

Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee 10 March 2022
Parking - Service Consolidation Efficiencies

Report to be considered by the Executive Member for Highways Operations on 10 March 2022, with the recommendations:

That the Executive Member for Highways Operations approves the termination of current district/borough council agency arrangements for Traffic Management and for Civil Parking Enforcement, with alternative arrangements for a traffic management and civil parking enforcement service put in place to provide a consistent countywide service in accordance with County Council policy objectives.

That the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment delegates authority to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, to make any necessary arrangements to terminate the agency agreements for Civil Parking Enforcement and Traffic Management.



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Reason for the decision

The County Council's directly managed on-street parking service is shown to be more efficient than the district delivery model and ending the remaining agency arrangements will enable the County Council to:

- Secure the most cost-effective service for the longer term;
- Integrate these functions within the wider highways service;
- Prepare for anticipated new moving traffic enforcement powers;
- Create a centre of excellence for enforcement, providing a resilient, cost-effective, and highly efficient service, including with anticipated new enforcement powers for moving traffic offences.

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Context

There is a demonstrable decline in the public perception of highway maintenance services and network condition. It is essential that the limited funding available for highway maintenance is invested in the right areas.

Part of the highway maintenance strategy is to minimise drawing funding away from highways maintenance to fund other activities.

The new LTP (LTP4) describes our transport vision and proposes a major shift in approach and emphasis, with an increased focus on policies which support modal shift and manage demand for road space. Effective enforcement of traffic regulations will be a key enabling activity to support this work.

The County Council has signed up to the Climate Emergency and set carbon neutrality targets for 2050. Achieving this will require transformational change in how we travel. Effective enforcement of traffic regulations will be key to supporting this shift.



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The on-street parking project was one of the department's key projects in meeting its Transformation to 2019 savings targets.

An independent review in 2018 showed a directly controlled on-street parking enforcement service to be the most cost-effective model, but seven districts were given the opportunity to enter into updated agreements aimed at delivering a service on a full cost recovery basis.

In July 2021, the County Council commissioned an update to the 2018 review to compare the seven district agencies with the in-house service.

The review shows a number of the district agencies report very high levels of expenditure compared to the in-house service to provide equivalent on-street services.

The 20/21 total collective operating deficit over the 7 agencies is £624,212.

Using like for like data, the 4 in-house operations ran at a combined operating deficit of just £7,621 but has since moved to generate a month-on-month surplus.



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Consultation/engagement

A report recommending ending agency arrangements was scheduled for the September 2021 Decision Day but was deferred to allow time for engagement with affected district and borough councils.

Subsequent discussions took place in October and November 2021.

A summary of issues raised by affected district and borough councils and the County Council's responses are set out in appendix 1 of the Decision Day report.

The current agency arrangement for civil parking enforcement and for traffic management is not a devolved service, and there is no change in the policy arrangements in ending agency arrangements, which have always been for the County Council to determine.



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Summary

CPE as it stands in the 7 agencies is not operationally viable in terms of achieving full cost recovery.

An expanded County Council directly managed parking service, using one contractor to provide the on-street enforcement across the County, will provide the County Council with the best opportunity to deliver a modern, consistent, and sustainable on-street parking service on a full cost recovery basis.

The creation of a single countywide traffic enforcement team will ensure the County Council is able to enforce moving traffic violations in the most cost-effective way.

Bringing together a full directly managed on-street parking service across Hampshire will enable the County Council to create a centre of excellence for enforcement, providing a resilient, cost-effective, and highly efficient service, utilising linked resources across this broad range of highway enforcement activity.



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