

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY 6 MARCH 2008

EXECUTIVE 18 MARCH 2008

CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the process for introducing Civil Parking Enforcement.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 20 November 2007, Executive received a report on Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) setting out the background to the scheme and some of the major implications for the City Council. Since then, the situation has moved on, firstly as a result of the government's decision on Exeter's unitary bid, which means that for the foreseeable future the arrangements for CPE will need to be implemented under the current two tier structure, and secondly as a result of ongoing discussions at officer level between the City Council and other authorities.
- 2.2 The target date for the implementation of the CPE scheme in Devon remains 5 May 2008. However, the achievement of this date is dependent upon the Department for Transport (DfT) approving the scheme submitted by the County Council and doing so within a timeframe which permits CPE to 'go live' on 5 May. At present, there is no indication when a decision might be forthcoming from DfT, nor what it might be, but officers will provide a verbal update on the situation at the respective meetings of Scrutiny Committee and Executive. The Police have confirmed to the County Council that they will continue to enforce on-street parking restrictions until such a time as the CPE regime is introduced.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The proposals for CPE, and their implications for the City Council, can broadly be divided into two functions: frontline enforcement and the 'back office'. In terms of frontline enforcement, the current proposal is for 27 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to be allocated to Exeter. These CEOs will be employed by the City Council and comprise thirteen existing Parking Attendants plus ten Traffic Wardens, who will transfer under TUPE, and four posts to be recruited to externally. Together, these staff will provide an integrated on and off street enforcement service and efficiency savings from combining two previously separate enforcement functions are reflected in the proposal. Discussions have commenced with the Police and Trades Union representatives regarding the details of the transfer of Traffic Wardens.

- 3.2 In terms of the 'back office' for CPE operations (the administrative staff dealing with notice processing, the new parking adjudication function and parking queries generally), there have been a series of discussions with the County Council and other Districts about a possible shared service arrangement for this. However, this now seems unlikely to materialise for Exeter. Of the two potential partners for a shared service arrangement, Mid Devon District Council appears likely to team up with North Devon and Torridge District Councils, where officers understand there is a degree of service integration around IT already, and East Devon District Council seems keen to run its own back office. The current proposal for Exeter is therefore to procure an upgrade to the existing Spur IT system for residents' parking permits, to be paid for by the County Council, and to recruit up to an additional four staff to deal with the projected increase in workload caused by CPE. An initial meeting with Spur has already taken place to outline our requirements and the likely timescale, and the recruitment process for additional staff is underway.
- 3.3 The City Council will run the on-street elements of Civil Parking Enforcement under an Agency Agreement with the County Council. The details of this Agreement are currently the subject of negotiation between the two Councils. The intention of the City Council is to enter into the Agreement on a 'zero additional cost' basis to ourselves, i.e. all the additional costs of parking enforcement attributable to CPE will be funded by the County, and Members are asked to endorse this approach.
- 3.4 Because of the need to recruit to a number of posts in anticipation of a 5 May implementation date, authority has been sought from the Leader of the Council and the appropriate Portfolio Holders to proceed with the recruitment process and delegate any necessary decisions to the Director Economy & Development. This is in line with the previous Executive decision of 20 November 2007.
- 3.5 CPE will have a major impact on the Administration and Parking Services Unit, adding an estimated 18 posts to the establishment and changing the grades of a number of posts. The costs associated with this will be recharged to the County Council under the terms of the Agency Agreement. In order to meet the target date for implementation, approval is sought to give the Director Economy and Development delegated authority to agree any necessary variations to the establishment and budget in consultation with the Leader of the Council and relevant Portfolio Holders. A further report will be submitted to Executive in the Autumn detailing all changes to the establishment and seeking a decision on any outstanding issues.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A financial model of the CPE scheme in Exeter has been developed by the County Council and its consultant (RTA Associates) in discussion with the City Council. All the capital costs associated with CPE, such as IT procurement, equipment etc, are being met by the County Council. The current model indicates that CPE in Exeter is predicted to move into revenue surplus in the

second year (excluding the initial capital costs) and cumulative surplus in the third year. However, Members should understand that these predictions may change once actual costs and the actual rate of Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) issue become clear. The financial risks of any variations in the financial model will be borne by the County Council.

- 4.2 The key point in considering the financial implications of CPE is that any deficit will need to be met by the County Council rather than the City Council, and any surplus in future years will be returned to the County Council once all the costs of running the scheme in Exeter have been deducted. Separate accounts will need to be maintained for on and off street parking income, including PCN income, and the City Council will retain all off street parking income as it does currently. In summary, the underlying principle is that there will be no financial detriment (or benefit) to the City Council as a result of the introduction of CPE.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement as appropriate;
- (ii) That Executive note any comments of Scrutiny Committee and endorse the approach set out in this report, delegating authority for any further decisions that need to be made, including variations to establishment and budget, to the Director Economy & Development in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders for Sustainable Development and Transport and Business Transformation and Human Resources.

ROGER COOMBES
HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION AND PARKING SERVICES

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None