**Appendix B: Watford BC parking service**

**Experience**

* Watford Council were the fifth Local Authority outside of London to introduce decriminalised parking enforcement in October 1997
* Watford Council were the first Local Authority to adopt a shared partnership approach with neighbouring authorities. Three Rivers District Council joined the Watford enforcement contract in 2001 and this was followed by Dacorum Borough Council joining the contract in 2003
* Watford Council manages the operational, administrative and enforcement processes relating to the issue of approximately 40,000 Penalty Charge Notices per year across all areas and in excess of 20,000 permits of varying types to various groups under varying criteria, including the 5,000 – 6,000 issued within Three Rivers and Dacorum
* Watford Council was the first Hertfordshire authority to establish its own blue badge fraud operation in partnership with the Police; Operation Clamp
* Watford Council manages 16 controlled parking zones, solely within its own locality alone, operating between 8am and 10pm, 7-days a week, including Sundays, bank holidays and the management of match day restrictions and a pedestrian zone. Additionally, Watford manages the permit issue, administration and all enforcement associated services in relation to Three Rivers and its 16 resident parking areas, between Rickmansworth, Chorleywood, Croxley, Bedmond, South Oxhey etc., as well as 9 controlled parking zones in Dacorum and enforcement covering central Hemel, Tring, Berkhamsted, Boxmoor and Apsley etc.
* Watford Council manages cash collection arrangements, maintenance and enforcement of 10 of its own off-street car parks and in excess of 85 pay and display machines, both on and off-street, further to a 60+ across Three Rivers and Dacorum
* Watford Council has procured and managed all signs/lines and bailiff contracts relied upon by all authorities in delivery of enforcement, recovery and parking services
* Watford Council alone processes approximately 6,000 challenges and representations per year undertaking all work at all stages of the statutory procedure using an equivalent resource level of comparatively smaller authorities
* During the term of the current enforcement contract, Watford Council has introduced 24/7 automated telephone and web payment services, an online Penalty Charge Notice challenge module and an online resident parking permit module, cashless parking facility for off-street car parks (Dacorum only) and pay and display credit/debit card facilities (Watford only), computerised text notes for Civil Enforcement Officers and upgraded all IT hardware, including all hand-held computers provided across the contract, and vehicles, at no additional cost to the partner authorities
* All staff employed by Watford Council have considerable experience of working with Watford for a number of years within the shared partnership arrangement and are City & Guilds qualified in Notice Processing, which includes the former Three Representations Officer now directly employed by Watford, in addition to further management experience of staff working within larger London Local Authorities, managing camera and moving traffic enforcement services applicable to London only, including bus lanes, banned turns and box junctions, as well as removals and management of a Council operated pound and establishment of all required operations
* Watford Council has experience of the deployment requirements, concessions and special arrangements of Three Rivers parking enforcement over 15 years and remains best placed in terms of accommodating enforcement staff, equipment, vehicles and proximity arrangements

**Current Enforcement Contract**

* The current enforcement contract was procured in 2008. It bears and refers to commencement dates in February and March 2008 but was not formally implemented until April 2008, by agreement
* The enforcement contract replicates the previous enforcement contract which has always been solely between Watford Council and its enforcement contractor, Indigo Park Services, formally Vinci Park Services
* In procuring this contract in 2008, Peter Kerr was the formal representative of Three Rivers Council and provided all information relating to the requirements of the service in order for the specification to be drawn up. Dacorum equally appointed an equivalent representative and all parties were provided with all specification documents, sat on the panel for interviews and presentations of the shortlisted contractors and negotiated and agreed appointment of the successful bidder and split arrangement of the overall contract costs
* The current service resource of each authority was accepted by each authority following consultation and review of the tender presented by the enforcement contractor in response to enforcement requirements and parameters that each authority outlined i.e. bank holiday, evening or Sunday enforcement etc.
* Watford Council uses the British Parking Association model contract, which is widely used within London local authorities and is recommended for use by the Secretary of State within the guidance accompanying the Traffic Management Act 2004
* The current BPA contract focuses on the delivery of a quality service provision, as opposed to a punitive approach, incentivising the enforcement contractor to ensure consistent performance. Target costs are paid each month to cover the resources of the services but profit is only achieved when all of the set KPI’s are met
* The contract is fixed in price and the only increases that have been made over the period since it commenced relate solely to RPI that is applied in April each year. As a result, the target costs do not fluctuate in any way, unless more resources are added or withdrawn from the service
* Watford Council intends to use this model once again in its future contract

**The Service Level Agreement**

* This agreement was first drawn up in 2001 when Three Rivers first approached Watford to join our enforcement contract. It appears that it was all but renewed as a matter of course in 2008 following procurement of the current enforcement contract. Watford accepts and agrees that this document and the outlined responsibilities and contributions must be reviewed in relation to any future partnership arrangement
* It is not intended that the fundamental responsibilities and commitments of the SLA will change. This means that Watford will remain solely responsible for management of the enforcement arrangements and associated Penalty Charge Notice processing and recovery processes. Equally, Three Rivers will continue to retain its current responsibility for setting its own overall strategy and policy decisions, including its decisions to apply parking charges, or otherwise, and the level of any such charges

**Future Contract**

* The costs or value of any future contract cannot be predicted at this stage and will be subject to the varying requirements outlined within the specification. It can be said that evening, Sunday and bank holiday enforcement arrangements are likely to increase the costs of incurred, which is why Three Rivers elected not to pursue these enforcement arrangements previously
* Further increasing the technology offer of the service is a significant pursuit of the new enforcement contract in order to increase and improve the customer experience, as well as the introduction of back-office and operational products that will increase efficiency and potentially create savings. Some detail of the services and products that are being reviewed as part of soft market testing have been extracted from the Parking Service Managers email correspondence and included within Three Rivers Head of Regulatory Services report to members. Those services include enforcement via ANPR and mobile phones to compliment an intelligence led enforcement approach and virtual systems that will also reduce stationary and equipment costs. The costs of providing our outlined services, either for inclusion in the service provision or optional benefits, will be detailed in any tender proposal but it is Watford’s view that enforcement contractors will not bear the costs of any such services, either at commencement or at any point during the contract. Therefore, the current position is likely to continue whereby it will be for each authority to finance any new technology that becomes available during the life of the contract, which will be dependent upon their ability to do so, in line with the ring-fenced income constraints of the governing legislation
* Watford are keen to ensure that the requests and wishes of Three Rivers are captured and reflected within the enforcement contract specification document. In continuation of the current arrangements, Watford will advise Three Rivers of any services or products that we may wish to introduce during the lifetime of the contract, together with an outline of all applicable initial and ongoing costs, further to provision of information in relation to any other services that they may wish to pursue, as we have done in relation to Dacorum and its desire for cashless parking. Watford will project manage these matters via our appointed enforcement contractor, in line with the contractual arrangements
* As Three Rivers have been advised, the lease on the current Parking Shop building in Market Street, Watford, expires in November 2017, and this will result in the service being relocated. It is likely that both the Council staff (Watford and Three Rivers) and enforcement contractor (current and future) will be moving to Watford Town Hall but this is yet to be finalised and Three Rivers have been advised that they will be updated as a matter of course. This will result in closure of the current Parking Shop, which serves both Watford and Three Rivers customers. A plan for the phased reduction of the Parking Shop opening hours has been approved by Watford leadership team and confirmed to Three Rivers. The first phase of reduced hours will commence from the beginning of the new year in January 2017 leading to full closure in November 2017
* The Parking Shop move may bring about a reduction in costs to both Watford and Three Rivers in terms of rent, rates, maintenance and other financial liabilities associated with the operation of the Parking Shop, although this is yet to be fully determined. The current contracted staffing arrangement is unlikely to change as a result of this change under the current contract because the officers employed perform both front line and back-office duties, meaning they will still be required to continue all existing duties, even if they are no longer serving customers in person. It may that this provision can be reduced under the future contract, particularly when existing online services and virtual systems are enhanced and implemented