

JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITION BOARD
26 SEPTEMBER 2008

Parking Services Update

Interim Report

Purpose of report

1. Further to the report presented to the JOSTB in July 2008 on the approach of the Front Line Workstream to manage the transition programme for the four district authorities parking services departments up to 1 April 2009 an further update has been provided as requested on the transitional works.

Work to Date

2. The Front Line Workstream Board (FLS) developed a Programme Initiation Document that sets the scene for the work that must go on up to 1 April 2009 and beyond to achieve the objectives set out in "We're ready.." and "Next steps..". The FLS work stream has, along with all other work streams been closed down and all responsibilities handed over to the relevant Service Director.
3. The Parking Project, headed by a project manager, now reports to the Service Director for Sustainable Transport. The aims of the project remain the same, to prove leadership and accountability to ensure a smooth transition of the separate Parking Services departments currently run within the four district councils into the one integrated Parking Services department required for Wiltshire Council. The Parking Practitioners Group continues assisting the Project Manager to ensure members of the relevant departments are involved in the transition and transformation of the service. The group meets on a monthly basis. An operational group meeting has recently started allowing the senior operational staff to have an input into the shape of the department and address concerns that the unitary process is leaving the district staff uninvolved. The operational meetings aim to start the process of amalgamating the discretion and cancellation policies, the off street parking place orders and operational practices. To reduce the likelihood of complaints in the short term the aim is to ensure all districts start to move towards the new policies in anticipation of April 2009.
4. Due to the highly legislative arena under which the work is undertaken there is less flexibility in approach than in some departments. The timeframes and documentation are described in the primary and secondary legislation allowing little or no change or chance to improve the processes. However, this does not preclude the parking services department within One Council from ensuring that we are at the forefront of both best practice and customer service provision.
5. This report is concerned with the transition tasks necessary to allow the department to issue Penalty Charge Notices on the 1st April 2009 and progress to date within those tasks. The current position is outlined below for information:
 - **Software:**
This is the key task of the project and is business critical that a system that is fit for purpose is delivered on time. Currently a draft contract is with the software

suppliers for comments or to be signed if agreeable. The project outlines and outcomes have been discussed and agreed with the formal project plan to be agreed at the next meeting. Funding has been agreed for an upgrade to the SAN at NWDC to allow hosting (upgrade necessary due to the size and number of photographs taken of the contravention and the number of cases to be issued per year) and to upgrade the system to include GPS reporting of PCN issue and location changes by staff to protect the staff members whilst working alone and allow better reports for members.. The new system needed for the new PCN prefix of WN will be designed on the NWDC system in the first instance and changed according to the outcomes of the operational meetings. The new clean WN database was installed at NWDC on 18th September and is ready to progress from test data to real time data dependant on the dates given for the completion of the new network. Payments protocols will be agreed once the separate project under the IT work stream to procure a cash receipting system has been completed and agreed.

- **Budgets**

A meeting to discuss base line budgets is arranged for 25th September to be attended by Service Director, Group Manager and Project Manager. The base line budget has been developed by the allocated finance team member for parking. The links to the Park & Ride scheme in Salisbury and the current levels of funding provided by the parking account will be investigated.

All revenue raised by the issue of Penalty Charge Notices On Street (on the highway and on street parking areas) must be reinvested first and foremost to support the running of the Parking Services department. Any surplus is also strictly regulated and must be used as prescribed under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to support transport related schemes. Penalty Charge Notices issued Off Street (Council owned car parks) must also first and foremost be used to support the service. However, any surplus from this area can be used for any purpose although it is recommended that transport schemes are supported as a priority.

The use of off street Pay & Display monies is not regulated. However, it is recommended that monies should first and foremost be reinvested in the off street car parks to improve facilities including adding CCTV, lighting and improving the overall design of the car park. The use of parking revenue to facilitate improvements to car parks to ensure Disability Discrimination Act compliance will also be discussed and if possible agreed.

- **Residents permits**

Permits will be issued and maintained by Chipside as well as PCN processing to allow permits to be issued from any location if necessary. The customer will see no difference in the issue of their permit but the system will increase efficiency and reporting. The requirement for a member of the public to provide documents confirming the ownership of a vehicle and of residency within the zone before a permit is issued will be continued.

- **Structure**

Structure of the new department is in development by the Service Director. An options paper outlining options for locating staff to ensure business continuity was passed to the Service Director and Group Manager. Due to the nature of the role it is recommended that the current locations for Civil Enforcement staff are continued post 2009 to ensure operational efficiency. However the back office functions are highlighted as an area that could be merged in the short to medium term for efficiency savings although no decisions has been made in respect of any changes to staff locations or terms and conditions. A senior officer team may be required to be based in one location to ensure the enforcement ethos is passed

throughout the department reducing conflict with the Traffic Penalty Tribunal and protecting the reputation of the council.

- **Post opening & dispatch**

A meeting to discuss the incoming and outgoing post handling protocols is arranged for 2nd October. This area is of significant importance for Parking Services due to the strict time lines involved with the processing of PCNs. Failure to respond in the correct manner and within the correct time frames could result in the cancellation of PCNs or leave members of the public at a financial disadvantage.

- **Cash collections**

A meeting has been held with Finance in regard to the collection of monies from Pay & Display machines across the County. The machines currently collect in the region of £7million per annum and are collected in different ways by different companies or staff members in each district. Further work is being undertaken to explore the links from this area to collections from buildings including the hubs and leisure centres to maximise efficiency savings.

- **Legal opinion**

Legal services have confirmed in writing that the statutory instrument under which the district councils enforce will be valid under the new unitary authority. Legal Services also confirmed that the PCNs issued by the district and outstanding on the 1st April will still be valid for collection by the new authority.

- **Procurement**

The Parking Project Manager has contacted procurement to outline the requirements for the department post April 2009 including statutory paperwork, Pay & Display tickets, bailiff services, permit paper etc. An officer from the department will be allocated to the project in the near future.

- **Corporate image including signs and uniforms**

The Project Manager is unable to progress this area until the communications team provide the design guide outlining the corporate colours and logos including pantones. Information on the requirements for uniform and signage has been provided to the relevant groups.

Conclusion

6. The project is progressing as per the project plan as submitted to the Front Line Services Work Stream Board and the Service Director for Sustainable Transport. No significant risks have been identified outside of the risks highlighted within the FLS risk register.

Recommendation

7. The JOSTB is asked to note the report.

AUTHOR: Chris Major, FLS Project Manager Parking