

Guidance on the
introduction of

Residents Parking Schemes



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Introduction

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.

A number of residential streets are frequently subjected to extensive parking by shoppers and commuters. 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 re-pass, 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 of the areas which request schemes and if deemed appropriate 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 provide for their needs and also give a prioritised list of areas from which the council could, subject to finance and resources 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.





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 authority yet retain continuity by avoiding a plethora of rules.

This document sets out a method of 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 a 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 when the issue may be too many cars owned by residents who are entitled to permits.

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)

It is important to note that on some streets within a proposed or requested residents parking scheme the amount of parking that would be permitted within a formal scheme could be less than is currently available due to the need to ensure junction protection, access and passing places.

This does not usually pose a problem during the weekday daytime restrictions due to the lower vehicle numbers. However, it can cause inconvenience to residents during weekends and evenings when demand is at a peak. All vehicles, including those of residents are required to park legally at all times or may be subject to enforcement.

In the case of the a town centre because the non-residential parking is often commuters it is appropriate to start consideration with a five day (Monday to Friday) scheme. If problems are due to short term shopping trips and commuting a six day (Monday to Saturday) scheme may need be considered. Occasionally a seven day restriction may be necessary due to the proximity to a town facilities.

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

- In most instances non-resident parking occurs during the day Monday to Friday.
- Less, and more possibly no, enforcement resources would be available at night.
- 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 and the numbers permitted per household.
- Neighbouring or adjoining streets which are subject to a Residents' Parking Scheme shall be classified as one zone.

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. 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

It is proposed that a survey method is used to help determine the extent of parking problems and the demand for residents parking in areas where residents and councillors have reported issues. This system has five components:

- The level of on street residents parking;
- The availability or otherwise of off street parking for residents.
- The availability or otherwise of alternative parking for commuters.
- 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).
- The wider community needs, for example: places

of worship, hospitals, schools, etc.

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

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

The system will produce a priority list to assist members in the decision making process of where the limited resources could be allocated. The relevant committee will then review and agree the forward plan of works.

Section 3: Permit types and criteria for issue

Residents permits

The council reserves the right to refuse issue of permits, where the class of vehicle in specific cases is deemed unsuitable for the scheme. For example, where the size of vehicle would reduce available parking for other residents in the area.

A strict control of the number of permits issued is essential. Where capacity allows, a maximum of two permits per property is considered appropriate. If capacity remains, then permits can be issued to properties in neighbouring streets, which do not have any off-street parking, within strict criteria, e.g., within 25m of the RPZ, then 50m of the RPZ, then 75m of the RPZ. This will be on a first come first served basis and it would not be possible to issue more permits than 125% of the available parking in the zone. This would be subject to periodic review.

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.

A property is defined as a residence being individually rated for the purpose of council tax. Houses in multiple occupation where the council tax is for the whole building will be entitled to the allocation for a single residence.

Business permits

Businesses operating within a Residents Parking Zone will not be considered eligible for a permit.

Visitors permits

Book of visitor tickets are available for residents to purchase where visitors/trades people require parking in a residents parking zone. Each book contains 10 tickets and a maximum of 20 books can be purchased in any year.

Virtual permits are becoming the preferred method of managing visitors with activation made from a mobile or landline telephone. All future schemes may include virtual permits as the standard method of validation. It is also recommend that the issue of visitor permits be reviewed annually to check for abuse and misuse of permits. If fraud is detected in specific areas it may be necessary to restrict/limit visitor permits to individual properties.

Renewal of permits

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 council needs to take into account the staff resources/costs associated with this and review the decision regularly.

Misuse and withdrawal of permits

In normal circumstances the level and frequency of misuse of permits is very small and easily detected. Experience 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

Blue badge holders would be permitted to park in a RPS on yellow line restrictions under the national regulations and concessions for legitimate badge holders.

Tradespeople permits

Many different trades often request permits or use the trades permit scheme on a daily basis. These range from general building and property maintenance contractors to mobile hairdressers and estate agents. If tradespeople need to use their vehicle on site a temporary dispensation may be sought for which a fee will be charged.

Security

It is essential that all paper 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. The use of virtual permits can and does reduce levels of fraud as the systems can be fully audited. Issue virtual permits only.



Section 4: Charging for permits and enforcement costs

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 and/or council tax feel that 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 as a minimum 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).

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.

The IT systems enable the council 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 two vehicles if there is clearly adequate space available on street.

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 where appropriate.

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 suffer from long stay commuters and which are predominantly permit holder-only parking places.

Appendix A: 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:-

- Not less than 75% of the available kerbside 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.
- Not more than 50% of dwellings 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 such as a driveway.
 - *A garage is defined as a building designed to accommodate a parked motor vehicle, with the minimum dimension being 5.0 metres long by 2.5 metres wide. Any garage that measures smaller than the minimum dimensions will not be classed as an off-road parking space.*
 - *A driveway is defined as an area of land designed to accommodate a parked motor vehicle.*
 - *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.*
 - *The design and introduction of a scheme should give consideration to the displacement parking in adjacent roads.*
 - *The authority should be satisfied that a reasonable level of enforcement of the proposals can be maintained by Civil Enforcement Officers.*
 - *The initial proposals should be acceptable to the greater proportion of the residents due to the restrictive and fiscal impact of a scheme.*
 - *Permits for non-residential premises should be able to be limited in their use to essential operational use only.*
 - *In areas where parking space is severely limited, the introduction of reserved parking does not seriously affect the commercial viability of the area.*
 - *After a full consultation process in excess of 50% of the total number of dwellings in the streets directly affected are in favour of the proposals to ensure a clear majority are in favour.*

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 B: 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:

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:
 - *Letters summarising proposals,*
 - *Public exhibitions*
 - *Press articles*
 - *Press advertisements*
 - *Website*
 - *Members surgeries*
- Results of consultations to be presented in a report.
- Modifications to scheme design: preparation of final proposals, including finalisation of preliminary design drawings.

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)
- 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. 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. Therefore consideration must be given to the Traffic Regulation Order Forward Plan and when schemes can be considered.

“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 -1	Neutral 0	Positive +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/cabinet member
Score -4 – 0	No Go	Committee/cabinet member 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.

P Mon - Sat
8 am - 6 pm
Resident
permit holders
R1
or
2 hours
No return
within 2 hours

 No exemption
for disabled
badge holders

Contact

Parking Operations
County Hall
High Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1UD

Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm
Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

01983 821000

parking.operations@iow.gov.uk

