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Provision of residents only parking zones

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr T Ansell - Transport

Executive Summary:

Residents only parking zones are a tool designed to protect residents from the negative impacts of commuter parking. Such zones are of particular relevance in areas close to town centres and venues that attract high visitor numbers.

Currently the council receives a significant number of requests for the introduction of residents only parking scheme. Given the many competing demands associated with the overall management of the highway network and limited budgets there remains a need for a thorough evaluation and prioritisation mechanism.

The existing criteria for introduction of residents parking schemes were last reviewed and approved in 1991 by the Highways and Public Works Committee and no longer meets the needs of the 21st century.

A revised policy and prioritisation mechanism is being developed to assist in the future evaluation and delivery of residents only parking zones. Whilst the work is still in draft format, a number of significant issues need to be concluded prior to the formal adoption of the revised policy and prioritisation mechanism. The views of the panel would therefore be of particular benefit.

Reason for scrutiny:

The development of a suitable policy and prioritisation mechanism is of particular importance to the council in terms of its budget management and the local community in terms of the negative impacts they experience from consistent commuter parking problems.

The development of the new arrangements will benefit from the panels scrutiny and input to ensure a successful output.

Background papers:

Report of the Director of Engineering and Town Planning to the Highways and Public Works Committee meeting 26 September 1991

Resource and legal considerations:

Residents parking zones need to be formalised in a traffic regulation order that along with associated signs and lines will be used as the basis of any subsequent enforcement activity.

The costs of implementing a resident's only parking zone will be specific to the extent of each zone. Currently no dedicated budget is available to implement residents only parking zones.

Subsequent enforcement of resident only zones will be undertaken by the council's civil enforcement officers.

Citizen impact:

Residents will have the opportunity to either support or object to the proposed resident's only parking zone, however unanimous support will not be required. Once a resident's only parking zone has been implemented, only permit holders will be permitted to park within the zone during controlled periods. Residents wishing to join a suitable scheme will need to pay an appropriate annual fee.

Environmental impact:

The operation of residents only parking zones can have a positive environmental impact within the zone. A reduction in the numbers of vehicles travelling into and through the zone looking for a parking space will be reduced. The visual street scene could be improved as a direct result of a reduced turnover of vehicles.

Performance management:

The introduction of a new resident's only parking policy and prioritisation mechanism will ensure future requests are appropriately evaluated and scarce resources targeted to the areas of highest need.

Equality Implications:


An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the review and this will influence the outcome of the revised policy.

Consultation:

Initial consultation has been focused within Engineering & Transportation disciplines. Wider public consultation is planned prior to the formal adoption of any revised arrangements. Once a new policy has been approved, the application of residents only parking zones will be subject to detailed scheme specific consultation as part of the statutory procedures involved with the implementation of traffic regulation orders.

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1. Report

The Council current operates five residents only parking zones that in general terms are designed to address resident parking problems in residential areas where a high volume of on street parking by non residents occurs. Specific examples include areas adjacent to Walsall town centre, Bescot Stadium and Manor Hospital. All of the existing schemes were introduced under criteria set in 1991.

Given the age of the existing policy and budget constraints, many factors are now considered worthy of consideration for inclusion in a revised policy. A sample of these are detailed below:

- The need for an appropriate priority / ranking system particularly as funding is very limited.
- Should we link permit costs to vehicle emissions (contribution to carbon agenda).
- Should we link permit costs to cost of the overall scheme operation so as the administration/enforcement cost does not become a financial burden on the general tax payer.
- How to manage permits for multi occupancy premises both current and future.
- Should we allow commercial vehicles in the scheme (works vans kept at home)
- Should we cap the total number of permits issued in relation to the available road space as this could result in more or less permits/household across different residents parking schemes.
- What percentage of support from residents we should seek before progressing a scheme.
- What is a suitable percentage of households without access to off-street parking facilities.
- Input of the neighbourhood management model
- How to treat carers/health care workers in the scheme.
- Provisions for blue badge motorists.

Residents naturally tend to think that the highway in front of their property is in their ownership and should only be used by them or their visitors. This is not the case as any motorist has the right to park at any location on the public highway provided they are not causing an obstruction or they are not contravening any parking restrictions.

These assumptions often lead to requests for residents only parking zones at locations that do not justify their introduction when a range of highway management factors are considered. It is therefore very important that any revised policy is able to distinguish between locations that suffer from only minor inconvenience to residents from locations that suffer significantly from the impacts of non resident parking.

Clearly, there is a significant cost to the council associated with the implementation and operation of residents parking zones. This needs to be carefully considered when setting permit costs as residents will expect a high level of enforcement to be undertaken. From current experience, the level of penalty charge income received from any enforcement activity is unlikely to cover the costs of carrying out the enforcement.

Once operational, residents only parking zones provide a significant benefit to local residents and this needs to be recognised in the overall benefit cost ratio of residents parking zones.

The attached **Appendix A** details the draft revised residents only parking policy in more detail. In addition to this a prioritisation mechanism needs to be developed that can be used to rank schemes for implementation as and when funding allows.

RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEMES
DRAFT REPORT

JUNE 2010

Contents

	Foreword
1	Introduction
2	Design of schemes
3	Revised criteria
4	Existing schemes
5	Times of operation
6	Issue of permits
7	Business permits
8	Cost of permits
9	Permits (general)
10	Exemptions
11	Blue badge holders
12	Enforcement and scheme administration

This report has been prepared to detail the process of updating the existing residents parking criteria, taking into account the council's civil parking enforcement responsibilities, guidance from the institution of Highways & Transportation Parking Strategies and Management 2005 and practise in use across other authorities.

In addition to the above, many other factors are being considered and developing for possible inclusion in the criteria.

- The need for an appropriate priority / ranking system particularly as funding is very limited.
- Should we link permit costs to vehicle emissions (contribution to carbon agenda).
- Should we link permit costs to cost of the overall scheme operation so as the administration / enforcement cost does not become a financial burden on the general tax payer.
- How to manage permits for multi occupancy premises both current and future.
- Should we allow commercial vehicles in the scheme (works vans kept at home).
- Business permits (Moat Road garage in middle of residents parking zone).
- Should we cap the total number of permits issued in relation to the available road space as this could result in more or less permits / household across different residents parking schemes.
- What percentage of support we should seek before progressing a scheme.
- What is a suitable percentage of households without access to off street parking facilities.
- Do we need to consider the input of the new neighbourhood management arrangements as part of the initial support to develop a scheme.
- How to treat carers in the scheme.
- What about blue badge motorists.
- Should we introduce a scratch card arrangement for visitor parking.
- Do we need full / part time schemes.
- Does this policy need an equality impact assessment.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 There are a number of existing residents parking schemes within the Borough, however the council receives numerous requests for new residents parking schemes each year. Therefore a fair and robust criteria needs to be put in place taking into account the changes brought about by civil parking enforcement, and ensuring that only those locations which have a serious parking problem are approved for a scheme.

1.2 Residents parking schemes are designed to give priority to residents by defining parts of the highway where:

- Parking is permitted only if a valid permit issued by the Local Authority is displayed in the vehicle.
- Parking times and duration are limited, except for vehicles displaying a valid permit.

They are not a means of controlling access to certain areas.

1.3 Schemes are typically introduced in residential areas where a high volume of on street parking by non residents occurs. Walsall specific examples include areas adjacent to Walsall town centre, Bescot Stadium and Manor Hospital..

1.4 Residents parking schemes may incorporate one street or several streets to form a zone.

1.5 Possession of a valid permit does not ensure entitlement to park and does not imply that adequate parking space will be available for all permit holders at one time. The maximum number of permits shall be determined on a case by case basis, and will be proportionate to the number of eligible households and parking capacity within the street or zone.

1.6 Depending on capacity a limited number of visitor permits may be offered, for which an additional charge will apply.

1.7 Vehicles not displaying a valid permit may be issued with a penalty charge notice.

1.8 Permits are not transferable between schemes.

1.9 An amendment to the current Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (Waiting, Loading, Stopping, Disabled Parking and Residents Parking)

Order, July 2008 Traffic Regulation Order will be required for the introduction of a new residents parking scheme, and any changes to the permit costs.

2.0 Design of residents parking schemes

2.1 The following needs to be considered in the design of individual schemes:

- Is a scheme required on a permanent basis or if it can be limited to specific days, times of day, seasons or events.
- Displacement into surrounding areas, it would be counterproductive to simply move the problem to a different location.
- Can effective control of parking space be gained through the introduction of waiting restrictions that apply during that part of the morning when commuters are seeking all day parking.

2.2 The design of individual schemes will vary, to inform scheme design surveys will be undertaken to determine the levels of residents and non resident parking demand, the level of support for the scheme and the times during which it may be appropriate for the scheme to operate.

Surveys undertaken may include:

- Appropriate surveys to determine the scale of the problem
- An evaluation of properties having off-street parking or potential for off street parking.
- An assessment of the on street parking capacity
- Surveys to establish the level of parking by residents during the day

2.4 The existence of and extent of other schemes in the area both on and off street should be considered, including the frequency and success of enforcement regimes, and potential impact on one another.

2.5 Remote schemes will require careful consideration as enforcement could place a disproportionately high demand on limited resources.

3.0 Proposed criteria for the introduction of new residents parking schemes.

3.1 Following receipt of a petition from residents requesting a scheme and acknowledging their agreement to pay the associated permit costs, it is proposed that the following set of criteria should be met prior to the consideration of a residents parking scheme being promoted.

- a) Not less than 85% of the available kerbside space is occupied for more than six hours between 8am and 6pm on five or more days a week, and a bona fide need of residents is established.
- b) At least 80% of the residents directly affected by the scheme have no possibility of providing parking within the curtilage of their own properties.
- c) After consultation a minimum of 80% of residents directly affected by the scheme are in favour of the proposals.
- d) Schemes will not be considered where parking would not normally be permitted on grounds of road safety and traffic flow conditions.
- e) The introduction of a scheme should not cause unacceptable displacement problems in adjacent roads.
- f) The council is satisfied that a reasonable level of enforcement can be maintained by Civil Parking Enforcement Officers.
- g) Where parking demand along a length of road exceeds availability the maximum number of permits issued (resident and business) will not exceed 120% of the available roadside parking.

4.0 Existing Schemes

4.1 Existing residents parking schemes will be unaffected by the new policy. They would be unlikely to meet the criteria set down in section 3.1 as the outside influence on parking will have already been removed.

4.2 Charging for existing schemes will be subject to the review.

5.0 Times of operation

5.1 Residents parking schemes usually apply Monday to Friday between the hours of 8am and 6.30pm, however, these times may be adjusted to suit each scheme and where necessary, schemes may operate for 24 hours daily.

6.0 Issue of permits

- 6.1 All reasonable steps will be taken to make residents aware in writing of their entitlement to apply for permits.
- 6.2 The number of permits issued to each household will be proportionate to the number of parking bays available within each zone as detailed in item 3.1 (g).
- 6.3 Residents permits will only be issued to vehicles registered at eligible addresses and where proof of residency is provided.
- 6.4 Subject to sufficient on street capacity visitors parking permits may be issued.
- 6.5 The administration system will facilitate the issue of permits to company car drivers provided that the following documentation can be produced
 - a typed letter on headed paper signed by the company secretary confirming that the vehicle is made available to the resident outside of working hours.

7.0 Business permits

- 7.1 Under certain circumstances consideration will be given to allow businesses within zones to purchase permits. Business permits will generally be associated with businesses premises rather than an individual vehicle.
- 7.2 Proof that a business operates from an address within a residents parking scheme area will be required.

8.0 Cost of Permits

- 8.1 The cost of all permits shall be detailed in Schedule 2 of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (Waiting, Loading, Stopping, Disabled Parking and Residents Parking) Order, July 2008 (as amended). The charges will be determined based on the costs required to administrate and enforce the schemes, and will be reviewed biannually
- 8.2 The level of charge will be chosen to achieve full cost recovery and will be based on a number of factors, including the extent of permit take up and the level of enforcement

9.0 Permits (general)

- 9.1 All permits must be displayed on the inside windscreen or dashboard of the registered vehicle. In the case of a motorcycle the permit should be placed in a conspicuous position in a vehicle mounted disc holder.
- 9.2 Permits will be issued for a 12 month period and be subject to a charge as detailed in 6.1, which is payable at the time of issue.
- 9.3 Permits will relate to specific streets or zones and will not be transferable between schemes.
- 9.4 Permits may be revoked if used fraudulently, if the applicants circumstances change such that the criteria for eligibility is no longer met or if a replacement permit is issued.
- 9.5

10.0 Permitted vehicles

- 10.1 A residents permit, visitor permit or business permit will only be issued in respect of a motorcar, motorcycle or light good vehicles.
- A motorcar is defined as – a mechanically propelled vehicle constructed solely for the carriage of passengers and their effects, seating no more than 7 persons in addition to the driver.
 - A motorcycle is defined as – a mechanically propelled vehicle not being a motorcar having fewer than 4 wheels, the weight of which unladen does not exceed 410 kilograms.
 - Light goods vehicle – a motor vehicle constructed or adapted for use for the carriage of goods, the permissible maximum weight of which does not exceed 3.5 tonnes.

11.0 Exemptions

- 11.1 A permit will not be required by vehicles actively (and essentially) engaged in the pursuance of statutory powers or duties by the following:
- Police, ambulance or fire service
 - Collection or delivery of post
 - Statutory undertakers

- 11.2 Exemptions for formal wedding cars or hearses may be granted in certain circumstances and will be at the discretion of the Parking Services Manager.
- 11.3 By prior arrangement with the Parking Services Manager, exemptions may be granted for vehicles being used in connection with repairs and alterations to premises within a scheme.
- 11.4 Permits will not be required for vehicles actively involved in loading and unloading or to allow passengers to board or alight from a vehicle.

12.0 Blue Badge Holders

- 12.1 If the traffic regulation order provides for permit holders only, blue badge holders must not park within a residents parking bay without displaying a valid permit.
- 12.2 If the traffic regulation provides for limited waiting with an exemption for permit holders, blue badge holders will also be exempt.

13.0 Enforcement and administration of the scheme.

- 13.1 The enforcement of residents parking schemes will be carried out on behalf of the council by civil parking enforcement officers as per existing schemes.
- 13.2 The scheme shall be administrated by Parking Services at Walsall Council.