

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE
20 November 2007

CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the proposed introduction of a Civil Parking Enforcement scheme for Devon from May 2008 and to seek in principle support from Executive for this Council to enter into appropriate partnership arrangements with the County Council and other Districts to deliver the scheme effectively.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Devon and Cornwall Constabulary have announced their intention to withdraw from on-street parking enforcement, via the traffic warden service, with effect from 1 April 2008. As Highway Authority, lead responsibility lies with the County Council to develop alternative arrangements for enforcement which will be carried out under the provisions of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) and will be designed to produce a fair and consistent approach to parking enforcement which contributes to overall transportation objectives. The regime introduced under the TMA will be known as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).
- 2.2 The Department for Transport is keen for the County Council to submit a scheme covering both on and off-street parking enforcement in partnership with the District Councils in Devon. County is working to submit an application to DfT by the end of November. The County Council has requested that Districts formally indicate their in principle support for this application, and this report is seeking that support from Members. If the application is approved by DfT, it is proposed that the new CPE regime will come into force from May 2008, although this timescale looks challenging. Between April 2008 and the beginning of CPE it is hoped that the Police will continue to carry out some enforcement although, as now, this is unlikely to be a high priority for them.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The detailed arrangements for the operation of a CPE scheme in Devon, and the specific implications for Exeter, have yet to be determined, which is why Members are being asked to support the application in principle only. Clearly, the operational and financial details of any scheme will be of paramount concern to the Council (as they will for all Districts) and will take shape as discussions with the County and other partner authorities continue over the coming months. The position of Exeter as a potential Unitary Council will also be an important factor in these discussions, as we will obviously wish to put in place arrangements which will continue to meet our needs from April 2009. There will therefore be further reports to Executive seeking more substantive decisions once specific proposals emerge and the potential implications for us become clearer.

- 3.2 At this stage of the discussions, the proposal is for District-managed enforcement (a team of Civil Enforcement Officers comprising current Parking Attendants plus additional posts which broadly reflect the present traffic warden establishment for each area) and either a single back office to handle “notice processing” across the County (basically the administrative tasks which flow from the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice) or as few back offices as possible if the single back office model is unachievable. For Exeter, officers support the idea of an integrated enforcement team directly managed by an expanded Parking Service and would also support the notion of a reduced number of back offices on the grounds of potential efficiency savings. There is significant further work to do on back office options, however, and officers would in any case wish to retain in house those functions relating to the consideration of formal representations and appeals which can directly impact on an authority’s reputation.
- 3.3 The financial details of CPE remain to be clarified. Among the key issues for the Council will be the number of additional enforcement posts we can expect in Exeter and whether, in our judgement, these are sufficient to carry out the levels of inspection and enforcement required by the scheme and by Members and residents locally; the number of back office posts we will require and how these posts will be funded. The expectation is that additional enforcement posts will be financed through income generated by Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), but it is not clear at this stage how any additional back office posts will be funded as this will depend on what arrangements are eventually put in place for notice processing and the size of the residual representation and appeals function. If there are any financial implications for the Council in 2008/09, these will be reported to Members for consideration as soon as they become clear. From April 2009 it is anticipated that the entire costs of the CPE operation in Exeter (both frontline enforcement and back office administrative tasks) will be capable of being funded from a combination of parking and PCN income which the Council, as a Unitary authority, would retain. Depending on what notice processing arrangements were in place, we would either buy in to these or provide them to others under a service level agreement.
- 3.4 CPE is a major development for all local authorities in Devon and will require a considerable amount of work over the coming months if the proposed implementation date of May 2008 is to be successfully achieved. There are still significant issues to be resolved and officers will be pursuing these with colleagues in the County Council and other Districts with a view to putting in place arrangements which deliver efficiency savings but also allow this Council to retain direct influence over those functions which will impact on its reputation as a parking authority and be seen as indicative of its approach to customer service. Further reports will be submitted to Executive for decision as the specific proposals take shape.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications of the introduction of CPE are difficult to gauge at this point. Much, if not all, of the upfront investment will be made by the County Council and the majority of enforcement costs should be covered by income from

PCNs. However, there may be some additional enforcement and back office costs which the City Council will need to consider meeting in 2008/09 and these will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That Executive

- (i) note the proposed introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement and support the County Council's application to DfT subject to further discussion and agreement on the financial and operational details of implementation
- (ii) delegate to Director Economy & Development, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development and Transport, any decisions about CPE that are required to meet the DfT timetable.

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ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling the report:

None