

FOOPA input to TECS scrutiny panel

Thursday 8 December 2016

TECS panel parking review

Aim and objectives

Aim

A review of general parking issues in Portsmouth with a view to considering alternative strategies

Objectives of the inquiry

1. To understand and evaluate the current parking situation in the city which would include :
 - The legislative background.
 - The management of supply and demand for parking, both on and off street.
 - Parking Permits.
 - Parking of commercial vehicles in residential streets.
2. To investigate how effectively other local authorities deal with parking issues.
3. To identify and evaluate possible long-term solutions.

Note: The review will not consider the location or circumstances of individual residential parking zones, nor will it cover enforcement

TECS

- "Customer choice"
- Free parking is convenient
 - Normally one has to pay for convenience
- Choice cannot always be met
- Limits to capacity

TECS assumptions

- ‘Portsmouth – the great waterfront city’
 - Too many people expect to drive through one of the most densely populated and congested cities in the UK to reach the waterfront and park there
- Is parking the main problem? Or the worst symptom?
- Must customer demand/expectations be met if they are unachievable?
- Cllr Vernon-Jackson blog
 - Useful to identify range of views, but no consensus

Wider traffic issues

Air pollution

- Portsmouth named by WHO for breaching air pollution safety levels ¹
- Third worst air quality in the region (DEFRA report March 2014)
 - Too many cars on a small island
- Portsmouth Director of Public Health (June 2016)
 - 600 early deaths in the city can be attributed to air pollution every year
 - “We need to significantly reduce cars in the city”
 - “We have the opportunity to make the island as car-free as possible so that the private car ownership becomes the thing of the past”

Physical activity

- Primacy of motor traffic discourages active sustainable travel
- ~ 2/3 adult population above normal weight
- > 1/3 children leaving primary school are overweight/obese (source: PCC)

Road safety

- Worst cyclist accident rate outside London
- Poor child pedestrian safety record

¹ <http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/health/portsmouth-named-on-pollution-danger-list-1-7378327>

On-street parking in OP

– many of these factors apply elsewhere in city

Increasing demand

- BAR
- Hotwalls studios
- Gunwharf overflow parking
- Wightlink expansion
- Residential developments
- Hotel development
- Square Tower events
- Trade vehicles parked at employee's homes

Reduced availability

- Camber car park transferred to BAR
- Gunwharf shoppers (ab)using free parking period
- 'Special cases'
 - Blue badge
 - Essential visitors
- Multiple car ownership
- Residents not using garages/car ports
 - e.g. utility room, boat store
- Car too big to fit into off-road parking space
 - Planning requirements out of date
 - Need a big car?
 - People getting ~~fatter~~ bigger
 - Lifestyle choice?

online petition Feb 15 (1)

Useful barometer – but no consensus

- “Deal with the commercial vehicles, commuters and multiple occupancy households clogging our residential streets, don’t just tax the ordinary family.”
- “I oppose any fee for first car unless guaranteed space available at all times”
- “Charges should be levied at visitors to the city, who cause major congestion, especially when they do not use the park and ride system, which we paid for!”
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- “24 flats in our road but space for 4 1/2 cars”
- “I live in a residents parking zone, there are lots of cars parked in the area for more than the stated time displayed, sometimes the cars are parked there for a few days and they don’t even get a parking ticket”
- “it is unfair to charge individuals for parking in the road they live”
- “We now have Park and Ride which is good but we have a Council with a policy to encourage others to drive into Portsmouth because you can park down the side streets.”
- “The council should withdraw the enormous number of FREE parking permits which are currently given to all the hotels and guest houses in the area. “
 - *Are business permits free? Or subsidised?*
- “If I am then expected to pay through the nose for my permits, which would amount to 3 when my youngest son passes his test ...”
 - *Why will youngest son need a permit (car) as soon as he passes his test?*
- “We already pay road tax to park on roads”
 - *n.b. There is no such thing as ‘road tax’ and vehicle excise duty (VED) does not give the right to park for free anywhere in the UK*

online petition Feb 15 (2)

Useful barometer – but no consensus

- “I haven’t got a car anymore as its just ridiculously expensive & not environmentally friendly. I now buy a yearly bus pass and its brilliant. No parking fees, no petrol ,no insurance, no maintenance and the bus service in Portsmouth is excellent. I’m also much fitter due to all the walking in between bus connections”
- “I’m having to drive around looking for a space, because of tourists and university students parking. and I’m expected to pay £40 plus for the benefit.....mark out parking bays, increasing the chance of parking (because) too many drivers are inconsiderate, leaving large gaps front & back of their cars when parking.”
- “Any extra administration funding should be levied on visitors, 3+ cars owners, mobile homes, and commercial vehicles”
- “we need to limit the number of vehicles in Portsmouth, two per house when no private parking , any more you should have to park in designated areas , even outside Portsea island, students should have to leave their cars outside full stop. Someone has to get a grip of the situation, Portsmouth is bursting with motor vehicles!”
- “some of those not living in the zone have taken advantage of our zone for the two free hours and more (parking attendants do not frequent the zones enough) and they have taken away our spaces so that the people who live in the zone and who PAY for it can’t park our cars”
- “make it compulsory for all future multi-storey developments within the city to be designed with underground parking facilities”
- “I regularly don’t find a parking space on Western Parade when I return home from work. When there are events on the common, there are no spaces at all in the surrounding area”
- “This area is congested by Residents’ with more than one car, businesses run from Private Residences, with their business cars, white vans, lorries etc., parked at all times, especially overnight”
- “We need to sort the residential parking as we are now invaded by students’ cars and commercial vehicles

Benefits and drawbacks of free parking

Benefits

- Convenience
 - In most aspects of life one has to pay for convenience!
- Easy/free parking expected by:
 - residents
 - businesses
 - visitors

Drawbacks

- Encourages driving and congestion
- Noise
- Air pollution
 - Will Portsmouth become a Clean Air Zone?
- Road safety degraded
 - More traffic = more interaction of vehicles & pedestrians
 - Parking < 10m of junctions against Highway Code advice
 - Deters pedestrians
 - Fewer children walking to school
 - More school run traffic congestion
- Public health degraded
 - lack of physical activity
 - obesity
- Parking enforcement difficulty = costs
- Weakens public transport (buses, taxis, PHVs)
- Frustration : "I can't park close to my house"

Option 1 - Create more on-street parking

- **Not enough space**
- Echelon (diagonal) parking inherently less safe
- People and cars getting bigger - need wider spaces (so fewer spaces)
- Decades of squeezing more parking spaces onto congested streets has not solved the problem
- Conclusion: doesn't work and is unsustainable

Option 2 - Ration parking

How much parking is/should be provided?

- What is upper limit?
- Number of on-street parking spaces
 - Residents
 - Visitors
- What is reasonable level of 'overbooking'?
 - Analogous to an airline - parking demand fluctuates

How to allocate?

- One permit per residence?
- Pricing?
 - Raising prices will discriminate against the less affluent
- Perceived need?
- How to allocate fairly (as complex as school place applications?)
 - n.b. Lots of people want to own cars. Fewer really need cars
- Conclusion: difficult to make equitable allocation

Option 3 - Reduce demand

- Reduce dependence on private motor car
 - “A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It's where the rich use public transportation.”

Gustavo Petro, former Mayor of Bogotá, Columbia

- Make alternatives more attractive
 - Improve bus services and routes
 - don't remove bus lanes !
 - Investigate a tram network running along our main thoroughfares
 - as a council tax payer, very happy for TECS panel to make a visit at council expense to twinned city of Caen to see how the French successfully integrate trams into their busy streets!
 - Safer walking
 - Implement proposed walking strategy
 - Provide more safe road crossings
 - Improve cycle routes
 - *Complete Shipwrights' Way*
- Conclusion: **medium term solution needs investment**
- **Ideal opportunity for new Solent Mayoral Combined Authority**

Proposal

- Why any free visitor parking? OP is:
 - Popular tourist area (*Spice Island*) - like Southsea
 - Retail area (*Hotwalls*) - like Gunwharf
 - Commercial area (*BAR, Wightlink*) -like city centre
- No free visitor parking in Gunwharf, city centre, Southsea - so why in OP?
- Is free parking an amenity?
 - No! indirect costs to others
 - Residents displaced
 - Encourages traffic congestion, air pollution, noise, speeding ...

Simple principle:

If you want to park, you pay - 24/7/365

- **Residents don't get free parking**
 - Buy a house with a garage (pay more)
 - Don't use your garage and pay for a resident's parking permit (pay)
 - Don't have a garage and pay for a resident's parking permit (pay)
 - Rent a garage (pay)
- **Why should visitors get free parking?**

Mitigate impact

- Short duration visitors
 - More flexible parking periods e.g. 20 or 30 minutes
- Volunteers e.g. cathedral
 - Organisation refunds cost of parking
- Businesses
 - Business offers refunds for cost of parking
 - e.g. vue in Gunwharf, Waitrose in Petersfield
- Consider city-wide validity of Residents' Parking Permits
 - Permit allows on-street parking anywhere in city
 - Need to consider carefully - might be unintended consequences

Concluding remarks

- Has the panel identified the risk that central government may impose a clean air zone on Portsmouth - with major constraints on use of polluting motor traffic in the city?
- Conventional political wisdom is that there are votes in parking. In June Portsmouth's medical officer of health told The News that she estimated that **600** people die early each year as a result of air pollution. **Many people would prefer to live in a city where the enlightened political wisdom is that there are votes in reducing the air pollution that kills our citizens**