

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

27 JUNE 2017

### JOINT REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES AND HEAD OF FINANCE

#### CIVIL PARKING MOBILE ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Cabinet for the procurement of a mobile enforcement vehicle and to recommend to Council a revision to the Capital Programme for 2016-17 to 2026-27 to include a budget of £68,000 for the purchase of the Civil Parking mobile enforcement vehicle.

##### **2 Connection to Corporate improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priority**

- 2.1 This proposal will support the Council's commitment; Helping people to be more self-reliant.

##### **3 Background**

- 3.1 On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) was given the powers to undertake civil parking enforcement (CPE) under the legislative powers of the Traffic Management Act 2004, to deliver effective parking enforcement.
- 3.2 Three financial years' experience of CPE has highlighted that certain areas, such as outside schools, are particularly difficult to enforce by officers on foot. Their physical presence deters motorists from contravening regulations when they are in the area but not when they leave.
- 3.3 Drivers who park their vehicles in areas such as on school 'keep clear' markings, bus stops and where a loading ban is in place, are a danger to road users and pedestrians, especially children, as well as causing traffic congestion. Road safety outside of schools is vitally important, and concerns in this regard have been expressed by schools, parents and local members representing the communities.
- 3.4 The Welsh Government legislates for the enforcement of parking contraventions by approved devices under The Civil Enforcement of Parking Restrictions (Approved Devices) (Wales) Order 2013. The approved devices are defined in this Order as a camera and recording equipment which have been certified by the Welsh Ministers as meeting the specified requirements and which are detailed in a schedule to the Order.
- 3.5 Such legislation and technology allows for parking restrictions to be enforced via CCTV. This report sets out proposals for the introduction of mobile CCTV

enforcement of parking restrictions throughout the Borough of Bridgend, to compliment the current foot patrols carried out by the Authority's Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's).

#### **4 Current Situation/Proposal**

- 4.1 Bridgend currently employs 12 Civil Enforcement Officers, operating within the Borough to provide parking enforcement, both on-street and off-street across the Authority. They currently issue in the region of 10,000 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) per annum.
- 4.2 While enforcement resources are appropriate for the majority of parking infringements, it is of concern that it has been suggested that enforcement consistently fails to meet expectations in the areas of schools, bus stops and other locations where short-term parking is prohibited i.e. zig-zags associated with pedestrian crossing facilities, no loading/unloading restrictions, double yellow lines with kerb markings. (Note: these are not areas where blue badge holders would be exempt from penalty charge notices being applied).
- 4.3 Whilst officers are regularly deployed to these areas their physical presence prevents parking only whilst they are there. Once officers leave the area, inappropriate parking reoccurs.
- 4.4 Local authorities have a duty to tackle dangerous parking and the Traffic Management Act 2004 allows councils to enforce parking at problem areas, where motorists are putting the safety of others at risk and causing unnecessary congestion. The Traffic Management Act recommends that approved devices (such as mobile CCTV vehicles) are used only in problem areas where enforcement is difficult or sensitive and enforcement by Civil Parking Enforcement Officers is not practical. Problem areas will be identified through operational intelligence gathered by the Parking Enforcement Officers, general public complaints, parents and schools.
- 4.5 At present the Council does not have the equipment to allow these problem areas to be addressed. Whilst visits are made to schools and bus stops, this is having little or no effect on reducing the number of Traffic Regulation Order contraventions. Mobile CCTV would capture images of those vehicles parking illegally, allowing PCNs to be sent in the post. This method of enforcement ensures that motorists who contravene parking restrictions understand that there is a likelihood of them receiving a PCN, even if there is no Civil Parking Enforcement Officer patrolling on foot in the area.
- 4.6 Currently as Civil Parking Enforcement Officers approach on foot, areas such as outside schools, Owners of vehicles will often remove them before any action can be taken and return when the officer is no longer in the area. The Mobile vehicle offers the advantage of being able to both quickly capture images whilst moving past an area before vehicles can be removed and also can be parked in unattended mode which will capture images whilst also acting as a visual deterrent.

- 4.7 The vehicle is not covert and is clearly signed as a mobile enforcement unit. It would ensure that Civil Enforcement Officers can enforce a greater geographical area as most on foot officers are dropped off in an area currently and do not have access to a vehicle throughout the majority of the working day. However mobile enforcement would not remove the need to have traditional on-foot enforcement.
- 4.8 Schools across the Authority are likely to experience issues at school opening and closing times associated with school generated parking. It is not possible to enforce each school effectively with foot patrols alone. A foot patrol would only be able to deal with potentially a single school within the arrival and departure times of schools based on their geographical locations.
- 4.9 There are currently 393 bus stop clearway restrictions in operation within the Borough of Bridgend. Unauthorised parking in bus stops is a problem that consistently affects local bus operators, impacting on punctuality, convenience of bus passengers (particularly those with mobility problems who are not able to access the low floor bus directly using the raised kerb) and indeed safety. As the bus stops are not always located alongside other areas of parking restrictions, some locations tend to be treated as a lower priority by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) due to the level of 'lost time' travelling on foot between the sites (CEO officers are not supplied with a vehicle and are often dropped off in area to patrol without vehicular transport). With a CCTV vehicle, an officer can patrol a full bus route in a relatively short period of time.
- 4.10 Abuse of zig-zags associated with pedestrian crossing facilities has significant safety implications as it restricts the visibility of any pedestrian crossing. In Town Centres in particular, drivers will quickly evaluate an area and take a chance if they do not observe a CEO on foot patrol as it may offer the most convenient location for the shop they are visiting. Unfortunately the driver is generally oblivious to the safety issues that they are causing. Due to the relative short-term nature of the parking stay, again it is difficult to provide an effective deterrent to this type of abuse with foot patrols alone.
- 4.11 Similar problems apply to loading bays and areas where loading/unloading is prohibited unless foot patrols are clearly visible. There are currently 33 loading bays, 6 Goods Vehicle Only loading bays and 300 no loading/unloading at any time restrictions in operation in the Borough of Bridgend. Effective enforcement of these facilities cannot be undertaken with the current enforcement resources available.
- 4.12 The purchase of a mobile enforcement vehicle is proposed through an appropriate procurement route.

To minimise disruption to the existing enforcement and appeals service, it is suggested that two additional officers would be required to implement this service - one additional enforcement officer to operate the vehicle and review the data (supplemented by existing enforcement staff, when required), plus one additional officer to deal with the back office side of the system and administration including, review of photographic evidence and submission to

the Wales Penalty Processing Partnership along with any increase in appeals that will be generated by the increased PCN levels.

## **5 Effect Upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

## **6 Equalities Impact Assessment**

6.1 As part of this Cabinet Report an EIA screening report was undertaken. In agreement with the Authority's Equalities Officer, the screening identified that the proposal can be screened out of the process and that a full EIA would not be required.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 It is proposed that set up costs will be covered by an earmarked reserve that has been created for the Civil Parking Enforcement service arising from underspends generated by the service since its inception. It is estimated that set up costs will be circa £68,000 for the vehicle and enforcement system supply and set up.

7.2 It is anticipated that the ongoing costs will be financed through income generated from the additional PCNs issued as a result of the introduction of the mobile enforcement vehicle. The ongoing annual vehicle and technical system maintenance and personnel costs are anticipated to be £10,000 maintenance plus staff costs in the order of £48,000. Initial projected income is expected to be in the region of £78,000 per annum. Whilst this will decline as the number of infringements decrease and the use of the mobile enforcement changes behaviour it is still expected that the system will be self-funding on an ongoing basis.

## **8. Recommendations**

8.1 Cabinet is asked to approve:

- (a) The purchase of a mobile enforcement vehicle and camera, and associated software/hardware to allow the CPE service to enforce parking restrictions.
- (b) Cabinet are also asked to note the employment of two additional support staff within the CPE team - one additional CEO to operate the vehicle and review the data plus one officer to manage increased appeals that will be generated by the increased PCN levels.
- (c) That a report be submitted to Council for approval to amend the capital programme to include a budget of £68,000 to fund the purchase of the Civil Parking mobile enforcement vehicle, to be met from earmarked reserves.

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**Background documents: None**