

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JUNE 2015

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEME POLICY REVIEW

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To obtain the views of the Environment Scrutiny Committee on existing policy governing the operation of resident permit parking schemes.
- To obtain the views of the Environment Scrutiny Committee on policy options in respect of future resident permit parking schemes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

That:

(A)	the Committee considers and comments on the policy framework for the operation of the Council’s existing resident permit parking schemes;
(B)	Members offer their views on whether the additional survey of residents discussed in this report should be commissioned;
(C)	the Committee considers and comments on a proposed policy and operational guidance for new resident permit parking schemes, and:
(D)	The Executive Member for Economic Development is advised of any comments and recommendations arising from this Committee.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 East Herts Council operates twelve on-street resident permit parking schemes (also known as RPZs); seven in Bishop's Stortford, three in Hertford and two in Ware. The 'Newtown' scheme in central Bishop's Stortford is likely to be expanded in 2015/16 and it is likely that a scheme will be implemented in the Southmill Road area of Bishop's Stortford, also in 2015/16. A list of current RPZs can be seen at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.
- 1.2 A report on the financial aspects of RPZs was submitted to the East Herts Executive on 3 February 2015. The Executive resolved that; "[the] Environment Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider and make recommendations on the criteria against which existing resident parking schemes and requests for new schemes can be assessed".
- 1.3 In accordance with this resolution, this report invites Members to;
- i) Advise whether they wish the policy on existing RPZs to be reviewed.
 - ii) Advise whether they wish the additional survey of existing schemes mentioned in this report to be commissioned.
 - iii) Offer comments and suggestions on policy options for future RPZs.

2.0 Report

Options for Review – Existing Permit Schemes

- 2.1 The Council's current policy on RPZs dates back to its adoption of a District Parking Strategy in 2003. At that time schemes were implemented as part of a broader strategy for the effective management of parking in East Herts – a strategy which included adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement powers and a review of the designation and pricing of the Council's car parks.
- 2.2 The list of schemes recommended in 2003 may be viewed at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**. Members will note that most of the schemes recommended in the 2003 Strategy have been implemented.

- 2.3 Current policy can be summarised as follows; “the highest priority for parking in residential areas where pressure on parking is extreme should be given to residents of that area.”
<http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=10361>
Scheme Expenditure and Revenue
- 2.4 The expenditure element of RPZs can be broken down into two areas:
- Implementation costs (e.g. consultancy, legal costs and signs and lines procurement)
 - Operational costs (e.g. enforcement, printing costs and signs & lines maintenance)
- 2.5 Funding for scheme implementation is typically secured by way of growth bids through the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process, although use is also made of Section 106 contributions. The Parking Service is offered an opportunity to request inclusion of a S106 provision as part of the Council’s planning process where, in the opinion of officers a development may impact amenity for local residents.
- 2.6 The ‘Coronation Road’ (W2) scheme in Ware, the development of which was funded by the developers of the former Charvill’s Garage site is an example of where S106 funding enabled the implementation of a scheme, the need for which could not have been foreseen when the original list was created in 2003.
- 2.7 Even if S106 funding is secured through the planning process this does not guarantee that an RPZ will be implemented. Extensive public consultation is a prerequisite to progression. Accordingly, although S106 funding was secured in respect of the J Sainsbury development in Hertford, residents in the Port Vale area twice declined the offer of a scheme; therefore it was not progressed.
- 2.8 The report to the 3 February Executive confirmed that whilst there is significant variation in operational cost from scheme to scheme, the total operational cost of schemes matches closely total revenue from schemes, when Penalty Charge Notice income is included in the latter figure.
- 2.9 The revenue element of RPZs can be broken down as follows:
- PCN revenue
 - Permit revenue

- 2.10 The objective of Civil Parking Enforcement is that no Penalty Charge Notices are issued because of 100% compliance with parking restrictions. Of course this is not the case in reality. Only penalty charge income arising from contraventions linked to the presence of RPZs was included in the 3 February 2015 report. As this revenue is a function of the scheme's existence, it is considered appropriate to include it in the financial model.
- 2.11 The Council operates a uniform permit charge across all schemes. As the nature of each scheme varies, there can be significant disparities in respect of each scheme's overall financial position.
- 2.12 Local authorities are prohibited by law from seeking to generate a surplus from their on-street parking operations. Should a surplus arise, its use is ring-fenced to parking and transport related initiatives such as highway maintenance, car park provision and public transport. As stated earlier, East Herts makes a slight loss on the operation of its RPZs – as it does on its on-street operations overall - therefore such considerations do not arise.
- 2.13 Members are asked to advise whether they are content for existing RPZs to continue to operate at close to break-even point overall, or whether they also wish individual schemes to break even.
- 2.14 The latter approach would require an annual review of income and expenditure on each scheme before a charge could be set for the coming year. As can be seen from the 3 February report, this would lead to a significant increase to permit costs in many scheme areas. Expenditure in particular can fluctuate from year to year, which could create considerable volatility in permit prices. Many residents who had voted in favour of their scheme on terms advertised some years ago would undoubtedly resist such a significant change.
- 2.15 For the above reasons, officers recommend that a uniform permit charge should continue to apply in respect of current schemes, with adjustments to permit prices taking place through the annual MTFP process, in line with Council policy.
- 2.16 Members are also invited to advise whether they wish other terms of operation of current RPZs to be reviewed. Chief among these would be the current 'exclusive' nature of schemes.

- 2.17 As part of its six month review of the 'Chantry' (B7) RPZ, the Council sought residents' views on the introduction of 'shared use' parking, whereby a limited amount of commuter parking would be allowed on streets where parking demand was low during the working day. An overwhelming majority of residents rejected the proposal as can be seen from the review report.
http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/media/pdf/3/p/Chantry_Road_Consultation_Analysis_Report_Final.pdf
- 2.18 The above shows the difficulty of trying to implement significant changes to the terms of operation of schemes retrospectively. Given the high levels of satisfaction there was understandable resistance from most residents to a proposal that was seen as a post-hoc attempt to water down the scheme's benefits.
- 2.19 The question asked in 2012 did not test whether residents might be willing to entertain 'shared use' parking if some or all of any additional income generated was used to reduce the cost of their permits. The Council may wish to test this price sensitivity in those existing schemes, which might lead to support for an element of 'shared use' parking where there is significant under use by residents during the working day.
- 2.20 Officers advise that only the 'Chantry' (B7) scheme and areas of the Stanstead Road (B1) scheme, both in Bishop's Stortford, would be capable of accommodating shared use parking.
- 2.21 To introduce 'shared use' parking in existing scheme areas the Council would first have to consult informally and would then be required to promote a Traffic Regulation Order to give legal effect to the change.
- 2.22 Should Members consider that a more in-depth review of existing schemes is warranted, to include a survey of resident opinion, officers have obtained a quotation from the consultants who currently assist with the design and promotion of most East Herts RPZs. A copy of their proposal can be seen at **Essential Reference Paper 'D'**. The quoted price for this review is £12,000. Members are asked to confirm whether they wish this review of existing schemes to be commissioned, in which case funding will be sought either in the form of an 'in year' bid against the Council's Priority Spend budget or by way of a growth bid for 2016/17.

Policy Proposals – New Permit Schemes

- 2.23 At the 3 February Executive the question was also asked, should East Herts Council continue to implement RPZs under *any* circumstances? This is clearly one of the policy options available to the Council.
- 2.24 RPZs are only implemented in roads where a majority of residents who engage in the consultation process indicate their support. Reviews undertaken approximately six months after implementation invariably demonstrate high levels of resident satisfaction. Officers suggest that in residential areas where demand for on-street parking outstrips supply and where residents' quality of life is diminished as a result, RPZs have a positive role to play as part of a balanced approach to parking management. They should be retained as an option; however a more sophisticated policy framework than that which has existed since 2003 is now required.
- 2.25 A new policy in respect of future resident permit parking schemes should address the following issues:
- What should be the criteria for identifying potential scheme areas?
 - What should be the criteria for prioritising the implementation of schemes?
 - Does the Council's 'user pays' principle remain valid in respect of resident permit parking scheme charges?
 - Should new schemes be required to break even on an individual basis?
 - To what extent might the Council need to review other parking policies and provision – for example off-street parking availability, designation and pricing – in parallel with considering the implementation of a new on-street RPZ?
- 2.26 A log kept by the parking service of requests for resident permit parking schemes is attached as **Essential Reference Paper 'E'**. A suggested policy framework for the prioritisation and implementation of future resident permit parking schemes such as these is offered as **Essential Reference Paper 'F'**. Operational guidance would be developed to give substance to the agreed policy framework. Draft operational guidance to underpin this policy framework is offered as **Essential Reference Paper 'G'**.

2.27 In line with the request made by the Executive on 3 February the Environment Scrutiny Committee is invited to offer its comments and recommendations on the matters discussed in this report to the Executive Member for Economic Development. These will contribute to a review of RPZ policy to be considered by a future meeting of the Executive.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 The financial aspects of implementing and running a resident permit parking scheme can be considerable. For example, the implementation budget for the proposed scheme in the Southmill Road area of Bishop's Stortford is £30,000. Implementation costs are likely to increase should the more extensive qualification criteria offered in **Essential Reference Paper 'G'** be adopted.

3.3 Extensive informal and formal consultation takes place before a resident permit parking scheme is implemented. The final act of consultation is advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order. Any interested party may object to proposals set out in a Traffic Regulation Order.

3.4 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper "A"**.

Background Papers

- East Herts District Parking Strategy Financial Strategy (Ove Arup) May 2003
- Minutes of a meeting of the East Herts Executive on 15 July 2003
http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/Data/Executive/20030715/Agenda/minutes_1.pdf
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Sections 45-46)
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/contents>
- Report to the East Herts Executive 3 February 2015 (Permit Charging Policy)

Contact Member: Councillor Gary Jones – Executive Member for Economic Development

gary.jones@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Neil Sloper – Head of Information, Customer and
Parking Services
Contact Tel No x 1611
neil.sloper@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Andrew Pulham – Parking Manager
andrew.pulham@eastherts.gov.uk