

CABINET

19 January 2005

VISITOR PARKING PERMITS

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

EA45 – Parking Review, 1 December 2004

CAB998 – Minutes of the Environment & Access Performance Improvement Committee held 1 December 2004, 15 December 2004

CAB996 – Proposed Parking Charges, 15 December 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At its meeting on 15 December 2004, Cabinet asked for a review of the existing visitor permit scheme including the options for wider availability of daily scratchcards. This report proposes that daily scratchcards for visitors should be more flexible than at present, but in order to minimise fraudulent use there should be restrictions on the number issued to each household. An increase in the charge for scratchcards is also proposed, together with changes to the minimum refund for surrendered annual permits and the charge for issuing duplicate annual permits following loss or theft.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That Members consider whether a system of daily visitor scratchcards should be introduced in accordance with the conditions set out in para. 2.4 of this report, and that if so, the system be introduced on the same date as the proposed increase in charges for residents and visitors permits.
- 2 That the minimum refund for surrendered annual permits be increased from £5 to £10, and the charge for issuing duplicate annual permits following loss or theft be changed from 50% of the original permit value to a fixed charge of £10.
- 3 That subject to the approval of Hampshire County Council, the City Secretary and Solicitor be authorised to advertise the proposed revisions to the On Street Parking Places Order as set out in this report and thereafter make the appropriate variation order.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15 December 2004, Cabinet considered the annual Parking Review including proposed increases in the cost of residents and visitors permits. It was agreed that permits would increase in cost to £20 per annum for the first permit for each household and £50 for each additional permit. Members were concerned that this increase in permit charges would cause difficulty for some residents who may purchase a residents permit for £20 for their own vehicle, and then would have to pay £50 for a visitor's permit that they may only use on a few occasions each year.
- 1.2 Since July 2002, there has been a scheme for scratchcards to be available for residents holding pre-planned social events. Existing permit holders can make up to 3 applications per annum for a maximum of 10 scratchcards per application which are only available for the single day specified in each application. The charge for each scratchcard is 50p, i.e. £5 for a book of 10 scratchcards, and the date is scratched off by the Parking Office. There has been an average of 20 applications per annum, with about 140 scratchcards per annum being issued, i.e. an average of 7 scratchcards per application. There are currently 4,227 households with annual permits. With this very low number of applications, the costs of issuing the scratchcards are not significant compared to the overall parking budget. There is a restriction that the scratchcards will not be issued if there is already another application for that road on that particular date, but there has not been any need to refuse any application to date.

2 Possible Changes

- 2.1 The existing scratchcard scheme does provide a useful facility where a resident is holding a pre-planned social event. With the small number of scratchcards issued and the fact that the date is specified on each card before issue, there is virtually no opportunity for fraudulent use of the scratchcards.
- 2.2 If a local authority was introducing a completely new residents parking scheme, the recommended provision for visitors would be using daily scratchcards where the resident scratches off the date on the day of usage. Annual visitor permits would not be recommended since they compete with residents' permits where there is restricted availability of spaces and they are open to fraudulent use. The use of annual permits compared to daily scratchcards was reviewed at the Parking Review Informal Scrutiny Group on 15 November 2004. The Scrutiny Group decided that the established system of annual visitor permits was the preferred option, and that it would be to the disadvantage of residents if the annual visitor permits were replaced with daily scratchcards.

- 2.3 The Scrutiny Group accepted the advice of officers that it would not be appropriate to operate two systems of annual and daily visitor permits since additional staff resources would be required, there would be more fraudulent use of permits, and there would be the costs of setting up a new IT system to issue daily permits. A proposal to issue scratchcard permits through other outlets such as local shops was not considered realistic since each permit must be traceable back to the resident to whom the permit was issued, and there would have to be a maximum number of daily scratchcards available to each resident.
- 2.4 If Cabinet decides that visitor scratchcards should be more widely available, the following conditions are proposed:
- Daily scratchcards would be issued by the Parking Office without the date of use being already selected.
 - The cards would only be available to households with annual parking permits, since an eligible household without an annual parking permit would still be able to buy a first permit for visitors for £20 per annum.
 - The number of daily scratchcards available to each household should be restricted since an excessive number of visitor permits will reduce the number of parking spaces available to residents. It is recommended that there should be a maximum of 20 daily scratchcards per annum for each household, and a restricted number will also reduce fraudulent use.
 - The scratchcards would be usable for up to 2 years from the date of issue, and there would be no refunds available for unused scratchcards.
 - In order to cover costs, it is recommended that scratchcards should be issued in books of 10, and that there should be a charge of £10 for each book of 10 cards.
 - The above scheme would replace the existing availability of daily scratchcards for one-off events.
- 2.5 There are two other minor changes that need to be considered for the residents and visitors permit scheme. There is provision for refunds to be made where permits are surrendered with an unexpired period, and there is a minimum refund of £5. With the increase in permit charges and the increasing costs of handling such refunds, it is recommended that the minimum refund should be increased to £10. In the case of loss or theft of permit, there is a permit duplication cost of 50% of the original permit issue price. Since the cost of many permits will now be increased to £50, this permit duplication cost could be considered excessive, and it is recommended that the permit duplication cost should also be set at £10.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

3 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 3.1 The Council promotes more sustainable approaches to transport in order to reduce congestion and pollution, and in so doing improve air quality in central Winchester.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 It is not possible to predict how many daily scratchcards may be issued where there is already a system of annual visitor permits. However the proposed charge of £10 per book of 10 scratchcards should cover the costs of purchasing and issuing the scratch cards. The scratchcards cost £4.49 per book to purchase from the printers.
- 4.2 Provided demand is relatively low and most scratchcards are issued at the same time as annual permits, there should be no additional administrative staff required in the Parking Office. However there will be staff resources required to set up the revised scratchcard system.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

None.