

TITLE OF REPORT: ON STREET CAR PARKING ENFORCEMENT IN HITCHIN

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Hitchin Members with an update of the on street car parking enforcement in Hitchin.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 17 December 2002 the Chief Constable of Hertfordshire wrote to all the districts and the County Council to inform them that as of the end of March 2004 they would withdraw their traffic warden service in Hertfordshire.
- 3.2 North Hertfordshire District Council investigated the possibility of undertaking on street enforcement and on 16 December 2003 Cabinet agreed the following:

RESOLVED

- (1) That an application be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport, through Hertfordshire County Council, to adopt powers under the Road Traffic Act 1991 with the intention of this authority operating Decriminalised Parking Enforcement from October 2004.
- 3.3 The Council applied to the Secretary of State for Transport and undertook the necessary tasks to enable the Council to undertake Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, this took slightly longer than first anticipated, however, as of 15th January 2005 the Council commenced enforcement throughout the District.
- 3.4 Prior to taking over the on street enforcement the Council was only responsible for off street enforcement (car parks) and employed six Parking Attendants (PA's). Due to the increased responsibilities for undertaking Decriminalised Parking Enforcement the Council employed an additional four PA's, therefore providing ten PA's to undertake the enforcement for on street and off street parking.

4. PARKING ENFORCEMENT

- 4.1 The Council is responsible for the enforcement of 352 Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's), 67 Control Parking Zones (CPZ's) and 2400 spaces in car parks. In Hitchin this equates to 113 TRO, 19 CPZ's and 1230 spaces in car parks. All of this is managed under the Road Traffic Act 1991, which the Council must comply with.

4.2 As of 31 March 2008 a new Act comes into force and the Council is currently updating its systems and procedures to ensure that we will be compliant. The new act is called the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). The key differences between the current Act and the TMA are as follows:

- Parking Attendants will be called Civil Enforcement Officers, however, their responsibilities will remain the same.
- There will be a 2 stage charging scale for Penalty Charge Notices, a higher rate of £70 and a lower rate of £50, therefore the offender will be charged on the severity of the contravention. The higher and lower contraventions are detailed in the Act, therefore, the Council cannot amend these. If the person pays their Penalty Charge Notice within 14 days of the date of issue they will still be entitled to a 50 per cent discount.

4.3 As explained in 3.4 above the Council employs ten PA's, due to the shift patterns six PA's are on shift at any one time and three PA's are normally based in Hitchin and patrol the town's car parks and streets where Traffic Regulation Orders and Control Parking Zones are in place. The PA's have set patrols which ensures the TRO's and CPZ 's are enforced.

4.4 Enforcement is reliant on the road lines and signs being kept up to date, therefore, as work is undertaken on the highways, the Council needs to ensure it regularly monitors, updates and re-instates these, as and when required. Due to the complexity of these processes, there are inevitably periods when some areas are not legally enforceable. The above listed processes are designed to ensure these are kept to a minimum level.

4.5 The following table shows the number of PCN's issued and paid in 2007.

	PCNs Issued for District	PCNs Issued for Hitchin	% issued in Hitchin
On Street	5219	2795	54%
CPZ	1468	549	37%
Off Street	6951	4532	65%
Rural	67	0	0%
Total	13706	7876	57%

4.6 Of the 13,706 PCN's that were issued, 9881 were paid and 2795 were waived by the Council. Processing continued on the remaining 1,030 that were challenged and were considered. If the offender is not satisfied with the Council's decision they can appeal to the National Parking Adjudication Service, last year 30 cases were heard and 22 were won by the person that was issued with the PCN.

4.7 Officers recently visited Hitchin on a Tuesday and surveyed many streets and identified very little illegal parking taking place.

4.8 The Council works closely with Herts County Council and Highways Authority to deal with any Highway issues. They have recently contributed towards the improvements to the street lines within the District and work is currently underway on ensuring all signs are updated.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications that directly affect this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The following table provides the net cost for operating Parking Services. Any surpluses made from on street car parking must be ring fenced and can only be expended on on street car parking enforcement.

Service Area	Actual 04/05	Actual 05/06	Actual 2006/07	Projected Outturn 2007/08
Set up costs	£270,243	£0	£0	£0
Off street	-£594,198	-£350,184	-£729,897	-£680,740
On street	£20,176	£187,259	£266,532	£249,970
Residents parking	-£15,257	£99,537	£83,934	£114,790
Grand Total	-£319,035	-£63,388	-£379,432	-£315,980

6.2 The 2004/2005 figures are disproportionate for on street as enforcement started in January 2005, the main costs that year were the set up costs.

6.3 The cost of providing on street enforcement has increased since 2005/06. This has increased by 25 per cent and is currently being funded by the Council to the value of approximately £250,000. When the Council took on this responsibility the aim was for the on street enforcement to break even.

6.4 The following table shows the income that has been received for off street and on street. The continued increase of off street income demonstrates that the on street enforcement is working relatively effectively.

Income	Actual 04/05	Actual 05/06	Actual 2006/07	Projected Outturn 2007/08
Off Street income				
Car Parking Charges	£913,103	£930,626	£1,092,423	£1,164,000
Parking Permits	£70,134	£78,426	£115,763	£136,390
Penalty Charge Notice	£141,903	£118,785	£158,831	£181,970
Grand Total	£1,125,141	£1,127,837	£1,367,017	£1,482,360
On Street income				
Parking Permits	£0	£262	£405	£650
Penalty Charge Notice	£42,510	£224,590	£197,596	£202,270
Grand Total	£42,510	£224,852	£198,001	£202,920

6.5 There are no Human Resource Implications.

7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 7.1 Consultation has been undertaken with representatives from the Hitchin Area Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 For Hitchin Area Committee to note and comment on this report.

9. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To allow the Hitchin Committee make known its views on the current situation concerning on street parking enforcement.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 None

11. CONTACT OFFICERS

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