

PARKING FOR CARE WORKERS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report explores whether there is a need to issue parking permits to carers working in the District, following the Council taking over the enforcement of Traffic Regulation Orders from the Police on 1 October 2004.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At previous Committee meetings Members have asked officers to explore whether a parking permit may be issued to carers when carrying out home visits.
- 2.2 Local Authorities that have already introduced Decriminalised Parking Enforcement confirmed that they issue permits to carers to allow them to park in residents parking schemes only. These permits do not allow a carer to park on-street, in contravention of a Traffic Regulation Order. Rochford District Council does not currently operate any residents parking schemes. However, several requests have been made from residents to introduce such a scheme and this will be reviewed with Essex County Council Highways in the New Year. If a residents parking scheme were to be introduced consideration would then be given to carers being issued with special permits to park in these permitted parking areas.
- 2.3 Dispensations allow a motorist to park on-street in contravention of a Traffic Regulation Order, provided that the motorist is not parked dangerously. These are issued by the Council to a specific car for a specific period at a cost of £15 for the first day and £5 per day thereafter. Dispensations are only issued as a last resort, where the motorist has no other parking option, for example, if a resident is having a new driveway laid and loading and unloading of tools and materials from the vehicle are taking place for a majority of the day. It would therefore be impractical to issue a dispensation to a carer due to the cost implications and the notice required by the Council to issue the dispensation.
- 2.4 There are very few properties in the District that have both double yellow line parking restrictions on-street, and no off-street parking. Many roads have a single yellow line with a one-hour restriction. These were introduced to prevent commuters from parking all day. Carers must, when visiting their patients, ensure that they park on their driveway or avoid visiting during the hour restriction.
- 2.5 Since taking over Decriminalised Parking Enforcement from the Police on 1 October 2004, the Parking Office has received just one request for parking permits or dispensations for care workers and other similar staff. This would suggest that there is little or no real requirement or demand at this time.

- 2.6 Contact has been made with groups and agencies that manage care workers to try to scope the problem. However, they were unable to provide information as to how many carers they employ, how many patients are visited at home where the carer has difficulty parking, and if the Council were to issue a form of dispensation for care workers, how many would be required.
- 2.7 The Guidance Manual on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement issued by the Department for Transport recommends that Councils accept the British Medical Association Badge (BMA). These are issued to doctors, nurses and midwives on emergency calls. The BMA badge scheme carries no legal exemption from parking controls. However, in the past the Police and Traffic Wardens have recognised the scheme and showed discretion when BMA badge holders were forced to park in contravention of a Traffic Regulation Order, in the course of their duties. To ensure there is no abuse of the scheme the BMA Badge may only be used by the holder, when they are away from their base and directly involved in patient care and where there are not legal parking spaces available. The badge must be correctly displayed showing the address where they are visiting at the time. If no address is shown or misuse of the badge is suspected, for example, if the vehicle is causing an obstruction, is left for an excessive time in the same position or is seen regularly in the same place, then a Penalty Charge Notice may be issued.

3 RISK IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Strategic Risk

The Council has already indicated that it is prepared to consider the issuing of parking permits to carers when it considers the introduction of residents parking schemes. On the accepted advice from Essex County Council, this should not be before DPE has been successfully operating for at least six months

3.2 Resource Risk

Residents parking schemes, including the issue of permits, are generally designed to be self-financing, so there should be no financial or resource implications to the Council in the long term.

3.3 Operational Risk

Early consideration of carer permits without the known effects of residents parking schemes should be avoided. All DPE adopting Councils have looked at these issues in tandem.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A full evaluation of residents parking schemes will be required early in 2005/6. This evaluation work can be contained within normal budget requirements.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) That the British Medical Association (BMA) Badge be accepted for use within the Rochford District and that the conditions of use, as set out in the report, be applied.
 - (2) That if a residents parking scheme were introduced in the future, consideration be given to providing carers with permits to park in these permitted parking areas, if requests are received.

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Background Papers:-

Guidance on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement Outside London.

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