

DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT (DPE)

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Deputy Leader Councillor George Clements
Portfolio Holder Councillor Geoff Blackwell

LEAD OFFICER: Head of Leisure and Environmental Services Keith Parker

REPORT AUTHOR: Open Spaces Manager – Toni Magean

Summary and Recommendation:

The County Council has approached this Council seeking to reach an agreement whereby Decriminalised Parking Enforcement continues under local management until April 2009.

It is recommended that:

- a) Executive agree to the principle of continuing with DPE enforcement as a variation to the existing agreement which would otherwise terminate on 31 March 2008. Subject to any financial loss being underwritten by Cumbria County Council
- b) The determination of details in relation to the variation be delegated to the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Finance and Business Development and Portfolio Holder.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Early in 2007 Executive agreed that the Council's agreement with Cumbria County Council to enforce decriminalised parking provisions in Copeland be terminated by 12 months notice. Therefore the agreement formally ends on 31 March 2008. In the intervening period employee resources dedicated to DPE enforcement have been reduced and the financial situation consolidated.
- 1.2 As indicated above the amount of employee time spent on DPE has been significantly reduced. Whilst in financial terms this means the operation is breaking even in customer service terms the lack of visibility of enforcement is having a negative impact. An impact as much in Whitehaven as outlying areas.

- 1.3 In mid December an approach was received by officers from County Council colleagues to determine what could be done to get this Council to retain DPE enforcement for at least another 12 months to April 2009, and probably beyond. It became apparent the County Council would be willing to underwrite this Council's costs in running the enforcement function subject to some safeguards.
- 1.4 Although any decision to retain DPE enforcement is a decision of this Executive the principles of an arrangement were discussed. These being
- a) The County Council would be expected to cover any financial loss incurred by Copeland BC.
 - b) Employee levels would need to be increased so that there would be greater capacity to take enforcement action in towns and villages outside of Whitehaven.
 - c) Any arrangement would be by way of varying the existing DPE agreement rather than fundamental re-write.
 - d) There would be a commitment to greater transparency between the two Council's. (This would be welcome since any future policy decisions by the County Council would impact directly on their underwriting costs rather than this Council's revenue account)
 - e) Costs would need to be adjusted based on income predictions after the Traffic Management Act's implications for on-street fines has been factored in and for the effects of this Council's Job Evaluation exercise.
- 1.5 In terms of future direction it is clear the County Council see parking as a strong contender for operation as a shared service with a central notice processing and residents permit administration system. How this will evolve is yet to be seen but this Council's exposure to the process can be managed via fixed term appointments or secondments within the enforcement team

2 CONCLUSIONS

- 2.1 Retention of the DPE enforcement role helps this Council in the economies of scale of the enforcement unit, particularly in balancing workflow. In addition by increasing enforcement levels it gives the Council the ability to ensure parts of the borough other than Whitehaven gain a stronger parking enforcement presence. It would also be consistent with the governments' steer that all such enforcement activity should be undertaken by one party and coordinated across county areas.
- 2.2 Indicative costs have been provided to the County Council which show a deficit requirement of £43,000 in the 08/09 financial year. These figures assume a £100,000 fine income level which on the current years performance is achievable and an increase to three enforcement officers.

The implications of job evaluation and the Traffic Management Act have not been factored in.

- 2.3 Executive is therefore asked to confirm they wish to extend the DPE agreement for a further 12 months on the principles outlined in 1.4 and if so to delegate the determination of details to the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Finance and Business Development and Portfolio Holder

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 5.1 Any implications will be cost neutral on this Council and an additional enforcement officer will be employed for at least a 12 month period.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 By helping to manage environmental nuisance this proposal supports the Corporate Plan.

List of Appendices: None

List of Background Documents: December 2007 DPE working papers.

List of Consultees: Corporate Team

Corporate Team, Deputy Leader Councillor George Clements

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Direct impact by controlling inappropriate parking
Impact on Sustainability	None
Impact on Rural Proofing	By increasing the resources dedicated to enforcement rural proofing is supported
Health and Safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None

Human Rights Act Implications	None
Section 151 Officer Comments	None
Monitoring Officer Comments	No comments