

## ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT - REPORT OF THE POLICY AND STRATEGY PORTFOLIO HOLDER

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In some areas within this Council's jurisdiction, the abuse of current parking regulations and the dumping of unwanted vehicles is becoming unacceptable.
- 1.2 Over recent months, Members of the administration have given detailed consideration to the development of a Policy to address the widespread concern of residents surrounding the increasing difficulty of both on-street and off-street parking across the District.
- 1.3 In addition, thought is being given to incorporating decriminalisation of parking enforcement as a process by which this Authority can take over the responsibility for the management and enforcement of on-street parking regulations under the Road Traffic Act 1991 provisions.
- 1.4 The Act allows us to apply to the Government to make the District a Special Parking Area, whereby the offence of illegal parking on waiting restrictions, (currently enforced by Police and their Traffic Wardens), is decriminalised, and made a civil rather than a criminal offence, with enforcement by the Council.
- 1.5 The thinking behind this element of the RTA 1991 is to achieve effective parking enforcement while at the same time releasing valuable Police resources to be used on other aspects of their work. Councils are then free to enforce traffic restrictions in accordance with demands and expectations of the public.
- 1.6 At the same time, there is broad recognition that the Council is under an obligation to develop a coherent strategy that meets the requirements of the Government's White Paper on the Future of Transport; is congruent with the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997, and fulfils the objectives of Hampshire County Council's policies contained in its Local Transport Plan – 2001/2006 and supporting Parking Strategy and Standards – 2001.
- 1.7 The purpose of this paper is to place in the public arena the thinking of the Administration on this subject in order to:
  - Outline the broad framework of a strategy; and
  - Put forward proposals for consultations with the local community on the agreed policy objectives.

with the overall purpose being to enable the development of a consistent strategy on Road Traffic Management for the District.

### 2. STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Government is concerned about the projected increase in traffic volumes over the next 20 years, and it is recognised that in the Forest this is likely to be between 11% and 49%.

- 2.2 The Local Transport Plan and Hampshire's Parking Strategy & Standards document set objectives to meet these concerns. The District Council is required to respond by developing supporting policies.
- 2.3 It is important that in developing a policy we reflect the concerns of residents, support the needs of the business community and develop proposals that will meet the aspirations of a wide range of stakeholders.

In addition, it is imperative the system is:

- Equitable;
- Simple to administer;
- Simple to understand; and
- Offers residents and other categories of user (to be determined) the opportunity to purchase a preferential parking Clock that could be used in both off-street car parks and, possibly, on-street parking if the Council decides to move into taking responsibility for decriminalised parking arrangements.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The following arrangements are being put forward by the administration to form the basis of a policy for the management of traffic in the District.
- 3.2 A Clock system is introduced to give residents and other regular visitors the option to pay for parking on an annual basis.
- 3.3 In the medium-term, consideration be given to extending the above system to cater for general on-street and residents preferential on-street parking arrangements. This to be linked to further studies on decriminalised parking arrangements.
- 3.4 The Clock to be renewed annually. To avoid conflict with the Council Tax the Clock to be issued for a calendar year commencing January.
- 3.5 The Charge for the Clock to be set (for financial projection purposes) at £5. (Note: this is inclusive of VAT). No limit to be set on the number of Clocks a motorist can purchase.
- 3.6 A 'Pay & Display' system be introduced into those car parks which regularly receive visitors. Visitors to have the option to acquire a 'Clock' from one of a number of local outlets in lieu of purchasing a ticket from a machine.

### **4. CONSULTATION WITH THE PUBLIC AND TOWN & PARISH COUNCILS**

- 4.1 The policy that is ultimately developed must be complementary to the Hampshire Local Transport Plan and Government requirements. In support of this we should look at both the off-street and on-street parking needs in each town/village centre across the New Forest.

- 4.2 It is important that Local consultations should be put in place to enable town/parish councils, business groups and others to express their views and where they wish to put forward suggestions that would improve the parking situation for their own community.
- 4.3 This is a crucial element of policy development, which should be emphasised when compiling the consultation strategy.
- 4.4 Therefore, a detailed consultation programme needs to be developed. In broad terms it is suggested that the following outline be pursued.
- Report to Cabinet on principles and outline options July 2002
  - Consultations with Residents, Town & Parish Councils, Business Groups, Visitors etc. August/Nov 2002
  - Report to Cabinet and Panel Jan/Feb 2003
  - Refine strategy and publish final proposals Feb/March 2003
  - Begin implementation process June 2003
- 4.5 It is proposed, in order to progress this strategy, that a detailed programme of consultations with town/parish councils will be drawn up immediately and published. All town/parish councils be invited to contribute (even those without District car parks) because they may have on-street or other traffic management issues to be considered.
- 4.6 Also, that four categories of car parks throughout the District be consulted upon:
1. Car parks requiring either a Clock or a 'pay & display' ticket for those who do not wish to acquire a clock, at a charge of (say) 50p for first two hours.
  2. Clock only car parks discouraging short stay visitors in favour of motorists who regularly use the Council's car parks.
  3. Car parks with no direct controls other than the normal long term waiting restrictions e.g. no longer than 24 hour parking or some other local restriction.
  4. Amenity car parks which visitors predominantly use.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Although this scheme is not motivated by financial necessity, it is likely to generate financial benefit to the authority. Detailed financial implications will need to be considered in light of the outcome of the consultation process outlined in this paper.

## 6. CRIME AND DISORDER

There are none arising directly from this report.

**7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Environmental Implications.

**8. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Cabinet agrees to progress a process of consultation over the possible introduction of a Road Traffic Management Scheme, as set out in this paper.

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