
RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEMES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report explores whether there is a need to introduce a Residents Parking Scheme within the District. Consideration is given to the implications of introducing such a scheme and the possible alternatives that would ease any parking problems for residents.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In the years leading up to 2004, Police enforcement of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) had been diminishing to the extent that many TROs in the District were never patrolled. From October of that year, the Council took over the enforcement of Traffic Regulation Orders with a predictably sharp increase in the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued. This in turn resulted in some residents, occasionally, being issued with PCNs outside their own properties.
- 2.2 A number of roads in the District have parking restrictions to prevent commuter parking and to limit all-day parking. However, many residents think they have a right to park outside their own property even if this means contravening a parking restriction. The Police stance is that the highway is for the passing and re-passing of traffic and not for parking. However, where no restrictions apply and no obstruction is caused, parking is tolerated.

3 WHY INTRODUCE A RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME?

- 3.1 Residents Parking Schemes are generally introduced where residents are unable to provide their own off-street parking and where there is regular competition from commuters and/or shoppers for on-street parking. This usually occurs in housing built before 1940s where parking was not necessarily a consideration. This is best illustrated where there are long streets of terraced properties, close to shopping areas or railway stations, having short or no front gardens.
- 3.2 Demand can also be acute where larger Victorian type properties are converted into smaller bed-sit or single person flats or where there are multi-car-owning households.
- 3.3 Owning and running a car is a choice that a resident makes and, therefore, it is their responsibility to ensure they can legally park their vehicle when not in use. However, where the conflict for on-street parking is between residents and shoppers/commuters (who are offered alternative arrangements in the area), the introduction of a Residents Parking Scheme can be justified provided strict criteria can be met. In Rochford, the method of control of shopper/commuter parking is by short-term restrictions (one hour in the morning and/or afternoon), an arrangement that is easy to manage once an

order has been made, simple to patrol, and causes the minimum of disruption for residents.

4 CRITERIA

4.1 There are five principal elements to be considered as to whether a scheme is introduced:-

- A scheme would not be introduced unless it has the support of at least 50% of the households within the proposed street.
- There is no off-street parking or no means of providing off-street parking at the properties.
- The scheme needs to be self-financing by the levy of a charge.
- Residents are unable to park because at least 40% of available kerb space is occupied by non-residents during the normal working day.
- The Highway Authority must be in agreement before the introduction of a scheme.

5 EVALUATION PROCESS

Consultation

5.1 Before introducing a scheme, the Council would need to go through a full consultation process, as illustrated below:-

- Initial enquiry would come from members of the public regarding Residents Parking who may or may not have already spoken to their neighbours. Enquiry should be made in writing and an initial feasibility study would be completed before proceeding.
- A questionnaire would be sent out to every resident in the street asking the following information:-
 - o Do they own a car;
 - o Do they have any off-street parking, if yes how many spaces;
 - o Would they require a residents parking permit;
 - o Would they require visitors parking permits; and
 - o Any other comments in support of the case.
- On receipt of questionnaires, if the majority in a street want a Residents Parking scheme, a visit to the street is made to ascertain if the scheme could be viable.

- Members are advised and their approval sought.
- Highways asked for their opinion and whether we should proceed or not.

Cost

5.2 There are costs associated with the introduction of a residents Parking scheme as follows:-

- IT solution;
- Lining and signing;
- Stationery;
- Enforcement;
- Advertising; and
- Alteration of TROs.

Procedural

5.3 If a Residents Parking Scheme was set up, application forms would be sent and the cost would be fully recoverable through the permit charge. Guidelines would be sent with the application forms advising:-

- Who is eligible for a Permit;
- Waiting list procedure;
- Period and time scheme operates;
- What kind of vehicles may be parked;
- How the permit is to be used;
- How the permits are issued;
- Explaining that even with a permit, there would be no guarantee that a space will always be available;
- Procedure for a lost permit;
- What happens if resident moves - advice on returning permit;
- Renewal procedure;
- Enforcement of the scheme; and

- Advice on the issue of visitor permits.

6 ENFORCEMENT

- 6.1 Enforcement of a Residents Parking scheme would be carried out by the Council's Parking Attendants and, depending on the number of schemes introduced, there might be a need for additional staff.
- 6.2 Generally speaking, all restricted hours of parking would need to be consistent across the District and within the existing patrol regime (e.g. requests from residents for the Parking Attendants to enforce their road at 11.00pm would not be practicable).

7 ISSUES FOR/AGAINST A SCHEME

For:

- Subject to the availability of spaces, a scheme can provide convenient parking for residents and visitors where no off-street parking is available.
- Provides potential income for the Council if non-permit holders contravene the TRO resulting in the issue of PCN.

Against:

- Potential cost of a scheme could be high if there is little participation – there are few streets in the district with limited or no off-street parking.
- Consultation and implementation timetable is lengthy and time consuming.
- Any introduction of a scheme would need an IT solution.
- Break-even level might be difficult to achieve with unnecessary costs falling on the Council.
- Expectation of being able to park outside resident's own property might not be achieved since it is likely that more residents would seek the issue of a permit than the number of on-street spaces available.
- Take-up of permits unpredictable (particularly if cost is high).
- Residents' expectations of enforcement might not be met - 24/7 patrolling will not be possible.
- Scheme might fall into disrepute by abuse:-
 - o Resident sells permit to commuter;
 - o Excessive requests for visitor parking permits for on-selling; and

- o Loss of income suffered in Council car parks.
- Administrative complications associated with loss or failure to display permit.
- Re-designation of existing bays to residents parking bays would substantially reduce the availability of short-term parking in the District's town centres and therefore affect the traders.

8 OTHER OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS

- 8.1 In areas close to railway stations, there is the possibility of amending or introducing Traffic Regulation Orders to help residents cope with parking controls. This might mean parking restricted for an hour in the morning on one side of the road and for an hour in the afternoon on the other side of the road. A resident could move their vehicle to the other side of the road at the changeover time and therefore park all day without penalty. This would certainly ensure that commuter parking was controlled. That having been said, in some situations, shopper parking might remain a problem.
- 8.2 Residents could, where possible, provide their own off-street parking, e.g. by using their property frontage as a hard stand and applying to ECC Highways for a vehicular crossing.
- 8.3 If in close proximity, Council car parks could be used. Two years ago, the Council's overnight parking restriction in car parks was lifted to enable residents who purchased Season Tickets to park overnight.
- 8.4 Residents might also approach local establishments with spare parking facility throughout the day (e.g. pubs) to agree a parking arrangement. Tenants could speak with their landlords or managing agents to discuss parking provision.

9 SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED AREAS

- 9.1 Ward Members have been asked for their suggestions of areas where residents might benefit from the introduction of a scheme. The Transportation Section has also received requests for Residents Parking Schemes and these have been fully investigated. This included an examination of the TRO (if one exists), discussions with ECC Highways team and an on-site visit to ascertain whether off-street parking was possible.
- 9.2 Appendix 1 shows the areas investigated, number of requests received against the number of properties in that street, any current TROs in place, officer comments and recommendations.
- 9.3 It will be apparent from the appendix that the number of locations where a scheme might be considered in the district is limited, largely because most properties do have off-street parking. Therefore, the introduction of a small number of schemes would be unduly costly and it is considered that

alternative solutions should be explored making use of the flexible parking restrictions currently employed across the district.

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Ultimately, owning a car is a lifestyle choice and councils are not responsible for providing parking for residents. The areas put forward all have possible solutions without having to introduce a Residents Parking Scheme. The only street that might fall within the criteria is Castle Terrace in Rayleigh although all but one of the properties in the road has off-street parking. Only one representation has been received in respect of this street and it would be necessary to have the support of the majority of residents for a scheme to be considered.
- 10.2 A householder does not have a right to park a vehicle outside their home. If, as a car-owner, a resident purchases or rents a property with no parking provision, it is their responsibility to resolve the issue.
- 10.3 The introduction of a Residents Parking Scheme is extremely complex and it is concluded would not be justified in Rochford for a number of reasons. Before a scheme is implemented there is an extensive process to complete including consultation with residents and Essex County Council. If only one or two streets qualify for the scheme, the price of the parking permits could be extremely high and therefore difficult for the Council to achieve cost neutrality. If the take-up of parking permits is correspondingly low, the Council risks being exposed to a loss of revenue.
- 10.4 Additionally, there are no guarantees that the Council would be able to achieve residents' expectations, both in terms of space availability and enforcement.
- 10.5 Fortunately, in the Rochford District, houses with direct access onto the street with absolutely no scope for off-street parking occur only in relatively few locations. Even in these streets, not all of the houses are affected.
- 10.6 In a number of cases residents have scope to provide off-street parking but have chosen not to do so.

11 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There is a risk that if a Residents Parking Scheme is introduced it may not be enforced as regularly as expected by residents, particularly in the evening. Additionally, the cost of the scheme could be shared by only a relatively small number of participants, pushing up the cost to the individual or exposing the Council to unrecoverable expenditure associated with introducing a scheme.

12 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Council must balance the needs of residents, workers and visitors against its long-term ambition to protect and enhance the environment.

13 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Depending on the scale of any scheme introduced, there might be a need for additional parking attendants and administrative staff. The Council's computer system is not designed to manage Residents Parking Schemes and would require development work. It is difficult to provide precise figures for the cost of a scheme; the cost to residents would be dependent on the number of participants and given the small number of areas where this would be an option, permits are likely to be expensive.

14 RECOMMENDATION

- 14.1 It is proposed that the Executive Board **RESOLVES**

- (1) Not to introduce a Residents Parking Scheme within the district at the present time.
- (2) That the Council discuss options with Essex County Council Highways Section for amendments to TROs or the introduction of new TROs in the areas identified in appendix 1 to the report.

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Background Papers:-

None

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Requests for Residents Parking Schemes

Road Name	No.of letters of request	No.of properties in street	Parking Restriction	Comments	Officers' Recommendations
Benleigh House - Marina Ave	1 Also, letter from Cllr C Lumley inc. petition with 12 signatures from residents of Benleigh House.	40	Junction protection and single yellow line no parking 11am - 12noon, Mon to Fri.	Benleigh House is a block of flats in Marina Avenue. The flats do not have off-street parking however there is sufficient land at the rear and front of the building to accommodate several parking spaces. All other properties have off-street parking. TRO could be amended to assist residents.	A Residents Parking Scheme would not be justified in this case; a dialogue with the owner of Benleigh House might help to bring available land into use for parking.
Castle Terrace	Letter from Cllr Pullen on behalf of one resident.	7	Double yellow lines at junction, single yellow line on one-side, no waiting 8am - 6pm	Four of the five properties on the side with no parking restrictions have provided their own (limited) off-street parking. However, permission for a drop-kerb has presumably not been sought from ECC Highways.	A Residents Parking Scheme would not be justified.
Link Road	None (one verbal request)	32	Single yellow line, no parking 10am - 11am, Mon to Fri.	All properties have off-street parking. TRO could be amended to assist residents.	A Residents Parking Scheme would not be justified.
The Approach	Letter from Cllr Lumley inc. petition containing 8 signatures.	34	Single yellow line, no parking Mon - Fri 10am - 12noon.	Off-street parking limited, some properties in front of station have a small frontage area for one vehicle only. TRO could be amended to assist residents.	A Residents Parking Scheme would not be justified, but revisions to the TRO could be explored..

Road Name	No.of letters of request	No.of properties in street	Parking Restriction	Comments	Officers' Recommendations
Kestrel Grove	1	91	Single yellow line. North side - no parking 10am - 11am Mon - Fri. South side - no parking 2pm - 3pm, Mon - Fri.	All Properties have, or can provide, off-street parking. Kestrel Grove already has split TRO on either side of the road.	A Residents Parking Scheme would not be justified.
Willow Drive	1	33	Single yellow line. No parking 11am - 12noon, Mon to Fri.	All Properties have, or can provide, off-street parking. This resident has the option of providing parking on his own frontage. TRO could be amended to assist residents.	A Residents Parking Scheme would not be justified.