

**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
4 DECEMBER 2000**

**REPORT ON: DECRIMINALISATION OF PARKING**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION**

**REPORT NO: 471-2000**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the potential for the decriminalisation of parking and its potential implications, and to seek authority to investigate the potential for a decriminalised system in Dundee.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to;
- a Note the current situation where the control and enforcement of on-street parking is carried out by the police and difficulty in maintaining adequate enforcement levels in the future.
  - b Remits the Director of Planning & Transportation to set up a Steering Group to investigate the possibility of the decriminalisation of on-street car parking in Dundee.
  - c Authorise the appointment of a specialist consultant to prepare a Business Plan to assess the feasibility of such a scheme.
  - d Any surplus generated will be ringfenced for transportation projects.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 As well as some loss of income to the District Court, there would be initial costs incurred to introduce such a scheme and to set up both the operation and administration of it, but these could be off-set by the income generated from all parking charges and fines being available to the Council. The Scottish Executive require that authorities schemes at least break even and although it is anticipated that this would be achieved, a full financial assessment will be carried out and reported back to Committee for consideration.
- 3.2 The cost of employing a consultant would be in the order of £7,000 and this sum can be met from the On Street Car Parking budget for 2000/01.

## **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Resources would be used more efficiently by improving enforcement and control of parking and all the income generated being available to the Council.
- 4.2 Pollution levels and access to facilities are improved by the increase in turnover of parked vehicles thus decreasing the circulation of traffic trying to find a parking space also resulting in less congestion.

## **5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct equal opportunities implications but by improving congestion and traffic flow access will be easier for the public transport user, the private motorist and servicing vehicles.

## 6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The cost of traffic wardens is borne jointly by the Joint Police Board and the Government with no monetary return from the parking charges or fines being available to the Joint Board. Therefore, as financial pressures increase, it has become apparent that Chief Constables throughout the UK are finding it increasingly difficult to incur the levels of expenditure required to continue providing an adequate level of parking enforcement. This situation is likely to deteriorate further with a resultant increase in abuse of parking regulations.
- 6.2 Many Councils in England have already opted to decriminalise parking under the powers of the Road Traffic Act 1991 and in Scotland both Edinburgh and Glasgow now control parking enforcement in their own cities. Several other Scottish Councils are also currently exploring the feasibility of adopting this approach.
- 6.3 With improved levels of enforcement more consideration can be given to the creation of Controlled Parking Zones. These are where parking regulations are introduced on an area wide basis to counter a parking problem across an area. Residential areas on the fringe of centres often attract commuters, shoppers and other long-term visitors. A programme of measures can be introduced to achieve a more equitable distribution of kerbside space, eg residents permit schemes can be incorporated.
- 6.4 Traffic Wardens in their current form and their association with the Police would no longer exist. They would be replaced by Parking Attendants who would be employed by the Council or by a parking contractor engaged by the Council. Therefore, although there would be no support from the Police for parking management at any time at events such as football matches, civic functions etc, temporary parking controls such as No Waiting cones would be owned, placed, enforced and collected by Council engaged staff.
- 6.5 Parking Charge Notices would be issued by the Parking Attendants and logged into hand held computers, which are downloaded for processing at the end of each shift. In extreme cases of obstruction or repetitive unpaid offences vehicles would be uplifted and taken to a secure pound. The offender is then charged for the return of the vehicle plus storage.
- 6.6 It is a strict requirement of decriminalised schemes that any revenue generated must be ring fenced for Transportation related project only and care must be taken to ensure that the system is not financially led. Experience from other authorities indicates that the public could easily perceive that such schemes exist as money earners and not primarily for improving traffic flow, relieving congestion and turnover in parking spaces.
- 6.7 Non-payment of fines would require to be pursued to an end by Civil Action, in the same way as the Council successfully enforces off-street fines and charges. It is essential that this is done to ensure the credibility of the scheme, otherwise non-payments levels would become significant.
- 6.8 The experience of other Authorities who already operate such a system is that because of the fact that parking has been decriminalised, tickets are more readily challenged. This requires that the relevant road markings and signs must be maintained to a high standard, however the cost of improving this can be met from the income generated.
- 6.9 If the operator decides that the offender does not have reasonable grounds for a ticket to be cancelled and they still feel aggrieved they can appeal to the Parking Adjudicator who is Government appointed and totally independent of the Council.
- 6.10 In order to progress consideration of such a scheme it is recommended that a Steering Group be set up who would engage a Consultant to prepare a Business Plan examining such issues as mileage of yellow lines to be covered, appropriate walking distance for attendants, anticipated level of abuse, number of tickets likely to be issued, estimated loss of income,

income and establishment expenditure. The Steering Group should comprise representatives from the following;

Planning & Transportation Department  
Finance Department  
Personnel & Management Services Department  
IT Department  
Public Relations Department  
Support Services Department (Legal Services)  
Tayside Police

In addition, Trades Union representatives will be consulted prior to the setting up of the Steering Group in order to determine what level of involvement they feel appropriate.

## **7 CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Support Services, Director of Corporate Planning, Director of Personnel and Management Services, Director of Information Technology, Director of Public Relations, Legal Manager and the Chief Constable, have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None.

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24 November 2000

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