

### Residents Parking Schemes Summary Report

#### Current policy position

The current policy was developed in consultation with a cross party advisory group of local members and was adopted in January 2018.

It is similar in most aspects to the previous policy, adopted in around 2010, in that its main purpose is to improve “quality of life” for residents of those areas in which:

- Most properties lack off-street parking facilities and residents therefore have to park on the street; and
- On-street parking space is monopolised by extraneous demands (typically commuters)

Improvement is achieved by excluding this “outsider” parking. This reduces competition for spaces, thereby making it more likely that residents will be able to park near their homes.

Eligibility criteria are set out in the policy. There are 10 in total, but the key ones are:

- A scheme can be implemented that is safe and still maintains the right to pass and repass along the highway and gain access to the highway.
- The scheme should allow for short-term parking of extraneous vehicles.
- Less than fifty percent of affected residences have or could have a facility to park off the road. In exceptional circumstances, this figure may be relaxed slightly in a designated Conservation Area.
- Eighty percent of residential properties returning a survey in the streets covered by the scheme agree to it being implemented, subject to a return rate of 50% being achieved

Most of the criteria are common to the previous policy. However, the current policy features two major changes which were included at the request of members on the advisory group and increase the likelihood that an area will qualify for a scheme:

- Garages no longer count as off-street parking.
- There is no longer a requirement that a scheme must contain a ratio of at least 0.8 on-street parking space to each property.

The level of support – i.e. 50% of households must respond to the consultation and 80% of responses must be positive – is the same in both previous and current policies (*NB the requirement was originally 80% response rate but that was reduced to 50% at member request some time before the advisory group was set up*).

In addition to improving parking conditions for residents, policy includes provision for a residents’ parking scheme to “be considered where a third party such as a developer, the rail

industry (for station travel plans), a Local Planning Authority (for area masterplans) or another relevant body identifies and funds scheme design, development and implementation”.

No scheme has yet been implemented in accordance with this provision. The nearest we have come is a consultation for a scheme in some of the residential streets near the railway station in Bromsgrove. That scheme was associated with the upgrade of the station and its extended car park. However, residents were balloted on two separate occasions and, in both cases, there was insufficient support for a scheme to go ahead.

### Current schemes

District	Number of schemes
Bromsgrove	2
Malvern Hills	2
Redditch	3
Worcester	10
Wychavon	7
Wyre Forest	5

### Emerging schemes

District	Number of schemes
Bromsgrove	2
Malvern Hills	-
Redditch	4
Worcester	2
Wychavon	2
Wyre Forest	3

### Challenges and issues arising

**Staff resource:** residents’ parking schemes sit with the Traffic Engineering Team which has reduced in size from 9 people in May 2017 to 6 people at time of writing. Workload has not decreased and the reduction in staffing has therefore meant a reduction in capacity and schemes of all types waiting longer to be investigated, assessed or progressed.

Residents’ parking schemes are particularly time consuming because of the detailed assessment against qualifying criteria and direct consultation with residents which must be carried out before the scheme can progress to TRO consultation. A considerable number of residents’ parking schemes have been done as overtime in recent years because it has not been possible to meet member/public aspirations in normal time given staffing levels and workloads.

**Enforcement:** this is an issue with on-street parking restrictions generally given limited numbers of civil enforcement officers, who often must work in pairs for safety, cover large geographical areas and are subject to competing demands for their attention. However, the fact that residents must pay for permits can cause them to have higher expectations regarding enforcement levels, which our partners in the districts are unable to provide. Enforcement of a residents’ parking scheme will inevitably be of lower priority than restrictions imposed with the intention of improving safety or reducing congestion.

**Consolidation Orders:** these are the legal documents which underpin all on-street restrictions, including residents’ parking schemes, and allow them to be enforced. There are 6 separate orders, one for each district, and all are of the same standard format which is outdated and needs revising.

Review/updating will ensure that the orders stand up to legal challenge, which in their current form is a risk. However, this review will be a substantial, time-intensive project which requires considerable input from the Council's solicitors as well as traffic engineering staff. As such, it is not a task that can easily be accommodated alongside regular workstreams.

**Permit costs and other variables:** all bar one of the residents' parking schemes in Worcester operate under the same terms and conditions. Residents within these schemes are entitled to apply for up to three annual permits at a cost of £30 for the first, £40 for the second and £60 for the third. They are also entitled to purchase visitor permits. These come in the form of scratch cards with four permits per card and residents can buy up to 80 cards per year (at a cost of £5 for ten cards). These charges have remained unchanged since implementation of the first scheme of this type, in Edgar Street, College Precincts and Severn Street, in around 2004. There are considerable disparities between these schemes and Worcester's first residents' parking scheme which was implemented in the Britannia Square area in 1985. Residents in the Britannia Square scheme are entitled to as many resident permits as they wish, at a flat rate of £30 each, but are not entitled to visitor permits. There are similar disparities elsewhere in the County. There is no suggestion that a "one-size-fits-all" set of terms and conditions ought to be applied across the whole of Worcestershire. However, it is difficult to defend a system which requires a resident of Redditch to pay £5 p/a for a permit whilst someone in Bromsgrove has to pay £40. Permit charges should be set at a level which covers the cost of administration and contributes towards the cost of enforcement.

**Displacement:** the biggest disadvantage and therefore the biggest source of criticism from residents and members is the propensity for residents' parking schemes simply to shift the extraneous demand to another location nearby. That is a likely consequence of any parking restriction but is particularly irksome with residents' schemes because it can be perceived as improving conditions for one set of residents at the expense of another. The way to avoid, or at least minimise, the risk of displacement is to go for a larger scheme area. Displacement will still occur but it is likely to disperse over a wider area rather than to the next street along. The main difficulty with larger schemes tends to be one of obtaining sufficient support from resident. The biggest problems tend to be experienced by residents who live within shortest walking distance of the source of the parking demand, be it town/city centre, railway station or the like. Those residents are likely to be most keen on having a parking scheme whereas people who live further along the street may not experience any difficulties and consequently have no desire to have a scheme which requires them to pay to park.

### Review of Parking Strategies

Residents' parking schemes, as a matter of policy, must be self-financing and that is a major barrier to the use of such schemes in a strategic sense. Residents who do not have off-street parking facilities are willing to support a scheme – even though it will cost them money – because it offers them a direct benefit. A scheme with strategic intentions is likely to include a range of areas, including ones where all properties have off-street parking for several vehicles. The people who live in such areas are unlikely to buy permits as they have no need for them. A scheme in such a location will not be self-financing.

Other authorities use parking schemes as part of comprehensive strategies to tackle congestion, drive more efficient use of highways and off-street car parks.

In 2008, as part of a data gathering exercise prior to development of Worcestershire County Council's first formal policy, a letter was sent to all district, borough and county councils in England

and Wales requesting information on their approaches to residents' parking. It was apparent from the responses that there are as many different approaches to the subject as there are councils.

Worcestershire's approach is aimed squarely at helping residents with a passing nod to strategic application should opportunities arise.

Some councils – Oxford is a prime example – have adopted a mix of parking controls, including residents' parking, to encourage the use of park and ride sites outside the urban centre. In that case, the strategic use of parking controls is the "stick" which complements the "carrot" of alternative modes of transport that commuters can use instead of their cars.

In other cases, parking strategies are a mechanism for forcing commuters onto paid car parks instead of leaving their cars on-street. The key in all cases is having the infrastructure available. Some of the commuters who objected to the introduction of residents' parking in the Barbourne area of Worcester complained that the closure of the park and ride site on the A38 had forced them to park on-street instead.