

TO: THE EXECUTIVE
DATE: 11th March 2014

RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME
(Director of Environment, Culture & Communities)

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 To seek approval on the details of a proposed Residents' Parking Scheme in streets surrounding Bracknell town centre.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Executive:

- (i) **Notes the information contained within this report, including the results of the public consultation undertaken in July 2013 (see Appendices A & B);**
- (ii) **Approves the associated Residents' Parking Scheme rules, permit eligibility criteria and charges which would be subject to an initial 2 year trial (see Table 1 & Appendix C);**
- (iii) **Notes the necessary advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders associated with the proposed Residents' Parking Scheme, the results of which to be considered and determined by the Executive Member for Planning Transport (see Appendix D).**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 As the town centre expands through regeneration, the day-to-day needs of residents will become a high priority. The Council must plan for the changes that come with a regenerated town centre, and this includes making sure residents living close to the town centre are protected from increased parking pressures.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not to progress with a formal public consultation at this time. However, given the timescales associated town centre regeneration, a later decision to progress with a scheme could result in a delay in responding to residents needs.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 5.1 The regeneration of Bracknell town centre is making good progress. When complete, the regenerated town centre should create an additional 2,800 jobs and attract 8 million shoppers each year. As the town centre expands, the day-to-day needs of residents will become a high priority and the Council must plan for the changes this will bring. This includes making sure residents living close to the town centre are protected from increased parking pressures.

- 5.2 The Council does not currently operate a Residents' Parking (RP) Scheme. Some residential streets near the town are already protected from the effects of parking by town centre shoppers or workers, typically with yellow line parking restrictions, and other streets may also need to be protected in this way. However, there are some residential areas surrounding the town centre where residents need to park their vehicles on the road and it is these areas that would benefit most from the protection of a RP Scheme.
- 5.3 In 2012, reports were received regarding the impact of construction workers parking within residential streets during the Waitrose store construction - an indication that parking pressures are likely to increase during the early stages of regeneration. The Council have already received requests for a RP scheme in some roads surrounding the town centre and as demolition and construction work continues, it will become increasingly important to protect residents from these parking pressures. The fundamental aims of a RP scheme would be to:
- Protect residents from increased parking pressures;
 - Be simple for residents to use; and
 - Be cost effective to operate.
- 5.4 It is considered that the best parking solution for residents is one which would cause little change to their existing parking habits. A modern day RP scheme would allow this by avoiding the need for official marked parking bays, instead only requiring that vehicles display a permit in the streets affected. Vehicles parked in a road where a scheme operates would need to display a permit in their window – with permits being issued for use by residents, their visitors or other legitimate users of the street. Accordingly, vehicles not displaying a permit during the schemes' operating hours could then be issued a parking fine. Standard exemptions would apply to postal deliveries, public services and for general loading/unloading of goods or passengers etc.
- 5.5 Earlier feasibility work has explored how such an RP scheme could work in Bracknell. The consultation exercise undertaken in July 2013 sought residents' general views on a scheme, alongside information on their local needs and preferences. Whilst the town centre regeneration plans are driving the need for such a scheme, it is critical that residents' help to shape the scheme being developed. The attached plan (**Appendix A**) shows 7 residential areas with which the Council consulted on principles of a scheme and sought feedback.
- 5.6 Not all streets would experience increased parking pressures at the same time and it is likely that other areas further from the town centre, beyond those initially consulted, may need to be considered for inclusion in a scheme later on if necessary to protect residents' needs - and subject to further consultation.

6 Consultation - Results

- 6.1 In July 2013, over 1600 properties in 48 roads received leaflets/questionnaires and the consultation was accessible via the Council's website. The consultation lasted 4 weeks and achieved an overall response rate of 21%, which in the context of Local Authority consultations is considered representative.
- 6.2 A summary of the questionnaire responses are shown in **Appendix B**. Broadly, these responses indicate the following:

Car Ownership

- **7%** of respondents do not operate a vehicle, **41%** operate one vehicle, **39%** operate two vehicles, **7%** operate three vehicles and **3%** operate four or five vehicles [*3% gave no response to this question*];
- **33%** of respondents don't park on-street, **40%** park one vehicle, **16%** park two vehicles, **1.5%** park three vehicles and **1.5%** park four or five vehicles [*8% gave no response to this question*].

Existing Parking Problems

- **78%** of respondents said they currently experience parking difficulties in their street;
- **74%** said these difficulties were related to local facilities or amenities within their local community (e.g. shop workers, rail commuters, large businesses).

Views on a Residents' Parking Scheme

- **81%** of the respondents believe that having an RP scheme in their road would be beneficial, in the context of a regenerating town centre;
- **55%** said they would not support a proposal for resident parking scheme if there were a charge for permits;
- **80%** thought there should be a limit on the number of permits issued per property and of these;
- **12%** suggested a one permit limit per property, **47%** suggest two, **13%** suggest three and **4%** suggest four or five permits [*24% gave no response to this question*];
- There was a fairly even split regarding suggested operating hours of a scheme, with **27%** suggesting 8am-6pm, **27%** suggesting 8am-8pm, **23%** suggesting 8am-midnight and **23%** stating various other operating hours;
- **62%** stated that a scheme should operate seven days a week.

6.3 Alongside the public consultation, views on the outline principles of an RP scheme were sought from Bracknell Forest Homes - who own property/land within 42 of the 48 roads consulted. Key points within their response were:

- A recognition of the need to protect future parking for the exclusive use of residents and their visitors;
- General support for a permit scheme, but due consideration needed regarding the impact of any permit charge upon their tenants;
- A request for further partnership working with the Council to increase parking provision in pressured residential roads, particularly within the areas consulted.

6.4 Input to the consultation was sought from the Environment, Culture & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel - in particular, their views on the issues of resident

permit charges and resident permit allocation, alongside the operating hours of a scheme. The following key points were raised by members of the panel:

- The scheme is a good idea generally, but residents should not be disadvantaged from their current position;
- A charge would probably be needed, as in other areas with similar schemes;
- There should be a limit on the number of permits issued;
- Further suitable areas within affected residential streets should be converted to additional parking;
- Whilst the consultation related to additional parking pressures associated with Bracknell town centre regeneration, no other parts of the Borough should be excluded from the Council's future policy on such schemes.

7 Consultation Conclusions

7.1 There are some clear conclusions which can be drawn from the residents' responses to the consultation:

- Over half of respondents are reliant on on-street parking and the majority already experience parking pressures;
- The majority of respondents are in favour of introducing an RP scheme, but support for a scheme involving a permit charge is broadly split with a small majority opposing a charge;
- The majority of respondents believe there should be some form of limit on the number of permits per property;
- The majority of respondents believe a scheme should operate seven days a week.

7.2 Combining the data and comments received on vehicle ownership and current parking patterns, and considering this alongside the broader flexibility of a modern RP Scheme (see the principles outlined in para. 5.4 above) the following further assumptions can be made regarding a future scheme:

- (i) That a scheme introduced with a maximum limit of 5 resident parking permits per household is likely to result in less than 50 (approx.) additional residents' vehicles parked on-street than a scheme restricting allocation to say 3 permits. Given the additional parking benefit to residents of displacing non-residential vehicles (other than visitors displaying a permit and/or legitimate users of the street) a proposed restriction below 5 permits per household would seem unnecessary at this early stage;
- (ii) That although preferences on scheme operating hours are evenly split, a majority could be acceptant of a scheme which operated 8am-6pm with the consideration of extended operating hours if required at a later stage (e.g. in response to an emerging town centre night-time economy);
- (iii) That the 3 self contained private developments within proximity of the proposed RP scheme (Boyd Court, Bevan Gate, Kelvin Gate) could be

eligible to visitor permits only (by request) for use in adjacent roads within the scheme;

- (iv) That a level of future Council funding towards creating some additional on-street parking capacity for residents within the affected roads would assist those who are likely to continue experiencing parking pressures in future.

7.3 In summary, there appears broad support for the further progression of an RP scheme and no identified barriers to its successful operation have been identified at this stage.

8 Scheme Proposals

Trial Period

8.1 There are a number of variable factors associated with the operation of an RP scheme:

- The scale of permit take-up:
Influencing the cost of administering the scheme, and its available on-street parking capacity
- The practicality of the scheme rules:
Influencing the effectiveness of the scheme for its users
- The effectiveness of parking enforcement:
Influencing the cost of running the scheme, and its effectiveness

As such, it is likely that the practical aspects of an RP scheme would require evaluation and adjustment after an initial period of settlement.

8.2 Therefore, an initial 2 year trial period is proposed during which the RP scheme would be subject to further review and consultation. The initial trial would enable accurate scheme operating costs to be identified and allow for further review of the permit eligibility criteria and scheme operating hours.

Scheme Detail

8.3 Taking into account the consultation results, and the feasibility work undertaken, **Table 1** (below) sets out the principles of the proposed RP Scheme.

8.4 RP schemes require a robust set of operating rules and the administration of resident and visitor permits, alongside more specific permits to enable essential activities to continue - such as professional tradespersons, health professionals, and carers visits for example; in addition to the needs for businesses located within the scheme area. Standard exemptions would apply to postal deliveries, public services and for general loading/unloading of goods and passengers etc. The proposed operating rules, including permit eligibility and charge rates are detailed in **Appendix C**.

8.5 The extent of the RP scheme, across the 7 residential areas affected, is detailed in **Appendix D**. This area matches the extent proposed within the previous informal consultation exercise. Some additional yellow line parking restrictions are proposed on sections of road affected by the RP scheme proposals, or likely to be impacted by parking pressures associated with the regenerated town centre (as referred to in para. 5.2) - these are also indicated on this plan.

Table 1

Type of scheme	Predominantly a 'Zonal' type scheme (with entry and repeater signs) – no marked bays and thus no fundamental change to residents' existing parking habits. Some traditionally marked bays would be required in isolated locations.
Scheme extent	All roads within the 7 residential areas consulted (Appendix A). Accompanied by some conventional parking restrictions on adjoining and/or adjacent roads as required.
Days of operation	Monday – Sunday (7 days)
Hours of operation	Monday – Saturday: 8am-6pm (8pm in certain zones, subject to formal consultation) Sunday: 10am-4pm
Resident permit allocation	Resident permits: Up to 5 per household. Subject to a 2 year trial period.
	Self contained private developments – Visitor permits only (by request), for use in adjacent roads. Visitor permits - per household: - 4 hour permit (re-usable) – 1 per household - 4 hour permits (scratch card) – up to 100 per household/annum - 24 hour permits (scratch card) – up to 100 per household/annum
Resident permit charges	1 st permit: .£FOC 2 nd permit: £FOC 3 rd permit: £20 4 th permit £40 5 th permit £70 Subject to a 2 year trial period.

Table 1

	<p>Visitor Permits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 4 hour permit (re-usable) –1 per household: £FOC- 4 hour permits (scratch card) – up to 100 per household/annum Initial issue 50: £FOC Further 50 (by request): £FOC- 24 hour permits (scratch card) – up to 100 per household/annum Initial issue 50: £FOC Further 50 (by request): £FOC <p>Subject to a 2 year trial period.</p>
<p>Access permit allocation</p>	<p>Alongside standard exemptions for loading/unloading and works to the highway, and/or general use of limited waiting parking bays, a permit system (where required) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Business/property owners located within the permit only zones;- Certain defined businesses located outside the permit only zones, where access is required (includes housing associations);- Professional health workers and public sector field workers requiring access;- Professional tradespersons requiring routine access (not covered by residents' visitor permits); <p>Some of these permits would be subject to a charge – see Appendix C.</p> <p>Subject to a 2 year trial period</p>

Communications and Public Awareness

- 8.6 On the current timetable, an approval to commence would result in the advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders, alongside individual notification of the affected properties, at the end of March 2014. A communications plan to maximise awareness of the advertised TRO and the scheme's benefits would also be introduced.
- 8.7 Consideration of responses to the formal consultation, alongside the conclusions drawn, would be subject to further decision in July 2014 by the Executive Member for Planning and Transportation, Cllr Turrell.

9 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 9.1 Subject to carrying out a consultation process in accordance with the advice already given to Officers as to timing, the giving of adequate reasons and time for responding and to proper consideration being given to the responses to the consultation process, the Council has the power to introduce a Residents' Parking Scheme, if the consultation process indicates the need and a desire to introduce a scheme.

Borough Treasurer

- 9.2 Income from the proposed scheme is unlikely to meet the full running costs during the two year trial period. An adequate provision will be made in the Council's accounts to meet the estimated net cost of the trial period.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 9.3 Not applicable.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 9.4 None.

Background Papers

Executive Report - Residents Parking (Public Consultation) - 11-6-13

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