

Proposed Scrutiny Review

Car Parking Strategy and Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in Staffordshire

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – Monday 9 January 2023

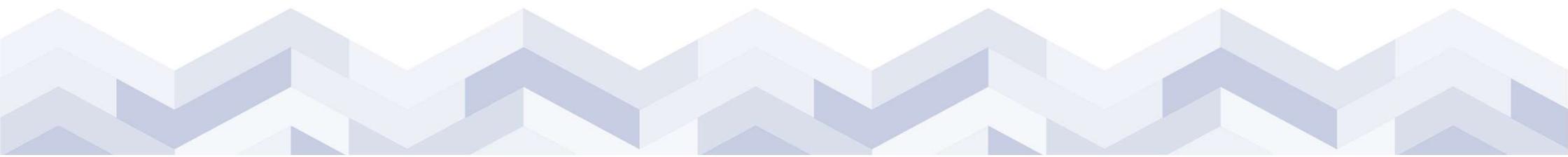


Request received from Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport 10 August 2022:-

"... if Scrutiny would be prepared to implement a sub committee to look into Staffordshire's parking enforcement teams and policy and review whether it is now fit for purpose...".

Further details supplied 15 September 2022:-

"to look at the current parking enforcement arrangements in Staffordshire, evaluate the need and current effectiveness of the service and current service provider and make recommendations based on this evidence..."



Strategic Role of Parking

- Vehicular travel is and for the foreseeable future will remain an important form of transport in a rural shire county such as Staffordshire.
- Parking is part of all of our lives. It affects where we go and how we choose to get there.
- The strategic role of on-street parking has an important role to play in delivering the County Council's vision providing an opportunity to support thriving economies, enhance the quality of life for people living in in our town centres, improve conditions for pedestrians, ease traffic flow, improve short-term accessibility of town centres, support public transport, and the local community through effective management of parking spaces.
- Parking spaces are needed to help our local economies grow but providing too much parking can encourage car use when more sustainable and environmentally friendly forms of transport are available. Inconsiderate parking causes obstruction and road safety issues to other highway users including motorists, public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities.
- Car Parking Strategy agreed by Cabinet – [20 November 2019](#)

What is Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)?

- Civil parking enforcement is the name given to the transfer of some powers from the Police to local authorities for enforcing parking contraventions
- Parking enforcement was first decriminalised in 2008 and subsequently including in powers provided to local authorities in the Traffic Management Act 2004 to support the network management duty of securing the movement of traffic
- The powers allow the authority to carry out parking enforcement where parking restrictions exist. The civil enforcement team can also address the blocking of dropped kerb pedestrian / disabled crossing points and vehicle access crossings.
- The police retain the sole powers to address offences such as wilful and unnecessary obstruction on the road or footway including where traffic regulation orders do not exist.

Current Arrangements

- Prior to April 2015 on street enforcement was carried out on behalf of the County Council by each of the eight district/borough councils
- In April 2015 the arrangements changed, and the County Council entered into a single arrangement with Stoke-on-Trent City Council (SoTCC) for enforcement and back office services.
- The district/borough councils remain responsible for off-street enforcement in their public car parks with four districts using the services of SoTCC for enforcement and all using the back-office services of SoTCC for processing of penalty charge notices.
- The current agreement with SoTCC is a Service Level Agreement for the provision of civil parking, bus lane enforcement and associated services and is made pursuant to s.101 of the Local Government Act 1972 (Arrangements for the discharge of functions by local authorities). The agreement is dated the 1st March 2016 but with a commencement date of 1st April 2015. The Initial term was for 5 years until 31st March 2020. The agreement already reflects the ability to extend and the Parties can agree to extend beyond 31st March 2020 for two five years periods (up to 10 years).
- In November 2019 Cabinet agreed to extend the current arrangement with SoTCC to the end of March 2025.

Considerations for Scrutiny:-

(i) Statutory guidance published May 2019 by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

- “should have a defined impact on the ground, with the committee making recommendations that will make a tangible difference to the work of the authority”.
- “prioritisation is necessary to ensure the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work that is of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority”.
- “The executive should not try to exercise control over the work of the scrutiny committee”.
- “All members and officers should consider the role the scrutiny committee plays to be that of a ‘critical friend’”.

Continued

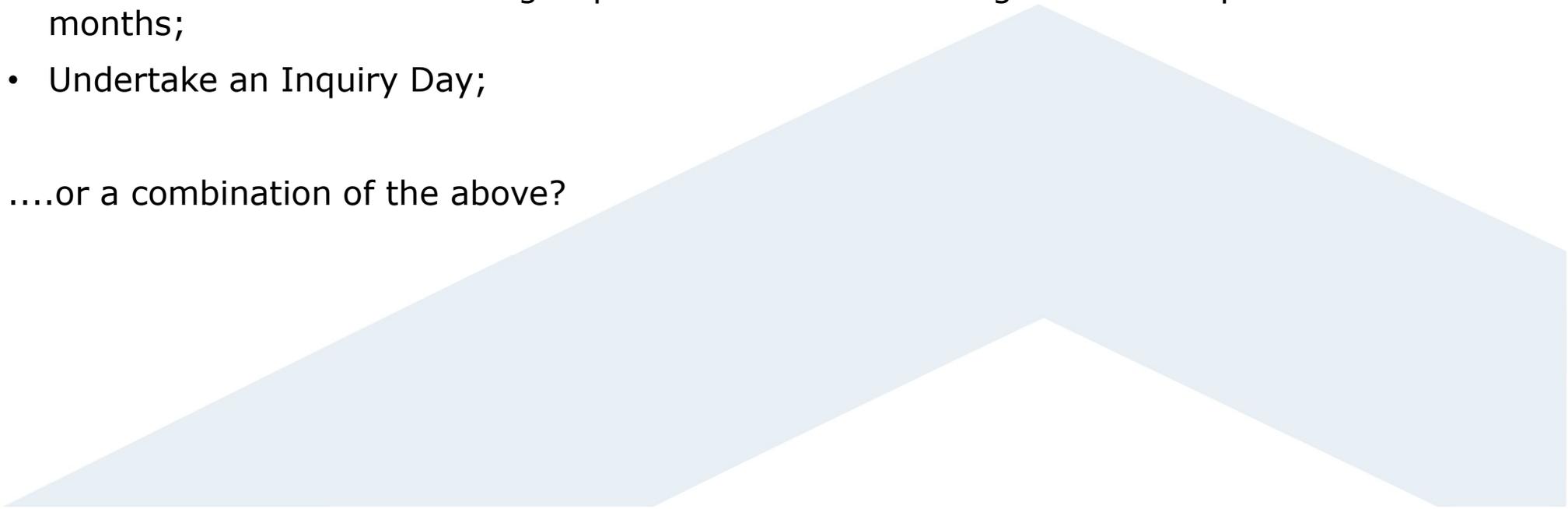
(ii) Informal Guidance

- Is the matter of particular concern to local residents as raised in correspondence, during canvassing or at surgeries?
- Is the matter an identified priority for the County Council?
- What difference will scrutiny of the matter make?
- What are the likely consequences of not scrutinising the matter?

Methods of Scrutiny

- Consider an item at a single meeting;
- Consider an item over a series of meetings;
- Allocate the work to a small group of Members for investigation over a period of 2-3 months;
- Undertake an Inquiry Day;

....or a combination of the above?



Potential Areas of Focus

- Review current parking strategy(s) for Staffordshire and any recommendations on how this could be improved, including joining-up across On and Off Street Parking?
- Scrutiny views on how the approach to parking across Staffordshire could be improved to support both our climate change ambitions and growth in our economy?
- Identify best-practice from elsewhere that could be applied in Staffordshire?
- Assess the performance of the current on-street parking enforcement operator, and make any necessary recommendations for improvement.
- Assess the extent of national policy issues on Staffordshire and make any necessary recommendations for change.

.... or a combination of the above?

Where would the Committee like to go?

