

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, TRANSPORT AND STREESCENE**

SUBJECT: **12 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT MEASURES**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To provide members of the Committee with an update on the progress of the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) arrangements since the launch of the service in October 2013.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The effective enforcement of on-street parking regulations is essential for:
- Improving safety for both pedestrians and drivers through de-cluttering streets of illegally parked vehicles which often obstruct clear safe views of the highway network by both pedestrians and other road users
 - Improving the general flow and efficiency of pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists through the road network
 - Improving the local environment by preventing parking on grass verges, pavements and through such activity causing damage and tripping hazards
 - Meeting the needs of people with disabilities through the increased provision of specific parking bays which are easily accessible and close to local shops
 - Supporting the local economy through improving the general flow of traffic through our highway network, and regularising journey times; and in doing so improving the quality, accessibility and overall reliability of public transport which uses the network
 - Improving the general ambience of our car parks which are for many visitors, the first visible arrival point within our towns
- 2.02 Following approval by Cabinet in February 2013 and the subsequent acceptance by Welsh Government of the business case, Civil Parking Enforcement was adopted by the Council and the service introduced across the County on October 1st 2013.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Following a recruitment exercise, the Council now employs 5 Civil Parking Enforcement Officers reporting to a single manager and support team, all of whom are currently based in Mold.
- 3.02 The Civil Parking Enforcement Officers (CPEO) each work a flexible 37 hour week with a Summer/Winter shift pattern which covers all 7 days of the week. The staff are also contracted to work Bank Holidays via a rota.
- 3.03 All CPEO's are provided with Personal Video Monitoring equipment which is operating and recording at all times whilst they are on duty. They also carry a lone working personal safety device, but for safety reasons patrolling is carried out in pairs in some areas of the County, based on a Risk Assessment.
- 3.04 Since 1st October 2013 the CPEO's have required Police assistance to deal with verbal abuse from members of the public on three occasions, one of which is still on-going. There is also another case which is currently going through the legal process which relates to a member of public causing damage to one of the Council owned car parks.
- 3.05 The CPEO daily patrol routes are created from information/complaints gathered from Councillors, Police, Head teachers and members of the public etc. Every effort is made to ensure that (where possible) each town in the County has been visited each week and known specific problem areas are more regularly patrolled, this also includes patrols around schools at the start and end of the day. A record of the number of PCN's issued in each community across Flintshire is shown on **Appendix 1.**
- 3.06 Since the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement within Flintshire the income received in relation to on-street enforcement across the County is allocated within the CPE Financial Model to offset associated costs; e.g. staffing, management, premises, vehicle, IT costs etc. It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that the CPE Financial Model is sustainable and reports a break even financial position on an annual basis.
- 3.07 Flintshire County Council utilises a regional service known as the Wales Penalty Processing Partnership (WPPP) which is hosted by Denbighshire County Council to process the PCN's that are issued. This is an efficient and cost effective service and ensures a regionalised approach to service delivery and provides members of the public with a more easily understood parking enforcement system which is consistent across the region.

- 3.08 Income received from direct car parking charges (which only currently apply in Mold) are utilised to offset the costs of managing the car parks in that town e.g. staffing, management, premises, rent, vehicle, ticket machine and IT costs etc. Any surplus is allocated to a reserve at financial year end and allocated for general improvement works in Mold town in conjunction with the Town Council. The fixed maintenance costs of the other car parks in the County are met wholly by the Council Given the financial climate and requests from other Town Councils to consider reintroducing car park charging at other towns in the County, this policy may have to be reconsidered in the future.
- 3.09 There has been a significant increase in usage in all car parks across the County over the past year. In Mold this can be evidenced by the increased number of pay and display tickets sold, along with increased revenue. In addition, car parks in some towns are now regularly full where they were previously underutilised. This is evidence of the success of CPE as drivers are more aware of the potential that should they be observed parked in contravention of a restriction on the highway a Penalty Charge Notice may be issued. This in turn removes congestion from the highway network.
- 3.10 From the results of a survey carried out during May and June of this year it can be seen that the car park capacity in Buckley, Flint, Holywell and Shotton were above 85% at their busiest period, and during the weekend between 55% and 71%. Mold had occupancy rate of 95% in most of its car parks during the periods measured.
- 3.11 Integral to the management of on street parking on roads with Traffic Regulation Orders in place (through CPE) is the issue of parking on non-restricted roads often in residential areas. In an attempt to avoid the issue of a PCN in town centres, motorists are sometimes tempted to park in residential areas - which in turn creates problems for local residents, who are often unable to park outside their own homes. The issue needs to be addressed and one solution would be the introduction of a Residents Parking Schemes, which restricts parking in defined streets to local residents whose vehicles are identified through a pass which is placed in the vehicle.
- 3.12 It is proposed that a pilot Resident Parking Scheme is introduced in an area of the County (yet to be defined) that is currently experiencing such parking problems. Once the system has been introduced and evaluated, a further report will be brought back to Scrutiny reporting on the outcome of the initiative. The location will be chosen in consultation with both the cabinet member and the local member for the selected area.
- 3.13 **Blue Badges**
Following recent changes in legislation and new guidance from Welsh

Government the Council is considering amending its practices and procedures in respect of the assessment criteria and method of assessment for the issue of Blue Badges and the associated enforcement of the scheme. In respect of enforcement, the legislation has given the CPEO's powers to inspect and retain a badge (without Police presence) if they have reasonable grounds for believing that the badge is a fake, has already been cancelled, should have been returned to the issuing authority or is being misused (including by someone other than the holder when the genuine holder is not involved in the journey). A report will be presented to Cabinet in November 2014 with details on the assessment criteria and the proposals to management of the service by the CPEO's

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That members of the committee note the progress of the CPE service in the first year since its launch.
- 4.02 That a further report providing feedback on the pilot Residents Parking Scheme is brought to a future Overview and Scrutiny meeting once a full evaluation has taken place.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 The income from PCN is utilised to offset the cost of operating the service.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 No identifiable impact.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 Controlling on street parking has a positive effect on pollution levels within communities as journey times are improved and delays avoided.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 Positive in creating increased access opportunities for those with disabilities to access town centres.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 With Cabinet Member.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Number of PCN's issued since the launch of the new service

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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