
Meeting: Executive
Date: 17 August 2010
Subject: Civil Parking Enforcement
Report of: Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Summary: The report outlines a number of recommendations from the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding certain aspects of the current civil parking enforcement contract, options for the future of civil parking enforcement and the development of a Parking Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities
Contact Officer: Jonathon Partridge, Overview and Scrutiny Officer (0300 300 4634)
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision No
Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in n/a

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Civil Parking Enforcement affects the Council priorities in relation to creating safer communities and managing growth effectively. There are no corporate implications as a direct result of this report although there would be significant implications resulting from any agreement to implement these recommendations.

Financial:

n/a

Legal:

n/a

Risk Management:

n/a

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

n/a

Equalities/Human Rights:

n/a

Community Safety:

n/a

Sustainability:

n/a

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. **That the Executive be informed of the following views of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the current civil parking enforcement structure and options for future civil parking enforcement to be taken into account in developing a new parking strategy:**
 - (a) **the Council should develop a common policy approach for civil parking enforcement across the whole of Central Bedfordshire and should consider the possibility of having a single paid car parking ticket that would allow you to park in any off street car park and in adjacent local car parks;**
 - (b) **the Council should investigate the possibility of delegating powers to local Town and Parish Councils, where requested, to determine the method of civil parking enforcement in their areas to ensure that schemes were appropriate for the local area in which they were used. This would particularly enable different approaches to be adopted for rural and urban areas;**
 - (c) **the Council should investigate the feasibility of implementing traffic orders on all blue badge parking bays so that enforcement could be undertaken in an appropriate way. The Council should also review the misuse of blue badges and what measures can be taken where they are used inappropriately;**
 - (d) **the time for which a civil enforcement officer was required to observe a car as being illegally parked before they could serve a penalty charge notice should be reduced from five minutes to one minute;**
 - (e) **the Council should provide a mixture of paid parking bays and parking that was open to free residential permit holders only. It was important to provide an appropriate mix of parking that provided free parking to residents only; free parking in towns to maximise the potential for economic regeneration; and provided greater restrictions for on street parking in commuter towns to encourage commuters to use allocated parking (for example at train stations) as opposed to using free on-street parking. A parking strategy for Central Bedfordshire should enable the identification of an appropriate mix of these types of parking depending on the local area;**

- (f) the Chief Constable should be requested to consider the use of enforcement powers by police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) to assist with keeping roads free from obstruction;**
- (g) the Council should consider extending the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and CCTV enforcement in Central Bedfordshire where this was considered to be an appropriate parking enforcement solution.**

Reason for Recommendation(s): To enable the Executive to consider any appropriate action in relation to the recommendations of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the development of a new Parking Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.

1. At its meeting on 22 June 2010 the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on Civil Parking Enforcement. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the current status of the civil parking enforcement scheme and provide possible options for future development.
2. The Committee discussed various concerns relating to current civil parking enforcement, which included the cost related to Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) compared to the relatively low level of income generated. Members were also concerned that there were insufficient levels of enforcement being undertaken including that undertaken by police officers.
3. Member's attention was also drawn to references in the report that there were in excess of 100 notified defects to sign and lines on the Central Bedfordshire road network. These defects rendered affected sections unenforceable. There were also repairs required in some off-street car parks and Members commented on their concerns regarding the poor maintenance of off-street car parking.
4. In considering the most effective manner of undertaking civil parking enforcement Members asserted the view that there should be mechanisms for Town and Parish Councils to manage their own enforcement, develop appropriate local solutions. Members recognised that there could be solutions that were more appropriate for rural or urban areas and felt that the decision to agree the most appropriate means of enforcement should be taken locally.
5. Whilst recognising the importance of locally defined enforcement measures Members also recognised the need for greater consistency of parking charges. It considered important that the Parking Strategy provided a strategic framework within which local areas could agree the most effective means of civil parking enforcement.

6. Members also discussed the use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and CCTV as potential future measures of civil parking enforcement. The use of these methods would allow a car to automatically register any cars parked illegally. Illegally parked cars would be issued with a penalty charge notice by an authorised Civil Enforcement Officer. The Committee felt that ANPR and CCTV enforcement would reduce the time Civil Enforcement Officers spent on the street and would capture more parking offenses.
7. In view of their discussions the Committee felt that ANPR should be considered for incorporation into the Parking Strategy that was under development and recommended that the Executive amend the appropriate Traffic Orders to allow possible ANPR and CCTV enforcement.

Appendices:

None

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

None

Location of papers: n/a