

## Threat of intervention must loom over parking authorities

Powers for a higher authority to step in if parking authorities fail to follow new guidelines, due to be published tomorrow, must be part of the restructured parking enforcement regime, says The AA Motoring Trust.

The principle of intervention has already been applied to traffic management in Department for Transport consultation on Guidance on intervention criteria<sup>1</sup>, which got underway on Friday.

A system of compensation, for when local authorities drag their feet in dealing with appeals against penalty notices, should also be implemented to reinforce proper supervision and control of parking enforcement.

Fridays traffic management intervention criteria set out a series of general aims for a supervisory body, all of which should be applied to parking enforcement. These include:

- Encouraging local authorities to raise standards;
- Helping local authorities to focus on essential elements of guidance;
- Giving local authorities a clear understanding of how they should assess their performance;
- Setting clear and consistent thresholds for interventions;
- Acting as an operators manual for authorities to refer back to for guidance;
- Giving the Secretary of State discretion in deciding whether a local authority is failing in its duties;
- Acting within soundly-based law.

Guidelines must be properly managed and policed for them to work properly. Without teeth to bring errant authorities back into line, they will become worthless and undermine public confidence, says Paul Watters, head of roads and transport for The AA Motoring Trust.

Clearly, the Government understands the need for this supervisory role in traffic management, so why not in parking enforcement?

NOTES TO EDITORS: <sup>1</sup> Under the Traffic Management Act 2004: Network Management Duties, consultation on draft Guidance on intervention criteria provides a wide range of aims to be considered.