



Wiltshire County Council

Guidance on the Introduction of Residents Parking Schemes in the County of Wiltshire



January 2007

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Introduction

A number of residential streets in Wiltshire are frequently subjected to extensive parking by shoppers and commuters. In these areas residents have expressed concerns that this often prevents them parking their own vehicles, or those of their visitors, close to their homes. Whilst it should be noted that there is no right to park on the highway – the only legal right being to pass and repass, it is sometimes desirable to introduce residents parking schemes to control the existence of parking and to discourage commuter parking which should be encouraged to make better use of more appropriate off-street facilities.

It is unlikely that the Council would have the financial or staff resources, in a single financial year, to satisfy the current number of residents' requests for schemes and review the operation of the existing schemes. It is suggested therefore that the requests be prioritised by the application of a system which can be seen as fair and consistent. This can be achieved by undertaking parking surveys, during the daytime, evening and overnight, on typical weekdays and a Saturday in each of the streets that have been identified as having a potential problem. The surveys aim to obtain information regarding the demand by residents and the level and effect of non resident parking. Consideration must then be given to the possible displacement effect caused by the introduction of a resident's scheme.

The results of this process will give an insight of the actual demand for a scheme on a daily basis and whether a scheme will adequately provided for their needs and also give a prioritised list of areas from which the Council could, subject to finance being available, select a number of streets to be considered for residents parking schemes. In addition the survey results would assist with the design and extent of a scheme

This guidance document sets out an appropriate set of rules for the consideration and introduction of Residents Parking Schemes including the consultation process and also advice on the appropriate types of scheme and permits to be introduced within the schemes.

Executive Summary

This guidance document sets out a clear set of guidance and rules under which schemes will be considered and under which they will operate. It is important that these rules, as far as possible, take into consideration the various needs of the resident's and other road users across the Districts yet retain continuity by avoiding a plethora of rules.

The way in which schemes are prioritised is often subjective. This document suggests a method of assisting with this assessment but also acknowledges that this should be supplemented by the local knowledge obtained over a period of time. The method is based on a scoring system which takes into consideration the number of properties, the level of on-street and off-street parking, the average occupancy levels during weekdays and Saturdays and the peak resident parking levels.

The cost of permits, no matter how small, will always be the main source of objections. However, it is essential that the cost of administering the scheme is reflected in the cost of the permits.

Resident parking schemes aim to give priority to residents over commuters and visitors to the area. This for most areas is a daytime problem over a 5 or 6 day week. It is not considered appropriate for schemes to extend into hours when commuter activity is nominal as this gives a false assurance to the resident who expects enforcement, or more importantly has an expectation of a space during hours which cannot be reasonably enforced with the resources available.

As part of any scheme design a review of the appropriateness of any current restrictions should be undertaken. In particular a revision of any daytime restrictions typically found on one side of the street is suggested to assist residents in finding a legal parking place at times of greatest need (i.e. before 8.30am and after 5.30pm).

Section 1 - Layout of RPS (including times of operation)

- 1.1 It is important to note that on some streets the amount of permitted parking, which could be provided, could well be less than that currently practical on the street. This would not normally be an issue on weekdays during the working day. It could however potentially pose a problem at weekends and during the evenings/overnight when resident and visitor parking activity is at it's greatest. For this reason many typical RPS in the Country have been introduced together with daytime parking restrictions. However the restrictions can often prove inconvenient during the early evening when demand by residents is at its greatest. It is therefore suggested that, when considered necessary, a restriction between 8.30am and 5.00pm on a Mon-Fri or Mon-Sat, should provide greater flexibility for the residents without being detrimental to the reasons for the restriction (e.g. higher vehicle flows or access for commercial/delivery/refuse vehicles during the normal working day).
- 1.2 In the case of the Town Centre, because the non-residential parking is often commuters it would be appropriate to consider a five day (Monday to Friday) scheme. If problems are primarily due to short term shopping trips a six day (Monday to Saturday) scheme may be considered. It is not normally necessary to introduce a seven day 24 hour (7/24) scheme, unless the reason for the scheme is an increase in parking demand during the evening, for example due to a cinema or other leisure facility. It is important to remember that despite the public perception about what a scheme can deliver for the residents;
 - (i) In most instances non resident parking occurs during the day Monday to Saturday
 - (ii) Less, and more probably no enforcement resources would be available at night and on Sundays

- (iii) A resident's only scheme will not solve problems caused by too many residents' vehicles unless unpopular restrictions are placed on the issue of permits.

All residents parking schemes should be designed on a zonal basis with careful consideration of zone boundaries to prevent commuting within a zone.

- 1.3 Enforcement of residents permit schemes tend to be during normal working hours, it would be appropriate for the proposed schemes to be operational during times for which enforcement is provided, and times when commuter activity is greatest. Enforcement outside of these hours will generally be on an ad-hoc basis and may be seen as entrapment by some residents who are the ones often caught in contravention of the restrictions during non-commuter hours, which they see as unfair. It is unlikely that sufficient enforcement resources will be available for RPS to be enforced regularly outside of the normal working day.

Section 2 - Prioritising potential areas for RPS

- 2.1 It is proposed that a prioritisation system used successfully for a number of other authorities elsewhere, be introduced to determine the priority for RPS in the Districts. The survey method aims to help determine the extent of parking problems and the demand for residents parking. This system has four components:

- (i) The total level of parking occupancy of the streets on "typical" days. Parking occupancy surveys are therefore undertaken on a normal weekday and Saturday four survey beats per day, on each day (mid morning, mid afternoon, early evening and late evening);
- (ii) The level of on street residents parking;
- (iii) The availability or otherwise of off street parking for residents.
- (iv) The availability or otherwise of alternative parking for commuters

- 2.2. The system provides for a total score of 30 points as follows

- (i) Total occupancy – a maximum of 20 points based on the average of all vehicles parked at various times of day.
- (ii) Level of residents parking – a maximum of 5 points based on the highest number of residents vehicles at any time of day
- (iii) Availability of off street parking for residents – a maximum of 5 points the number of properties with off street parking places.

- 2.3 The system will produce a priority list to assist Members in the decision making process of where the limited resources could be allocated.

- 1.2 The list of potential areas/streets will need to be provided by the districts and should be based on streets for which residents have made a formal request for a residents parking scheme.
- 2.5 When the list has been adopted, the District and County Councils may wish to determine the number, the extent and the geographical locations of the areas at the top of the priority list. It is possible that, for financial reasons, not all of the schemes could be implemented. WCC may also wish to take a policy decision that other areas scoring below a certain number of points say 15, would not normally be considered for a scheme given the relatively low level of problems and the restrictive effect it would have on residents. Given these two elements the districts may wish to consider introducing an annual review of potential areas. This would have the benefit of never actually refusing any area schemes, and at the same time being able to accommodate changes in parking behaviour including displacement from newly introduced RPS or other changes to parking patterns such as the loss of public parking places, or development taking place.

Section 3 - Permit types and criteria for issue.

Residents Permits

- 3.1 Each Council reserves the right to refuse issue of permits, where the class of vehicle in specific cases is deemed unsuitable for the scheme.
- 3.2 If a limit of one or two permits per property is considered appropriate additional permits could be made available in areas where road space can accommodate at least 25% more cars than the number of permits issued. Should additional permits be available it is suggested that this be on a first come first served basis with no guarantee of a permit in future years. Proof of vehicle ownership or entitlement to keep the vehicle at home should also be required. Normally a utility bill and vehicle registration document will provide the necessary evidence, however the issuing authority may, at its discretion, determine or request other forms of evidence. This may be particularly relevant when a resident has access to or use of one or more company vehicles. In such circumstances a letter from the company may be required and a transferable permit issued. The strict control on the number of permits available is considered essential to a scheme achieving its objectives. Such restrictions, when relaxed, eventually result in chronic parking problems caused simply by too many residents' vehicles and complaints that residents are paying for a scheme which offers no tangible benefit. Two permits per property is considered to be a fair allocation and not considered restrictive, however for high occupancy dwellings could generate a number of objections.

Business Permit

- 3.3 Businesses operating within a Residents Parking Scheme may, at the discretion of the Councils, be considered eligible for a permit.

Visitors Permits

- 3.4 Annual visitor permits are sometimes considered an appropriate means of managing visitors, and are considered easier to manage than books of daily permits. However, they often become an additional permit for the property. Daily scratch card permits for visitors is now the most popular way of managing visitors, however these can be costly to purchase and administer for a small authority. It is therefore recommended that, in the event of visitor permits being introduced, the charge for the permits reflect their value and the cost of administration. It is recommended that a charge at least equal to that of the residents' permit be charged for. It is also recommended that this be reviewed annually by survey to check for abuse and misuse of permits. It may be necessary to restrict / limit visitor permits to individual properties.

Renewal of Permits

- 3.5 It is the permit holder's responsibility to renew their permits before expiry. Residents will appreciate a reminder and this is good customer practice. However the District Councils would need to take into account the staff resources/costs associated with this.

Mis-use and withdrawal of Permits

- 3.6 In normal circumstances the level and frequency of misuse of permits is very small and easily detected. Experience elsewhere has found that the residents themselves are often the first line in enforcement. Also the potential of withdrawal or invalidation of a permit is sufficient to halt any misuse. Again such a policy should be clearly documented and the residents be made aware of the policy. This may be particularly relevant if the authority decides to issue annual visitors permits.

Blue badge holders

- 3.7 Blue badge holders who are non-residents would be permitted to park in a RPS on yellow line restrictions under the national regulations and concessions for legitimate badge holders. It may be necessary to consider whether any further concessions would be appropriate e.g. within the 'permit holders only bays' themselves without time limit, to reduce the possibility of vehicles being parked obstructively on other restrictions at junctions etc.

Carers

- 3.8 In many instances the introduction of some limited waiting bays would provide carers with the ability to park in a RPS. The District Council may however wish in certain circumstances to draw up rules that deem a regular carer visiting for long periods a "resident" of the area. This is only likely to be appropriate if the resident does not own a vehicle themselves and therefore there is no permit allocated to that property. Such schemes need to be managed carefully and strict procedures agreed with the relevant organisations. A County wide scheme would need the agreement of the other Districts affected.

Medical Permits

- 3.9 Limited waiting times are likely to be adequate for the majority of medical visits. The medical profession also have a means of identifying nurses or doctors on call. However, if problems arise, the provision within the policy to issue permits to local doctors' surgeries or Health Centres covering the areas of their responsibility may be an appropriate solution. It is recommended that the need for such permits is monitored and made available at a later date if considered appropriate.

Trades people Permits

- 3.10 Many different 'trades' often request permits on a District wide basis. These range from general building and property maintenance contractors to mobile hairdressers and estate agents. The issue of these permits may be considered by the individual Councils although they prove very difficult to manage and are therefore often abused. If trades people need to use their vehicle on site a temporary dispensation should be sought for which a fee will be charged. This should be clearly explained in any literature sent to the property holders to avoid any doubt at a later date.

Security

- 3.11 It is essential that all permits including visitor permits are not only printed to prevent forgery but are managed and issued in a secure way to prevent abuse. It should not be forgotten that a permit with a face value has a significantly higher value to a non resident. Secure permits can be procured for use by the authority or alternatively the printing out-sourced to a specialist printer.

Section 4 - Charging for permits and Enforcement costs

- 4.1 This is a particularly controversial issue as many residents consider that they are not the cause of parking problems and having paid their vehicle excise duty fee they are "entitled" to park on the highway in their own area free of any charge. However all residents parking schemes must be operated on a cost neutral basis and under no circumstances must be a charge on the on-street parking account.

In determining the level of charge it is considered that it should reflect at least the annual costs of administering the permit system. This would include staff costs, overheads, consumables and any permit system maintenance items (software licences for example

- 4.2 Additional permits could be issued if sufficient road space is available and when all residents have had the opportunity to obtain their permit entitlement. If second permits were to be issued as of right, it would be appropriate that the charge for the additional permits reflect the benefit it provides.

- 4.3 Improved IT systems enable the districts to monitor the number of permits per Zone compared to the available spaces on-street. A limit of say, 125% of the spaces for the number of issued permits could be applied. It is likely to prove unpopular if permits are no longer available to residents with more than 2 vehicles if there is clearly adequate space available on street.
- 4.4 The introduction of complex rules, permit management systems, refunds and various other permit types or length (e.g. monthly) add to the administration cost and therefore the potential cost to the resident. It is therefore beneficial to keep rules simple.
- 4.5 When considering the introduction of further schemes the cost of enforcement should not be overlooked as this is potentially a significant cost to the enforcement authority. Different schemes will of course require different levels of enforcement. Those prone to very short term commuter problems, or with significant areas of limited waiting are likely to require more frequent patrols than those who sufferer from long stay commuters and which are predominantly permit holder only parking places.

Appendix A - Terms and conditions for Residents Parking Schemes in North Wiltshire

Eligibility for Permits

Permits will only be made available to a resident whose normal place of abode is within the street designated on a permit; i.e. their vehicle must be registered at that address and this must be displayed in the windscreen of the vehicle at all times it is parked within a scheme.

- Residents will be required to:-
 - i) Provide proof of eligibility for permits (council tax or utility bill); and
 - ii) Provide proof of vehicle ownership. (V5 log book)
 - iii) Pay the requisite fee.
- There will be a restriction on the number of permits issued per household, except in streets where the road space available can accommodate at least 25% more vehicles than the number of properties. In this instance additional permits will be available on a first come first served basis. Each permit must be for a vehicle registered to an owner at the given address.
- Permits will be valid for a period of 12 months from the date of issue.
- Residents who have use of a company car, lease/hire car or who operate a taxi will require a letter, or lease agreement to confirm this arrangement.

- If a resident has regular visits by a registered carer a carer's permit or annual visitors could be issued to them to enable parking in the residents parking area providing that a permit has not been issued to the resident of that property.

Level of charges for residents parking permits

- A charge will be levied for each permit, with permits being valid for a period of 12 months. Additional permits, when available, shall be issued on a first come first basis at a charge until all available permits are issued (to a maximum of 125% of the zones' parking capacity).
- An administration fee of will be payable for the replacement of lost or damaged permits
- An administration charge of £ will be levied for provision of new permits for owners who have changed their vehicle, and that the new permit is valid only to the expiry date of the old permit.
- Visitor permits may be available and a charge will be levied. Proof of residency will be required.

Appendix B

Criteria for Residents Parking Schemes

The following are regarded as the main criteria which should be met prior to the consideration of a residents parking scheme:-

- a) Not less than 85% of the available kerb side space is occupied for more than six hours between 8am and 6pm on five or more days a week from Monday to Saturday inclusive, and a bona fide need of residents is established.
- b) Not more than 50% of the car owning residents have, or could have parking available within the curtilage of their own property, or within 200 metres walking distance by way of garages or other private off-street space.
- c) The peak or normal working day demand for residents' spaces should be able to be met up to a maximum of 125% of the zones parking capacity.
- d) The design and introduction of a scheme should give consideration to the displacement parking in adjacent roads.
- e) The Authority should be satisfied that a reasonable level of enforcement of the proposals can be maintained by Parking Attendants.

- f) The initial proposals should be acceptable to the greater proportion of the residents.
- g) Permits for non-residential premises should be able to be limited in their use to essential operational use only.
- h) In areas where parking space is severely limited, the introduction of reserved parking does not seriously affect the commercial viability of the area.
- i) After a full consultation process in excess of 50% of the residents of the streets directly affected are in favour of the proposals.
- j) Residents parking schemes will not be considered in commercial centres.

The above criteria should be used as a guide and be treated as reasonable requirements for a scheme. However, the details could be modified to accord with special circumstances and it is therefore important to consider each scheme on its own merits.

Appendix C

Consultation Protocol

The Case for a Protocol

Consultation can be a powerful tool for improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of services, and for ensuring that the Council remains in touch with the community.

There are generally two separate phases that can be summarised as:

- (i) Development and Preliminary Design Phase
 - Preliminary consultation designed to identify problems/issues to be targeted, outlining objectives for the proposal as a whole.
 - Following the preparation of a preliminary design, a full public consultation including some or all of the following elements:
 1. Newsletters summarising proposals, and feedback form
 2. Public exhibitions
 3. Press articles
 4. Press advertisements
 5. Website
 - Results of consultations to be presented in a report.
 - Modifications to scheme design
 - Preparation of final proposals, including finalisation of preliminary design drawings
- (ii) Detailed Design and Implementation Phase

- Tailored much more towards keeping people informed on progress of the implementation of an already agreed proposal
- Options for change far more limited
- For both phases, a protocol to guide key components of consultation should introduce a degree of certainty to a process that ultimately needs to result in schemes being delivered on the ground in a timely and cost effective manner.

To that end, the following factors are identified as being crucial to that objective:

- Cost
- Time
- “Go/No Go” (i.e. the minimum level of support required to proceed) and
- Delegation

Taking each in turn,

Cost

In relation to the Development and Preliminary Design phase of a project, the project manager will always need to ensure that a consultation exercise has been planned and undertaken which makes certain that local priorities are reflected in the design and that the proposals are supported by the local community.

Each project will have an individually tailored consultation programme featuring all or some of the techniques referred to above; plainly the more extended and complex those processes become, the greater the cost. Having regard to recent experience, best practice and affordability, it is suggested that the proportion set aside for consultation should be **no greater than 25%** of the entire budget allocated for development and preliminary design.

For the Detailed Design and Delivery Phase, consultation is tailored much more towards keeping people informed of progress, and requires proportionally less in terms of overall budget.

Time

One of the primary objectives of a protocol is the need to ensure the timely delivery of schemes, and to ensure that when options for change are rehearsed through consultation that there is a recognised limit within which a decision must be reached that can be shared with consultees from the outset.

“Go/No Go” (i.e. the minimum level of support required to proceed)

Given the nature of the projects with which the Council becomes engaged, it is not realistic to proceed only in circumstances where there is unanimous support. However, the overarching purpose of consultation will always be to achieve the greatest degree of consensus, particularly at the development and preliminary design stage.

.Accepting that unanimity is extremely unlikely, it is therefore useful to consider what might be the minimum level of support required to proceed to the next stage of a particular project.

In order to determine what might constitute “substantial agreement”, the following simple matrix is commended as a way of drawing together the level of support a project has attracted through consultation at key stages by key groups or individuals. In summary, it proposes a scoring appraisal which for different stages looks at the degree of support at each individual stage. Depending on the degree of support, a score of -1, 0 or +1 is awarded for each stage and added together to give a final result.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
	-1	0	+1
Confirmation that a problem or need has been identified and prioritised	no		yes
Level of resident’s support for proposal	0-40%	41-60%	61-100%
Does local Member support proposal?	no	No strong view	yes
Level of public support at conclusion of development and preliminary design stage	0-40%	41-60%	61-100%

It is further commended that interpretation of the results should be:

Score 4	GO	
Score 1-3	GO/NO GO	decision referred to Committee
Score -4-0	NO GO	Committee informed that scheme should be abandoned and investment redirected

It is recognised that the thresholds suggested above should not be applied without discretion. Each project will exhibit varying degrees of controversy, and from time to time, it may be appropriate for the project manager to vary some or all of the criteria.