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All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL 16 DECEMBER 2021
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT USING AUTOMATED NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION (ANPR) TECHNOLOGY

1 Executive Summary

1.1 A recommendation from the Parking Modernisation Review was to investigate the feasibility of the enhancement of parking enforcement using a combination of mobile and static Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.

1.2 ANPR is technology that uses optical character recognition to read vehicle registration plates and provides several benefits, including increasing road safety, increased compliance in areas with parking restrictions and more effective enforcement.

1.3 This report sets out the full business case for this method of enforcement, including how an increased level of service can be achieved, whilst taking into consideration the financial impacts.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That CPPP agrees with the proposals in this report and recommends to Cabinet the inclusion of a capital budget in 2022/23 for the purchase of two new electric vehicles with ANPR capability, static cameras, and associated software to enhance parking enforcement across the borough.

3 Explanation

Current parking enforcement

3.1 Parking restrictions are enforced by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) who issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to vehicles, which are in breach of parking restrictions in an area. This service is delivered by APCOA.

3.2 CEOs are deployed to locations across the borough on-foot or by cars. The Parking Enforcement team currently consist of 7 CEOs and 4 vehicles.

The proposed ANPR enforcement

3.3 Although not all parking contraventions can be enforced via ANPR, this type of enforcement is effective in identifying parking contraventions across larger areas, where deployment of a CEO on foot would not be feasible. ANPR enforcement can also be used in relation to parking on school ‘keep clear’ markings, and on bus stops where PCNs can be issued to the offenders by post, in line with the current legislation.

3.4 Enforcement using ANPR provide the following benefits:

- Making enforcement more time efficient by reducing the time spent in a permit area, to detect non-compliance as well as increasing the numbers of visits to the permit area.
- Quicker response to enforcement requests received from a member of public.
- Increasing compliance with parking restrictions and levels of considerate and safe parking.
- Compliance with school drop off and pick up, increasing road safety at schools.
- Reduction in emissions outside school drop off/pick up points.

ANPR Vehicles:

3.5 The ANPR vehicles can be used to monitor a permit zone to detect non-compliance with parking restrictions, known as a spotter mode, or left stationary in a location to monitor an area.

3.6 The current permit database will be loaded onto the system and updated in real time. The permit database will be then sent to each ANPR vehicle that will be used to patrol all the Council's permit zones. In permit zones the vehicles will drive through a permit area with the preloaded permit database and any parking contravention highlighted will be sent directly to a CEO to issue a PCN.

3.7 It is proposed to purchase two new electric vehicles fitted with ANPR capability. These new vehicles will be 100% powered by an electric motor and features a rapid charge facility.

ANPR static enforcement cameras:

3.8 The camera system is an unattended enforcement camera system that is used to automatically enforce school keep clear parking restrictions.

3.9 ANPR static enforcement cameras are compact and unobtrusive and can be easily mounted on suitable existing street furniture, or a dedicated CCTV post. Hertfordshire County Council have confirmed that this can be accommodated, and a licence agreement will be put in place between the two authorities.

3.10 The camera system combines a powerful HD Camera with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to provide reliable high-quality video evidence.

3.11 A connected Windows desktop application that allows attended or unattended evidence packs sent from the cameras, mobile enforcement vehicles and capture stations to the review server (either installed in the cloud or locally), to be downloaded and reviewed before being approved and sent to the back office for processing.

3.12 The camera system also sends encrypted evidence in real time using wireless transmission over the 3G/4G network to a control centre where it can be processed by an operator. Evidence of verified contraventions can then be transferred to a Notice Processing system for further action.

3.13 It is proposed to purchase two static cameras, and these will be moved between different school locations throughout the year to help enforce school keep clear parking restrictions.

4 Legal Implication(s)

4.1 Vehicle registration marks are identified as personal data as the enforcement officer or enforcement office can identify ownership of a vehicle through information held on the enforcement system, as well as the ability to obtain keeper details from the DVLA.

4.2 In line with Section 33 (1) of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Council will operate the ANPR systems in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice issued by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner.

4.3 A privacy impact assessment will be completed, and all data will be managed in line with the Council's privacy, data protection and retention policies.

4.4 The camera systems must be certified by the Secretary of State for Transport as outlined in the Civil Traffic Enforcement Certification of Approved Devices guidance, Version 1, Issued 28 February 2008 by the Department for Transport and in line with The Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (Approved Devices) (England) Order 2007.

4.5 PCNs will be issued in line with The Traffic Management Act 2004.

4.6 As per The Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2015, most parking offences can be only enforced by a CEO who is required to note down all the evidence of the alleged contravention before attaching a PCN to the vehicle. Although penalties may, in some circumstances, be served by post to the registered keeper of the vehicle, PCNs in respect of parking contraventions based on CCTV evidence alone can be only issued for contraventions in relation to parking on school keep clear markings and on bus stops.

5 Financial Implication(s)

5.1 Different financing options have been considered for this project and Officers have undertaken some soft market testing with possible suppliers.

5.2 The preferred option, both for financial efficiency and also for climate benefits of electric vehicles, is the outright purchase of two vehicles with ANPR equipment, installation of EV points and static cameras.

5.3 The implementation of this scheme, would generate ongoing efficiencies for the service, including increased enforcement coverage and the ability to accommodate new permit areas.

5.4 The estimated capital requirements for the project are £220k.

5.5 It is recommended that this is funded through a £25k contribution to Capital (funded from a £25k one off budget approved at Council in February for the improvement of enforcement activity), with the remaining £195k funded by borrowing.

5.6 Revenue costs of £15k will be required for training and will be built into the next iteration of the medium-term financial strategy and 2022/23 base budget.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 Increased levels of enforcement could create negative publicity; however, the nature of complaints from residents indicate that the additional enforcement will be perceived as positive. Parking enforcement will continue to be undertaken in line with the Council's Enforcement policy.

6.2 ANPR vehicles automatically read vehicle registration numbers (VRNs) and comparing them against the permit database and therefore it is crucial that cameras have an unrestricted view to function correctly. VRNs in areas with higher vehicular density may not be readable by the ANPR camera due to very small gaps between parked vehicles and should this be occurring frequently in an area; foot patrols will need to be deployed to the area where vehicles can be inspected by a CEO. Any such vehicles will be flagged up by the ANPR camera and the Parking Team will review any such data to determine the suitable enforcement strategy for the area.

6.3 It should be also noted that VRNs may be occasionally misread by the ANPR system which often occurs when number plates are very muddy or screws on the number plate amend letters or numbers of a VRN. Such vehicles may appear to be in a contravention; however, any flagged vehicles will be investigated by a CEO before a PCN is issued.

7 Security & Terrorism Implications

7.1 There are no security & terrorism implications in relation to the proposals in this report.

8 Human Resources

9.1 There are no known Human Resources implications in relation to the proposals in this report.

9 Communication and Engagement

9.1 Both static and cameras in vehicle will be overt, with appropriate signage in place.

9.2 The introduction of ANPR enforcement will be promoted across the borough with all key stakeholders and a communications plan will be put in place. Specifically, Parking Services will engage with schools to highlight the positive health and safety aspects of this scheme and to identify priority areas and be aware of where and when cameras will be located.

9.3 With a large amount of enforcement requests particularly in residential and school areas, an increased level of enforcement presence should assist in a positive message of residential engagement. This will be enhanced through the proactive communications plan.

10 Health and Wellbeing

10.1 With an expected increased level of visits to permit areas, further negativity could be aimed at CEOs. However, the enforcement vehicles would provide an increased level of visibility and demonstrate a proactive stance by Parking Services to improve the level of road safety and compliance in areas of concern.

10.2 Increased enforcement of school keep clear areas will increase safe access for pedestrians.

10.3 It is anticipated that the presence of ANPR cameras around schools will decrease level of Nitrogen dioxide and therefore improve air quality around schools.

11 Procurement Implications

11.1 Officers will work with the Procurement team to procure two new electric vehicles with ANPR capability, static cameras and associated software through a Framework or competitive tender. As the value of the tender will be over £100k, it is recommended that this is overseen by the General Procurement Board. The indicative procurement timetable is outlined below:

Present project to General Procurement Board	12 January 2022
Issue Tender	13 January 2022
Tender Return	14 February 2022
Present procurement outcome to General Procurement Board	23 March 2022

12 Climate Change Implication(s)

12.1 The Council will be replacing two petrol vehicles with two new electric vehicles, reducing the overall carbon footprint of the service.

12.2 In addition, the introduction of static cameras outside some schools is likely to lesson exposure to emissions amongst a concentrated number of school children.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the following Council's Corporate Priorities:

- Improve transport options and infrastructure.
- Delivering value for money;
- Reducing our carbon footprint;
- Ensuring effective enforcement of the borough's parking restrictions

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 The Equality Impact Assessment identified that there is the potential for positive impacts on the Age Protected Characteristic group because ANPR cameras are likely improve safety around schools and therefore have a positive impact on children.

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Background papers to be listed (if applicable)

N/A