

CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES REVIEW

Briefing Report



I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report is to inform the Working Plymouth on street Scrutiny Review Panel on the background to the review of on street parking, what has been delivered to date and the reasons why a policy for controlled parking zones is required.

2. BACKGROUND

On Street Parking Review

- 2.1. In September 2010 work began on a review of on street parking in Plymouth. The review was in response to increasing demands on on-street parking. The review included consultation with residents and business on what they thought works well, what doesn't work well and where opportunity existed to improve on street parking. Appendix A and B summarise the outcome of this consultation.
- 2.2. The review was centred on residential areas. The principal objective of the review was to establish the criteria for when a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) should apply however, whilst undertaking the review, identify any opportunities to improve to street parking.

Controlled Parking Zones

- 2.3. A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) is a defined area which has parking restrictions applied where, during the designated period the restrictions apply; parking is only permitting to vehicles displaying a valid permit. The purpose of a CPZ is to restrict non-residents from parking within the area during the operational time of the CPZ, helping residents to park but not guaranteeing a parking space.
- 2.4. The first CPZ was introduced within Plymouth in 1974 and further zones have been added over the years to the point that Plymouth now has 53 CPZ's (appendix C is a map of Plymouth CPZ's). The current 53 CPZ's comprise of a total of 22 variations to when restrictions apply.
- 2.5. There are no restrictions to the number of permits which a residential property may apply for within a CPZ however, in May 1997, 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 involving an increased parking demand

- 2.6. Plymouth City Council also provides permits for businesses, businesses which require to park within a CPZ, in order to operate/deliver their service.
- 2.7. Below is a table showing the number of permits issued to individual residential properties for the year 2011/12 (this data is also representative of today): -

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%

- 2.8. In 2011/12 30 of the 53 CPZ's were over-subscribed, that being a greater number of permits were in circulation than are there were residents bays to park in; a situation which is no better today. In some cases some CPZ's are oversubscribed in excess of 300% which is common cause of negative media and resident's frustration.

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. The Local Transport Plan 3 goes on to say "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 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 or uniformity.

- 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, inefficiency and confusion in areas of the city.
- 3.6. Many of the current CPZ's do not achieve their principal objective of deterring commuter and non-resident parking which in some cases can be attributed to how the city has developed however restrictions remain unchanged or reviewed for many years.
- 3.7. The Parking Service receives a significant number of complaints related to resident's challenges parking and subsequent requests for, or changes to, permit parking controls are, and continue to be, made to Transport. The absence of a CPZ policy, or specifically criteria to determine whether a CPZ is suitable, creates difficulty managing such complaints, requests and expectations.
- 3.8. One such example is that of Stonehouse where the success and growth of the popular Royal William Yard has seen significant increases in visitor numbers in this area. The CPZ's in this area do not apply of an evening or weekend where visitors to Royal William Yard often park within these resident's bays of an evening and weekend, when the restrictions don't apply; this creates significant difficulties in local residents parking.
- 3.9. Another example is Millbay. Millbay is subject to significant development, including a new Arts School, however there are limited parking controls which local businesses and residents face a number of challenges. There are further locations in Plymouth where representations have been received requested permit parking controls.

Current Controlled Parking Zone's

- 3.10. The current 53 CPZ's and 22 variations in the timings of operation are known to cause confusion and cause for complaint. This is linked to 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 and that only 2 CPZ's restrictions apply 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.
- 3.11. The current variations to restrictions create challenges and inefficiency to the management and enforcement of the CPZ's. Enforcement officers are not always able to get around all zones within the allocated permit zones and, particularly where zones 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 enforcement officers will visit.

What Have Been Delivered so Far?

A – 'Dual Use' Parking

- 3.12. 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.

- 3.13. 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 bays to 'dual use' bays which allows the pay and display bays to be used by resident permit holders. This has proved to be very successful and popular with local residents.
- 3.14. The 'dual use bay' approach was proposed to the Cabinet Member for Transport to be expanded within the recent Review of Parking Charges. During consultation on this paper a number of representations were received in favour of this element of the overall proposals. Representations on these proposals are currently being reviewed and will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Transport in January 14.
- 3.15. 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.

B - Management of Parking Bays

- 3.16. As part of the review a number of trials of technology to reduce abuse of short term parking, parking to support local businesses, has been undertaken to great success. Parking machines which require a motorist to obtain and display a free parking ticket have been introduced at a Distract car park in Crownhill, bays to provide parking to visit local shops on Union Street and Embankment Road.
- 3.17. The impact of this technology has been powerful with some businesses directly attributing these measures to increased turnover. The machines will refuse to give another ticket to a vehicle which has already had the allocated time and an enforcement officer will issue a parking fine to a vehicle not correctly displaying a free pay and display ticket.

4. THE NEXT STEPS

- 4.1. The Working Plymouth on street Scrutiny Review Panel is to receive and consider criteria to determine when CPZ's should be considered to manage parking across the city.
- 4.2. Whilst not the primary objective of the Scrutiny Review, consideration needs to be given to rationalising and simplifying the current CPZ's in Plymouth to respond to residents' concerns and questions over the effectiveness of a number of CPZ's.

5. FUTURE STEPS

- 5.1. Following the adoption and application of a CPZ policy, and the potential expansion of dual use bays to make more efficient use of parking space, consideration may need to be given as to whether remaining parking pressures, associated with the growth in car ownership against limited space to park, may require consideration of introducing a cap on permit numbers/entitlement.

Appendix A

CONSULTATION – SUMMARY OF RESIDENTS VIEWS

Satisfaction Survey Results

How satisfied are you that the permit represents good value for money?

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Other
43%	35%	22%

How satisfied are you with the availability of parking outside your property?

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Other
22%	62%	16%

How satisfied are you with the availability of parking in your street?

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Other
23%	61%	16%

How satisfied are you with the availability of parking in your zone?

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Other
27%	50%	23%

How satisfied are you with the current time restrictions in your zone?

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Other
39%	35%	26%

- Only 23% 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.
- Many residents have identified the main issue of not being able to park when they come home from work. Only 8 of our 22 different time restrictions run until 6pm, which is when many people identified as the time they arrive home from work. By this time, most spaces are full and they cannot park. Only 38% of residents are satisfied with the time restrictions in their zones.
- Feedback indicates a preference for a standardised approach to time restrictions. This could be either 24 hour, 7 days a week or at least 8am – 8pm.
- The feedback from residents indicates that a huge issue is that too many permits are issued to properties, specifically 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.

- 30% of residents highlighted the fact there are too many permits issued per property and the increase in students parking their cars as the **main** reason for their dissatisfaction. This is the largest total.
- Residents indicated an acceptance to the need to limit the number of permits on offer to properties but also indicate that they would like to see resident permits issued to permanent residents only.
- It has **not** been an occurring theme from residents to suggest they would be happy to see a price increase in permits, even if this provided a better service.
- As a separate issue, many residents have indicated via the general online survey their dissatisfaction at the property they occupy being excluded from the scheme where they live.
- Residents identified that the current bay markings gives car users the opportunity to park in such a way that can reduce the number of available spaces. 18% of residents gave this reason to explain their dissatisfaction.
- It seems to common practice that motorist's park 'in the middle' of a double space so when there partner returns from work they move their car and both are able to park. This was reported quite a few times.

Specific Points/Comments Raised by Residents: -

- The number of commercial vehicles being brought home and parked in residential zones – taking up more than one vehicles worth of space.
- The abuse of the business permits system. Many business permits are in place but vehicles are remaining in the same place all day – therefore taking up spaces.
- The number of multi occupancy properties being shared by several taxi drivers and the subsequent parking of the taxis in the street.
- Commuter parking relating to the time restrictions. If someone works mornings then a 2pm-3pm permit only zone is perfect for the commuter.
- Confusing restrictions. P&D, single yellow lines, residential zone, and residential zone with visitor only bays that other permits are not eligible for. Some roads have permit only on 1 side of the road and P&D on the other side of the road.
- Limited Waiting Bays. The difficulty of enforcing cars parked in limited waiting bays. Need to have in place system to effectively patrol, manage & enforce if necessary. Ticket Machines, Pay and display and/or no return periods could resolve this.
- Too many controlled parking zones, too many restrictions within these zones.
- Natural boundaries of parking zones are not in place, therefore dispersal parking to the streets immediately outside of the zones have huge problems.
- Permit systems in place for Football & Rugby matches. To be enforced on match days only.

The following is a list of specific areas which came forward on a number of occasions during the consultation: -

- Requests for permit parking in Whittington Street
- Requests for permit parking in Amherst Road
- Requests for permit parking in Salcombe Road
- Request for permit parking in Peverell, particularly when Plymouth Argyle plays at home.

Appendix B

CONSULTATION – SUMMARY OF THE BUSINESSES VIEW

1. 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).
2. 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. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.