county and borough councillors who are better aware of the process and therefore more able to advise residents on the parking review process and progress.	Three year cycle means that it usually takes longer to look at individual problems as compared with previous cycle whereby every problem could be looked at every fifteen months. It is however, extremely rare for parking to be a contributor factor in accidents involving personal injury, and as such the relative safety risk of a longer cycle is low.
Considering smaller area within each review allows for better analysis of the 'big picture' within each town.	It is questionable how much value is added by running the 'informal consultation' exercise at the beginning of the review for each area. There are already a number of ways that residents can contribute to or initiate changes to parking controls in their street. This aspect of the process could modified (or removed) going forward.
Considering smaller area within each review makes management and implementation of each review easier and more efficient.	
Gives an opportunity to introduce schemes that are 'nice to have', which would ordinarily not rank as a high enough priority to proceed with under the previous cycle.	
Dedicated engineer means that the public, officers, and councillors have a sole point of contact with the council on this matter, and allows for a greater level of service than would otherwise be provided by the council's central parking team.	
Three year cycle means that adequate time is allowed between each review to allow previous proposals to 'bed in' and parking patterns adjust before the area is looked at again.	
Dedicated engineer means that if there are parking schemes that must be	

progressed urgently due to irrefutable safety concerns, the resource does exist to implement the schemes rapidly.	
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2.2 A list of pros and cons of the strategy of the three year cycle is provided below.

Pros	Cons
Aims of strategy are admirable, i.e. seeking to find parking space where it is needed and to minimise schemes which cause displacement.	There is realistically only a finite amount of new parking space that can be found using only parking restrictions. Essentially this means removing yellow lines, and in most cases it is undesirable to do so. Some schemes where existing yellow lines have been removed under this cycle have faced significant opposition from residents – although have been successful from an engineering perspective.
Strategy ensures that schemes that could be considered unnecessary or unwarranted from an engineering perspective are easier to reject.	It is difficult to resolve parking problems without in most circumstances also causing some displacement parking. If the county council resists introducing new controls on the basis of 'displacement', this does not resolve the problems that residents are complaining about.

- 2.3 Although it is neither a 'pro' nor a 'con' of this strategy, in many areas (particularly Weybridge) one of the conclusions from the detailed study was that there is a need for more off street parking (i.e. car parks) which parking reviews cannot provide.
- 2.4 The main concerns expressed by members of this committee in respect of the current approach are in relation to how long it takes to resolve individual problems. It is unclear whether this is based on perception of poor customer satisfaction, concerns around road safety, or both.
- 2.5 There is no guidance that provides a recommended frequency of parking reviews. Regardless of the approach decided on, introducing or modifying parking controls is a long winded process and this is frustrating for customers, members, and highways staff. In either approach adopted, customers have to wait a long time before anything physically changes on site. This is largely due to the legal processes involved.
- 2.6 The government is carrying out a review of legislation under which traffic orders are made, so the process may become less onerous for highway authorities in the future although there are no details about this at present. It is important to remember that the legislation exists essentially to protect the rights of individuals, to make sure the public are aware of the intentions of the authority, to give them an opportunity to make representations, to make sure the authority is accountable and that decisions made are justifiable.
- 2.7 The review process, whether fifteen month or three year, enables us to minimise administration, provide clear and up to date information for our customers at all stages of the review, and minimise legal and engineering costs. To exemplify the legal costs involved in parking controls, those for one site may run to around £1k, whereas those for an entire parking review covering 50 sites may be in the order of £5k-£8k, although of course these costs vary with location and scheme details. These figures simply reflect the

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advertising costs and do not include the disproportionate staff resources required for treating sites on an individual basis.

- 2.8 This committee has always adopted an approach where sites with 'irrefutable and serious road safety concerns' could be treated on an individual basis. It is difficult to provide discrete criteria for such locations, although the parking team defines them as:

"where there is evidence of accidents, in relation, in part at least, to parking, either from the council's own database or the police, or a direct request has been made by the emergency services or our road safety team based on their safety concerns".

- 2.9 The police have powers to fine motorists parking their vehicles obstructively on the highway (whether carriageway or footway) without the need for a traffic order. Therefore, regardless of the parking review period decided upon, the police should in most circumstances be capable of providing some assistance with particularly problematic locations until such time as they can be permanently resolved through formal parking controls.

- 2.10 Clearly, the longer term cycle means that, on average, it will take longer for an individual request to be considered, however we do not have any evidence to suggest that outcomes for our customers are materially worsened by this.

- 2.11 There are number of options open to the committee in terms of future programme. One suggestion is to compress the reviews into a two year strategy. This could be achieved and would enable the reviews areas to better reflect divisional boundaries, in the following order, with one review taking place every six months:

- Cobham, Stoke D'Abernon, Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott
- Weybridge
- Dittons, Moleseys and Esher
- Walton and Hersham

This option could provide the efficiency and focus of considering smaller areas than the whole borough at one time, whilst accelerating the overall programme. Any compression of the programme would mean the 'initial survey' could no longer be scheduled, but would still allow for meetings and discussions with key stakeholders before, or as part of parking review site assessments.

- 2.12 If this committee wishes to consider promoting any sites for potential on-street charging locations, this would most likely be better achieved through a gradual process. As such it would probably be incorporated more effectively within an area-by-area type review than on a borough wide basis.

- 2.13 If it is decided that the parking reviews in Elmbridge should revert to the former (fifteen month) cycle and without a dedicated engineer, the next countywide review for Elmbridge would be presented to this committee for initial approval in June 2019. This is due to the need for Elmbridge to fit in with the existing timetable for the rest of the county, as the parking team only has the resources

to present parking reviews to two boroughs/districts at each committee cycle (i.e. per quarter year), and covers a total of ten boroughs and districts.

3 OPTIONS:

3.1 The options going forward, are:

- To 're-commission' the parking strategy and/or three year cycle 'as is'.
- To 're-commission' the parking strategy and/or three year cycle with modifications to either approach or objectives.
- To initiate a new review process with a compressed programme, e.g. a review of four areas over a two year period.
- To return to the previous review cycle whereby the whole borough is reviewed but with a dedicated engineer. This review could be achieved on an annual basis.
- To return to the previous review cycle whereby the whole borough is reviewed on a fifteen month basis, without a dedicated engineer. Note, the next review for Elmbridge would be presented to this committee in June 2019.

4 CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 None.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Cost of dedicated engineer is around £40,000/year which is funded by the committee's portion of the surplus from the on street parking account (approx. £212,000 in 2015/16 financial year). This money could otherwise be spent elsewhere.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 No significant implications arising from this report.

7 LOCALISM:

7.1 As identified in table 2.1.

8 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
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9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 The committee decides how it wishes to review parking in Elmbridge in future.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 Parking reviews will be taken forward as decided by this committee.

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Consulted:

None.

Annexes:

None.

Sources/background papers:

Local Committee report 23 Feb 2015 Item 12/15 - Elmbridge parking strategy
