

\*PART A

**Report to:** Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel  
**Date of meeting:** 17 January 2017  
**Report of:** Parking Service Manager  
**Title:** Parking Service Annual Report

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The Parking Service Annual Report 2015/16 has been published and circulated for members. The annual report is produced in line with the recommendations of the Traffic Management Act 2004 statutory guidance and is intended to increase transparency of the service by detailing all main operational and financial service information during the previous financial year. Watford has produced this report yearly since the Act came into force in 2008.
- 1.2 The intention of this supplementary cover report is to inform members of the panel of current and future plans of the Parking Service that do not fall within the reporting format of the annual report.

**2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 The annual parking report be noted.

**3.0 Background information and future plans**

- 3.1 As outlined within the annual report, the current 10-year parking enforcement contract expires in Spring 2018. A project initiation document was prepared and approved in March 2016 to ensure that sufficient time is provided for the procurement and re-tender process. Soft market testing has commenced and a specialist Parking consultant has been appointed with work on the new contract specification beginning in January 2017.
- 3.2 The introduction of new technology and enhancement of existing services is a primary outcome sought of the future Parking enforcement contract with a view to increasing ease of customer access and further improving operational efficiency. This includes replacing and upgrading the online resident permit application system to

include a virtual voucher facility. This will remove the costs and user difficulties associated with the completion and display of hard copy vouchers by allowing residents to purchase time for visiting vehicles using their allocated unique pin number to access pre-allocated hours of their account. Other areas being explored and that tenderers may be requested to provide submissions in relation to include the use of cashless parking via applications and/or telephone, replacement of hand-held computers with more efficient and cost effective mobile phones, enforcement in a virtual environment via ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition), upgraded back-office notice processing system with intelligence led enforcement tools such as heat mapping and upgraded radio communication systems. These improvements are sought alongside the revision and confirmation of the contractual staffing arrangements, enforceable hours and necessary base requirements of an enforcement service, including the provision and number of vehicles, IT arrangements, cleaning costs, pay and display maintenance, cash collection etc., which will significantly affect the final contract costs and service that can be delivered

- 3.3 It is expected that the procurement process will be completed in Autumn 2017 with the successful enforcement contract appointed by November 2017 allowing a 6-month implementation process and/or any required migration or exit procedures that may be applicable
- 3.4 The lease of the Parking Shop building in Market Street expires in November 2017 and it is anticipated that the Parking Service will be relocated. At the time of writing this report, alternative premises have not yet been confirmed but Council officers are exploring the capacity for the service to move into the Town Hall or annexe building. It is intended that this move will include both Council and contracted staff with this arrangement continuing under the new enforcement contract
- 3.5 Moving the Parking Service to the Town Hall will mean that the current public facing opening hours of the Parking Shop will be reduced considerably. The Parking Shop is currently open between 8am and 6.30pm, Monday to Saturday. Monitoring of the footfall and services accessed during 2015/16 has shown that the Parking Shop receives an average of 250 visitors per week and that an average of 70% of those visitors are attending to purchase visitor vouchers. Residents can currently purchase and renew their residents parking permits online, challenge and pay for Penalty Charge Notices online or via an automated 24/7 payment line. This information indicates that the number of visitors in person to the Parking Shop is likely to be minimal upon the introduction of an online virtual visitor voucher system

- 3.6 As a result of online service streams, the provision of public facing Parking Shops are now very few and far between in the operation of a Parking Service. It is expected that the new parking enforcement contract will follow this model and the enhancement and introduction of new online systems will mean that a Parking Shop will not be included within our specification
- 3.7 In order to assist the customer transition of reduced Parking Shop opening hours, following re-location, to eventual removal of the service entirely, leadership team has authorised a plan of phased reduced opening hours, which began in the first week of January 2017. The first phase sees the opening hours reduced to 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, 9am – 6.30pm Thursdays and 9am – 1pm on Saturdays. Phase 2 will maintain these hours but the Parking Shop will be closed on Tuesdays and Fridays. The third phase will additionally close the shop on Wednesdays with Saturday closure being reviewed on the basis of the visitor footfall numbers seen in the previous two phases. Each phase will last for a 3-month period and the third phase will end in November 2017 to coincide with the relocation and withdrawal of all public facing services. Arrangements are currently being made with the Town Hall’s existing Customer Service Centre to provide a collection service and process for general parking queries
- 3.8 The blue badge fraud partnership initiative established by the Parking Service; Operation Clamp, which involves the Council’s fraud officers and the Police, has been extended to include surveillance operations and this has resulted in two recent prosecutions of business owners fraudulently using blue badges. The Parking Service is currently in the process of further enhancing and supporting this operation by appointing a specialist blue badge fraud investigation company (BBFI) to run large blitz operations on a limited number of occasions per year to raise the profile and effectiveness of this operation.

**Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact:

Justin Bloomfield

Parking Service Manager

01908 223 650

Justin.bloomfield@watford.gov.uk

**Report approved by:** Andy Smith, Transport & Infrastructure Section Head

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Annual Parking Report

**Background Papers**

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

**File Reference**

None