



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21

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

18th MARCH 2021

**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 27th February 2020, (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 The SWPG, a regional collaboration for the processing of Penalty Charge Notices, (PCNs), issued for civil parking contraventions, consists of the following 7 Local Authorities: -

- Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
- Merthyr Tydfil CBC
- Caerphilly CBC
- Monmouthshire CC
- Newport CC
- Torfaen CBC
- Blaenau Gwent CBC

3.2. RCT is the lead Authority of the Group and, under Service Level Agreements, (SLA), with all Authorities, undertakes the processing of all PCNs issued in RCT and across the Group's area after the point of issue. *Note: each individual Local Authority conducts its own civil parking enforcement operations.

4. UPDATE / CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The SWPG has adapted well to the challenging working environment posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The work of the SWPG has continued throughout the pandemic with excellent standards of work being maintained.

4.2 At the start of 2020/21, we were finalising our plans and investment in a hybrid mail solution whereby day-to-day printing, packing and mailing tasks are undertaken by a centralised print unit, with the SWPG being a pilot area. The timing of this development, occurring as it did alongside the on-set of the pandemic, proved crucial in maintaining the work of the SWPG as the transition was made to flexible home-working.

4.4 The adoption of hybrid mail has further improved processing efficiency, reducing costs and allowing staff greater time to focus on responding to an increasing volume of incoming correspondence generated as a result ongoing civil parking enforcement operations.

4.4 To complement the advance in processing efficiency, the physical base of the SWPG has moved from Sardis House, Pontypridd, to Ty Glantaf, Treforest Industrial Estate. In making this move, the Parking Enforcement and Streetcare Enforcement teams are now joined under one roof.

4.5 There is a great deal of synergy between these two areas, and indeed with others as well such as Streetcare Cleansing and Waste Services too, so the office move can be seen to have further enhanced the business efficiency of not just the SWPG, but the wider Streetcare function as well.

4.5 In April 2020, Newport CC commenced their own mobile camera enforcement operations, (the third such vehicle within the Group bearing in mind we already operates two such vehicles ourselves). Under the auspices of an enhanced SLA, RCT duly undertakes the processing of evidence gathered by the Newport vehicle and generates PCNs accordingly.

- 4.6 Between 1st April 2020 and 28th February 2021, (the 11 full months of 2020/21 to date), SWPG staff have processed, (challenges, representations, appeals and payments), over 35,000 PCNs across the Group whilst maintaining compliance with legislative timescales, DVLA processes, and key performance indicators.

5. FUTURE PLANS

- 5.1 Looking ahead to 2021/22: the SWPG client portfolio will continue to be enhanced as Merthyr Tydfil CBC plan to operate a mobile camera enforcement vehicle, (for which RCT will duly undertake the back-office processing of evidence gathered by it), and aspirations remain for The Vale of Glamorgan CBC to join the Group as well).
- 5.2 Furthermore, the Welsh Government, (WG), as part of a suite of transport measures assisting the creation of public spaces aiming to help to promote people's health and well-being, have set out their vision for solving the problems caused by pavement parking, which will see likely the adoption of pavement parking as a civil parking contravention.
- 5.3 A Working Group has been set-up by the WG to agree a strategic approach to this new area of civil parking enforcement, establish guiding principles and support Local Authorities with clear, workable and detailed guidance, as they adopt new enforcement powers accordingly, which will likely come into operation from July 2022.

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 SLAs are kept under review, but all costs are expected to continue to be 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.

- 8.4 Income received from other Local Authorities over the course of the past year from SWPG processing functions has, in the light of the impact of the COVID pandemic, exceeded expectations, with approximately £120k generated in the first 11 full months of 2020/21.

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 SWPG consists of 7 Local Authorities all with their own civil parking enforcement operations, with RCT undertaking back-office PCN processing duties on their collective behalf, thus positioning itself as a regional parking ticket processing hub.
- 11.3 The SWPG team have coped admirably with the challenges brought about by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, moving offices and adjusting to a more flexible home-working routine with further business efficiencies being achieved.
- 11.4 In the year to date, RCT has processed, (challenges, representations, appeals and payments), over 35,000 PCNs and received approximately £120k in associated processing charges under the terms of the SWPG SLAs.
- 11.5 Going forward, the SWPG will be enhanced still further by the addition of a mobile camera enforcement vehicle in Merthyr Tydfil CBC and the Council will work with all SWPG partners to prepare to best meet the inevitable challenges resulting from the WGs aspirations to tackle pavement parking.