

Parking Services Update

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Cabinet Member: Councillor John Woodman, Highways and Transport

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report is submitted to update the Scrutiny committee;
1. On progress made since the last committee meeting within Parking Services.
 2. To introduce the revised policy for the introduction of resident parking.
- 1.2. Parking Services supports Economic Development within the County Plan, by keeping the traffic moving and reducing congestion. The revised resident parking policy supports the overall vision by making residential streets a better place to live by removing non-residential parking.

2. Issues for Consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are asked to consider and comment in respect of the changes made in how Parking Services is delivered within the County.
- 2.2. Members are requested to comment and record their support of the revised resident parking policy being introduced.

3. Background to Delivery of Parking Services in Somerset

- 3.1. Members will be aware that since June 2012, the County Council has been responsible for on street parking enforcement across the entire County (apart from the M5, the A303 and private roads).

The County Council also works in partnership with Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset District Council. The partnership involves enforcement of their car parks, processing and collection penalty charge notices, along with other related services such as cash collection.

South Somerset District Council has remained outside of the partnership and they undertake their own enforcement and related services.

Discussions have recently taken place with South Somerset District Council about joining the partnership. It is not anticipated there will be any change for the time being whilst South Somerset District Council complete their current transformation programme.

- 3.2. Service Delivery June 2012 to June 2017

Initially a five year contract following a competitive tender was awarded to NSL Services, the market leader in the provision of civil enforcement and associated services. The contract included options for further extensions up to a maximum of 5 further years.

The level of service provided by NSL was wide ranging and included the following;

- Fully trained and qualified staff to enforce parking restrictions across Somerset.
- Management and supervision
- Operational premises
- Vehicles
- Uniforms, stationary and all associated equipment
- Parking IT system, including payment and permit portal, portable enforcement devices and communications with remote workers.
- Back office processing facility* to deal with incoming correspondence, telephone calls and payments relating to permits and penalty challenges.
- Cash collection and pay and display machine maintenance.

*Undertaken within the NSL Shared Service Centre at Oldham.

In addition a small team of 4 officers based in County Hall, provided operational and strategic guidance to the contractor. The team also monitored the contract performance, dealt with appeals to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal, referrals from the contractor and review hearing at the County Court.

4. Changes in Service Delivery June 2017 to June 2019 and beyond

4.1. Civil Parking Enforcement - Contract extension

Following extensive negotiations involving Somerset County Council officers (Operations, Legal and Procurement) and NSL Directors, a two year extension of on street, car park enforcement and associated services has been agreed to June 2019.

The back office and IT services have not been extended. Please see section 5 of this report.

The 5 key reasons for the extension are summarised below.

1. Carrying out a re-procurement exercise timed around June 2019 rather than June 2017 is likely to lead to better outcomes for SCC in the longer term, and reduce risks in the shorter term.
 - a. Prior to the EU referendum, there were some indications from central government that the prevailing legislation regarding local authority civil parking enforcement (which does not permit automated ANPR enforcement used commonly in private sector car parks) may be reviewed. Any relaxation or change would necessitate a fundamental change in how enforcement was supplied, particularly in district-controlled off-street car parks. At the present time there is no information coming from government

to indicate whether (let alone when) the issue of ANPR enforcement may be reviewed, which presents a significant uncertainty in any re-procurement exercise. We would hope to have a better indication of the government's intentions regarding ANPR enforcement in 2 years' time; in any event, extending for a shorter period in the meantime is an effective way of mitigating the risk presented by this uncertainty.

- b. As part of the pre tender review extensive discussions were undertaken with Dorset County Council to undertake a joint procurement exercise for enforcement services. Due to uncertainty relating to their forthcoming unitary reorganisation, a joint collaboration in the short term was not possible. Collaboration with a future West Dorset unitary authority would give SCC advantages of geography and economies of scale which we are keen to take advantage of. By mid-2018 we would hope new structures to have emerged in shadow form which may allow us to recommence this potentially advantageous joint exercise.
 - c. One probable and one possible development in the medium term are likely to affect the volume and distribution of enforcement purchased through the SCC contract by Somerset District Councils. Firstly, Taunton Deane Borough Council are likely to have a reduced need for enforcement as a result of the planned implementation of 'pay on foot' controls at a number of Taunton car parks. Secondly, whilst South Somerset District Council have yet to join the shared service, if this should change within the next two years a procurement process after these two changes reduces the level of uncertainty, and is therefore likely to present better future value for SCC.
 - d. Over the next two years of the extension, there is likely to be further 'attrition' (through natural turnover, retirements and possibly performance management) of the TUPE workforce NSL inherited from District Councils in 2012. This will in turn probably generate a more competitive market response to a re-procurement exercise, as the current rates will be based in part on the cost base for a more expensive workforce, which is significantly higher for TUPE staff.
 - e. The current contract uses an indexation measure composed of both CPI and Average Weekly Earnings. The Council is likely to benefit from lower inflationary costs over the 2 year extension period, rather than re-procuring for a June 2017 commencement which exposed the Council to an earlier increase on the cost base of the workforce
2. Financial modelling on the proposed new terms of the contract indicates that SCC is likely to make net annual revenue savings of around £100,000 per annum for the duration of the extension, for an additional one-off cost of around £10,000.
 3. Changes to the performance mechanism in the current contract will ensure that SCC has an enhanced ability to manage NSL's performance of enforcement services for the extended term, which should ensure that we can sustain the recent improvements in performance, as detailed below at Fig 1 and Fig 2.

Fig. 1: PCNs (all) served by Financial Year

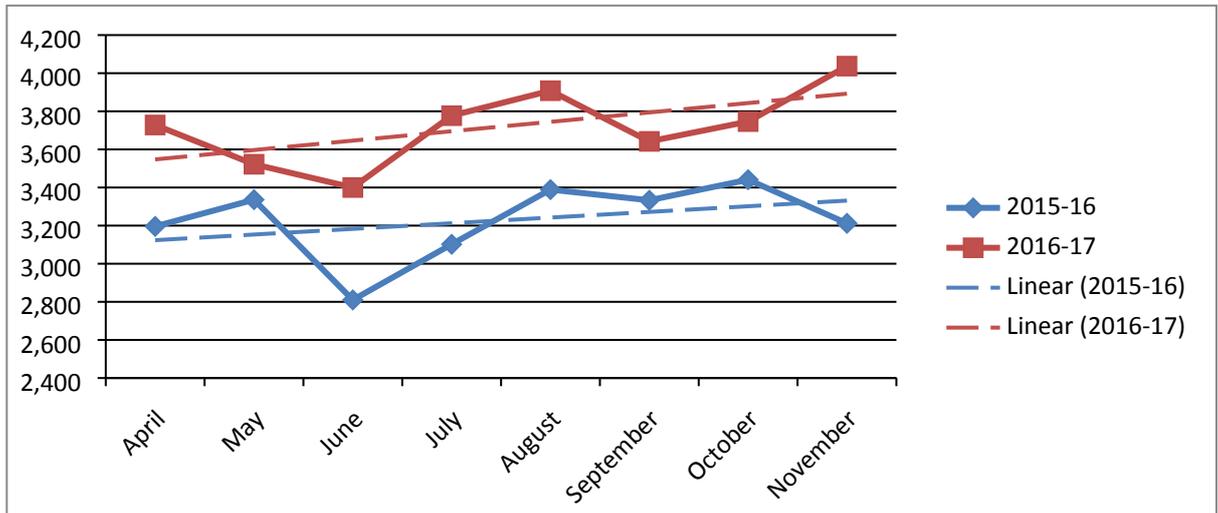
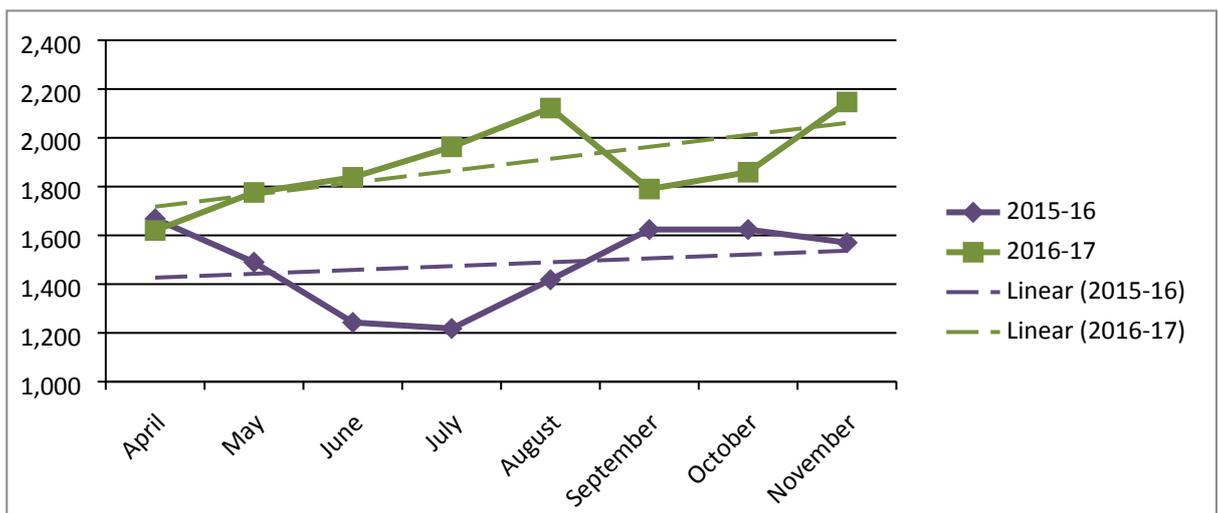


Fig. 2: PCNs (on-street) served by Financial Year



4. NSL are committed to delivering a number of significant and innovative enhancements to the delivery of enforcement services in a rural area, and there are further opportunities to leverage improved relationships with the supplier to deliver further service developments.
5. Finally, an extension on the agreed terms will put SCC in a better position to manage the potential two changes in the district tier of the shared service partnership (Taunton Deane and South Somerset).

4.2. Future Initiatives with NSL

We have provisionally agreed to explore a number of exciting further initiatives with NSL:

1. Reviewing CEO uniforms, as part of a wider approach to improving and soften the image of parking enforcement in Somerset. The first change was to replace the traditional peaked cap with a softer baseball cap in the summer and a woollen 'beanie' in the winter.
2. Developing a responsive replacement signs and lines service to deal quickly with un-enforceable areas.

3. Developing and piloting an environmental / street scene enforcement capability within the CEO workforce, with the aim of piloting a neighbourhood officer / wider regulatory enforcement role in suitable communities (in partnership with district councils).
4. Developing an approach to the clamping and/or removal of persistent evaders (those who regularly contravene parking restrictions and fail to pay penalties).

However, any such initiatives provisionally agreed where necessary will be reviewed by Legal Services to ensure that, if they amount to a modification of the contract, such modification is permissible in terms of procurement law and the Council's contract standing orders.

5. Insourcing of Back Office and Permit Processing

- 5.1.** The negotiations with NSL also related to the insourcing of the back office services to the County Council.

The aims of insourcing the back office Notice Processing elements are in line with a number of SCC's overall strategic objectives, including:

1. Longer term opportunity for partnering with neighbouring authorities, specifically Dorset County Council.
2. Increase in local employment opportunities.
3. Developing a commercial approach where specialist knowledge, investment or intellectual property creates a competitive advantage.
4. Achieving full cost recovery for chargeable services and developing new, sustainable income streams.
5. Developing the resilience of key statutory services, to improve Business Continuity Management.
6. Enable further inbound telephone services to be handled by the returning contact centre.
7. Improvement to how customers access parking services locally.

As well as aligning to a number of SCC strategic objectives, the in sourcing also supports the County Plan priority to ensure that "Somerset is a place where people have the good quality services they need; by joining-up with partners, organisations and communities to provide and run efficient services to make every pound work hard for Somerset".

5.2. Benefits of In-Sourcing

The main specific benefits for Somerset County Council are set out below:

5.3. Non-financial benefits to Somerset County Council

Service Efficiency: The proposed model would improve service efficiency in the following ways:

1. Correspondence quality – Improvement of local knowledge when compared with a contractor who lacks this knowledge.
2. Improvement of the customer experience as the local processing team will have greater ownership of the process.
3. Improvement in management efficiencies as the process is being managed locally rather than at arms-length due to the geography.
4. Refocus on objectives towards customer service rather than volume processing to maintain profit margin.
5. Use of current in-house parking team's experience as foundation for service delivery.
6. Swifter decisions on complex cases rather than delays and double handling while cases are referred between the contractor and the Council.

5.4. Service development: It is likely that the operational structure of Somerset County Council will continue to evolve in the medium term. Additional enforcement processing functions and parking related functions could be added to Parking Services at the cost of additional resource only, without the time and cost of a procurement exercise or negotiations to vary a contract. With the growth in the parking team, additional experience could provide an opportunity to support traffic management in the handling of their general correspondence as the roles of parking and traffic management are closely aligned. Further opportunities could also be considered, such as the resident parking policy which is currently under review and forms part of this report. The enhanced team also provides greater confidence to the District Councils in consideration of more strategic services being provided to them due to the improved resilience amongst the larger team. In the future, additional support to be provided by parking services in respect of new resident parking will be available.

5.5. Reputation: The reputation of Somerset's Parking Services, and the wider council, would be enhanced by the successful delivery of a lower cost, high quality and effective service delivery model. This could be an enabler for shared service opportunities with other Parking Services in the region.

5.6. Benefits to customers, members of the public and residents

The service to Somerset Parking Service users would improve because of the additional service resilience and the adoption of best practice described above. In addition, customers will benefit from:

1. **Trained Staff** – all staff employed in the processing of PCNs and call handling will be required to hold the relevant NVQ / City and Guilds. This will ensure staff are fully trained to the highest standards
2. **Flexibility** – the in-house service with locally devised systems and processes will enable service delivery to be amended efficiently in light of legislative changes or customer demand without financial penalties.
3. **Investment** – the in-house service will benefit from reinvesting into trained staff rather than contractor management services and contractor profit. By refocusing existing staff from contract monitoring (letter checking & double handling of customer queries) to service delivery, additional resources can be provided to improve the service to the residents of, and visitors to, Somerset.
4. **Improved responses** – users of parking services will be less confused as they will be dealing with local officers who are knowledgeable about the area. There will be a general improvement in the handling of their correspondence and a reduction in the need to send follow up letters through better quality responses. With the decision makers writing / supervising responses, quality and speed of response will be improved.
5. **Local knowledge** – advisors can address customers' issues and concerns knowledgably, both with regards to parking restrictions and how the service is provided.

5.7. Added Extra Benefits

Improved access to offices: Due to the number of staff employed within parking services the added benefit for Somerset County Council customers will be the ability to submit documents and payments in person. Whilst not advertised, parking services staff will be able to attend to personal callers on request. This will deliver an improved service to customers:

1. Submission of residents' permits application.
2. Collection of residents' permits on a same day / next working day basis, thus restoring a service that was available before Somerset County Council / NSL took over parking enforcement.
3. Continue to provide the opportunity for customers to pay PCNs in legal tender and potentially by card by use of portable card terminals.

5.8. Financial Benefits to Somerset County Council

The Parking Service budget brings in a modest credit surplus, with corporate and business support overheads fully recovered. Spending any surplus raised from civil enforcement (penalty charges and associated income) is restricted to the improvement of highways/transport in Somerset. Income from Car Park, Pay &

Display is not restricted in this way, though income from the largest SCC-owned car park (West Somerset Railway car park in Minehead) is used to pay a commercial mortgage on property in Minehead and is not available to Parking Services. Based on the cost of the outsourced current service, bringing notice processing in-house would result in financial savings for Somerset County Council in the following ways:

1. Reduced overall Parking contract value, leading to reduced “head office” contractor costs (which are a percentage of the total contract value and of low or no productive value to Somerset County Council). This will also reduce the annual liability of the Authority.
2. Overall savings in the cost of service delivery for Parking Services.
3. Potential improvement to the speed of PCN payment rates, by reducing the number of challenges and representations by clearer communication through high quality correspondence, and the facilitation of a range of payment methods, including instalment plans for those in the greatest financial difficulty.
4. Reduction in the volume of correspondence, with a “right first time policy”.
5. Covering business support overheads.

It is important to note that the new shared service is intended to cover its operating costs it is not intended to generate a surplus for the County Council.

6. Services Transferred

6.1. Services Transferred

The areas transferred to the County Council included the following:

1. Scanning and indexing – all correspondence relating to PCNs is received, opened, scanned and allocated to the relevant case and workflow within the parking enforcement database.
2. Payments – all payments relating to PCNs are accepted and processed by the Council. Payments are made by way of postal cheques, via the internet (provided by the IT Supplier) and the existing Somerset County Council IVR (interactive voice recognition) telephone payment system.
3. Correspondence handling – following the receipt of correspondence, the Council is required to respond appropriately; this usually involves cancelling or upholding the PCN. Responses are made in accordance with the relevant Council’s policy and National Legislation.
4. Statutory documents – the collection of outstanding PCNs requires a number of statutory documents to be sent to the registered keeper. These are sent in accordance with pre-determined timescales. Due to the volumes of correspondence we have taken the opportunity to use the Council’s print and post system.

5. Staffing Resources – whilst staff in Oldham were eligible to transfer under the TUPE regulations, none chose to do so and have been redeployed elsewhere within the Oldham Shared Service Centre. Therefore, four additional members of staff have been recruited, (three based in Taunton and one based in Yeovil) to handle notice processing, with funding for a fifth passed over to the Customer Contact Centre in respect of telephone handling. We have also recruited an apprentice in line with SCC’s recruitment policy, with a view to making them a permanent appointment at the end of their apprenticeship, subject to successfully completing their qualification. This apprentice will also be involved in proving the concept of a “digital post room” across the Council as a whole.

All staff will be trained to the Level 3, Award in Notice Processing provided by WAMITAB and regulated by Ofqual. The qualification involves 3 days classroom training followed by the preparation of case studies. Once recruited they are supervised by an experienced officer. Three of the new staff and an existing officer have achieved the qualification with the remaining two scheduled to complete by mid-October.

6. Telephone calls – all inbound calls relating to PCNs, general parking enquires and permits* (see later comments re Mi-Permits) that were dealt with in the remote Shared Service Centre in Oldham are to be handled by the County Council Contact Centre following the return of contact centre staff from South West One (SWO).
7. IT Services - the County Council has procured a new IT system to manage parking services. The IT procurement covered the following.
 1. On street enforcement software to record CEO activity and serve PCN’s.
 2. Online portal to receive challenges, representations.
 3. Online portal to enable payments of PCN’s to be made.
 4. Online portal to apply and pay for parking permits.
8. Print and Post – We have made use of the service provided by Synertec. This new service to Somerset County Council provided an opportunity to make savings in postage, consumables and staff time. Particularly as Parking Services’ needs are specific, correspondence must be sent first class on the day the letter is dated and printed in colour as they will include photographs.
9. Payments – Parking Services is moving towards a cashless payment system, in line with Somerset County Council’s digital and customer strategies. This will be achieved through an online payment system and the customer contact centre, details of which will be printed on Penalty Charge Notices and subsequent correspondence. The option to make payment in cash has been removed from all correspondence and is not encouraged. However, we are required to accept cash as legal tender for a debt and it cannot be refused.

10. Permit processing – A new online permit portal has been provided by our IT provider and is a highly configurable and flexible system that enables residents and healthcare professionals to apply and pay for their permits. The portal operates on a shopping basket principle so multiple permits can be paid for in a single transaction. All permits involving a vehicle registration are now ‘virtual’ in the same way of the vehicle tax. The portal enables users to self-administer changes to their vehicle which become effective with immediate effect. Paper permits are provided for daily scratch cards and annual visitor permits but are applied for via the portal. Business and non-resident landlord permits remain paper based applications as the volumes currently in use do not make the portal option viable. The Mi-Permit service also enables residents to apply by telephone should they not have access to a computer.

7. Service Improvements between Outsourced and Insourced Service

7.1.

Area	Outsourced	Insourced
<u>Scanning and Indexing</u>	Images scanned daily with blank pages uploaded due to duplex scanning.	Images scanned daily at higher resolution, blank pages removed to reduce unnecessary storage.
<u>Staffing</u>	Staff trained in house, with no formal qualification.	Staff trained to Level 3, Award in Notice Processing.
<u>Print to Post Service</u>	Print house operates on one letter per packet.	SCC print to post service able to send up to 10 letters to same address in single packet per day.
<u>IT Services</u>	Each handheld contained the entire County.	Handhelds configured per District, only contains the data needed.
<u>Representations against Notice to Owner</u>	Representations by post.	Option for the public to make representations via online portal.
<u>GPS within IT System</u>	Limited use of GPS data.	Extensive use of GPS data available, both in terms of retrospective analysis and live data. Ability to identify “which CEO is the nearest”.
<u>Permit Portal</u>	Only annual resident permit and annual visitor permit could be purchased on line with separate transactions. Scratch cards only available by paper applications	All permits can be applied for online or by telephone with a single transaction (shopping basket principle). Paper applications removed for 99% of permit requests.
<u>Permit Use and Changes</u>	All permits were paper based and required a permit to be displayed. Any changes to vehicles	Virtual permit system adopted for all permits with a vehicle registration (as per road tax). Permits are live immediately

	required 5 days processing time to receive update.	and holders of permits can self-administer changes to their vehicles etc.
<u>Email correspondence</u>	No facility to respond to correspondence from within the IT system.	Fully integrated email facility to respond to correspondence at the click of a mouse.
<u>District Referrals</u>	Daily referrals of multiple cases to District Councils seeking clarification.	Referrals to Districts reduced by about 75%.

7.2. Key Achievements

- Continuous enforcement with minimal coverage lost, during handover to new system.
- All enforcement staff trained on the new hand held software in time.
- Migration of circa 200,000 penalty records to new system over the weekend.
- New payment lines tested and able to take payment by 10am on the morning of changeover. Anticipated to be up to 24 hour delay.
- Taunton enforcement base moved to library with no disruption to library staff or enforcement services. Fully snagged within a week of moving.
- One existing officer and 3 newly recruited trained to Level 3, Award in Notice Processing (remaining 2 officers scheduled to complete during October 2017).
- Outstanding enquires no “older” than 4 days.

7.3. Performance statistics (12 June to 7th August 2017)

2,875 enquires written and via the Contact Centre received since go live 12th June 2017 (to 7th August).
71% of enquiries relating to PCN's received via the enquiry portal.
1,250 written responses to enquires sent by email.
4,500 items of correspondence sent by post
600 virtual permits issued.
13,000 individual (daily) scratch cards issued.
3,250 payments made online – (£107,000).
4,500 payments via automated telephone system – (£147,000)

8. **Resident Parking Policy**

8.1. Background

Since June 2012, Somerset County Council has been responsible for the enforcement of on street parking restrictions across the County. This includes yellow lines, limited waiting areas, resident permit zones, loading areas and disabled parking bays. In 2012, Somerset inherited a number of existing residents parking schemes that were set up and funded by District Councils under their individual policies:

- South Somerset – 3 zones, all in Yeovil.
- West Somerset – 1 zone in Minehead.

- Taunton Deane – 10 zones, all in Taunton.

In 2012 there were no resident's parking schemes in Mendip or Sedgemoor.

The method to introduce new resident parking areas across the County was developed in a revised policy to coincide with the enforcement responsibilities. The existing scheme came into effect in October 2013.

Other non-resident parking schemes involving mainly safety related issues are dealt with on a case by case basis by the Traffic Management team.

The key aspect of the resident parking policy is the appointment of a local scheme champion. The scheme champions' role is to canvass support for the scheme in the local area.

Whilst a number of small schemes have been successfully introduced across the County, the current methodology involving an "unqualified" scheme champion can contribute to delays and miscommunication with other residents, for what can be a controversial proposal and complicated process.

The revised policy aims to streamline the process and ensure residents who may be affected by any scheme are fully aware of the features and benefits of a resident parking scheme, as well as understanding what the scheme can and cannot achieve.

The existing policy was used to introduce the following small resident parking schemes.

Kings Square area, Bridgwater	May 2016
Middle Street, Taunton	May 2016
West Quay area, Bridgwater	May 2016
Wookey Hole Road, Wells	May 2016
Grange Road area, Street	June 2016
Portway, Wells	June 2106

Since the introduction of the above schemes, the policy has been on hold to enable a review to be undertaken by officers.

Issues with current process

A review of the process following implementation of the above schemes identified an underestimation of how much time and technical knowledge was needed by the scheme champion to "sell" the scheme to neighbours and community.

The extent of the "optimal scheme boundary" to account for displacement was also identified as an issue along with an accurate identification of those properties who would be eligible for on street parking permits. Both these issues have been addressed within the revised policy.

9. Proposed revised Resident Parking Policy

9.1. Policy Aims

The revised policy aims to identify and prioritise schemes requested by residents to ensure they are supported and viable. This includes ensuring that there is a parking problem that requires some form of control and would be self-financing; i.e. cover the cost.

This policy sets out how Somerset County Council will deal with requests for new on street parking restrictions or the amending of existing controls.

9.2. What can be requested?

In general terms there are two types of parking restrictions.

1. Restrictions that stop (prohibit) parking (waiting) these include;

- Double yellow lines
- Single yellow lines
- Loading bans
- School Keep Clears
- Verge and footway parking bans

2. Restrictions that allow parking (permit waiting) these include;

- Disabled parking bays
- Permit (e.g. residents or business) parking bays
- Loading bays
- Coach parking bays
- Limited waiting bays
- Pay and display bays

Requests for the introduction or amendment of parking restrictions can be received from a variety of sources, such as:

- Residents
- Police
- Developers
- Councillors
- District Councils
- Town Councils
- Parish Councils

It is important to note there is no “one size fits all” answer; highway safety issues will be paramount and any proposal must be financially viable. Prior to implementation of any scheme, the view of all who could be affected by the proposal will be considered by consulting in the wider area, as it may be necessary to extend the area of control from the original request.

9.3. Process to Request Resident Parking Restrictions

Following receipt of a request for resident parking restrictions, an acknowledgement will be sent.

To ensure efficient use of Council resources is made, only those schemes that have support from the local community will be accepted.

For a scheme to be considered for inclusion on the work programme, it will be

necessary for a request to be supported by an appropriate representative number of residents living within the requested location/relevant road.

For the Council to consider a request this could be submitted by a simple petition with sufficient signatures to the following;

We, the undersigned of The High Street, Anytown, Somerset, “request that Somerset County Council investigate what options are available to improve parking.”

Alternatively residents may contact the Council individually by letter or email. The total number of requests will be considered in the same manner as a petition.

The request will be added to the list of new requests to enable a desktop review of the area to be undertaken.

Scheme requests will be prioritised in the following way:

1. Order of request.
2. Level of support/requests from residents.
3. Impact on residents/area.
4. Ability to co-ordinate work with other Highway/Traffic schemes in the area.
5. Financial viability.

Details of requests and progress of schemes will be reported through the Highway Improvement Board.

9.4. The Process

The initial request must demonstrate that 60% of the residents support implementation of residents parking or changes to the current parking arrangements.

Following assessment and the processes mentioned above, a review will be undertaken of the area. During this review, other roads may be included within the area which would identify issues such as displacement (cars moving to nearby streets to find unrestricted parking), business, visitor attractions, town centre improvements, traffic flows, congestion, parity of availability and charges (based on the concept of ‘polluter pays’).

The review will take a “holistic view” to ensure the scheme is “right first time”, particularly in terms of displacement. The need to consider displacement is highlighted within a Local Government Ombudsman complaint which found the documentation sent out by the Council* as part of the consultation exercise was **“deficient in not drawing the attention of the recipients to the possibility of displacement parking on streets left out of the CPZ,” which means that they were given insufficient information to make an informed decision on whether they wished their street to be included.**”

*London Borough of Ealing

The review may identify a residential area with adequate off street parking as being unsuitable for a resident parking area. If non-resident parking is a problem a safety based solution may be appropriate, e.g. yellow lines during the times associated with the school run.

9.5. Initial Consultation

This will usually involve a public meeting to which all residents within the identified area will be invited along with a questionnaire to be completed. For a mixed scheme, i.e. town centre, where business and retail properties are located within the consultation area, they will be involved in the consultation to ensure the needs of their visitors and customers are taken into account.

The aim of the consultation is to identify whether the majority of residents would support the introduction of parking controls. The consultation will also identify the cause of problem parking that usually results in residents being able to park near to their property.

Once they have been presented with the controls that could be introduced. The consultation will also ask residents to indicate their wishes for the design of the scheme.

If the majority of residents support the need for controls, a draft scheme based upon the specific needs of the residents and the surrounding areas will be prepared.

It is proposed the Council's policy is to proceed with a scheme development when the initial consultation response rate is in excess of **60%** with a majority of respondents are in favour of parking controls. A lower rate may be acceptable where a unanimous response is received.

The consultation may result in no viable solution being identified, particularly if there are too many residents vehicles for the available road space.

9.6. Informal Consultation

Following the initial consultation a draft scheme will be prepared by officers based upon a highway assessment of the area. The scheme will take account of resident feedback received during the initial consultation process. Details of the draft scheme will be circulated to residents and interested parties for further comments.

Details of the informal consultation will help with the design of the final scheme and enable the Traffic Regulation Order to be drafted.

The consultation process may also identify locations in the wider area that may not wish for controls to be introduced. These could be removed despite the original requesting location proceeding.

9.7. Formal Consultation

Once the legal documents have been prepared, the draft Traffic Regulation Order will be published for formal consultation. Formal consultation of a Traffic Regulation Order takes the form of an advert in the local paper and Public Notices placed near the proposed restrictions (where appropriate). Local residents and any other interested bodies will also be sent notification letters. Local Councillors, Emergency Services, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association, the Chief Constable and local public transport operators are notified of the proposals.

The formal consultation period is for at least 21 days from the start of the notice. Full details of the scheme will be made available at County Hall, , Local District/Town Councils and online.

9.8. Objections to Proposals

Any objections to the proposals and comments of support must be made in writing to the address specified in the notice or submitted via email during the consultation period. All objections must be considered and dealt with regardless of where the objector lives.

The results of the consultation will be considered in liaison with the local County Councillor whose support will be sought on the scheme and objections.

9.9. Decision to Implement

Once the consultation period has closed and all objections and comments will be considered. If the scheme is to be abandoned or amended, residents will be advised of the decision and the reasons for the decision in writing.

The decision to confirm the scheme and formally seal the Traffic Regulation Order and determine any remaining objections will be made by the relevant authorised officer following consultation with the local Councillor and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport if necessary. If appropriate the Traffic Regulation Order will be referred to the TRO Sub Committee for approval.

All will need to be satisfied all required procedures have been followed and that the proposal is supported by the local County Councillor.

All residents and those that objected during the formal consultation process will be notified of the Council's decision on the Order.

Once the decision to implement has been made, any lining and signing works will be arranged, along with any pay and display machines that are required.

Where necessary, residents will be provided with details on how to obtain any required permits.

Following the sealing of the TRO and conclusion of the signing, lining, installation of machines the necessary formal Notice will be placed in the local newspaper advising the date the scheme will come into effect.

Local residents will be notified of the start date of the restrictions and when the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers will start regular patrols.

10. Blue Badge Enforcement

- 10.1.** Historically, Somerset County Council has taken limited action in the case of misuse of a blue badge. This usually took the form based of a series of warning letters, often based upon feedback from members of the public.

In view of the lack of pro-active enforcement a trial has been undertaken in

partnership with a specialised Company in fraud detection.

The trial involved 8 days of enforcement across Somerset, and took place within the following locations;

- Taunton
- Bridgwater
- Burnham On Sea
- Yeovil
- Wells
- Glastonbury
- Street

The trial resulted in a number of badges being 'seized' as misuse was suspected. Upon further investigation the badges were returned with an appropriate warning on how the badge is to be used in the future.

Within Taunton one badge was 'seized' as suspected misuse was identified. Further investigation indicated the badge being used had been issued to a female who was deceased. The user of the badge was challenged at the time and it became apparent the husband of the deceased was using the badge without authority.

Following a review of the circumstances and evidence by Legal Services, the decision was taken to prosecute the individual. The case was determined at the Magistrates Court in Taunton.

The individual concerned attended the hearing, offered no mitigation, apologised for the misuse of the badge and pleaded guilty.

He was fined £100.00, ordered to pay costs of £423.00 and a court surcharge of £30.00. The total amount was below the average of £700/£800 usually associated with this type of offence.

Officers are currently in discussions with the provider to agree details of a longer term arrangement.

11. Background papers

- 11.1.**
1. Key Decision for In House Notice Processing 2016
 - Parking Business Case appendix A
 - Parking Business Case Exempt Content appendix B
 2. NSL Contract Extension Business Case
 3. Existing Resident Parking Policy
 4. LGO report on a complaint against London Borough of Ealing ref 08 013 187

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.