

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 OCTOBER 2009

MEMBER'S ITEM: WARD PARKING REVIEWS

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

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Summary

This report details the Council's approach to managing changes to on street controlled parking.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Under Medway's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny rules (Chapter 4, Part 5, Paragraph 9.1) Councillor Goodwin has asked that an item on this issue is included on the agenda for this meeting.
- 1.2 National Indicator 167 "Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak" forms part of the Local Area Agreement for Medway. Effective parking controls are a factor in reducing congestion.

2. Member's Item request

Councillor Godwin has submitted the following for this item:

- 2.1 Councillors are regularly contacted by members of the public concerning parking, and are often asked to present petitions on this subject. However, officers have since stated that ward parking reviews, and smaller area reviews, are no longer undertaken. They were suspended in 2007 and are not being reintroduced on budgetary grounds.
- 2.2 The committee should therefore consider:
 - i) when and how this new policy of not conducting parking reviews was introduced;
 - ii) a review of this policy, so that a) issues are considered on a case-by-case basis, and that b) in order that Members can accurately inform residents about what they can expect when raising parking issues.

3 Background

- 3.1 Since 2007, controlled parking reviews have not been carried out without the benefit of external funding. The decision to take this approach was taken by the Director of Regeneration, Communities and Culture in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Frontline Services.
- 3.2 The most recent review and subsequent delivery of a changed controlled parking zone was recently implemented in North Gillingham. This was based on funding obtained via a section 106 agreement linked to the planning permission granted to the New Mid Kent College site in Prince Arthur Road. The cost of review and implementation covered by the section 106 agreement was £207,515.
- 3.3 Since 2007, the following reviews have been carried out with the funding sources as shown.

Ward	Funding Source
Chatham Central	Members Capital Funds
Gillingham North	S106 Agreement Mid Kent College - MC2005/0647

- 3.4 Although no wider scale reviews have been carried out, there have been a large series of small scale changes to controlled parking that are very localised in their effect.

4. Director's Comments (or any other sections you wish to insert)

- 4.1 The decision to carry out controlled parking reviews is linked to resource prioritisation. The approach of the Service is to continue to pursue external funding such as Section 106 contributions where planning applications cause a wide impact on the profile and need for parking in a particular area.
- 4.2 The Service continues to respond to requests for minor changes but this approach is limited in application as more significant changes have an effect over a wider area which is better dealt with by wider controlled parking review.
- 4.3 The cost of the recent extension of the Gillingham north Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) is £207,515. The review has taken a year from initial consultation to the final introduction. The process, which was mainly undertaken by consultants includes extensive consultation, delivery of options, collation of responses, further reviews and consultations even before the draft Orders are published. If objections to the Order are made, these are then considered by Ward Members prior to recommendations being made to the Portfolio Holder and Director. The process is very time-consuming but experience has shown that it needs to include repeat stages to ensure local people are

aware. Unfortunately, even with high quality documents and follow-ups, the response rate for such reviews is invariably low. As an example, the consultation document for Gillingham North was hand delivered to nearly 1200 properties and a public meeting was also held. The total number of returned questionnaires was 329, representing only 28%. Changes are made at a number of stages. Some changes may be made as a result of the initial response. On occasions groups or residents may request a meeting at which other options are advanced. These, too, need to be consulted on. Further changes may be made as a result of objections to the draft Orders. These are not usually re-consulted as only fairly minor changes are introduced, affecting only single properties.

- 4.4 As can be seen, the workload for each review is very heavy. At present priority is given to Traffic Orders required for new projects, for example Orders are required for new pedestrian crossings or new waiting restrictions may be necessary to improve road safety. Where possible quality of life issues are addressed where a change may result in a significant reduction of a problem. Ward reviews have been completed in 10 which leaves another 12. The first wards to be reviewed were those where the greatest benefits could be achieved. In the main these were town centres, stations and other areas where there would be the highest proportion of the non-residential parking. In a number of the other wards, there are certainly significant parking pressures but they arise mainly from the lack of road space or off street parking. Reviews of these are likely to generate a lot of problems but few solutions.
- 4.5 Although the Gillingham North extension cost £207,515, it is not thought likely that further reviews would cost as much because there are unlikely to result in such extensive changes. That said the greatest proportion of cost is in time to prepare and consult. Although this could be done by consultants, there is still a significant time requirement to manage the process and the Orders themselves are made by the Council. It is estimated that the average cost of area-wide reviews would be approximately £150,000. The total to complete the 12 wards not so far reviewed would therefore be £1,800,000.
- 4.6 It is very difficult to predict the income from new CPZs. In general, income is high for the first few months and tails off rapidly as drivers realise they are likely to be caught. Some, such as the area around the Priestfields Stadium, generate an ongoing income that would exceed the likely cost of the original introduction but detailed figures for those costs are not available given the intervening years. Others, more recent reviews such as Chatham, generate only a modest income. A steady revenue stream is essential for the continued operation of the service, of course, but the Chatham CPZ generated an income of £29,000 from Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) in the first six months of

the current year. The Rainham area is larger and generated £76,000 over the same period. As noted this income pays for the ongoing service and in meeting other operational costs. The income is not therefore surplus income, as it needs to fund staffing and operational costs of running the service.

5. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
<p>Low</p> <p>Changes in parts of Medway indicate that there may be better parking control solutions</p>	<p>The change in use of properties or the addition of new properties can alter the needs for parking</p>	<p>Reacting to and implementing smaller changes to controlled parking</p> <p>Pursuit of external funding for wider reviews</p>

6. Financial and legal implications

- 6.1 There is no allocated budget to carry out controlled parking reviews and to implement resulting changes.
- 6.2 The Traffic Management Act 1994 (Section 16) places a duty on local traffic authorities to manage the road network to expedite the flow of traffic.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 That Members consider the contents of the report.

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Background papers

None