

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Update on the On Street Parking Review

Committee: Growth & Prosperity Overview & Scrutiny Panel

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Cabinet Member: Councillor Coker

CMT Member: Director for Place

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I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report seeks to update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the current On Street parking review and includes the views of residents and businesses together with proposals in response to the review.
- 1.2. The On Street parking review started in Sept 2010 in response to growing pressures with On Street parking and was centred around establishing what works well, what doesn't work well and where opportunities existed to improve on street parking.
- 1.3. The review is to help establish the principals for when an area should be subject to a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), also referred to as a Residential Parking Zone, as well as how to deliver improvements with existing On Street parking for residents and businesses.
- 1.4. Whilst the review is focused on Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ's), areas where parking is in greater demand, the review does recognise that challenges exist within other, non CPZ, areas of the city.
- 1.5. Resident's views were sought via a survey which was sent to all residents within existing CPZ's in September 2010. Residents not residing with a CPZ were invited to submit their views via an additional electronic survey.

- 1.6. The view of businesses was sought via an electronic survey in June 2011. The survey was supported by the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry who helped to raise awareness of the survey to businesses.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) is a defined area which has parking restrictions applied, during a designated time period, only permitting vehicles to park within that area, during the designated time period, with a valid permit for that particular area. Proof of residency is required on application for such a permit.
- 2.2. The purpose of a CPZ is to restrict non-residents from parking within the area during the operational time of the CPZ to help enable residents to park.
- 2.3. The first CPZ was introduced within Plymouth in 1974 and, with further zones added over the years, to where we currently have 53 CPZ's. The 53 CPZ's comprise of a total of 22 different time restrictions; with variations in day and time of operation.

3. CURRENT POSITION

Strategic Context

- 3.1. The Local Transport Plan 3 identifies the car as providing an irreplaceable tool for a range of journeys, but also included within the drive for greater efficiency as it will not be possible to build enough roads for everyone to drive where they like, when they like, as fast as they like and park for free. Equally it is not possible to provide the levels of parking required, specifically within existing residential areas, to meet current and potential future demand.
- 3.2. As Plymouth's population grows so too will the demand for travel. Put simply, by 2026, without taking action now to increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling, demand for travel by car will far exceed the capacity of the road network, presently significant demand for parking will outstrip the availability.

Parking Policy

- 3.3. There is currently no set policy which sets out the criteria for when a residential area should be considered for a Controlled Parking Zone.
- 3.4. Historically calls for residents parking schemes, or restrictions to be introduced, have come from groups and/or through elected members as a result of local concerns. Many restrictions, including residential parking schemes, have been implemented on this basis, often with mixed support, and no defined assessment criteria.

- 3.5. The absence of such a policy has led to a ‘piece meal’ approach to the introduction of residents parking schemes resulting in inconsistency with highway restrictions across the city.

Demand versus Availability

- 3.6. Over the years Plymouth, along with many other cities, has seen continued growth in car ownership where, in advance of further challenges as the city delivers its growth agenda, demand for parking outweighs availability in a number of areas.
- 3.7. The current Controlled Parking Scheme does not limit the number of permits available to any property. The only restriction on permits issued is when a private property applies for planning permission and is granted a change of use. At this point the property becomes ineligible to apply for a permit.
- 3.8. In 2010/11 30 of the CPZ’s were over-subscribed, that being a greater number of permits than are there were residents bays available to park within; a situation which is no better today. In some cases some CPZ’s are oversubscribed in excess of 300%.
- 3.9. The current situation with oversubscription is a common cause of negative media and resident’s frustration. 30% of residents highlighted they felt there are too many permits issued per property and the increase in students parking as the main reason for their dissatisfaction; this was the largest total.
- 3.10. Figure 1 below is a breakdown of the number of permits issued to individual properties: -

Permits issued per property	Number of properties	Number of permits	Percentage Share
1	3313	3313	39.73%
2	1302	2604	31.23%
3	461	1383	16.59%
4	149	596	7.15%
5	56	280	3.36%
6	13	78	0.94%
7	6	42	0.5%
8	3	24	0.29%
9	2	18	0.22%
Total	5305	8338	100%

- 3.11. In 2010/11 8338 permits were issued to 5305 properties where 70% of the properties had either 1 or 2 permits and 30% of properties holding 3 or more permits. Properties with greater than 2 permits clearly have a greater adverse impact on parking pressures.

Timings and Confusion

- 3.12. The current 53 CPZ's and 22 variations in the timings of operation are known to cause confusion and cause for complaint. Many residents highlighted a key issue of not being able to park when they come home from work. Only 8 of the 22 variations of time restrictions run until 6pm; meaning the other 14 zones allow anyone to park in the zones up to 6pm; regularly resulting in bays being full when residents arrive home.
- 3.13. Benchmarking has highlighted that Plymouth has far more CPZ's than comparable cities; a number of Plymouths CPZ's cover very few properties and, in one example, one CPZ covers just one isolated property.
- 3.14. Of all the 22 variations to parking restrictions only 2 apply restrictions on Sundays. Historically this may have been acceptable, however Sundays are widely accepted as normal working days, and some residents' zones experience particular issues on Sundays due to non-residents use.
- 3.15. The resident's survey highlighted that, in many cases, the current time restrictions in the majority of residential parking zones do not achieve their stated purpose; that being the ability for a resident to park close to their property at any point of the day. Only 22% of residents in permit zones are satisfied with the availability of parking in their street, and only 27% satisfied with the number of spaces in the whole zone.
- 3.16. The current restrictions create challenges to the delivery of an efficient and effective enforcement service to ensure compliance to the set restrictions. Enforcement officers are not always able to get around all zones within the allocated permit zones and, particularly within zone s which only have 1 or 2 hour restrictions, enforcement patrols are predictable for motorists who know they can park for most of the day and need only move their vehicle during a narrow window when they know enforcement officers will visit.

Exclusions

- 3.17. A number of residents indicated, via the online survey, their dissatisfaction at the property they occupy having been excluded from the scheme where they live.
- 3.18. In May 1997, in an attempt to limit the detrimental impact on parking through developments, a decision was approved at the Plymouth Joint Highways Committee to exclude properties from residents parking schemes which obtained planning permission to either: -
 - Be demolished or re-developed,
 - Be changed from single occupancy to multi occupancy

- Be subject to any other change that would involve an increased parking demand
- 3.19. Whilst the above exclusions were introduced to reduce the impact of multicar ownership in residential areas, these do not address parking pressures recreated through leasing multiple rooms within a single property. I.e. currently if a 4 bed property is rented out as four separate rooms, which would not require planning permission, the property would be eligible for permits. If however the same property were to be split into two separate properties, which would require planning approval, this would then be exempt from permit parking.
- 3.20. Any house of multiple occupancy (HMO), which has sought planning approval (required with 7 or more non-related tenants), is automatically exempt from residents parking permits. From 14th September 2012 the requirement to apply for planning permission will reduce from 7 to 3 non related residents. This will help to reduce the impact of future HMO's as all more properties would find themselves subject to planning consent and exclusions from parking schemes.

Inconsiderate and Unsafe Parking

- 3.21. Current demand for parking is a significant contributing factor when looking at the reasons for inconsiderate and/or unsafe parking; this includes parking in a manner to cause obstruction to other vehicles, including buses, and places pedestrians at risk through parking on pavements and so having to enter the road. Vehicles parking on pavements and verges also have a detrimental impact on highway maintenance costs.
- 3.22. 18% of the residents highlighted in the survey their dissatisfaction that some residents park in a manner to prevent others being able to park, such as parking in the middle of a double bay, only then to move when their partner or relatives, comes home from work.

Balance of Parking Provision

- 3.23. Considering the balance of on street parking across the city, that being the type and amount of parking allocated within a defined area, highlights a number of situations where the under supply of one type of bay is matched with an oversupply of another; causing difficulties for residents, businesses and/or visitors.
- 3.24. Under the On Street review a number of underutilised pay and display streets were identified within CPZ's experiencing high demand for residential parking. In May 2012 an amendment order was implemented to change these pay and display streets also allow residents permit holders to park there.
- 3.25. The feedback from residents indicates that a huge issue is that too many permits are issued to properties. Particularly multi occupancy properties

that are occupied by students. Many residents indicate how the parking problems are not as bad during the holidays when students have returned home.

- 3.26. In May 1997 to limit the number of parking permits in the system a report was taken to the Plymouth Joint Highways Committee recommending that properties situated within a Permit Parking Zone that are obtaining planning permission to: (State what was/decided/approved and what it is not that a report was taken) property be ineligible for parking permits if any of the following applied: -
- be demolished or re-developed,
 - be changed from a single occupancy to multiple occupancy or
 - be subject to any other change that would involve an increased parking demand,
- 3.27. The main scenario example is as follows two, four bedroom houses next to each other; one house gets turned into two, two bedroom flats, after a granted planning application. This house then becomes ineligible for parking permits. The other house is rented out as four separate rooms and no planning application is submitted or required. This house is then still eligible for permits to be issued.

On Street Parking – The Businesses Perspective

- 3.28. 46% of businesses responded that they were either satisfied or very satisfied in finding parking, 38% neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 15.5% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (11.3% stated they did not know).
- 3.29. 13.9% of businesses highlighted that they used current businesses parking permits for commuting, 33.8% to visit clients or customers, 32.3% to collect goods or merchandise and 12.3% to deliver goods or merchandise (7.7% did not specify a purpose). Whilst the majority of businesses are using permits to support business needs was a concern that 13.9% of businesses use permits for commuting; as none of the permits available to businesses are for commuting.
- 3.30. The Local Transport Plan 2011-26 highlights that, whilst the car will continue to be an important mode of transport for a range of journeys, there is a need to have an emphasis on bringing about changes in travel behaviour; this includes encouraging commuters to use public transport, cycling and walking.
- 3.31. Whilst the survey indicated that current business permits continue to support those businesses for which they were introduced for, some businesses commented they had different needs and that they would like to see a permit which offered greater flexibility; such as a permit which allowed employees to park longer, ability to park outside their business

and to allow customers and clients to use permits. Businesses also indicated they would be willing to pay for the ability to park outside their business, for clients and customers to use the permits, to be able to park longer and for permits which could be used by more than one vehicle.

- 3.32. Whilst the ability to park outside of the businesses was a popular choice, and one which businesses indicated as willing to pay for, this has to be balanced with the overall demand for parking within the specific residents parking zone.
- 3.33. A new 'Business Support Permit' was introduced in April 2012 which enabled businesses to park for longer and to be used by more than one vehicle at any one time in order to provide further support to businesses during the current challenging economic climate. These permits do not conflict with existing residents parking pressures as, for the first time; they enable parking within on street pay and display bays.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1. The following proposals are currently being developed, and are subject to further work, in response to the On Street review and from the views of residents and businesses and are expected to be completed October 2012: -

Establish 'Controlled Parking Zone' Policy

- 4.2. The principals setting out when a residential area should be considered for the adoption of a residents parking scheme needs to be defined. The adoption of such principals will ensure a consistent and disciplined approach to the designation of residents parking zones.
- 4.3. All existing CPZ's and other residential areas experiencing high demands for parking should be assessed under the CPZ policy to:-

- Establish if areas should remain subject to a CPZ
- Establish if an area should become subject to a CPZ

Address the 'Demand above Availability' Issues

- 4.4. It is not a realistic option to 'carry on as we are' issuing residents parking permits without and limitations or further controls on permit numbers. Demand current exceeds availability in over 50% of the cities CPZ's and it is not practical, nor realistic, to build new roads and streets to accommodate these vehicles; or manage increased demands as the city delivers growth in population.
- 4.5. Proposals are currently being explored on introducing a cap on the number of permits residents may own. This also includes the potential overnight use of the Councils car parks, residents whom have off street parking (driveways and garages) but choose not to use them.

Rationalise and Simplify Existing CPZ's

- 4.6. The current 20 permutations of CPZ times is known to be confusing and in many cases does not appear to be achieving their fundamental purpose with residents experiencing a number of issues when trying to park.
- 4.7. All of the current timings should be reviewed with the objective to rationalise and simplify through reducing the number of permutations to one or very few i.e. All CPZ's could be 8am to 8pm. This will also allow more efficient and effective enforcement.

Exclusions

- 4.8. The new Article 4 Direction to be effective from 14th September 2012 will have a favourable impact on reducing additional pressures resultant from HMO's. It is recommended the impact of Article 4 be reviewed before any further proposals are considered relating to exclusions from CPZ permits.

Inconsiderate Parking

- 4.9. Alongside the development of a CPZ policy an 'Enforcement Policy' will be developed setting out the adoption of powers to enforce pavement parking and how this is implemented to help tackle inconsiderate and dangerous parking. Such a policy will be centred on areas such as road safety and bus punctuality.