

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: CITY CENTRE ON STREET RESIDENT ONLY PERMITS
DATE: 17 JUNE 2013
RECIPIENT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

The City Council is seeking to make more parking available for residents living in the city centre. The proposed solution is to allow resident only permit schemes to be introduced within parts of the City Centre, primarily within the Pay & Display Zone. Approval is sought from Cabinet to amend existing policy to allow these schemes to be introduced within the city centre.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

Over the last 10 years as a result of a renaissance in city centre living and planning policy promoting city centre residential development, the Bargate Ward in the City Centre has gone from being the least populated in Southampton to one with the highest population. Between 2001 and 2011, Census data shows that the resident population increased by nearly 60% in the Bargate Ward, which covers most of the city centre. Over this period, parking standards for new development have limited the amount of parking available within residential developments.

The current Strategic Level Parking Policy was approved by Cabinet on the 17 March 2008. This recognises that *the overall objective of parking policy is not to attempt to control vehicle ownership, but to manage vehicle use*. However, within the city centre, the policy is explicit that no on street resident parking zones should be provided, noting that *the ready availability of, and proximity to, extensive public transport networks makes this a highly accessible area, close to most of the City's major facilities*. In the city centre, there is generally no uncontrolled on-street parking available and most of the city centre is covered by the Pay and Display controlled zone, which restricts the availability of freely available on street parking to city centre residents.

There is now a recognition that as part of the overall objective *not to attempt to control vehicle ownership, but manage vehicle use*, consideration should be given to allowing the provision of on street parking zones for city centre residents. The Adopted Core Strategy anticipates further significant growth in city centre living over the period to 2026. Even where residents own cars, city centre living promotes much more sustainable travel patterns than other locations, as residents have good access to public transport and a range of facilities within a short walking or cycling distance. This is evidenced by the lack of growth in traffic movements across the city over the period when the city centre population has significantly increased. However, many city centre residents will want to own a car for journeys where public transport, walking and cycling do not provide a suitable alternative.

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In the city centre, the objective should be to balance the needs of visitors with those of residents, recognising the overall economic requirements of the City and that of city centre residents. It is therefore proposed to introduce a permit based Residents Parking Zone in the City Centre Pay and Display Zone that makes use of Shared spaces. A Shared Space is one that can be used by residents to park in but can also be used by non-residents as normal pay and display parking bays. A residents' permit does not guarantee a parking space and generally would be a space for a "zone" rather than one that is allocated to an individual, vehicle or property.

A six week consultation was undertaken on these proposals between 8 April and 13 May 2013. Details of the proposal were posted on the Southampton City Council website along with an online questionnaire for responses. Hard copies of this information and the questionnaire were also made available at Gateway and the Civic Centre Library. Site notices were posted around the City Centre in proximity to the parking areas affected and statutory consultees were notified in writing. The consultation document is shown in Appendix 2.

A total of 61 people responded to the consultation and a summary of their responses is provided in Appendix 3. 80% of respondents were in favour of the principle of introducing a city centre on-street resident permit scheme and it is therefore proposed to amend the existing Strategic Level Parking Policy, to allow a scheme to be introduced.

In the mid 2000s, national planning policy restricted the amount of on-site car parking provision that could be provided in new residential developments, which led to additional demand for on-street parking by residents. When these developments were located within existing on-street resident only parking schemes, this generated excessive demand for resident only permits, creating undue pressures on the existing permit holders' parking areas. In order to address this problem, on 16 October 2006, Cabinet approved a policy *To exclude occupiers of developments approved since March 2001 from any entitlement to permits under the city's Residents' Parking Schemes*.

Whilst this policy currently applies across the whole city centre, it is inappropriate for addressing residential parking pressures within the city centre, for the following reasons:

- A significant proportion of city centre residential development has been approved since March 2001 and further new residential development is anticipated in the city centre;
- Even where residents own cars, city centre living creates the most sustainable travel patterns and should be encouraged; and
- The introduction of a new resident permit parking scheme in the city centre, allows the number of permits to be managed at a level that does not cause undue pressure on spaces available.

It is therefore proposed to amend this policy within the city centre (as defined in the LDF Core Strategy). However, it is not proposed at this time to change the policy for areas outside the city centre.

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Appendix 3 highlights that there are a mix of views on other more detailed aspects of the scheme proposals, including:

- The cost, availability and eligibility of permits; and
- The extent and size of zones

In order to implement the scheme, it will be necessary to advertise Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which will specify much of these details. Further work will be undertaken to optimise the detailed proposals, following these principles:

- There is a presumption against introducing Resident Only Parking in locations, where this would adversely affect the city centre economy by restricting the availability of spaces to shoppers and visitors;
- The number of permits issued should be managed to reflect the availability of on street spaces, also taking into account the parking demands of shoppers and visitors; and
- The cost of permits should be set at a level, which ensures the scheme recovers its start up and operating costs, covers the cost of any lost parking revenue and manages the number of permits issued.

It is proposed that delegated authority is given to the Head of Transport, Highways and Parking, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport, to finalise detailed scheme proposals, including the cost of permits and advertise the necessary TROs. The consultation indicated that the cost of permits was expected to be at least £1,000. Further work will be undertaken before the TROs are advertised to define the details of the schemes. This includes financial modelling of the scheme and an assessment of existing usage and future demand, to determine the extent of suitable zones within the city centre for resident only permits and the availability and cost of those permits. TROs will provide an opportunity for members of the public, businesses and other stakeholders to comment on these detailed proposals.

Although city centre on street resident parking schemes will predominantly be introduced as a shared space within the Pay and Display Zone, there are some parts of the city centre that lie outside this area, where there may be the need to introduce resident only on street scheme. The proposed policy change would allow these schemes to be introduced, where they can meet the requirements in the revised Strategic Level Parking Policy.

RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Policy

It is proposed that the existing Strategic Level Parking Policy is amended in order to:

- Allow the provision of on street resident parking permit schemes in the city centre; and
- Allow people living in city centre developments approved since March 2001, to have access to resident permit schemes

The proposed policy changes are shown in Appendix 1.

Financial

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It is expected that the cost of permits will be at a level to make the overall cost of the scheme be cost neutral in 2013/14. This is expected to recover the cost of introducing and running the scheme and also any lost revenue from people using resident only bays.

Legal

S.1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('the general power of competence') provides the Council with the power to do anything a member of the public or private organisation may do subject to pre or post commencement limitations (which are not applicable in this instance).

The Traffic Regulation Order to deliver the changes to parking restrictions will be advertised and implemented in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).

Property

None.

OPTIONS and TIMESCALES:

It is anticipated that schemes could initially be introduced during the 2013/14 financial year.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Revision to Strategic Level Parking Policy 4(a)

Appendix 2 – City Centre On-Street Parking – Pay & Display Shared Residents Bays Public Consultation

Appendix 3 – Summary of Consultation Responses

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