

Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 22nd February 2017

Wards: ALL

Subject: Parking update report (including ANPR, pavement parking and RingGo)

Lead officer: Paul Walshe (Head of Parking & CCTV)/ John Hill (Assistant Director – Public Protection)

Lead member: Councillor Ross Garrod (Cabinet Member for Street Cleanliness & Parking)

Contact officer: Paul Walshe

Recommendations:

A. That the Panel review and comment on the contents of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with an update on the delivery of service undertaken by the Parking Services team.
- 1.2. In particular the report seeks to provide the Panel with an update on the progress in respect of the implementation of the most significant improvement projects undertaken by the Parking and CCTV section in the last 12-18 months. These are Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR), cashless parking payment system (RingGo) and the new pavement parking policy.

2 DETAILS

2.1. Organisational structure of Parking Services

- 2.1.1 Parking and CCTV Services are responsible for managing and enforcing parking regulations within and outside of controlled parking zones across the borough with the exception of red routes which are the responsibility of Transport for London. Separately the section is also responsible for maintaining and improving the Councils public space CCTV cameras.
- 2.1.2 Parking and CCTV Services section is made up of 7 teams with a staffing establishment of 91 officers (See appendix 1). The expenditure budget for the year 2016/2017 is in the region of £4,955,000.
- 2.1.3 Parking Services aim is to:
Improve traffic flows and compliance of the parking restrictions; this will lead to a reduction in congestion, pollution, improve bus journey times and pedestrian safety within the borough.
- 2.1.4 CCTV Services aim is to:

Improve the ability of the Public Space cameras to capture events that will support our partners (police) ability to keep the borough safe for the residents, businesses and visitors

2.1.5 The section currently provides a range services to the following customers and partners including:

- (i) Issue 18,352 Residents permits (parking in on and off street parking spaces)
- (ii) Issue 666 Businesses permits (parking in on street parking spaces)
- (iii) Issue Visitors (parking in on and off street parking spaces)
- (iv) LBM staff (parking in on and off street parking)
- (v) Public and businesses regarding public space cameras
- (vi) Police and the All England Lawn Tennis Association (parking in on and off street parking spaces) and Crime issues (public space cameras)
- (vii) Support pedestrians by the enforcement of Pavement Parking
- (viii) Schools safety – enforcing
- (ix) keeping all traffic moving – enforcing MTOs .

2.1.6 The core aim of Parking and CCTV Services is to provide a service that has a reputation of delivering high quality services for our customers by responding promptly to enforcement, parking and crime issues. In 2015 the service invested in customer services by the creation of a dedicated customer services team. This has seen a significant drop in the overall number of complaints received by the service as evidenced below:

Complaints received Jan-Dec 2015	46 Complaints
Complaints received Jan-Dec 2016	34 Complaints

2.1.7 Similarly in respect of appeals against PCN's issued performance has improved as demonstrated below:

Appeals successfully defended by Parking Year ending March 2016	52%
Appeals successfully defended by Parking Year ending Feb 2017	58%

2.1.8 The results of the resident's survey are a key indicator for Parking and CCTV Services service delivery, congestion continues to be one of the key issues with parking enforcement and the issue of parking permits being some of the most effective measures in managing and reducing congestion. The parking and CCTV comprises several teams each of which have responsibility for the delivery of different elements of Parking services provided by the Council. Set out below is a brief description of these component service areas:

- (i) Civil Enforcement Team: The enforcement team includes Civil Enforcement Officers, who issue PCNs (Penalty Charge Notices) on-street and reviewing officers who check CCTV footage of potential contraventions and issue PCNs (Penalty Charge Notices) on the basis of that evidence.
- (ii) The permits team processes parking permits, yellow line waivers and bay suspensions
- (iii) The PCN processing and Debt Recovery team process the Penalty Charge Notices issued for parking and traffic contraventions, which involves responding to representations, preparing evidence for the independent tribunal, and enforcing unpaid penalty charges using the county court and enforcement agents (formerly known as bailiffs).
- (iv) The customer relations team answers FOI requests and complaints and manages public consultations.
- (v) The Public Space CCTV team monitor CCTV cameras around the borough and work with police and other partners to detect and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.

2.1.9 A full organisational chart is provided as Appendix 1 to this report.

2.1.10 One of the key objectives of the Parking & CCTV TOM (Target Operating Model) is to improve the flow of traffic through the borough, manage the supply of available parking space and to provide the customer with value for money services with a strong emphasis on customer care. In order to deliver these objectives the service has in the last 18 months implemented 3 significant new programmes aimed to transform the manner in which Parking Services are delivered in Merton. These projects, referred to in paragraph 2.1 above are ANPR, RINGO Cashless payments and the introduction of Pavement Parking Enforcement. A detailed consideration of the success/progress of the implementation of each of these three projects is set out below:

2.2. **ANPR project**

2.2.1 This project involved the installation of 41 cameras that use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to automatically monitor and enforce bus lanes, banned turns and yellow box junctions.

2.2.2 The objectives of the project were threefold:

- a) To reduce congestion and bus journey times around the borough;
- b) To improve safety outside schools (by enforcing school entrance markings more effectively)
- c) To increase the efficiency of the parking enforcement team by automating the process of identifying potential contraventions of traffic regulations;

2.2.3 The contract to provide the ANPR system, as well as public space CCTV upgrades, was awarded to Tyco Integrated Fire & Security Ltd In October

2015 following a competitive 2-stage procurement process in which 5 firms returned complete tender submissions. Of the 5 submissions Tyco's bid achieved the highest score on the quality criteria and was also the lowest-priced bid. The ANPR element of the Tyco contract is sub-contracted to Siemens' civil enforcement division.

- 2.2.4 The planned 'go-live' date for the ANPR system was 27 June 2016. On that date all of the cameras had been installed and the back-office infrastructure was in place to allow for the transmission and storage of the video clips provided by the enforcement cameras.
- 2.2.5 Although a programme of testing was undertaken before the "go-live" roll out of the system, it became apparent on implementation in late June 2016 that there were several issues affecting the system's performance:
- a) The reliability of the cameras was poor – cameras often stopped recording or there were intermittent faults such as the camera image being 'flipped' upside down.
 - b) The number of contraventions being recorded was below expectations
 - c) Too many 'false positives' were being recorded. A false positive occurs when the ANPR camera is triggered but the vehicle in question is not breaking the rules.
- 2.2.6 The issues only became apparent when the system went live and Merton officers were able to identify these.
- 2.2.7 The focus during the initial testing phase was on ensuring that the various back office systems and network connections that had been installed were working correctly and that evidence packs were being sent from the cameras. This work was prioritised as without it the system would not have worked, whereas the configuration of the individual cameras was always likely to be an on-going process.
- 2.2.8 Since the launch of the ANPR system in June 2016 and the identification of issues with the system, Council officers have been working with the contractors to resolve these issues. The programme of remediation has focussed on the following:
- 2.2.9 i) Regular weekly meetings/conference calls between Siemens/Tyco and Council officers; ii) Meetings on a quarterly basis between senior officers of both Siemens/Tyco and Council; iii) The deployment of Siemens/Tyco staff to the Civic Centre to work alongside Parking officers in order to understand and resolve ANPR issues in real time; iv) On the 15th December 2016, the Council issued a "letter before action" to the Contractors setting out the basis of a potential legal action should the objective of a fully operational ANPR become unachievable; v) Following the issue of said letter a number of improvements and system upgrades have been implemented which has resulted in significant progress in achieving the end objective of a fully operational system.
- 2.2.10 The service is currently in the process of checking each camera and making final adjustments to the camera angle, field of vision etc. before the cameras can be signed off and the project closed.

- 2.2.11 A significant upgrade will be rolled out in late February/early March which will make it easier for the contractor to detect and investigate any faults. This will help to keep any future downtime to a bare minimum.
- 2.2.12 The final adjustments that are being made to the cameras should also produce an increase in the number of contraventions captured, as the 'area of interest' on which the camera focuses is being enlarged so as to capture more vehicles.
- 2.2.13 In addition to the system improvements at the current locations, there is a rolling programme of review which will identify additional locations where new ANPR cameras are planned to be installed in the borough
- 2.2.14 Despite the technical issues experienced, significant progress has been made and although not yet fully functional to the standard demanded by the Council the system has already proven successful in increasing the efficiency of the enforcement team as they are now able to process more cases without requiring additional resources.
- 2.2.15 As a result, the introduction of the ANPR system has now made it possible to capture a greater number of motorist contraventions. This has also enabled more civil enforcement officers to be redeployed out on street and into the camera cars, thereby enabling the service through it's advisory and enforcement capacity to deliver a greater degree of overall pedestrian and road user safety throughout the borough, particularly in locations adjacent to schools.
- 2.2.16 We do not yet have any data on congestion or bus journey times but it is expected that as more and more motorists comply with the traffic regulations (to avoid receiving PCNs) these will improve.
- 2.2.17 For more information about how the ANPR cameras work please refer to Appendix 2.

2.3. **Cashless parking (RingGo)**

- 2.3.1 The cashless pay by phone parking service was launched in all Council operated car parks in October 2014 and then rolled out to all on-street parking bays a year later.
- 2.3.2 The service allows motorists to pay for parking without the need to carry cash – instead they pay with a credit/debit card on the RingGo app, or by phoning RingGo.
- 2.3.3 Motorists pay a small fee for the convenience of using the RingGo service, which covers the cost to the council of processing the card payments.
- 2.3.4 Any new parking bay (for instance in a new zone) is now added to the RingGo service so that motorists always have the choice of paying by cash or RingGo.
- 2.3.5 5 new locations were added in 2016 and a further 3 such locations will be added by the end of March.
- 2.3.6 The contract with RingGo expires in 2018 but can be renewed for up to 4 additional years.

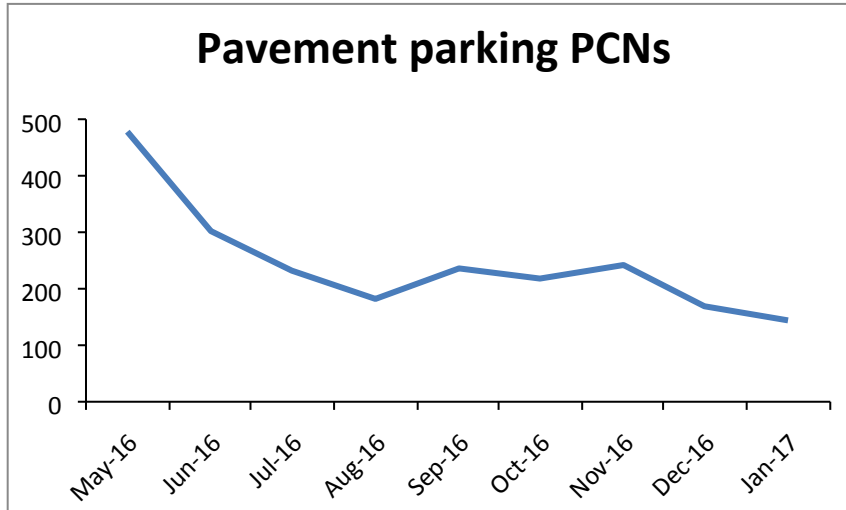
- 2.3.7 The proportion of motorists using cashless parking is steadily increasing. Over the last 12 months it has been responsible for 40% of revenue from parking charges, up from 30% in the first 12 months.
- 2.3.8 In addition to the parking charges the Council has received a further £155k in revenue from service fees.
- 2.3.9 **Revenue received from the RingGo Service**

Type	Value of income taken (last 12 months)	Value of additional services provided (texts etc.)	Total
Off Street	£701,619	£53,508	£755,127
On Street	£1,013,815	£101,381.15	£1,115,196.91

2.4. **Pavement parking policy**

- 2.4.1 In April 2016 the Council implemented a new pavement parking policy. The primary aim of the policy was to clarify to residents and motorists the rules about parking on the pavement and ultimately to provide a safer environment for pedestrians.
- 2.4.2 Parking on the pavement is prohibited throughout London under the Greater London Council (General Powers) Act 1974, except where it is specifically permitted and indicated by signs and marked bays.
- 2.4.3 The policy was introduced following a number of complaints from members of the public about vehicles causing an obstruction by being parked on the pavement.
- 2.4.4 Pavement parking is now only allowed at certain locations and then only if a minimum gap of one metre has been left on the pavement for wheelchair users and pedestrians to pass the vehicle. Vehicles parked inconsiderately by not leaving a minimum gap of one metre on the footway will be issued with a PCN.
- 2.4.5 This approach balances the needs of pedestrians and other road users, and ensures that emergency vehicles can still travel along narrow roads. If the Council allowed no pavement parking on these narrow streets there is a danger that emergency vehicles would not be able to pass as they would be obstructed by vehicles parked on the road.
- 2.4.6 Vehicles are not permitted to park on grass verges and a PCN will be issued to any vehicle found parked wholly or partially on a grass verge.
- 2.4.7 A list of the roads on which pavement parking is permitted is published on the Council's website, together with a copy of the policy.
- 2.4.8 To inform residents about the new policy we placed stories in My Merton magazine, erected signs on every street affected by the policy, sent out regular tweets and Facebook posts, and published an FAQ on the parking webpages.

2.4.9 When the policy was first introduced and enforcement resources were concentrated on pavement parking there was an increase in the number of PCNs issued. However, the number of PCNs issued is now falling each month, which demonstrates that motorists are now complying with the pavement parking policy, as demonstrated in the table below :



This appears to indicate that there is now a much greater degree of compliance and clearer pavements, thus making it easier and safer for pedestrians generally, in particular persons using mobility vehicles, to use.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The cashless parking and ANPR contracts each have several years to run, so no alternatives are proposed at this time.
- 3.2. The alternative to operating a cashless parking service would be to revert to using only pay & display machines. This would be a retrograde step, reducing the number of payment options available to our customers.
- 3.3. Reverting to cash payments would also mean an increase in cash collection charges.
- 3.4. The alternative to the ANPR system would be to revert back to a manual process for identifying contraventions. This would do little to reduce congestion or bus journey times and would divert resources from the important task of enforcing school zigzag markings. The Council would need to massively increase capacity of enforcement officers to monitor and enforce the 41 locations
- 3.5. The alternative to having a published pavement parking policy would be to revert to using officers' discretion for each complaint that is made. This would result in more complaints and reduced customer satisfaction.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Residents and motorists were consulted extensively with regard to the pavement parking policy and on the use of ANPR enforcement to keep traffic flowing.

- 4.2. The cashless parking service was introduced as a direct result of feedback to a parking survey carried out in 2012.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. RingGo was introduced in October 2014, and the contract is up for review in October 2018.
- 5.2. The pavement parking policy was introduced in April 2016.
- 5.3. ANPR enforcement began on 27 June 2016 but handover has been delayed by technical issues.
- 5.4. We anticipate that the system will be signed off and the project complete by the end of April 2017, though this may slip to May to allow for sufficient acceptance testing.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no financial implications of the pavement parking policy, other than the increase in PCNs which has resulted in an additional £90k penalty charge payments received over a 10 month period.
- 6.2. Similarly, the cashless parking project was designed to be cost-neutral and the revenue from the RingGo fees covers the cost to the Council of providing the service.
- 6.3. In respect of ANPR, the estimated number of additional contraventions captured by the system was based upon a fully operational system, which has not yet been achieved. Any shortfall in the ability to enforce arising from the introduction of a less than fully operational system will be reduced as a result of the on-going remedial works that are being undertaken by the contractor. It is also offset by the payment of PCN charges in respect of contraventions arising from other areas of parking enforcement.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. These projects contribute to the Council's statutory duty to provide parking facilities, manage the flow of traffic, and improve bus journey times.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None – parking/traffic enforcement is decriminalised.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. One of the drivers for the pavement parking policy was to improve safety for disabled road users who were often forced to enter the road to pass badly parked vehicles.
- 10.2. As more motorists comply with the traffic regulations congestion should improve and this will contribute to reduced emissions and cleaner air.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Appendix 1 – Parking and CCTV Organisational structure chart

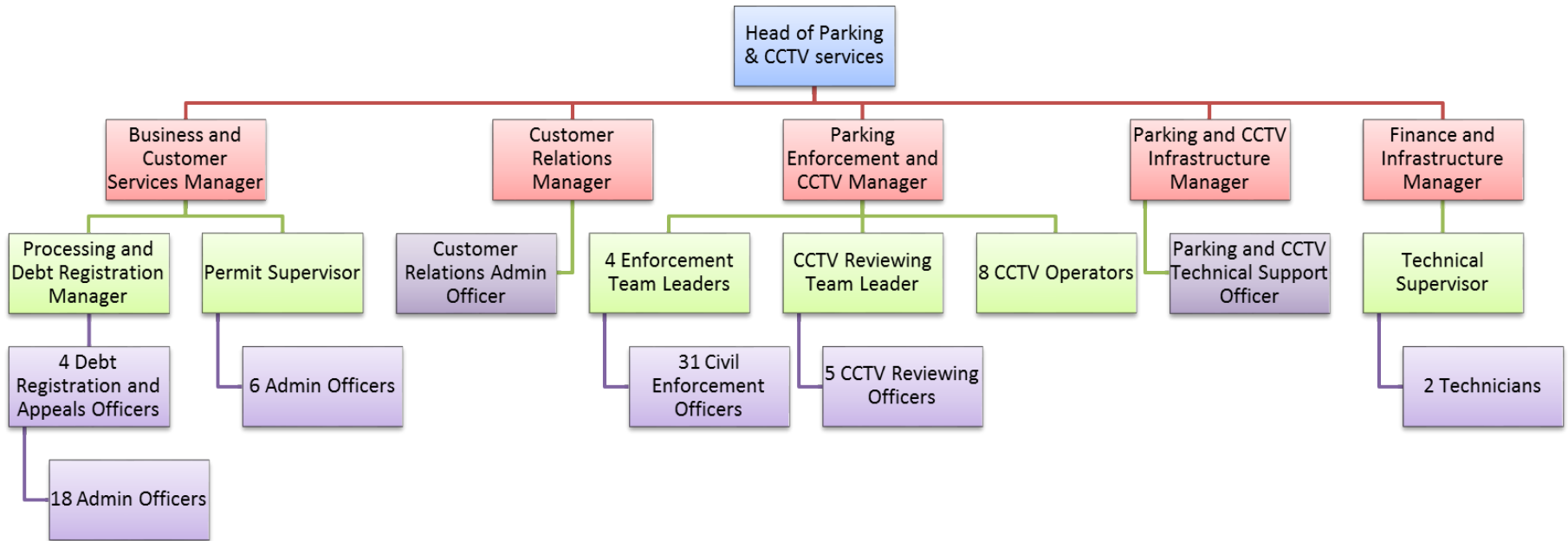
- Appendix 2 - Overview of the ANPR enforcement method.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. None

APPENDIX 1 – PARKING AND CCTV ORGANISATIONAL CHART

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APPENDIX 2 – OVERVIEW OF ANPR ENFORCEMENT

See separate document 'LaneWatch Unattended Enforcement – Functional Description'

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