

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'E'

EAST HERTS COUNCIL RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEMES OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Resident permit parking schemes (RPZs) may be offered 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 governs the prioritisation, implementation and operation of RPZs in East Herts.

2. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF AN RPZ

Implementing an RPZ can bring advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages

- Discourages commuter/shopper parking in residential streets
- Enhances environment in residential areas
- Residents find on-street parking is easier and more convenient
- May engender improved parking and traffic management
- Can deliver road safety benefits
- Encourages alternative, more sustainable modes of travel
- Can reduce traffic and congestion

Disadvantages

- Possible negative effects of displaced commuter/shopper parking
- Costs of introduction and management
- Residents and their visitors have to pay to park in their street
- 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 RPZ

There are two broad approaches to the implementation of an RPZ (see below). In order to ensure the most efficient use of available parking there should be a presumption towards a 'shared use' approach wherever possible.

Exclusive Use 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 have 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 Use Permit 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 and/or limited waiting use.

4. INITIAL CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION OF AN RPZ

Criteria that must be met in full before an RPZ will be shortlisted:

- There should be early evidence of resident and district councillor support for an RPZ (e.g. petition, build-up of email requests or letters).
- At least 50% of properties in the proposed area as a whole should have no off-street parking (survey required).
- The kerb space occupied by non-residents should be greater than 40% at times when parking problems caused by non-residents occur (survey required).
- There should be sufficient kerb space to enable a minimum of 75% of all households within the proposed scheme area to park at least one vehicle on-street (survey required).

5. FINAL CRITERIA FOR RPZ PRIORITISATION

Final criteria that will determine the order of progression of shortlisted RPZs:

- 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 and the outline terms on which that scheme should be developed will rest with the Portfolio Holder acting in consultation with the Head of Service, on the advice of the Parking Manager.

The geographical area of a proposed RPZ will be based on officer judgement, informed by considerations such as natural or man-made boundaries, requests logged, input from local district councillors and any conditions attached to relevant S106 funding (where available).

6. CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOL

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

- Preliminary consultation with district councillors for the affected town.
- A survey of 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.
- To qualify for progression to design stage, a simple majority of the total number of households in streets where a scheme is proposed (50% +1) must respond formally to this initial questionnaire and a simple majority of these respondents (50% + 1) must vote in favour of a scheme.
- Officers may re-consult in streets where the vote is tied, where residents' wishes appear unclear or where officers are aware of decisions made in nearby streets may make impact the situation elsewhere; however any decision by officers to depart from the above position must be clearly justified in relevant commissioning reports and communicated to affected residents.
- Except in the case of very small scale schemes, a second round of consultation should be by means of a public exhibition or public meeting 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 to further refine elements of the proposed scheme's design.

- The next, formal stage of the process will involve the advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order in the local media and on-street Notices.
- The resolution of statutory objections to a Traffic Regulation Order is a matter for officers; however in exceptional circumstances where the volume and/or type of objection is viewed by officers as significant and/or when a petition has been received that qualifies the lead petitioner to address the Council, the matter may be referred to an appropriate committee of the Council for review .
- All RPZs will be reviewed approximately six months after implementation. This review will include a survey of district councillors, residents and businesses in and around the scheme area, following which point modifications may be made following the promotion of an Amendment Order, 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 access
- Emergency vehicle access
- 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 should be to maximise amenity for residents whilst taking into account the needs of the wider community.

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. Individually marked or designated parking bays will not normally be provided.

Residents of new housing developments within established scheme areas (e.g. apartment buildings or existing buildings converted into apartments) will not be considered for inclusion in that scheme where private off-street parking is included in the development. In other cases, primarily where new houses are built that do not have private off-street parking there should be a presumption towards creating permit eligibility for that new address.

Private roads and roads that are not maintained at public expense will not be considered for inclusion in a resident permit parking scheme.

8. SCHEME CHARGING PRINCIPLES

Permit and charges shall be determined by the Council and set at a level that seeks to cover the annual operational costs of the Council's RPZs.

Where a 'shared use' scheme has been introduced, any revenue surplus arising from this function will be used to offset the overall cost of resident permits.

Residents within a proposed scheme area will be given the Council's best estimate of the likely permit charge. Permit charges will then be subject to annual review, with the charges revised as necessary to ensure that overall the Council's RPZs continue to operate on as close as possible to a break-even basis.

Residents will be required to confirm their agreement to these terms during the consultation process.

9. RPZ OPERATIONAL TERMS

Outline terms of a proposed RPZ will be set out at the start of the consultation process and will be refined through the process of consultation with residents, local Members and others.

The following principles will apply:

- The number of resident permits offered per household will be based on an officer assessment of the availability of kerb space versus the number of households within the proposed scheme area.
- The quantity of visitor parking hours offered per annum will be approximately 20% of the annual operating hours of the RPZ. (For example, if a scheme operates for 10 hours a day, 6 days a week, approx. 600hrs of visitor parking time will be issued per household).
- The operational hours of a scheme will be considered on an individual basis and as a rule they will be set at the minimum necessary to secure the primary objective of that scheme whilst maximizing its potential for legitimate use by other motorists.

10. SPECIAL PERMITS

To qualify for a special parking permit an organisation or individual will be required to demonstrate:

- That they are providing essential care, health or other essential community service for residents within the RPZ.
- That there is a need for them to park within the RPZ to provide that service.

An organisation or individual will be required to write to the Council detailing the reasons why they need this permit. If they meet the Council's criteria they will be sent an application form to complete. The Council may require additional, supporting documentation in support of an application.

11. REVIEW OF AN RPZ

Review of Schemes

The Council will review resident satisfaction with a newly introduced RPZ approximately six months after implementation. This review will also canvass the views of residents, local councillors and others from a wider area outside the scheme's boundary, to ensure its full effects are understood. Where beneficial, the scheme may then be modified as per the process set out in Section 6 of this document (Consultation and Implementation Protocol).

12. REMOVAL OF AN RPZ

Significant evidence of local support for the removal of an RPZ will be managed in the same manner as the process set out in Section 6 of this document (Consultation and Implementation Protocol).