

## **Controlled Parking Zones in residential areas (CPZs).**

(Cllr George Wheeler March 2014)

### **Summary**

Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) can be used for several purposes. This paper is concerned with the use of CPZs to improve the quality of life for residents of an area where outsider parking prevents them from accessing reasonable on-street parking close to their homes. The paper puts forward a policy and procedure for the introduction and review of CPZs which have this objective.

The main thrust of the policy is that these schemes are aimed at resolving a local difficulty. The solution will need to strike a balance between the competing needs of local residents and businesses and it is proposed that the people best-placed to come up with the basis of the best solution are the ward councillors working with their constituents, though it would be expected that they would take advice from professional staff.

A four-stage procedure is put forward. The first stage is the identification of a proposed CPZ boundary and the preferred controlled parking regime by the ward councillors working with their constituents. The second stage is a decision by the cabinet member on proceeding with the scheme, including funding its implementation. The third and fourth stages are carried out by the Highway Authority. The third is the formal consultation, including statutory consultation on traffic regulation orders (TROs) and if the scheme is approved, the fourth is the implementation of the scheme.

The users of on-street parking in a locality are categorised into eight classifications and three broad levels of parking regime are identified. The first stage in the procedure should reach a broad view on which type of parking regime is appropriate and which classes of user will qualify for permits.

In its final section, the paper acknowledges that the policy could lead to more CPZs with more variations of parking regime. It also acknowledges that the city already has a lot of CPZs and different parking regimes and that there is a strong case for some rationalisation. It argues that where some rationalisation is desired, it is taken through the review process recommended in this paper but with the impetus for change coming from the Highway Authority rather than the community.

### **1) Purpose of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs)**

1.1) The CPZ scrutiny working party has received a great deal of information but there has been little so far on policy background to the use of CPZs. This paper suggests a policy and procedure for the introduction of new CPZs where the object is to bring relief to local residents in an area where outsider parking prevents reasonable on-street parking access to local residents. A procedure for the review of these CPZs is also suggested.

1.2) CPZs can be set up for a number of purposes: (i) to protect shopping, industrial or commercial areas from indiscriminate parking, (ii) to bring relief to local residents in an area where outsider parking prevents reasonable on-street parking access to local residents or (iii) for other reasons.

1.3) This paper addresses the second category, the use of a CPZ to bring relief to local residents in an area where outsider parking prevents reasonable on-street parking access to local residents. The paper puts forward a procedure for this type of CPZ. This is essentially a local matter and best resolved locally, although it does have small-scale implications for wider transport policy and its implementation is technical.

1.4) The implications for wider transport policy are (i) improved road safety conditions arising from marked parking bays which discourages drivers from parking too close to junctions or obscuring visibility at other locations, (ii) small-scale traffic reduction when some drivers switch to other transport modes if the convenient supply of free parking is withdrawn and (iii) reduced local pollution levels as traffic volumes in the area are reduced and commuters no longer tour the area looking for a space. However these effects are minor compared with the improvement in quality of life for local residents who should be able to park reasonably close to their homes or receive visits from friends or relatives arriving by private transport. Local businesses can usually benefit as well.

1.5) The object of these schemes is to strike a balance between the interests of a number of groups of people: local vehicle-owners, local residents who want to receive visits from friends and others who do not live locally, local businesses for parking by their customers and staff, other visitors to the area and people who park in the area to visit nearby areas, including people commuting to work. A classification of users is given in section 3.

1.6) A variety of levels of restriction can be used (as given in section 4). The level of restriction should be the least restrictive measure consistent with affording appropriate relief. This will minimise the inconvenience to other residents and other drivers.

## **2) Procedure.**

2.1) A four-step procedure is suggested for the possible introduction of new CPZs, given in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5, with a review after 6 to 12 months, paragraph 2.6. A procedure for review of existing CPZs is put forward in paragraph 2.7.

2.2) Since the object is one of avoiding local inconvenience, it is suggested that the formulation of the solution is best done locally, by the ward councillors and their affected residents. Ward councillors will be made aware of problem parking areas by their constituents who have difficulty in parking. Drivers who have difficulty in parking near their homes are not likely to be reticent in telling their councillors about it. Discussion between the ward councillors and residents needs to identify the boundary of the CPZ and the level of restriction to be imposed. Appropriate advice would be taken from professional transport staff but a recommendation to the cabinet member will be put forward by the ward councillors. The recommendation will address the boundary of the CPZ and the level of restriction to be imposed.

Before taking this process too far, it would be wise to ascertain from the cabinet member whether the scheme is likely to proceed. Otherwise, the hopes of the community could be raised only to go unfulfilled.

If any expenditure is needed during this process e.g. for any costs of meetings or publicity, this must be sourced locally, from Living Streets fund, community grant or other funding source available to ward councillors. At the end of this stage there will have been no formal

consultation over a proposal but the ward councillors should be reasonably confident of the proposal receiving majority support if it is subject to formal consultation.

Past investigations have sometimes been accompanied by surveys. It is the experience of the author that these surveys have achieved little beyond confirmation of the residents' identification of the problem. They have resource implications and if a survey is to be undertaken, its funding needs to be identified.

2.3) The cabinet member needs to take several decisions before taking the proposal further: does it conform with general policy and will there be funding for implementation should the proposal? As long as professional advice has been sought and followed in step 1, the proposal should conform to policy. One aspect of policy that is particularly relevant is whether the level of restriction is the least restrictive consistent with providing appropriate relief. There may be a temptation to apply a more restrictive measure than necessary which could disadvantage local businesses or residents who want to receive visitors without paying for a permit for every visit.

Funding can come from central sources (LTP allocations, S106/CIL if appropriate, parking revenues or others) and/or local sources (Living Streets, community grant or other). If funding for formal consultation and implementation cannot be identified, the proposal should not be taken further. There is no point in carrying out formal consultation unless the scheme will be implemented if it is supported in the consultation.

2.4) If funding is identified and the proposal conforms to policy, the Highway Authority should put the proposal to formal consultation, including the statutory consultation on traffic regulation orders (TROs). The cabinet member has the responsibility for interpretation of the consultation result, though discussion with ward councillors would be expected. Consultation is not limited to residents of the CPZ but the views expressed by them are likely to be given greater weight than the views of non-residents. The views of car-owning and non-car-owning residents should be given equal weighting. A clear majority of residents should be in support of the proposal for the project to be implemented.

2.5) If approved by the cabinet member, the scheme will be implemented by the Highway Authority.

If a proposal for a CPZ is rejected by residents of the area, it could indicate that the chosen boundary was wrong. There could be a problem in part of the area but it may be less extensive than envisaged at the first stage. There is nothing to prevent a different scheme with a different boundary being put forward at a later date.

2.6) It is suggested that a CPZ should be reviewed informally after it has operated for six to twelve months. If the local community is not satisfied with the operation of the CPZ, it could indicate that the wrong parking regime has been chosen. If the level of restriction turns out to be too great or too lax, it can be reviewed by identifying a different restriction through the process in step 2.2 and then undertaking steps 2.3 to 2.5. The formal consultation could lead to a change in the operating times and permit qualification. However the expense of making TROs and of street-marking will not be repeated.

2.7) A review of an existing CPZ is in essence the same as that for the introduction of a new CPZ. It should be undertaken if the CPZ community believes the current scheme no longer serves its purpose - they will tell the ward councillors. The first stage should be a review by

ward councillors and residents as in step 2.2. If a problem is identified, recommendations for alterations to the CPZ boundary or the restriction regime should be made to the cabinet member who would take the process through steps 2.3 to 2.5 as for a new CPZ. The expense of a change to the restriction regime is likely to be less than a change which involves changes to TROs.

### **3) Classifications of parking users.**

For purposes of allocating permits in a CPZ, users of on-street parking spaces are divided into eight classifications:

- (3.1) vehicle-owners residing in the CPZ but not in non-qualifying properties,
- (3.2) friends, relatives or acquaintances visiting residents of the CPZ, but again excluding people living in non-qualifying properties,
- (3.3) professional or trades people, including care staff, visiting any resident of the CPZ,
- (3.4) businesses in the CPZ for parking by their customers,
- (3.5) businesses in the CPZ for parking by staff who regularly use their vehicles for the business,
- (3.6) businesses in the CPZ for general staff parking,
- (3.7) other visitors to the area and
- (3.8) vehicle-users who park in the area to visit adjacent areas, including people commuting to work.

Non-qualifying properties are defined through the planning process. When planning permission for a new property or a change of use of a property is granted, the property may be excluded from qualifying for permits within an existing CPZ if there is one, or from a future one if one comes into being at a later date.

### **4) Levels of Restriction.**

4.1) Three levels of restriction are recommended, a short-term restriction, a restriction for the working day and a 24-hour, 7-day restriction. Some classifications of user qualify for permits in all three levels:

Group 3.1 users are able to purchase permits for use in the CPZ. In areas where there are too many residents' vehicles for the available spaces, a system restricting the number of permits to any household could be considered. The method of allocation would need to be clearly defined to prevent staff who issue the permits from being put under pressure to decide who would get the permit. There are no such schemes in Plymouth currently.

Group 3.2 users can use a visitor permit. These are permits that can be purchased by residents of the CPZ, other than residents of excluded properties.

Group 3.3 users are classed as essential users and can purchase permits to cover all areas.

The three levels of restriction apply to the other classifications of parking users (classifications and are as given in sections 4.2 to 4.4 below. 4.2 is a short period of restriction and is the least restrictive; 4.3 is a restriction for the working day and 4.4 is a 24-hour restriction and is the most restrictive. In each case, the details of the scheme would be customised to suit local circumstances.

4.2) A short period of restriction, often one hour, during which vehicles without permits would be subject to penalty. Permits are likely to be granted to classifications 3.5, 3.6. Residents could purchase daily permits for use during the period of restriction by classification 3.2. The aim is to prevent all-day parking by anybody other than by local residents or their visitors but to impose the minimum inconvenience to everybody else, including particularly customers of local businesses (class 3.4). Some limited waiting could be provided to cater for the latter who arrive during the period of restriction.

4.3) A restriction over the working day with permits granted to 3.1, and some of 3.5 and 3.6. Residents could purchase daily permits for use by classification 3.2. This restriction is effectively a family of restrictions with varying timings and permit eligibility.

The restriction time can vary to suit local circumstances. For example, on the Hoe, the start time could be 10.00 a.m. to allow hotel guests to park on-street and leave without penalty. The finish time can also vary, depending on the interaction between returning residents and parking pressure from non-residents.

Some spaces will be available for limited-period waiting for classification 3.4. These spaces will probably be shared so that they are available to both permit holders and for limited waiting; the latter may be free or subject to a charge. Permit eligibility for classifications 3.5, 3.6 will depend on availability of spaces.

4.4) A 24-hour, 7-day restriction. This would apply in areas under the most acute parking pressure and parking is likely to be restricted to permit-holders and visitor-permits only, classifications 3.1 and 3.2. This allows no facility for non-resident parking so local businesses would not have on-street parking. Some limited waiting might be provided for business customers.

## **5) Too many different schemes.**

It is evident from the above that if this policy is accepted, there will be a large number of CPZs and a variety of parking regimes. It is accepted that a smaller number of schemes would be administratively convenient and a reduced variety of parking regimes would be more easily understood by visitors to an area. However, this paper argues that these schemes are intended to solve local problems which are different in every location. The most important factor for success is whether the right balance is struck between the competing needs of local residents and businesses. The critical issue is whether the right boundary and the right parking regime for the CPZ has been identified by the ward councillors working with their constituents.

There is however a strong case for rationalisation of the current number of CPZs and the different parking regimes. Proposed new CPZs could become extensions to existing schemes rather than new CPZs. In any review of existing schemes, the potential for rationalisation should be a factor.

If there is a “policy” desire for rationalisation of schemes rather than a resident-led request, it is essential that the local communities should be engaged in the process and support it. The same procedure for review should be adopted although the impetus for the review would come from the Highway Authority rather than the local community.