

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL**



JOINT COMMITTEE (SPELTHORNE)

DATE: 10 December 2018

**LEAD OFFICER: David Curl – Parking Team Manager (SCC)
Jackie Taylor Group Head of Neighbourhood Services
Spelthorne Borough Council**

SUBJECT: On Street Parking Enforcement Update Spelthorne BC

DIVISION: All areas of Spelthorne Borough Council

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Joint 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 Spelthorne.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Joint Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of the report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- Improve road safety
- Ensure access for emergency vehicles
- Improve access to shops, facilities and businesses
- Increase footfall into Town Centres
- Ensure access for refuse vehicles and service vehicles
- Ease traffic congestion
- Ensure turnover of parking space use across the borough

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

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Joint Committees make decisions about new parking restrictions and have an oversight role in terms of the enforcement of them.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) undertake parking enforcement within Spelthorne under an agency agreement with Surrey County Council. SBC is currently solely liable for any financial deficit. The current agreements run until 31 March 2020 whilst discussions take place about future arrangements.
- 1.4 SBC achieve operational efficiency and value for money, providing a fair and adequate enforcement service whilst providing a surplus year on year.

2. ON STREET ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 SBC undertake a range of enforcement activities under the agency agreement including:
 - Waiting restrictions
 - Designated parking bays (Disabled bays, Limited waiting bays, Permit Bays, etc)
 - School Keep Clears
 - Pedestrian crossings
 - Loading, bus stops and taxi ranks
 - Temporary suspensions for events, essential works, highway maintenance and other planned activities likely to impact roadside space
 - Drop kerbs
- 2.2 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) are deployed across the District, covering core enforcement hours from 7:00am until 7:00pm, Monday to Saturday, and 9:30am to 6:30pm Sunday). Enforcement activity outside of these hours is possible only through staff overtime, which is at a higher cost.
- 2.3 Some restrictions, such as yellow lines with loading restrictions and white zig zags (approach to pedestrian crossings), can be enforced immediately; the vehicle will be in clear violation of a restriction by parking on them.
- 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 CEO is required to log all the vehicles in a particular area and then return after the limited waiting time for the bays has expired. Only then can they undertake enforcement if it

is clear that the vehicle has overstayed the waiting limit (evidence of vehicle position and tyre valves). This is a time consuming process for the CEO's.

- 2.5 Patrols are undertaken at varying times of the day and week to reduce awareness about exactly when CEO's will be in the area.

Staines upon Thames Town Centre

- 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 borough.
- 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 important to small business owners, as the restrictions ensure turnover in parking spaces along the main High Streets.

Villages and 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 impactful, in order to improve the cost effectiveness of enforcement activities. The ability to deploy staff in a smart way 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, 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 the extremely high resourcing requirements it would involve, as well as having the normal enforcement requirements at the same time. We do however have a School rota in place that ensures each reported school is visited by an officer at the

shortest intervals possible. When there are wider traffic/parking issues highlighted, the enforcement team will work with Surrey County Council to identify causes and potential solutions (travel plans, alternative travel transport).

Residential areas

- 2.14 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 enforcement team.
- 2.15 CEO's can enforce obstruction of 'official' drop kerb crossovers and pedestrian crossing points. This will require the permission of the property owner to request enforcement action (except pedestrian crossing points which can be enforced without a request). If the property owner does not contact the enforcement team to request enforcement action, they will not take action (except pedestrian crossing points which can be enforced without a request). SBC seek to respond to these requests as soon as possible.
- 2.16 Both the Joint Committee and enforcement team have improved communication with residents to ensure that they are clear what can be enforced and giving them the options to contact the Police where the use greater or immediate powers of enforcement are required.

Suspensions and Waivers

- 2.17 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.
- 2.18 SBC 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 we are continually looking to improve the method in which customers apply, pay and have the approval for suspensions and waivers processed.
- 2.19 This is undertaken in accordance with the scale of charges set out in the county councils parking strategy.
- 2.20 In order to operate this process effectively a notice period is needed. A minimum period of 10 working days from request of application is needed to allow processing and cleared payment prior to the suspension period.

Events affecting the highway

- 2.21 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.

2.22 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 borough. Clear requirements of the time required to assist in this is necessary to ensure adequate staff are available.

Lines and Signs

2.23 It is the responsibility of Surrey County Council to ensure that the lines and signs are enforceable. SBC will undertake unforeseen emergency work on behalf of Surrey County Council.

2.24 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/winter when leaves fall or snow can be present.

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2.25 To reduce the potential for this to occur our parking and cleansing teams work together closely and action sweeping requests as a priority.

3. ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 Extra CEO's resources have been temporarily allocated to enforcement activities in Ashford in tandem with a parking study which is being carried out by SBC. Results of this study will be available in 2019.

3.2 Information is available in Annex 2 and 3 showing where PCN's were issued and for what type of offence. KPI's are shown in Annex 4.

3.7 SBC continue to seek new ways of improving the enforcement service they provide. This includes:

- Using additional enforcement officers as described in 3.1.
- The introduction of small motorbikes to enable faster, more flexible deployment of enforcement resources.
- 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. SBC 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.

3.8 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. In particular high traffic areas we can also explore new technologies to remotely monitor traffic and bay occupancy.

- 3.9 There is an ongoing review of the parking enforcement arrangement in the County that could also lead to cost savings. These could start to materialise during 2019/2020 if there is progress.

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:

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 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 Joint 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 The surplus generated by SBC in 2017/18 was £14,166 giving the Joint Committee a share of £8,500.

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 via the parking task groups.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATION:

Area assessed:

Direct Implications:

Spelthorne BC

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 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:

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 Spelthorne Borough Council Borough Council, under agreement with the County Council. The report focuses on the operational performance during 2017/18. The committee is asked to note the report.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 Joint Committee can consider these arrangements and comment as appropriate.

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Annex 1 – Annual accounts

Annex 2 – PCN’s issued by town/streets and visits

Annex 3 - On Street Parking Key Performance Indicators

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