

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy document sets out Worcestershire County Council's approach towards the provision of Residents' Parking Schemes (RPS) on the local highway network in Worcestershire.
- 1.2 The public highway is provided for the expeditious movement of people, vehicles and goods. The primary right of the public is to pass and repass along the highway. However, parking has long been recognised as being incidental to this right and so has come to be considered lawful. In general, unless on-street parking would be deemed an obstruction or a legal restriction is in place, kerbside space is considered available for anyone to park there.
- 1.3 Householders are often resentful when others park outside their homes, even where the householder does not actually have the use of a car. Some residents even believe, incorrectly, that they actually have rights to park on the road outside their property.
- 1.4 Where an area contains a mixture of land uses, such as residential, business, shopping, commerce, school and transport facilities, residents can often feel swamped by the daily influx of other vehicles. Even where residents have off- street parking facilities, they may on occasion be obstructed by others, which is a matter for the Police. Further, they may, in any case, feel that their quality of life is suffering.
- 1.5 Where the same problems are experienced in a predominantly residential area, which is adjacent to other developments that attract large numbers of parked vehicles, the daily intrusion of long-term parking is particularly resented and there may be call for RPS.
- 1.6 Whilst there is no specific legal duty for the Local Transport Authority to pursue RPS, if they meet the criteria set out in this Policy, then consideration will be given to the implementation of these schemes to reflect available resources and improved quality of life for local residents. RPS may also 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.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 In most areas, off-street parking is provided in urban centres by Local Planning Authorities (Borough, City and District Councils). However, the purpose of these parking facilities is to support economic activity and development, and so charges are often levied and waiting times restricted to manage demand and use of these facilities. Often, these facilities are aimed more for use by short-medium stay visitors, rather than local residents.
- 2.2 Residents' parking schemes can have a negative impact on local businesses. In central urban areas where there is insufficient space to provide on-street parking then alternative provision should be available or implemented, such as controlled on-street parking by the introduction of limited waiting through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), Park and Ride schemes, or other solutions which provide an attractive alternative to access by car.
- 2.3 In any area there is always some extraneous parking. Residents' schemes should only be considered where there is evidence that the available kerb space is often occupied by extraneous vehicles over the long term, defined as being 7 hours or more. In many cases, the implementation of RPS can lead to a significant improvement to the local environment and residents' wellbeing, enhancing access to limited kerb space and reducing demand to park in residential areas.
- 2.4 It should be noted that residents who benefit from off-street parking facilities may not need to be issued with a permit, as they may be able to park freely on their own land. Once a scheme is in place, those residents without off-street parking would have to pay for the privilege of parking, where previously they could park for free. Waiting restrictions in controlled zones (where RPS apply) can be limited to between 8 am and 6 pm, for example to alleviate such concerns.
- 2.5 Worcestershire County Council has adopted the following criteria for the consideration of proposed RPS. It should be noted that when residents are apprised of both the advantages and disadvantages of implementing RPS, only a minority may be interested in proceeding further. More commonly, residents seek to be exempted from existing waiting restrictions, which cannot be accommodated within the constraints of legislation and guidance.

### **3. Key Principles**

- 3.1 The main element of any RPS is the displacement of extraneous long-term (7+ hours) parking by enforceable restrictions. Generally, lengths of road space are prescribed for limited waiting, possibly through on-street parking meters, whilst some road space is prescribed for residents-only parking. Some schemes allow residents displaying a permit to park without further charge in areas where charges for short-term parking are implemented. The residents who have a car purchase a permit, to be displayed inside the windscreen when it is parked in the prescribed area. The purchase of such a permit does not entitle the resident to park in any particular space, neither is any space guaranteed. Instead, it permits them to park for longer periods. Whilst the scheme will permit short-stay visitor parking, long-stay visitors are forced to park outside the controlled area. This can deliver significant social and economic benefits to an urban area, by improving accessibility for all.
- 3.2 Since a major feature of any such scheme is the displacement of large numbers of parked cars, particular thought must be given to where those vehicles will go thereafter. To avoid them simply being displaced into other residential streets, outside the limits of the scheme under consideration, off-street parking space, ideally in the vicinity, must be already available or be made available. This parking space provision should be sufficient to accommodate most of the displaced vehicles. However, where the measure is introduced as part of an urban area parking strategy with ample Park and Ride facilities, this may be appropriate. When this is not done, the displaced vehicles may simply replicate the same problem again in another nearby area.
- 3.3 Where the road space available for an RPS falls below that required to issue one permit per household, consultation on the scheme must make the limited parking availability clear. This will often be the case along narrow streets, as rationalising parking to introduce a RPS can reduce available parking spaces by up to 50%.
- 3.4 The introduction of an RPS will not normally be accepted as an alternative to the provision by a developer of parking accommodation to required standards.

## **4. Criteria for the Provision of a Residents' Parking Scheme**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The scheme should allow for short-term parking of extraneous vehicles.
- 4.3 Less than fifty percent of affected residences have or could have a facility to park off the road. Off street space will be calculated in line with the planning process and so will not include garages. In exceptional circumstances, this figure may be relaxed slightly in a designated Conservation Area.
- 4.4 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
- 4.5 Indication of regular occupation by extraneous vehicles is evident. This means that schemes will not be considered where vehicles cannot currently park. For example, on zig-zag markings for schools or pedestrian crossings or along sections of highway that already have a no-waiting restriction applied.
- 4.6 The properties that front the roads concerned are residential. Schemes may be considered where there is another type of property, for example a church or school when the scheme can make adequate provision for that property.
- 4.7 The financial cost of the scheme including investigation, design and implementation should where possible be self-financed or supported by external funding sources. The scheme must not include:
- An A or B class, or main distributor road;
  - A traffic sensitive street;
  - Where vehicles are not currently permitted to park;
  - A minor road in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a significant Conservation Area where cars would detract from the landscape or would impact on the local significant historic views, impacting on the local visitor economy.
- 4.8 There is no material objection to the scheme from the Local Planning Authority (Borough, City or District Council), Local County Councillor or West Mercia Police.
- 4.9 The Local Planning Authority (Borough, City or District Council) will support the scheme, is able to demonstrate operation of a permit scheme is viable in the area and they are able to carry out any necessary enforcement.
- 4.10 The scheme will not be pursued if there are objections received during the TRO process that cannot be overcome.

## **5. Procedure**

- 5.1 Within Worcestershire, the responsibility for consideration and implementation of RPS will be administered by the Traffic Management Team.
- 5.2 Generally a desktop evaluation will be undertaken within one calendar month and the scheme added to an investigation list if appropriate. Further consideration of such requests, including site visits will be carried out annually to assess further the viability of a request.
- 5.3 Detailed investigation will be carried out by the County Council or nominated agent for up to 12 schemes each year depending upon demand and will ascertain whether all the eligibility criteria are met for the scheme.
- 5.4 An RPS is introduced by way of a Traffic Regulation Order (“TRO”). It is one of many means of controlling on-street parking, through the issue of parking permits to individual persons for the use of specified vehicles. It is not a means of controlling access to certain areas as short term parking by any vehicle should ideally be accommodated within the area.
- 5.5 Those schemes that appear viable will be included on a list of similar TROs.
- 5.6 Once identified for implementation, the TRO process and design for an RPS will be managed in line with available resources, which generally support serious congestion and safety issue schemes.
- 5.7 If the TRO process is successful, then implementation of necessary highway signage and road markings will be programmed and delivered.
- 5.8 Information regarding any scheme will be continually passed to the Local Planning Authority (Borough, City or District Council) to ensure that they are able to manage the application for and issue of permits in a timely way, and ensure subsequent enforcement.
- 5.9 Residents' parking bays will be broken across accesses, with H-bar markings only provided when required to protect access to multiple residences.
- 5.10 A third party, usually the Local Planning Authority (Borough, City or District Council) will carry out the issue and revocation of permits and subsequent enforcement of the scheme. There will generally be a charge for permits, which will be determined by the Authority in line with the costs associated with the scheme.
- 5.11 Where an urban parking strategy has been developed, eligibility criteria will be set aside as appropriate

## **6. Conditions**

- 6.1 Once installed, all signage will be the property of Worcestershire County Council as the Local Transport Authority. The Council will retain the right to remove signs where these are to be incorporated in an overall signing scheme for that locality (e.g. being combined with other road signing on the network). The Council will also review road signing provision as part of other road maintenance or improvements schemes, and retains the right to remove signing where the scheme no longer complies with the criteria applying at that time to the provision of RPS.
- 6.2 The Council reserves the right to remove a scheme after a reasonable notification period, in consultation with the Police and relevant Local Planning Authority (Borough, City or District Council) for reasons including but not limited to:
- Facilitating the safe movement of traffic;
  - Where removal of a scheme is subsequently identified to meet the need to keep traffic moving safely;
  - Where accidents increase following implementation of a scheme.

## **7. Permits**

- 7.1 A resident's permit will only be issued for a passenger user vehicle, a goods vehicle, an invalid carriage or a motorcycle. Other vehicles may usually be parked within the area on a short-term basis.
- 7.2 Permits will not be required for vehicles actively and essentially engaged in the pursuance of statutory powers or duties by the following:
- Fire Service, Health Service and Police;
  - Military;
  - Delivery or collection of postal packets;
  - A Local or National Government representative;
  - Statutory undertakers;
  - Formal wedding cars or hearses.
- 7.1 Permits will not be required for vehicles
- actively engaged in loading/unloading;
  - where passengers are boarding/alighting.
- 7.3 All permits must be displayed on the inside surface of the windscreen or in a visible location on a motorcycle so that the particulars recorded are clearly visible.
- 7.4 The Council reserves the right to revoke a permit upon reasonable grounds for reasons including but not limited to:
- The applicant's circumstances no longer confer eligibility for a permit
  - The permit is fraudulently used

- A replacement permit has been issued.

7.5 Further conditions may be implemented with respect to permits by the City/District/Borough Council

7.6 The purchase of a permit does not guarantee a parking place. In certain locations, road space is at a premium, especially in areas of older (pre-1930s) housing stock, where the number of vehicles owned by each property can exceed the road space available across the frontage area of the property. The matter is further exacerbated when properties are converted for multiple occupancy, creating further demand for kerb side parking space.