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Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Title of meeting:	Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel
Subject:	Parking Research Results
Date of meeting:	Wednesday 20 September 2017
Report by:	Market Research Officer
Wards affected:	All Wards

1. Requested by

Traffic, Environmental & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel

2. Purpose

To gain solutions to parking problems within the city with members of the general public who live in the city.

3. Information Requested

Feedback from local residents regarding problems and potential solutions to parking in Portsmouth. This was to focus on commercial vehicles, parking zones, HMOs, planning and students, as well as discussing the alternatives to using a car in the city.

…………………………………………………
Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

PARKING REVIEW - GROUP RESEARCH

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

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PARKING REVIEW - GROUP RESEARCH

Kelly Dubock, September 2017

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1.0 BACKGROUND

Portsmouth is a densely populated vibrant city with over 210,000 people living within the city boundaries. The ONS project this figure to increase over the coming years to around 215,000 by 2020, making Portsmouth the most densely populated area outside of London

Large areas of the city's housing is made of up Edwardian and Victorian terraced properties that do not have off-road parking available. Parking on the street generally equates to 1 space per property, but many households have 2 or more vehicles.

The city has a growing University population, with a transient population of around 25,000 students (UoP) each year. The University also employs around 2,500 full-time equivalent staff.

The City also attracts a large number of visitors to its world class attractions and major events, such as The Great South Run and Victorious, which serve to increase the demand for the limited supply of parking within the city.

1.1 PARKING IN THE CITY

Increasingly, residents are finding it harder to park, with some residents reporting that they do not move their cars during certain periods, particularly in the evenings when most people are at home
Around 19% of the city's streets are within permit zones - in some areas this has caused enhanced parking problems due to displacement, i.e. some of those living close the boundary of a permit zone are parking in a non-permit zone to avoid charges.
With this in mind Portsmouth City Council tasked the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel in 2016.

1.2 PANEL FORMATION

The Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel began a review of parking in the city on 28 September 2016.
The cross-party panel comprises:
• Cllr Steve Hastings (Chair)
• Cllr Jim Fleming
• Cllr Paul Godier
• Cllr Lee Hunt
• Cllr Ian Lyon
• Cllr Tom Wood

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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.

2.0   RESEARCH

The scrutiny committee has undertaken to fulfil their objectives in a number of different
ways, ranging from talking to professionals in the area of parking and traffic, inviting other
council to demonstrate learnings and ideas they have been able to implement as well as
using the experience of council officers so they could build a picture.

However, Portsmouth has a number of unique features and therefore all the members of
the committee believed it to be important to understand the feelings on the subject from
Portsmouth residents.

Over the years residents have been asked for their opinions on parking, often at a much
localised level. It was therefore important that any further work was useful, covered new
ground but also that those who participated could see a larger picture, i.e. that the parking
problems they might be experiencing may be different in another location.

The scrutiny panel requested a piece of research/consultation in order to further
investigate the problems faced by residents but also to explore any possible resident
solutions.

2.1   HOW IT WORKED

As already discussed, parking within the city of Portsmouth can be contentious in some
areas. It was therefore important to ensure that any research enabled proactive and useful
discussion.
The scrutiny panel was particularly keen to hear from residents and their ideas for
improving parking within the city. With this in mind a focus group or workshop allowing a
discussion of ideas was decided to be a good starting point.
To inform and get the best information or feedback it was necessary to plan the workshop
to focus on a number of key areas. To allow residents to inform these key areas an online
forum asking individuals to comment on parking problems and solutions was set-up. This
online forum also had the added advantage of providing one of the main recruitment
platforms for the workshop.

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In addition to the online forum, residents were notified by Flagship about the workshop.

They were invited to submit their comments or their desire to participate in the workshop by phone. This option was taken up by a number of individuals.

The online forum highlighted many different areas and solutions but four areas were mentioned time and time again and were for many residents the cause of many issues related to parking in the city.

These four areas, along with a 5th (looking at reducing the need for parking) formed the basis of the workshops.

Six tables of residents discussed a topic. All had the opportunity to make comments on all topics covered in the session.

Discussions identified a number of key areas which will allow for focus quantitative research to take place and giving all residents the chance to tell PCC how they feel about these suggestions and ideas.

3.0   PROCESS

Prior to the workshop, an online forum ran for a number of weeks giving residents the opportunity to make comments about the parking in their areas, as well as giving them the opportunity to register an interest in participating in the focus group/workshop on Tuesday 25th July, 2017.

Seven hundred and ninety-one residents responded to the forum board with 318 of those indicating an interest to attend the group at the end of July.

3.1   GROUP SELECTION AND FINAL ATTENDEE NUMBERS

To allow a broad range of responses, data was divided by ward and selection within each group was based on a 'random' selection process. This was to ensure that geographically all areas of the city were given a voice but also to ensure that biased was minimised in the selection process.

In total the following individuals attended:

* 28 x residents (30 confirmed attendance but 2 failed to attend)
* 6 x Councillors
* 5 x PCC Officers (to facilitate the group discussions on each table and record conversations).

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3.2   GROUP TOPICS

Using the feedback from the online forum we were able to identify the top 5 areas for discussion at the group. These included:

- Commercial vehicles
- On-street parking
- HMO/Planning/Students
- Parking Zones & Permits
- Reducing the need for parking

Each topic was covered in-depth by one table of residents, although all had the chance to comment towards the end of session on anything discussed at another table. This allowed targeted and focused discussion but also gave the opportunity for any innovative ideas to be brought to the forefront also.

4.0   RESULTS

A wide and varied discussion occurred and was recorded. It is important to preserve anonymity of those involved but the following information highlights the key findings and also the areas covered by each group based on the topics selected from the comments submitted to the online focus group.

4.1   KEY OUTCOMES

Following extensive discussion the participants agreed the most important ideas that should be explored in more depth. These ideas do not exclude others but were deemed to potentially be the most effective way of approaching parking in the city initially.

Top 3 ideas agreed by the focus group participants:

1.   Move commercial vehicles from residential roads to other sites in the city
2.   Limit the number of HMOs - better liaison with planning and parking.
3.   Make resident parking citywide

4.2   FEEDBACK - OVERVIEW

Each table discussed a specific topic with a PCC officer there to make notes and ensure the conversation kept moving. Their role was primarily as an observer but all had a discussion guide to enable them to help the group if conversation stalled. In this instance this was unnecessary.

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4.3   TABLE FEEDBACK - COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

- Taxi firms with 5 plus vehicles operating in a residential area. Taxi drivers turn up park their cars then go out in taxis. At end of shift come back park taxi and take their cars - so never any spaces for other residents.
- Suggested 1 car per business registered at an address. Then £500 a year for any additional vehicles.
- Compounds needed for commercial vehicles - available land should be sought. A possible idea raised was that a shared car could transport workers from the compound to their homes.
- In school holidays why can cars not park on the zig zags? Also open up school car parks at weekends and school holidays.
- Many council related vehicles parking in residential areas (Colas/Mountjoy)
- Residential permits are now digitised so if a vehicle has been parked in a residential area for a long time, cannot see whether it has a permit by looking
- Rules need to be enforced and need more traffic wardens patrolling.
- Suggestion to use the company car parks in Hilsea (near to train station) so that people can park then get the train into the city to work.
- Use the park and ride car park for parking overnight.

4.4   TABLE FEEDBACK - ON-STREET PARKING

- Issues with parking near visitor venues such as Kings Theatre.
- Many trading estates are left empty overnight.
- Issues with second car ownership and motorbikes taking up a whole parking space.
- Use school car parks to park in the evening.
- Grass verges are often used to park.
- Extend the park and ride to Fratton for match days.
- Subsidised trains for match days.
- One way systems to remove bottle necks in city.
- For new developments parking should be created underneath building.
- Knock down some rows of houses to create more parking spaces. Instead build tower blocks with underground parking.
- Close off individual roads so that only people with permits can park in these. (Using an automated barrier system)
- A lot of properties are having kerbs lowered so they can create a parking space in their front garden - means that they can two cars on the road and a third on driveway which can be an issue.

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4.5   TABLE FEEDBACK - HMOs/PLANNING/STUDENTS

- No consideration on parking when planning decisions are made.
- Students do not need a car all of the time. Look at car sharing schemes such as Zipcar. It would be useful to obtain figures on the number of cars registered that are parking in the city compared to the number of on street spaces. Also ask university for student car ownership figures.
- Look at Boris bike schemes to encourage more cycling.
- Need better and more reliable public transport.
- Better policing of school run with parents parking on zig zags outside of schools.
- Suggested marking out parking bays in unrestricted zones so that people park properly and do not take up two spaces.
- Possibility of using car parks such as B&Q for people to park their cars overnight.
- Need better liaison with planning department on HMOs - when residents object on parking grounds this is not taken into account. This possibly is because of the planning legislation so cannot be taken into account.
- Houses that have garages often do not use them for their cars - used for storage instead.

Comments from other tables:

- Marking out bays in residential streets is a good idea as often people park in the middle of two spaces to save a space for another family member It was pointed out that this may prove difficult as what would be classed as a standard size space. It was pointed out that when disabled car parking spaces are marked out on roads any size car can fit in these so why not do the same for all spaces - 1 space per house.
- Stop planners allowing HMOs
- Waiting lists for permits - certain number of permits for a RPZ and if none available then no new developments can be granted planning permission.
- For some developments it is in their contract that they are not permitted to allow cars - how is this policed?

4.6   TABLE FEEDBACK - RESIDENT PARKING ZONES

- In these zones the residents have better parking however it becomes an issue when they have visitors. Also disadvantages other nearby roads that do not have RPZ as additional cars will park there instead or buying a second/third permit.
- Commercial vehicles will park outside of the RPZ so they don't need to buy a permit. Suggest that car parks are opened up at night so commercial vehicles can park there (8am-8pm)
- Should either be a city wide RPZ or none.
- Suggested RPZ have 23 hours parking with a one hour slot between 5-6pm where cannot park - allows others to park in the zone when coming home from work - this should be based on demand.
- Increased cost for 2nd/3rd/4th car registered to every address.
- Congestion charge for travelling into the city.

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- Make the park and ride more beneficial for commuters and extend to Gunwharf. Also open later into the evening.
- Cars not registered to Portsmouth addresses parked in residential streets - how are these managed?
- No new developments should be granted planning permission unless have dedicated parking.

Comments from other tables:

- Agreement that RPZ needs a holistic approach - all or nothing.
- Main issues with parking are at the end of the day when people come home from work (4-7pm).
- Perhaps have restrictions at a certain time of the day.
- New 24/7 gym opened in Cosham. People are parking in the 2 hour parking zone to go to gym, meaning residents cannot park. Cllr Fleming said that this is being closely monitored and will see more traffic wardens in this area.
- The 2 hours parking zone near properties in Fratton is just enough time for people to park there to watch football at Fratton Park - suggestion that in these areas the time limit is reduced to 1 hour.

4.7   TABLE FEEDBACK - REDUCING THE NEED FOR PARKING - ALTERNATIVES

- Encourage employers with multiple vans to supply places for them to park.
- 3rd car in a household to pay £510 for permit.
- RPZ - either scrap or make the whole of Portsea Island a RPZ.
- Park and Ride should be extended to other areas such as Southsea.
- More dedicated bus lanes.
- Congestion charge for driving into town.
- Reduced fare for people going to Fratton Park on match days.
- Encourage people to walk shorter journeys.
- Underground parking for new developments.

Comments from other tables:

- Later running of public transport
- Making more use of buses - more cost effective. Often cheaper to get a taxi to Gunwharf instead of using bus/train.
- Only allow electric vehicles in the city - a radical idea but might be needed.
- Culture of walking is needed - need a cultural shift. E.g. mothers walking children to school instead of driving.
- Investigate walking tunnels as they have in other countries.
- Help promote a public transport day by offering free public transport for the day.

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5.0   RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Some interesting ideas and opinions were voiced during the workshop. Participants highlighted some key areas that warrant further work.
Ideally, any further work would be undertaken in two stages. In the first instance any additional information about feasibility and legality of implementation should be explored by council officers.

In addition to the three key areas, councillors should identify any further areas that they would like to explore further.

Once this initial stage of work has been completed, this information should be used to develop the second stage of work in the form of a quantitative piece of research (questionnaire).

A questionnaire focusing on the key areas identified at the group, which all residents could respond to, would allow the committee to explore the acceptance of any changes or ideas with a wider audience. Supplementing this survey with additional ideas/changes would also be useful.

Although it is recommended that the questionnaire is primarily online, options to allow alternative access should also be made available, i.e. printed copies available in council offices, printed copies available on request, or perhaps inclusion in the winter issue of flagship (Nov/Dec - if the timings are appropriate). As well as potentially the promotion of the wider questionnaire in Flagship (timings allowing), website, social media, partner organisation communications and WOM would all play a part encouraging people to respond to the questionnaire.

Ideally any questionnaire should run for 6-8 weeks to allow for maximum participation across the city. The longer period of 8 weeks should be undertaken should the questionnaire run over the Christmas period.