

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DATE: MONDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2009

SUBJECT: FUNDING IMPLICATIONS ON TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER PROCEDURE

BY: Head of Environmental Services

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A report to advise Members on anticipated implications on the procedure for Traffic Regulation Orders, due to limited funding.

Decision Required: For Information Only.

Introduction

1. Throughout the year, the Engineering Section receives various requests for new waiting restrictions or amendments to existing restrictions. These requests come from a variety of sources, including Members, members of the public, Kent Highway Services and the emergency services. Any amendments or new waiting restrictions require the backing of a formal legal document, known as a Traffic Regulation Order. Without this Order the restrictions would be legally unenforceable. In addition to this, the installation and removal of disabled persons parking bays requires a similar Traffic Regulation Order.

Discussion

2. As well as the cost of the physical lining and signing on site, there is the cost of preparing the Traffic Regulation Order. The average cost of a TRO is approximately £1,500, including advertising costs, and the average cost of a lining gang is around £700 per day.

3. The total annual budget for waiting restrictions, including preparation of the Traffic Regulation Orders, lining, signing and work associated with disabled persons parking bays, is currently £13,500. The majority of the budget is spent on the lining work itself, and as such it is becoming increasingly more difficult to meet the costs of the Traffic Orders.

4. In the current financial climate, we are reviewing the frequency in which Traffic Regulation Orders are completed, and it has now been necessary to reduce the number of Orders prepared each year to work within the available funds. As such, the completion time for new and amended waiting restrictions is now expected to be at least 18 months from the date of the initial consultation with residents. Previously, where no objections were received to proposals, it was possible in many cases to complete the installation of new restrictions within 6-8 months.

5. With disabled persons parking bay applications, this amount of time would be deemed as excessive, and therefore we will continue to install “advisory” bays until the necessary Traffic Regulation Order has been completed to make the bay enforceable. This process is already used by other District Councils in Kent as well as Swale, and means that the bay is marked out on site, but the associated signing is not installed until the bay is legally enforceable and covered by the relevant TRO.

6. It is anticipated that the associated costs of providing a Traffic Regulation Order will reduce as Officers continue to carry out more of the preparation work in-house. Although this impacts heavily on resources, it does result in the reduction of costs incurred through using specialist consultants for the legal aspects of the Orders, and allows for a better use of the funds available.

Recommendation

7. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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Date: 18th August 2009