

Essential Reference Paper 'G'

EAST HERTS COUNCIL RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING POLICY OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Resident permit parking schemes (RPZs) may be introduced to assist residents living in an area where on-street parking demand significantly exceeds supply and where it is not appropriate to manage parking problems using conventional parking restrictions.

This document supports the policy framework that underpins the prioritisation, implementation and operation of RPZs in East Herts.

2. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF A RESIDENT PARKING ZONE

Whilst there are immediate and obvious attractions of implementing RPZs, they bring advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

- Discourage commuter/shopper parking in residential streets
- Enhance environment in residential areas
- Residents find their on-street parking is easier and more convenient
- May engender improved parking and traffic management
- Can deliver road safety benefits

Disadvantages

- Possible negative effect of displaced commuter/shopper parking
- Costs of introduction and management and payment for permits
- Permits do not absolutely guarantee a parking space
- May only help manage an under-supply of spaces, not solve underlying problems
- Can lead to inefficient use of on-street parking spaces
- Possibility that a RPZ may reduce availability of on-street parking, with consequent problems for visitors and businesses.

3. TYPES OF RESIDENT PARKING SCHEME

There are two broad approaches to the implementation of an RPZ.

Exclusive Permit Schemes

This is the most traditional and common form of RPZ, where a street or area is divided into prohibited and permitted parking areas. In order to park in a permitted area, a vehicle would be required to display a valid permit. The permit categories may include residents, visitors, care workers serving residents and others as the

Council may see fit. The system provides optimum benefit to residents but low levels of resident parking can lead to an inefficient use of on-street parking at certain times of the day or days of the week.

In areas where the demand for on-street spaces from residents alone exceeds the supply, the management and allocation of permits can be problematic; this is particularly the case where the RPZ results in the kerb space being reduced through formalisation of permitted parking – e.g. clearing parking at junctions – although this is normally justified on traffic management/safety grounds alone.

Shared Space Schemes

This type of RPZ involves the dual use of on-street space, overcoming the under-use problem noted above. It commonly enables the time-limited shared use of on-street space (which may or may not be charged for) to be operated alongside vehicles with resident permits that would be exempt from either time or charge restrictions. In isolation, it may eliminate the need for the administration of permits for visitors, carers etc. A hybrid variation of this type of RPZ could contain some bays marked for exclusive resident use.

4. INITIAL CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION OF A RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEME

Criteria for shortlisting requests for an RPZ are:

- There should be clear evidence of resident and district and county councillor support for an RPZ.
- At least 50% of properties in the proposed area as a whole should have no off-street parking (officer survey required).
- The kerb space occupied by non-residents should be greater than 40% at times when parking problems caused by non-residents occur (third party survey required).
- There should be sufficient kerb space to enable a minimum of 75% of householders to park at least one vehicle on-street (third party survey required).

5. FINAL CRITERIA FOR RPZ PRIORITISATION

Final factors that will determine the order of progression of shortlisted RPZs are:

- The availability of S106 funding.
- Any beneficial tie-in with other work being undertaken e.g. town centre enhancements.
- Potential for a 'shared use' approach.
- Resolves problems for emergency vehicle access.
- The availability of off-street parking for non-residents in the area.
- The perceived impact of displacing non-resident cars.
- The size of the proposed RPZ.

The final decision as to whether to progress any given shortlisted RPZ to design and consultation stage will fall to the Portfolio Holder acting in consultation with the Head of Service, on the advice of the Parking Manager.

6. CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOL

All proposed RPZs will be subject to consultation. The process will comprise:

- An initial questionnaire to all residents and businesses within the proposed area to identify the level of community concern regarding parking difficulties and to establish the level of support for an RPZ. This consultation will also be used to identify the community's outline requirements for a RPZ. The results of this questionnaire will be used to inform the development of a proposed RPZ based on the majority view expressed.
- To qualify for progression to detailed design stage, a simple majority of the total number of households in a proposed scheme area (50% +1) must respond formally (and in favour) during this initial round of consultation.
- For an individual street within a proposed scheme area to be included in formal proposals a simple majority of those households in that street that vote is required to secure the inclusion of that road in the proposed scheme (50% +1). Officers may re-consult in areas where the vote is tied or where residents' wishes appear unclear; however any decision by officers to depart from the above policy position must be clearly articulated in relevant commissioning reports.
- A second round of consultation should be by means of a public exhibition, a public meeting or local residents' group meetings as appropriate to the size and scale of the potential RPZ. This will allow officers to answer questions on a one to one basis and should be followed up by a questionnaire to all residents and businesses within the proposed zone. This will include asking again if respondents are in favour or opposed to the RPZ (a final vote).
- The formal stage of the process will involve the advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order in the local media and on-street notices.
- All RPZs will be reviewed approximately six months after implementation. This review will include a postal survey of all residents and businesses, following which point modifications may be made where these are seen as beneficial to the needs of residents and others.

7. DETAILED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

When designing an RPZ there should be a clear understanding of the parking problems in the area and the implications of the introduction of the RPZ. Accordingly, when considering the needs of the residents and determining the layout of an RPZ the following detailed points must be addressed:

- Maintaining traffic flow & visibility at junctions.
- Vehicle accesses.
- Loading/unloading requirements.
- Bus stops.
- Needs of blue badge holders.
- Limited waiting areas for local businesses.
- Needs of visitors and other categories of drivers who need to park within the zone.
- The mix of the area (residential/commercial).
- Safety of the public and other road users within the zone.

The objective in all cases would be to maximise the number of residents spaces and to reduce the amount of commuter parking in residential areas and also to provide proper consideration of special issues such as churches, schools and businesses to minimise disruption.

Signage and markings are required to be in accordance with the current Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions and the relevant sections of the Department for Transport Traffic Signs Manual. Special authorisation will be obtained from the Department for Transport before any non-standard scheme is implemented.

Individual parking bays will not normally be provided. Vehicles must be parked wholly within a continual marked bay with no part of the vehicle spanning another marked bay or extending over yellow lines or some other restriction. Failure to comply with this requirement will make the permit holder liable to a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN).

A 'zone' approach can be used with special authorisation of the Department for Transport although the approval process can be lengthy. In these, yellow lines can be removed and the marking of bays is not necessary. However, signs are still needed to inform motorists of the restrictions and that, in practice, they are only recommended for a cul-de-sac and small areas. This is because motorists are, in general, only aware of the restrictions from signage at the entry of zones, hence the need to restrict the size of zones for clarity of enforcement.

8. SCHEME CHARGING PRINCIPLES

Permit and other related charges should be determined by the Council and should be set at a level that seeks to cover the annual operational costs of the RPZ. All such charges should be clearly set out and published in any consultation literature, along with all other Terms and Conditions of the Resident Parking scheme. All permit charges should be subject to an annual review process.