

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 6 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEME POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To adopt a new policy and operational guidance in respect of resident permit parking schemes in East Herts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE: That:

(A)	the new policy and operational guidance for future resident permit parking schemes as now submitted, be adopted, and
(B)	the actions proposed in paragraphs 2.7, 2.9 and 2.13 of this report, be approved.

1.0 Background

1.1 East Herts Council operates twelve on-street resident permit parking schemes (also known as RPZs). There are seven in Bishop's Stortford, three in Hertford and two in Ware. Work is underway on a scheme for Hertford and another in Bishop's Stortford. A list of current RPZs can be seen at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

1.2 The Council's current policy on RPZs dates back to its adoption of a District Parking Strategy in 2003 and 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>

1.3 A report on the financial aspects of RPZs was submitted to the East Herts Executive on 3 February 2015. This Committee 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”.

2.0 Report

2.1 In line with the request of the 3 February Executive a report was presented to the Council’s Environment Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2015. This Committee resolved that:

- Existing RPZs should continue under current arrangements, other than to explore opportunities for shared use parking where appropriate.
- There should be no commencement of new schemes until the Council formally adopts a new policy regarding the creation of RPZs.

Review of Existing Permit Schemes

2.2 It can be difficult to implement changes to the terms of operation of an RPZ that is already in place. Given the invariably high levels of satisfaction there can be understandable resistance among residents to proposals that may be perceived as a post-hoc attempt to water down the scheme’s benefits.

2.3 When consulted recently, residents of the ‘Chantry’ (B7) RPZ in Bishop’s Stortford resisted strongly a proposal to introduce ‘shared use’ parking, whereby non-residents’ vehicles might be allowed to park in the zone on a managed basis.

2.4 Officers have not tested 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 permits. The Council may wish to test this price sensitivity, which might lead to support for an element of ‘shared use’ parking where there is significant under use by residents during the working day.

2.5 Officers’ current view is that only the ‘Chantry’ (B7) scheme and areas of the Stansted Road (B1) scheme, both in Bishop’s Stortford, are capable of accommodating ‘shared use’ parking.

2.6 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.

- 2.7 The Executive is invited to confirm whether it wishes the 'exclusive' nature of existing RPZs to be reviewed with a view to implementing 'shared use' parking where possible.
- 2.8 Should Members consider that a more comprehensive review of all existing schemes is warranted, which could include a survey of resident opinion on issues such as 'shared use', officers have obtained a proposal from the consultants who currently assist with the design and promotion of most East Herts RPZs. The price for this review would be approximately £15,000. This review would establish a helpful evidence base upon which a number of proposals, including the possibility of amending the operational terms of current schemes, could be developed.
- 2.9 The Executive is asked to confirm whether it wishes this full review of existing schemes to be commissioned, in which case the cost would be met from New Homes Bonus funding.

Policy Proposals – New Permit Schemes

- 2.10 RPZs are only implemented 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.
- 2.11 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 therefore be retained as an option; however as more and more schemes are implemented they can exacerbate parking problems elsewhere, including off-street car parks. For this reason a more sophisticated policy framework than that which has existed since 2003 is now required.
- 2.12 Particular areas that the new policy on RPZs addresses include:
- The need for extensive research into the consequences for the wider community, should an RPZ be implemented.
 - The need to ensure that whilst RPZs address residents' needs, they operate flexibly, to make best use of the available kerb space.
 - The need to ensure that as far as is possible the Council's RPZs continue to operate on a 'break even' basis.

Under the new policy East Herts Councillors representing the wards in the town will enjoy an enhanced role at an early stage in the decision making process and their majority support for a scheme and the outline terms on which that scheme might operate will be a prerequisite to officers making a funding bid and proceeding to detailed design and public consultation stages. Local Members will also play a prominent role in the review of new schemes, which typically takes place around six months after implementation.

- 2.13 Officers' record of outstanding public requests for an RPZ is attached as **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**. The Executive is asked to confirm whether it wishes the viability of these requests to be re-evaluated under the terms of the new policy.
- 2.14 The proposed policy framework for the prioritisation and implementation of future RPZs is offered as **Essential Reference Paper 'D'**. Operational guidance to underpin this policy framework is offered as **Essential Reference Paper 'E'**. A basic flowchart of the proposed policy and operational procedure is offered as **Essential Reference Paper 'F'**.
- 3.0 Implications/Consultations
- 3.1 The financial aspects of implementing and running a resident permit parking scheme can be considerable. Evaluation and preparation costs would increase significantly should the more extensive qualification criteria offered in **Essential Reference Paper 'E'** be adopted.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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)
<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/documents/s27538/Resident%20Permits.pdf>

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