

CABINET (TRAFFIC AND PARKING) COMMITTEE

17 NOVEMBER 2008

WINCHESTER RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME REVIEW

REPORT OF HEAD OF ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Contact Officer: Andy Hickman Tel No: 01962 848105  
email:ahickman@winchester.gov.uk

RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report considers the Winchester Town Residents' parking scheme, which has been reviewed as part of the development of the Winchester Town Access Plan. It also sets out and discusses issues raised at a residents association and interest groups meeting held to discuss the residents parking scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That parking restrictions be kept under review and that a more strategic review of the extent of the scheme be undertaken once the effects of the new South of Winchester Park and Ride scheme have been established and as part of the emerging Winchester Town Access Plan. Such a review would include the cost of permits and possible concessions for low income groups.
2. That waivers and dispensations for tradesmen etc be reviewed as part of the annual car park charges review and reported to Cabinet in due course.

Continued...

3. That visitor scratch cards are amended to include the address of property to which they apply and that the purchase of (up to a maximum of 20 (days parking) per annum) scratch cards by residents living within the zone who are not permit holders be permitted and that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to amend the parking places Orders be amended accordingly.
4. That any future extensions/ amendments to parking restrictions should be considered on their particular merits and reflect local issues and circumstances and as such future departures from the current zone restrictions may be appropriate.

## CABINET (TRAFFIC AND PARKING) COMMITTEE

17 November 2008

### WINCHESTER RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME REVIEW

#### Report of Head of Access and Infrastructure

#### DETAIL:

##### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the background and history of the Residents parking scheme and considers some changes to the scheme in order to make it more effective and to better meet the needs of residents. The first residents' permit scheme was set up by the Council in the Hyde area of Winchester in 1970. This remained a very small scheme until some additional areas were added during the early 1990s. Significant expansion of the residents' permit schemes was restricted by enforcement limitations at that time. On-street yellow lines were enforced by the police and their traffic wardens service with the income from fines going direct to central government, while the residents permit bays were enforced by City Council parking attendants.
- 1.2 In Summer 1996, there was a major expansion of the residents' permit area in Winchester to its current size. This was possible as a result of the City Council becoming the first local authority outside London to take on decriminalised parking enforcement. This change enabled the Council to take over the enforcement of all on-street waiting restrictions under a system where the income from penalty charges was retained by the Council and used to offset the costs of carrying out on-street parking enforcement.
- 1.3 As part of the Summer 1996 expansion, a new policy was introduced that the number of permits available to any household was reduced by the number of off-road parking spaces available within the curtilage of that property. This policy was unpopular with many residents and was difficult for the Parking Office to regulate, so it was withdrawn after about 12 months.
- 1.4 The charge for resident and visitor permits was set at £10 in 1970, and that charge remained at the same level until January 2003, a period of 33 years. It is not known how the amount of £10 was agreed in 1970 but it is assumed that it was related to the costs of issuing permits and enforcing the scheme. In January 2003, permit prices were increased and at the same time a two tier pricing structure was introduced. The first two permits for any household were increased in price to £15. Within outer zones only, up to two further permits can be issued and these were increased in price to £30.
- 1.5 A further increase in permit prices was implemented in July 2005. A two tier pricing structure was retained but only the first permit for any household was priced at £20. The second, third and fourth permits for any household were increased to £50. At the same time a daily scratchcard option was introduced

so that any permit holder could purchase up to 20 daily scratchcards per annum at a price of £10 per book of 10 scratchcards. It appears that many households are purchasing these daily scratchcards as an alternative to purchasing additional annual visitor permits. A further charge increase was introduced in 2007 where the cost of the first permit was increased to £22 and subsequent permits remained at £50.

- 1.6 At its meeting on 15 December 2004, Cabinet agreed that in future the permit scheme should be cost-neutral. This was a result of complaints from some residents that decisions on permit charge increases were not being considered objectively. A cost-neutral approach was considered appropriate because this is a service that only benefits a minority of residents in the Council's area and it is detrimental to those residents who live outside the town area and wish to park in Winchester. Compared to other transport items, it was considered that this is not an essential service that should be subsidised as for example Dial-A-Ride and Shopmobility are, but it was also not a service that should generate income for the City Council as, for example, off-street car parking does. A cost-neutral target when setting permit charges was therefore considered to be reasonable.
- 1.1 The principles of the permit scheme are not appreciated by some residents, particularly those who have moved into the area after a scheme was introduced. The permit schemes have been introduced to give priority to residents for on-street spaces in the vicinity of their property. This is achieved by prohibiting parking by those who are not residents in a particular street, and this can be those working within the town centre, those shopping in the town centre, employees and visitors at major sites outside the town centre such as the Hospital, or students at the University of Winchester or Peter Symonds College.
- 1.2 The problems do vary according to location, and as a result the restrictions imposed also vary. In the outer zones, there are some roads where parking is allowed without a permit, and this is useful for visitors to properties in those areas. However this is not appropriate in some inner zones where 2 hour parking would be dominated by shoppers to the detriment of residents who need to park on-street. Similarly some roads have restrictions to 10pm instead of the standard 6pm because there are restaurants and entertainment venues that attract evening customers who would otherwise utilise the available on-street parking spaces.
- 1.3 In each zone the restrictions are set to maximise the benefits to residents. However in some zones there are many more permit holders than there are spaces available. The size of zones does vary considerably depending on the demands of residents when the zones were first established. If residents in a particular road consider they have enough spaces for residents in that road but it is possible that residents from another road will overflow into "their" road, then the residents will want a small zone. However those residents in a road where there are insufficient spaces will want larger zones to give flexibility when they are unable to find a space in their own road.

- 1.4 There has been some confusion regarding the difference between resident and annual visitor permits. Resident permits are issued for a specified car registration number and cannot be used for other vehicles. Annual visitor permits are not restricted to a specific vehicle and some residents do use a visitor permit on their own vehicle. This can be because they drive a variety of vehicles from a work pool for example, or it may be because they want to use the permit for visitor's vehicles when their own vehicle is not being parked on-street. There have been concerns that annual visitor permits are vulnerable to abuse by being sold or given to those who are not residents or genuine visitors to a property, but the flexibility of annual visitor permits is useful to many residents.
- 1.5 The current Government policy which encourages high density development within urban areas adds to the pressures for parking space within the Town. The current Traffic Order which covers the Winchester Town Residents Parking Scheme precludes new development where planning permission was granted after 30<sup>th</sup> May 2002 from being issued with Residents' Parking Permits over and above the amount of permits issued for the previous land use. For example, if a single residential residence on a large plot was redeveloped into 6 smaller residential properties then that development would only qualify for the entitlement of one residential property.
- 1.6 Extension and/or alterations to the residents' parking scheme have to be supported by at least two thirds of those residents affected. An important consideration in any change or extension of the scheme is that messages to motorists through signing and lining should be consistent and understandable and thus stand up to challenge through the national adjudication service.

## 2 Discussion

- 2.1 The following issues were discussed at a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008 of a variety of interest groups, representative groups and organisations who are affected by the residents parking scheme. This meeting was very useful and provided some valuable input to the review process. The following issues were discussed:

### 2.2 Extent of the Scheme.

The boundary of the current residents parking scheme does tend to be the point where on-street commuter parking starts. Certain areas of the Town just beyond the boundary of the residents parking zone, which are within walking distance of the central areas, do experience problems due to commuter on-street parking.

Some current areas/streets where known problems exist are listed below.

- **Quarry Road, Petersfield Road and Fivefields Road.** It is proposed to extend the parking zone in the near future along Quarry Road and

further waiting restrictions are proposed for Petersfield Road. Nothing is currently proposed for Fivefields Road.

- **Hillier Way, Winchester Rugby Club.** Some additional waiting restrictions are being considered for this area but there is concern that removing parking from Hillier Way would displace it into other areas of Abbott's Barton which would then necessitate further protection measures for residents parking areas.
- **Stanmore.** Some additional parking restrictions are being implemented after a process of public consultation. A residents' parking scheme is not currently being considered for this area.
- **Sleepers Hill Gardens and Dawn Gardens.** This area is currently being considered as a new residents' parking area.
- **Lynford Avenue and Lynford Way.** This area is currently being considered as a new residents' parking area.
- **St Catherines Rd and Ebden Rd, Highcliffe.**

Looking at the Town in terms of where there are still areas of un-restricted on-street parking, where commuters can park all day and walk into the City to their place of employment, the following areas need to be considered.

- **Stanmore**
- **Abbott's Barton**
- **Highcliffe**
- **Winnall**

It should be noted that some or all of these areas may not want to become part of the residents' parking scheme due to the cost of permits to residents. As such it may be considered appropriate to have a reduced cost of permits for some residents on low incomes or in some parts of the Town on the extremities of the existing zone. Such concessions would however be difficult to administer and would cause anomalies in areas of the city already inside the zone such as council housing areas and social housing. The cost of the first permit is also low compared to many other authorities and is considered small when compared to the annual cost of running a car. It is noted, however, that the cost of second and third permits is more expensive.

It is suggested that parking restrictions be kept under review, and local amendments be made in consultation with residents as required, and that a more strategic review of the extent of the scheme be undertaken once the effects of the new South of Winchester Park and Ride scheme have been established. Such a review would consider the cost of permits and possible concessions for low income groups.

### 2.3 Time Restrictions.

The current zone restrictions apply from 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday, although in some areas of the Town these have been extended to 10pm. A departure from this approach may result in confusion amongst motorists and would require the use of more signing. Currently within the zone no roadside signing is required for the majority of the no waiting restriction.

A recent scheme at Vernham Road has introduced restrictions from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday. This is due to the nature of the problem which was caused mainly by student parking in relation to Peter Symonds College. This has been successful but did mean that signs had to be erected.

It is felt that future schemes should therefore be considered on their particular merits and reflect local issues and circumstances and as such future departures from the current zone restrictions may be appropriate again in the future.

### 2.3 Visitor Permits

The issue of mis-use of visitor permits was discussed at the representative group residents parking meeting in September. It was recognised that some mis-use does occur, but that this was thought to be very limited. It was also felt that any change of the practice whereby visitor permits became vehicle specific (by including the cars registration number) would cause problems for residents and genuine visitors.

Visitors scratch cards were also discussed at the September meeting and two particular issues were felt worthy of further consideration. The first relates to drivers who use scratch cards and block driveways/ accesses. At present there is no way from the scratch card of identifying the address where the visitor would be so that they can be asked to move their vehicle. **This could be rectified by including an address box onto the scratch card. It is recommended that this is added.**

The second issue related to the purchase of scratch cards by residents who are currently not holders of a resident permit. At present the purchase of scratch cards is limited to permit holders. Some residents may not own a car or have off-street parking and therefore do not need a residents permit but will still have visitors. **It is recommended that this restriction is removed and that eligible residents living within the zones who are not permit holders be permitted to purchase visitors scratchcards up to a maximum of 20 (days ) per annum. This will require the parking Places Order to be amended.**

### 2.4 Enforcement

The general view at the representative parking group meeting was that there is not widespread abuse of the visitor permits. Permits could be made vehicle

specific by adding a requirement that these include a registration number but this would cause problems for residents and visitors. Currently if a problem is reported the holder of the visitor permit is sent a letter requesting that such mis-use is ceased. If this persists then the permit can be withdrawn.

Changes to enforcement schedules have recently been introduced and additional mobile enforcement has been achieved by the use of motorcycles. The temporary removal of the pay on foot barrier controlled car park systems at Tower Street and Colebrook Street car parks has meant that less Civil Enforcement Officer time is needed to manage and repair these systems. It is hoped that these factors will allow better and more comprehensive enforcement.

The issue of pavement parking was discussed at the representative parking group meeting and it was explained that the City Council enforcement officers can only enforce this where parking restrictions are in place. In other areas where no parking restrictions are in place then the City Council has no power to enforce and then this becomes a matter for the police. It is hoped that new powers will be granted to enable local authority enforcement of parking across dropped kerb crossing points through the Traffic Management Act in due course.

## 2.5 Other issues

A variety of other issues were raised and discussed at the representative group parking meeting. Size of zones and the number of permits issued was discussed and explained that in some cases the current scheme although not ideal does offer the best practical solution to the problem. Such matters can be raised at any time and considered for inclusion in the annual programme of traffic management schemes to be investigated.

The matter of issuing waivers and dispensations to parking restrictions to builders' vehicles and the period of these waivers was discussed. This matter will be considered and reported to Cabinet as part of the annual review of car parking charges in the New Year.

More use of no- waiting at any time restrictions was raised. There have been incidents recently where emergency service vehicles, buses and refuse collection vehicles cannot get into certain areas due to parking on limited waiting areas. Such issues are considered on a case by case basis and no waiting at any time restrictions implemented if they are warranted. Access for emergency service vehicles must be maintained.

The issue of discounts on permit charges for smaller cars was raised. The Council already have a system of discounts for environmentally friendly vehicles based on vehicle emissions and this is considered the most practical and fair way to apply such discounts.



The two thirds rule was also discussed. This current rule states that two thirds of residents within a defined area where a change to a parking restriction (eg the implementation of a residents parking zone) is being considered must support the scheme in order for it to be implemented. This has recently been questioned in relation to possible extensions to the residents' parking zone in Stanmore. This issue also relates to the cost of permits and the impact on low income groups as discussed above. The two thirds rule applies at the informal consultation stage where all residents are asked if they favour the proposed scheme. This gives an indication of the likely support if the proposal is taken forward and formally advertised and thus helps in the assessment of the scheme. This issue was particularly pertinent in the Stanmore case as a significant number of students rent houses here. The two thirds rule does help to gauge the likely success of a scheme and thus to ensure that scarce resources are not spent progressing a scheme that ultimately is not supported by residents.

## 2.6 Provision for New Development.

A review is currently being undertaken of residential parking standards for new development which will be subject to consultation shortly.

## 3. Conclusions

The representative parking groups meeting provided valuable input to the review process. Some short term amendments to the scheme have been identified which will help to improve the scheme for residents. Some longer term issues require further consideration in relation to the impact of the South of Winchester Park and Ride Scheme and in relation to the emerging Winchester Town Access Plan.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

### 4. CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

The proposals accord with the corporate priority for safeguarding our high quality environment.

### 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

#### 5.1 Staff resources are available to implement the proposed changes as outlined above.

### 6. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

The Hampshire (Various Roads, Winchester) (Parking Places and Restriction of Waiting) (Controlled Zone) Order 2002

### 7. APPENDICES:      None