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Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Transport decision meeting
Subject:	Residents Parking Zones - Evaluation & Feedback
Date of meeting:	20 March 2024
Report by:	Felicity Tidbury, Assistant Director for Economy, Planning and Transport
Report author:	Kevin McKee, Senior Advisor
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Cabinet member for Transport
Wards affected:	All

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report was requested by the Cabinet Member for Transport to acknowledge that some residents have requested reviews of existing Residents Parking Zones (RPZ). The report sets out the main areas which have been highlighted and could be considered in such a review. A further report with more detailed proposals on how to assess these issues will be brought to a future decision meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 Parking in Portsmouth is a major problem for many residents. The proposed Parking Strategy (Item 6 on the agenda) highlights that between 2011 and 2021 the number of cars registered in Portsmouth has increased by almost 17,000. The problems are getting increasingly more acute. As part of its response, the council has been pursuing a programme of consultation on potential RPZs. In October 2023¹ the decision was taken by the Cabinet Member for Transport to accelerate this programme using consultants so multiple areas could be considered at the same time.

¹ <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=28013>

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- 2.2 The programme of consultation on RPZs has focused on potential new zones with informal and formal consultation embedded as part of this programme. The informal consultation enables communities to share issues and to shape proposals before they come forward formally. For example, when a RPZ is proposed there are normally a number of objections and suggestions received from residents and business, however usually, once a RPZ is operational there is general satisfaction. In some instances, questions and suggestions are made by residents and businesses and therefore, a review will allow for continued monitoring of the RPZs to ensure they still fulfil the original requirements.
- 2.3 Any residents' parking scheme is designed to suit the needs of the majority and issues that are raised through the informal consultation in an area. However, an RPZ must have a level of restriction on residents and on non-residents to ensure it is effective and so it is likely there will always be some comments. The aim of a review will be to test the individual comments against the general view to see whether improvements can be made to existing zones.
- 2.4 Information about the current permit criteria, in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQs), and details of permit prices are included in Appendix A of this report.

3. Review considerations

General

3.1 Resident Permit Charges

In recent consultations respondents have commented on the permit cost and the additional pressure it puts on budgets in the cost-of-living crisis. The cost of a permit needs to pay for the provision of the service and the cost of a second vehicle, or even a third vehicle is higher to discourage unnecessary vehicles and to encourage the use of more sustainable travel options. A review could examine the balance of costs and charges.

3.2 Business Permits

In order to encourage people commuting to work to consider options other than using the private car the price of business permits is set higher than residents' permits. Two exceptions to this are classroom-based teachers and people working for a charity who can purchase permits at £30. Currently a business with a place of work in a zone can get as many business permits as they need subject to cost. A review could look at these charges.

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3.3 Visitors Permits

The cost of visitors' permits was last reviewed in 2020. There is currently no limit on the number of visitors permits that can be issued and there is a perception residents buy them to park vehicles which do not meet the criteria for a permit. Visitors permits in the form of scratch cards can be purchased through local outlets and it is very difficult for the Council to monitor how they are used.

Since 2020 the number of residents buying virtual visitors permits using RingGo has more than doubled and they now account for around 35% of those sold. The system allows registered residents to buy a visitors permit at anytime and anywhere which is more convenient than buying scratch cards. Encouraging greater use of RingGo or other similar systems, would also give the council more visibility as to how they are being used. However, in any scheme which requires greater use of this technology there is a need to understand that those who cannot or do not use smart phones and/or the internet can still access the service. This could be investigated further and consider with an Integrated Impact Assessment to understand the options for providing a fairer and more convenient service for providing residents visitors permits.

3.4 Enforcement of RPZs

Some residents have reported issues about enforcement and the Council is reviewing how this is carried out and how it can be made even more effective. The Council is looking at purchasing an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) car. Currently in order to enforce a permit only zone, a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) needs to enter the registration of every vehicle in a street into their handheld computer to see where each vehicle has a permit.

3.5 The ANPR car would be able to scan registration numbers and quickly identify vehicles that did not have a resident's permit. A CEO would then check only the vehicles highlighted to see if they had a valid blue badge on display or other reason to be parked. This provides much faster checking, but also ensures only vehicles which contravene the restrictions will receive Penalty Charge Notices (PCN).

3.6 Consultation on Residents Parking Zones

The Council currently use a two-stage process of consultation where an initial survey asks residents in an area if they have parking issues, and if they do what times the issues occur and what they think causes them. It also asks if a RPZ would be helpful in their area. In areas where there are parking issues and residents who respond consider a RPZ would be useful, a RPZ is designed. A second round of formal consultation then takes place on the details of the proposal before being brought to the Cabinet Member for Transport for a decision.

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- 3.7 During both phases of consultation residents are provided with written information. The process may benefit from providing residents with the opportunity to talk to officers directly at drop-in sessions and have more of an interaction.

Residents Parking Zone Specific

3.8 The Hours of Control

Whenever there is a consultation, residents have differing views on the appropriate hours that a Residents Parking Zone should be controlled. This often reflects individual circumstances. Some even consider that a zone is not needed. These issues could be considered on a zone-by-zone basis. In addition, some residents, in areas where there is a maximum period of time non permit holders can park without a permit, would like the time period reviewed or removed.

3.9 Boundary Streets

Where there are boundaries between two zones there can be issues with residents on one side of a road being unable to park in bays which might be free opposite and across a zone boundary. In some places bays in streets either side of boundaries have been designated for permit holders of both zones so people can have flexibility to park across a boundary. A review could consider how effective this blurring of the boundaries is whether more are needed or whether there are other ways to address these issues.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 Officers will consider the above as well as any further comments received from Councillors and other interested parties and produce a proposal for a review.
- 4.2 As well as surveying residents for their views, each change proposed will require an amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which specifies the existing restrictions. This requires formal consultation with anyone likely to be affected by the proposed change. The comments received during this formal consultation will need to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Transport at a formal decision meeting.
- 4.3 It should be noted that the Council's in-house Traffic Regulation Order team who would normally do this work is currently at capacity and the accelerated programme of consultation is being carried out with the help of external consultants. The report therefore will also need to consider what additional

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resources are needed to carry out the review, timeframes and how this work can be funded.

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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:**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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Appendix A

Details of the Current Criteria in the form of FAQs and Costs of Permits

Frequently asked questions

Do zones guarantee a parking space outside my house?

No. If the road outside your home or business is a public highway then anyone can park there as long as they do so legally. Existing parking zones show that residents have more chance of parking outside or near their homes when a parking zone is in operation, than before.

Where can I park within a parking zone?

You can park anywhere within your own zone, as indicated by signs.

Will they all be entitled to permits?

No more than two permits are usually issued to each postal address, and only to residents with vehicles registered to an address within the zone. Additional permits are considered depending on how many have been issued, together with the number of spaces available.

I have a company/lease car. Will I be entitled to a permit for it?

Yes. You will need to provide a letter from your company on an official letterhead as confirmation.

I have a commercial vehicle. Will I be entitled to a permit for it?

Only if the commercial vehicle weighs 3500kgs or less and is registered to an address within the parking zone, or is the only vehicle at your address, or is needed for emergency call-outs (proof of call-out will be required).

I own a motorcycle. Do I need to apply for a permit?

No. Currently motorcycles are exempt from residents' parking zones in the city.

I am a blue badge holder. Do I need to apply for a permit?

In the area where you live you have a choice. You can either display your blue badge at all times within your zone or apply for a resident permit. Blue badge holders are exempt from all residents' parking zones in the city. However, if you park in a marked disabled bay or in another zone, you will have to display a blue badge as usual.

I do not have a car – can I have a permit for my visitors?

You can't have a resident permit because these are linked to a vehicle registration number and are only issued for vehicles registered to residents' addresses within a zone. Visitor permits are available to all residents, whether they have a car or not, for use in visitors' vehicles. Parking can be purchased electronically or in the form of a scratch card.

How are parking zones enforced?

Like all parking restrictions in Portsmouth, they are enforced by the council's civil enforcement officers, who may issue penalty charge notices to vehicles contravening parking restrictions.

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Permit costs

	1st	2nd	3rd
Annual residents' permits	£30	£120	£300*
Annual business permits	£150	£300	£630

	12 hours	24 hours
Visitor permits	£1.15	£2.20

**Subject to capacity*

For further details, see the website portsmouth.gov.uk/residentparkingzones