



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20

**PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY,
COMMUNITIES & PROSPERITY
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

27th February 2020

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF
PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND
FRONTLINE SERVICES**

Agenda Item No: 4

**SOUTH WALES PARKING GROUP
(SWPG) UPDATE**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee with update of the work of the South Wales Parking Group (SWPG).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the previous report which was presented to the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on the 7th February 2019, (accessed [here](#)), and receive an update on the work of the South Wales Parking Group (SWPG) from the Parking Services and Enforcement Manager accordingly.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 21st November 2018, Cabinet considered the report of the Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services which sought approval for the Council to provide

civil parking enforcement back-office Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing functions on behalf of additional Local Authorities across South Wales.

- 3.2. A copy of the decision taken by Cabinet at its meeting held on the 21st November 2018 in response to the report's recommendations can be accessed [here](#).

4. UPDATE / CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Councils in the former Gwent region, (Caerphilly CBC, Newport CC, Torfaen CBC, Monmouthshire CC and Blaenau Gwent CBC), all now operate their own Civil Parking Enforcement, (CPE), services. Their enforcement operations commenced thusly:

- 8 April 2019 – Caerphilly CBC
- 30 May 2019 – Monmouthshire CC
- 1 July 2019 – Newport CC
- 17 July 2019 – Torfaen CBC
- 10 September 2019 – Blaenau Gwent CBC

- 4.2 RCT successfully mentored and guided each Local Authority listed above through the process of applying to the Welsh Government for CPE powers, the set-up of their enforcement operations, and also assisted with staff training from both an enforcement perspective and back-office standpoint.

- 4.3 Consequently, all the Council's listed above duly joined the South Wales Parking Group, (SWPG), regional collaboration whereby by RCT undertakes the processing of all PCNs issued in RCT and across the Group. This expanded the SWPG to 7 Local Authorities; (Merthyr Tydfil CBC was already part of the Group prior to the Council's in the former Gwent region joining).

- 4.4 In light of the continued growth of the Council's Parking Services Department, (including the SWPG and frontline enforcement), staffing structures have been reviewed to ensure appropriate levels of resilience remain to enable RCT to meet its responsibilities as its SWPG client portfolio continues to grow and associated workloads increase.

- 4.5 The Department now comprises of the following posts:

- South Wales Parking Group Manager (1nr.)
- Parking Services Technician (2nr.)
- Highways Support Assistant (4nr.)
- Civil Enforcement Officer Team Leader (2nr.)
- Civil Enforcement Officer (12nr.)

- 4.6 Between 1st April 2019 and 31st January 2020, (the 10 full months of 2019/20 to date), SWPG staff have processed, (challenges, representations, appeals and

payments), over 50,000 PCNs across the Group whilst achieving 100% compliance with legislative timescales and key performance indicators.

5. FUTURE PLANS AND EFFICIENCIES

- 5.1 Looking ahead to 2020/21, preliminary discussions have been held with Officers from the Vale of Glamorgan CBC with a view to joining the SWPG, (and there are also aspirations for Bridgend CBC to join as well).
- 5.2 Furthermore, the Council are investing in a hybrid mail solution whereby day-to-day printing, packing and mailing tasks are undertaken by a centralised print unit. This will allow staff greater time to focus on responding to the increasing volume of incoming correspondence generated as a result of the regional civil enforcement operations getting up to speed. (It is envisaged that such a solution will be implemented imminently).
- 5.3 Later this year, Newport CC will be introducing a mobile camera enforcement vehicle to complement their enforcement operations. As the Council has already procured the necessary software to review its own mobile camera enforcement footage, it will also be undertaking this work for Newport CC and the SWPG Service Level Agreement will be enhanced accordingly.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 A detailed financial analysis of the administrative tasks undertaken with respect to the processing of PCNs has helped to inform a SLA offer to all participating Local Authorities. The operation of the SLA is kept under review as part of implementing the new arrangements, but all costs are expected to be fully met by the additional income generated.
- 8.2 A centralised arrangement of this type has led to a reduction in administrative costs. For example, following negotiations with suppliers, the cost of procuring the requisite software licences and consumables has been significantly reduced.
- 8.3 In terms of resource requirements, the Council has purchased an updated software system in order to efficiently administer the SWPG operation, with costs offset

against the income generated from the additional back-office processing functions.

- 8.4 Income received from other Local Authorities to date from SWPG processing functions has thus far exceeded expectations, with approximately £180k generated in the first 10 full months of 2019/20.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA 2004): The Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions prescribes that back-office PCN processing functions can be contracted out, (albeit decisions with regard to formal representations cannot).
- 9.2 Local Authorities have a duty to tackle dangerous parking and the TMA 2004 duly confers responsibilities upon Local Authorities with Civil Enforcement Area status to enforce civil parking contraventions accordingly.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

- 10.1 A regional collaboration to efficiently process PCN helps to deliver a greater consistency of parking enforcement practices across the region and, as such, can be seen to contribute the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities with respect to the theme of "place": creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work by making Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment clean and attractive.
- 10.2 This report has considered the potential long-term impact of collaborating with other Local Authorities to provide a more sustainable PCN processing function, with a clear responsibility for the Council to guide and inform other Local Authorities as to their own policies and procedures to help ensure fair standards of parking enforcement across a wide area.
- 10.3 With the aim of balancing the business needs of all Local Authorities, whilst helping to alleviate the problems caused by inconsiderate and dangerous parking practices, the Council can be seen to be collaborating with others to consider the needs of all users of the Highway.
- 10.4 The civil parking enforcement service helps to improve traffic flow and road safety, improve public transport reliability and reduce parking problems in town centres, residential areas, outside our schools, etc. The creation of safe walking environments outside schools is also likely to lead to healthier lifestyles.
- 10.5 A partnership between a number of Local Authorities across south-east Wales, which shares common aspirations, best practice and consistency of service provision, will help support the delivery of a Wales of cohesive communities, a prosperous Wales and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.

11. **CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The CPE Service ensures that Traffic Regulation Orders are better enforced, which maintains the highways in a condition that are free of vehicles which would otherwise be restricting the traffic flow and thus the highways would be better able to undertake their primary purpose of the unrestricted passage of vehicles in a safe manner.
- 11.2 The former Gwent Authorities are now enforcing their own Traffic Regulation Orders via Civil Parking Enforcement, with RCT undertaking back-office PCN processing duties on their collective behalf, thus positioning itself as a regional parking ticket processing hub.
- 11.3 In the first 10 months, (April 2019 – January 2020), of the expanded SWPG, RCT has processed, (challenges, representations, appeals and payments), over 50,000 PCNs and received approximately £180k in associated processing charges under the terms of the SLA.
- 11.4 In addition, RCT SWPG staff and Civil Enforcement Officers have assisted in training colleagues in each of the aforementioned Local Authorities, thus not only helping to aid consistency of enforcement across the Group, but also building regional resilience and firmly establishing RCT as a centre of excellence.
- 11.5 Going forward, the Council is investing in a hybrid mail solution whereby day-to-day printing, packing and mailing tasks are undertaken by a centralised print unit and are also looking to expand the SWPG still further with the potential for additional Local Authorities to join the Group.