



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

Held on Tuesday 27 June 2017 at 6.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Tatler (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Hirani, Farah, Miller and M Patel

1. **Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Substitutes (if necessary)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Southwood (Chair), with Councillor Miller present as substitute. Councillor Tatler, as Vice-Chair of the Committee, acted as Chair of the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared by Members.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2017 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising (If Any)**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. **Deputations (If Any)**

There were no deputations to be heard by the Committee.

6. **Petitions (If Any)**

There were no petitions to be discussed by the Committee.

7. **Brent Council Parking Service Annual Report 2016-2017**

Gavin Moore (the Council's Head of Parking and Lighting) introduced the report which set out the key achievements of the Council's Parking Service over the last financial year, alongside key aims and objectives for the coming year. Mr Moore explained that whilst the publication of the annual report fulfilled a statutory duty in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Council's Parking Team viewed the Annual Report as an important opportunity to be open and accountable to residents. He had therefore brought the draft report to Members for comment and endorsement in advance of the statutory publication date.

Mr Moore outlined a summary of the key achievements over the past year, as detailed within the report, which included: a gradual increase in Parking Charge

Notices (PCNs) issued by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs); an increase in PCNs issued by Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras for both parking contraventions and bus lane contraventions; enhanced productivity from CEOs; a lower number of complaints from residents about the service; a continued strong performance on debt recovery; a further increase in cashless on-street parking payments; the introduction of the borough's first business specific CPZ and accompanying 'business visitor' permit; and a substantial increase in the number of car parks in Brent which had secured the 'Park Mark' safer parking accreditation award. Mr Moore stated that it was hoped that the enforcement progress would assist in driving up traffic and driving standards across the borough.

Members welcomed the report from officers and it was felt that the progress made had been very positive. Questions arose on what could identifiably be improved from the Parking Service in the coming year. Gavin Moore stated that the quality of enforcement, and the adjudication of representations, could continue to be improved to try to avoid PCNs being issued in error. He noted that, staffing wise, the parking team were looking to recruit to a specific post to drive up quality within the service in order to address this, and another post to deal specifically with presenting Brent's case at independent appeal hearings. The Committee also heard that there was additional work planned to remove both older, poorly functioning pay and display machines, and those machines which were not in regular use. It was additionally explained that a further ten cameras for capturing moving traffic contraventions were planned to be introduced in 2017.

Members asked for detail on the approach that the Parking Team had been taking around schools, as it was felt that busy school drop-off times could often lead to illegal parking or anti-social behaviour. Gavin Moore explained that enforcement around schools was difficult at peak times but that the Council had been taking steps to address this. He explained that the difficulties caused by the Deregulation Act 2015 which had restricted CCTV use on locations that parking PCNs could be issued. This was a particular problem when CEOs were deployed, as drivers who were parked illegally were more likely to drive away before being issued with a PCN. Mr Moore outlined that the Council had been trialling a re-deployable camera with the aim to capture contraventions on school's 'keep clear' zig-zag markings, which was permitted under the Deregulation Act. He noted that it was clear that the threat of a PCN was an effective deterrent and it was hoped that this approach would prove to be effective over the course of the trial period.

Specific questions were asked on whether more could be done to issue PCNs for dangerous parking on red routes and also illegal parking on roads around the borough's town centres. Gavin Moore stated that red routes were monitored and managed by Transport for London (TfL) rather than the Council, however he said that Brent reported any identified problem areas on these routes to TfL. He also explained that the Council always tried to respond to notifications and intelligence from residents on illegal parking around town centres and that deployment plans for CEOs were often amended to react to these. The Committee heard that problems in addressing these issues were often caused by a lack of CEOs available to respond, particularly at peak times. Mr Moore went on that there was a wider difficulty caused by a lack of supply of people applying to be CEOs. He noted that the CEOs were employed by Serco and were currently offered minimum wage. He outlined that ideally the Council and Serco would want CEOs to be paid London Living Wage, but that the Council could not instigate this under the current inter-

authority agreement. He explained that the contract with Serco would be up for renewal in 2018 and that this issue could then be addressed.

A Member of the Committee asked whether the Council could improve its approach on providing information and clarity to residents when pay and display machines were removed. Gavin Moore said that the Council replaced the machines with a sign that detailed the removal. Mark Fairchild (the Council's Parking Projects Manager) added that the sign was also designed to include where information on the location of the nearest machine was, but officers acknowledged that this signage could sometimes be clearer. Officers outlined that any feedback would be taken on board.

Discussions moved to customer feedback on the service more generally. Members questioned whether feedback obtained was positive and also whether the Council had captured any feedback from visitors to the borough. Gavin Moore stated that the number of complaints were reduced but that the Council would always continue to take resident feedback into account. He emphasised that the Parking Service aimed to reduce the numbers of appeals which were referred to the Environment and Traffic Adjudicators (ETA) independent appeals service. On feedback from visitors, Gavin Moore said this was largely only picked up directly where the service had issued a PCN. However, he noted that Brent residents frequently fed back the comments of their visitors. This had been important in 2016 when feedback had been decisive in ensuring that the Council's permit system made appropriate provision for regular visitors to vulnerable residents.

A question was asked by a Member on whether the Parking Team had been working alongside the Council's new Town Centre Managers in order to manage parking demand in accordance with the Council's wider objectives. Gavin Moore confirmed that the Parking Team had been working with the two new Town Centre Managers who were now in post (Wembley and Harlesden). He stated that it was a fast learning curve for both sides but there had been a lot of initial communication on issues such as: where the car parks and controlled parking zones (CPZs) were around town centres; which areas had high demand for parking; and the typical yield per parking bay.

Questions were raised on the business specific CPZ in Stonebridge ward (mentioned within paragraph 4.10 of the covering report) and whether there were plans to extend this to other areas within the borough, such as the business park in Park Royal. Mark Fairchild agreed that this was an area which had been considered in the past, but the work had been overtaken by the borough-wide consultation on CPZs. He agreed that Park Royal was an area that could be considered for a CPZ review if there were indications from businesses that this would be their preference.

A question arose on whether the Council should be communicating more widely on the laws relating to parking on pavements throughout the borough. Gavin Moore said that the Parking Team worked closely with colleagues in the Highways Team who had the expertise in this area. He made clear that signage and formal decisions were vitally important to any PCNs issued in relation to pavement parking, and that both the Highways and Parking Teams would continue to ensure that this was consistent across the borough.

In response to a final question from a Member, Gavin Moore outlined that the key findings from the borough-wide consultation on CPZs was due to be discussed at 24 July Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The publication of the Council's Parking Annual Report 2016/17, subject to amendment in respect of the 2016/2017 Environment and Traffic Adjudicators (ETA) data, be approved for publication prior to October 2017; and
- (ii) It be noted that the additional information on the outcome of appeals to the independent appeals service, ETA, in 2016/17, would be added to the published Annual Report in September 2017.

8. Any Other Urgent Business

There was no other urgent business to be transacted.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Highways Committee was scheduled for 16 October 2017.

The meeting was declared closed at 6.44 pm

COUNCILLOR SHAMA TATLER
Vice-Chair, in the Chair