



Report of: The Chief Environmental Services Officer

To: Scrutiny Board City Development

Date: 9th September 2008

Subject: Resident Parking Schemes

Electoral Wards Affected:
Citywide

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide the City Development Scrutiny Board with an overview of the administrative and enforcement processes involved with Resident Parking Schemes (RPS) with particular reference to:-

- The types of permits,
- The enforcement principles,
- Special schemes
- Fraudulent use of permits.
- Comparisons to other cities
- Dual use of schemes

1.2 A separate, but complimentary, report has been provided by the Director of City Development with regard to the installation of schemes.

2 Outline of the Resident Permit Scheme

2.1 In order to park within a scheme a permit must be displayed, or some other form of dispensation obtained. There are currently 65 schemes with 2 pending. Currently in the region of 22,000 permits are in use. Every zone contains a property list of addresses which can apply for a permit – if you are not on the list you cannot apply. There are approximately 11,300 properties listed.

3 Types of permits available

There are 3 types of permit available (examples are appended at the back of this report):

3.1 Residents permit

Residents permits are free at issue, although there is a charge of £10 to replace lost permits. Every car parked in a scheme must display a permit to park. A permit can be issued for every car that is registered to the address (so 4 cars = 4 permits). There is no limit on the numbers, but the applicant must supply proof of address and proof that the car is registered there.

The permit has the vehicle registration number written on it and can only be used with the nominated vehicle. The permit normally states which RPS it applies to.

Permits are free and last for 3 years, although this is shortened to the length of the tenancy if the applicant is a tenant. Only residents can apply for a residents permit – not landlords, agents or owners.

3.2 Visitors permit

There is only one visitors permit issued to every address. They will be issued, upon application, to every address. As they are not specific to a vehicle, they can be used by any vehicle. Applicants must supply proof of address.

Permits are free and last for 3 years, although this is shortened to the length of the tenancy if the applicant is a tenant. Only residents can apply for a visitors permit – not landlords, agents or owners.

Whilst it is not possible to electronically report on the split between visitor/resident permits in existence, in 2007/8, applications received suggest that 3,807 resident permits were issued compared to 4,262 visitor permits. If this were to be extrapolated across the 22,000 permits, this would give 11,220 visitor permits in use and 9,900 resident permits in use. (The balance figure falls to business permits). This is not surprising as most properties would need a visitor permit, but not all would have a car.

3.3 Business permit

If one of the addresses on the property list referred to above is a business, they can apply for up to 3 permits. These permits are issued annually and there is a charge of £50 per year per permit to cover the administration but the permits can be used in any vehicle.

In the region of 880 business permits are in place. If they are lost, a £10 administration charge is applicable. The lost permit details are handed onto the parking attendants who look for any fraudulent use.

4 Enforcement

4.1 Enforcement of the scheme is carried out by the Council's Parking Service, by issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs - parking tickets) to vehicles without a valid permit.

In general, PCNs are issued at one of 2 price levels, either £50 or £70. Illegally parking in an RPS is classified by the Government as a more serious offence under the differential pricing rules, and the cost of the ticket is £70, but reduced to £35 if paid within the first 14 days.

To ensure that residents themselves are not disadvantaged by the scheme, the local policy is to normally cancel tickets issued in the following circumstances;

- Genuine permit holder who forgot to display permit
- Permit holder who displayed permit incorrectly
- Genuine visitor who did not display permit
- Genuine resident who does not have a permit but subsequently applies for one within 14 days of getting the ticket

Cancellation would happen following receipt of a representation (1st stage appeal) from the driver.

If the motorist/resident is a persistent offender, the case is reviewed individually, but less leniency is exercised.

4.2 In common with other traffic restrictions, essential service providers, removal vans and emergency services are all exempt.

4.3 If a motorist believes they have been wrongly issued with a ticket, they may appeal to the Council in the first instance. Should the appeal not be found in their favour, there is a further appeal which ultimately gets judged by an independent adjudicator.

5 Special schemes

It is recognised that there is a need for flexibility so the following additional schemes are in place

5.1 Dispensations scheme

The parking service offers temporary access to those who require access to the zones but who cannot use a permit for some reason. This must be arranged before the person parks and permission is not given retrospectively (eg if someone has received a ticket) :

Up to 2 hours:	free
Up to 1 day:	£5
Up to 7 days:	£20

The charge is imposed to deter non essential use, and to cover costs as there is a dedicated member of staff to run the scheme (which also applies to other restrictions, not just residents zones).

The scheme works by taking the registration of the vehicle and passing it on to the relevant parking attendant so that no ticket is issued.

The service also offers general dispensations for particular areas when appropriate, for example large social & community events, blood donors etc., but these are not charged for.

5.2 NHS scheme

Members of the health services who need to visit patients at home can apply for permits at £50 per year. These permits are transferable so each practice only needs a few permits – there could be 12 staff but if only 3 are visiting at any one time, only 3 are needed. Again, the charge is to deter non essential use. Applications must be from the NHS trust rather than the individual.

5.3 Accredited Landlords scheme

The Council runs an accredited landlords scheme to encourage better standards in the private rented sector for tenants. Landlords and members of the scheme can apply for 1 permit to cover those areas where they own property(s).

There are annual charges which are charged at differing rates based upon concentric rings away from the city centre:

Outer ring (district centres):	£50
Middle ring (outer urban area) :	£100
Inner ring (closest to city centre):	£200
Multi use (stated RPS in more than one “ring”):	£200

5.4 Other

New residents can use short term temporary permits, which can be issued with the proper permit application forms, so that residents can park without fear of receiving a ticket whilst their papers are changed to the new address and the application can be processed.

Ward members may also apply to buy a “business” permit if their wards have RPSs within them. These cost £50 per year.

6 Fraudulent use

6.1 It is unusual for a false application for a residents permit to be processed. This would involve forging documents or falsely registering a vehicle to an address on the property list. However, as visitors permits are completely transferable it is simple for a resident to apply for a permit and then sell it on, & the sale of visitors permits is common in some areas. This is not common across all zones, but is concentrated in areas with the following characteristics :

- Low rate of car ownership (residents who don't wish to have visitors to their property)
- Adjacent to areas of high commuter demand
- Alternative parking is chargeable

6.2 Parking Attendants report suspicious parking patterns (for example, if visitors arrive between 8–9 am every weekday) and carry out casual observations to see if further

investigation is required (for example, the direction that the driver walks when leaving the vehicle). This is then referred for further action, which can happen in a number of ways, including issuing parking tickets, cancelling permits, and joint operations with Police, involving arrests.

Local intelligence can also be obtained from genuine residents who recognise fraudulent use of permits in their area. Such information can be followed up without the need for residents to identify themselves.

7 Other authorities

About half the core cities make a charge for permits.

7.1 Charges

	Annual fee
Bristol	£50
Birmingham	£60
Manchester	Free
Liverpool	Free
Nottingham	Free
Sheffield	£36

If considering charges, there are 2 basic operational issues which need to be taken into account:

Currently permits are issued for 3 years. A move to an annual charge will therefore mean 3 times as much administration. The alternative would be to expect people to pay for 3 years up front which may be unpopular and could cause more administration if people move house and wish to claim refunds. An additional point is that the largest permit area is predominantly occupied by students on short leases.

If charging were to be introduced retrospectively, residents may wish to withdraw from an RPS.

8 Dual use

In most other cities, there are residents permit areas that are also available to other road users for either limited waiting or pay & display parking. This is often suitable in areas where the residents zones are comparatively empty during the day as cars are used for getting to work.

In practice this works in the following way. During “home hours” (evenings and weekends) the RPS restrictions apply. During working hours when many residents will have moved their cars to travel to their destinations, spaces will be left. RPS restrictions can be lifted during these hours, and parking controlled by pay & display (P&D) or by limited waiting. There does need to be some control in order to prevent commuter parking reoccurring. P&D would work in those areas near to shopping areas, workplaces or transport hubs, depending on the length of limited wait.

9 Staffing Costs

The cost of enforcing the schemes is absorbed within the parking services general budget, and all are enforced regularly. The income from Penalty Charge Notices issued within the zones for illegal parking goes some way to offset these costs.

The costs of administering the permits, overheads, buying materials, communications and maintaining the schemes is also absorbed within parking services general budgets. The ICT systems in place are old (hence the difficulty in report gathering for the statistics given above) and the cost of updating these will need to be accommodated within our existing budgets if possible. Any additional schemes which come on line add to that cost although the size of the operation does lead to economies of scale.

10 Next Meeting

- 10.1 The next meeting on 14th October will receive a report which will include any information requested as a result of scrutinizing this opening paper.

11 Recommendation

- 11.1 Members of the City Development Scrutiny Board are asked to note the contents of this report and are invited to comment on the information presented.

Background papers

There are no background papers