

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 APRIL 2025**

RESIDENT'S PARKING ZONE POLICY UPDATE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an update on the Resident's Parking Policy that the Council operates to prioritise on-street parking for residents in areas where there can also be demand for visitor parking. The policy has been in place for a number of years and is subject to a current review.
2. In addition, members submitted a Quad of Aims to consider the implications of vehicles of different sizes and emissions parking within the zones. By considering individual vehicle circumstances, the Quad of Aims identified the following outcome:
 - (a) Provide an incentive to use and ownership of smaller, more sustainable vehicles. This will have a positive impact on:
 - (i) Greenhouse gas emissions
 - (ii) Road maintenance budget
 - (iii) Provide additional funding for transport policy objectives
 - (iv) Reduce severity of road collision injuries
 - (v) Inform any future review of on-street and council car park differential charging

Summary

3. This report has considered the Quad of Aims in relation to Resident's Parking and reports initial findings.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee considers and notes the attached initial findings report.
5. It is recommended that consultation with Members, residents and businesses where appropriate is undertaken.

Background Papers

None

Joanne Roberts ext 3187

Council Plan	This report contributes to the Council Plan through the involvement of Members in contributing to the development of operational policy.
Addressing inequalities	There are no issues relating to inequalities which this report needs to address
Tackling Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Efficient and effective use of resources	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda
Health and Wellbeing	This report has implications on the Health and Wellbeing of residents of Darlington.
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Wards Affected	Park East, Northgate, Park West, Pierremont, College, Stephenson, Bank Top & Lascelles, Eastbourne
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

6. The Council operates Resident Parking Zones to prioritise on-street parking for residents in areas where there can also be demand for visitor parking. The current zones are indicated on the plan included at **Appendix 1**, except zone Z which is located in the vicinity of the Darlington Arena, in Eastbourne Ward and only operates when there is an event. The existing policy has been in place for a number of years and is subject to a review to ensure it meets current needs, as follows:
 - (a) Review the current resident parking policy to establish if it is fit for purpose. This would be in terms of appropriateness to the borough of Darlington and the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.
 - (b) Consider how the current policy aligns with other Local Authority's policies, particularly the 12 North East Authorities and learn best practice.
 - (c) Consider how the policy reflects and helps to deliver other national and local policies and priorities i.e. Climate Change Strategy, Net Zero, Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan, Darlington Transport Plan, Darlington Town Centre Strategy etc.
 - (d) Identify changes and any additional services for residents, businesses, and visitors.
 - (e) Seek the views of residents living in the residents parking zones on how the current RPZ policy works. Including whether there are any additional measures that they would consider appropriate. It is also critical that we capture the views of non-permit holders.
 - (f) Produce a revised policy and implement the changes.
7. In addition, members submitted a Quad of Aims to consider the implications of vehicles of different sizes and emissions within the RPZs. By considering individual vehicle circumstances, the Quad of Aims identified the following outcome:
 - (a) Provide an incentive to use and ownership of smaller, more sustainable vehicles. This will have a positive impact on:
 - (i) Greenhouse gas emissions;
 - (ii) Road maintenance budget;
 - (iii) Provide additional funding for transport policy objectives;
 - (iv) Reduce severity of road collision injuries;
 - (v) Inform any future review of on-street and Council car park differential charging.
8. This report presents the initial findings.

Need for an RPZ

9. Residents parking schemes are required to ensure priority parking is available for residents in areas that would otherwise attract non-resident parking such as close to town centres to avoid parking charges.
10. There are currently 16 RPZ zones within the borough of Darlington. Parking is restricted to permit holders only during the hours of operation which are generally 8.00am to 6.00pm, seven days a week. Of the 16 zones, 13 are charged for permits at £40 per 12 months, £24 per six months and £12 for a temporary three-month permit.

11. An RPZ is introduced through an appropriate Traffic Regulation Order to restrict non permit holder parking in a specific area.

Current Policies influencing RPZ

12. The Council has introduced a Council Plan that considers the core principles of addressing inequalities, tackling climate change and making efficient and effective use of resources. Transport is an enabler to jobs and economic growth and prioritising parking for residents in areas that attract commuter, and non-residential parking helps to address inequalities by focusing on resident needs as well as encouraging the use of public transport by implementing car parking policies that restrict parking for motorists.
13. RPZs contribute to the objectives of the Darlington Transport Plan by restricting parking for non-residents that encourages journeys to be made by other modes and complements the work being undertaken that is introducing cycling and public transport infrastructure to encourage journeys by alternative modes to private vehicles.
14. The Government’s priorities include decarbonising transport, and the Tees Valley Combined Authority’s (TVCA) Strategic Transport Plan has identified need and the Council is working with TVCA on rolling out electric vehicle charging infrastructure. To date this has been introduced in off-street car parks and LEVI funding will be used to deliver on-street charging.

Current Resident Parking Policy

15. The current RPZ Policy sees zones operate seven days a week, during daytime hours (no evenings), except for the zone adjacent to Darlington Arena. There are 16 zones in total and of these, three zones offer free permits to residents.
16. The Policy does allow the purchase of trader permits so that work can be undertaken in residential properties. Businesses operating within the zones are also able to purchase permits.
17. Exemptions apply to blue badge holders, emergency services vehicles and observed loading/unloading.
18. The current policy does not provide visitor parking permits as within each zone ‘dual use’ bays are available that provide dedicated parking for residents or limited stay parking for visitors that discourages long stay non-resident parking.

<u>Current Policy</u>	<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>
Operating seven days a week	Consistent approach for delivering the service.	Public expectation of weekend enforcement if schemes aren’t self-enforcing.
Some schemes operate free	Local support from affected residents as parking policy is in their favour.	Reputational risk at a lack of consistency if charges were implemented, residents would likely object if

		enforcement is not increased. No discouragement for parking or reducing the number of vehicles in a household.
Current costs £40, £24, £12 (free)	Varying costs for different durations give residents options to pay.	Costs vary across the region with some local authority schemes costing less than the paid for permit.
Trader permits	Supports local businesses and economic growth.	Potentially reduces resident spaces.
Parking waivers	Supports local businesses and economic growth.	Potential for misuse as good value for money compared to some off-street parking locations.
E-Permits	No printing and postage costs	Possible user anxiety as no permit on display in vehicle.
Limited parking dual use bays	Maximises parking availability by allowing non-resident short term parking for visitors.	Requires enforcement to ensure turnover of parking spaces.
No visitor permit parking	Reduced chance of permit misuse.	Lack of parking opportunities for visitors to residents within the zone.
Business Permits	Supports local businesses and economic growth.	Reduces available space for priority resident parking or on-street pay and display.
Exemption for emergency vehicles	Supports emergency access needs.	
Exemption for observed loading/unloading	Supports residents by allowing deliveries etc.	
Blue Badge parking	Currently can park for free and without time limit.	Blue badge holders take up resident bays, majority are not residents (visitors).

Scheme	Free or Paid permits	Hours of operation	No of permits issued 23/24
Zone A	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	66
Zone B	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	111
Zone C	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	138
Zone D	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	32
Zone E	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	204
Zone F	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	136
Zone G	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	77
Zone H	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	248
Zone I	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	65
Zone J	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	283
Zone K	FREE	All days, 8am to 6pm	96
Zone L	FREE	All days, 8am to 6pm	81

Zone M	FREE	All days, 8am to 6pm	36
Zone N	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	183
Zone O	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	32
Zone Z	PAID	All days, 8am to 6pm	41

Current Schemes

How the Darlington Scheme compares to other Local Authority RPZs

19. Benchmarking information is included in **Appendix 2** from all North East Local Authorities. This information demonstrates the differences between schemes operated by each Local Authority.
20. The hours of operation vary but tend to be daytime usually with some weekend operation.
21. The cost of permits widely varies from a free permit for every resident with a vehicle registered to the address to sliding scale charges that increase with each additional permit, such as Newcastle City Council, first permit is £25 and the second permit can cost £75 unless it is a low emission vehicle for vehicles emitting less than 120g/km CO₂ that sees reductions in cost to £12.50 and £62.50 for first and second permits respectively. Newcastle City Council is the only Council in the region that offers free permits for Electric Vehicles. Darlington Borough Council annually charges £40 for each permit excluding the free permit zones. South Tyneside Council also provides free permits for those with blue badges and those over 65.
22. Some schemes offer the opportunity for additional ‘visitor’ permits to be purchased that can either be assigned to vehicles for regular visitors or to households that means the resident provides the permit to the visitor on arrival. Darlington Borough Council does not provide visitor permits as there is limited stay and pay and display parking in close proximity to RPZs. Some authorities introduce a limit on visitor permits, either by introducing scratchcard books of a set number of visits for example ten or 20 visits or limiting the number of permits and/or visitor permits that can be issued.
23. Some local authorities introduce additional admin charges for replacement (lost) permits or for changing vehicles.
24. There are also different approaches to blue badge parking. In Darlington, blue badge holders can park unrestricted within resident parking zones. Some Local Authority areas will only allow blue badge parking if it is accompanied by either a resident or visitor permit.
25. Some schemes allow businesses that are located in the zone to have permits, but this is generally on a case-by-case basis. For example, it would not be feasible in town centre locations to allow all businesses access to permit parking as there would not be enough parking spaces available for residents in these areas as well and off-street car parks are designed for longer term parking. In other areas there can be smaller businesses operating that have operational parking needs that mean business permits can be accommodated, for example a local business such as a florist who regular undertakes deliveries to

customers.

Eligibility Criteria and process for implementing an RPZ

26. Darlington Borough Council has not developed eligibility criteria for implementing an RPZ, it has been considered on an area wide basis depending on local circumstances.
27. Eligibility criteria could be considered to ensure requests are consistently considered; such criteria could include but not be limited to the following:
 - (a) Requests will be considered if there is a likelihood of high demand non-resident parking being attracted to an area that will occur throughout the day.
 - (b) Support from Ward Councillors can be demonstrated.
 - (c) Funding for a new scheme is identified.
 - (d) Surveys demonstrate demand – will need defining for the policy.
 - (e) % of residents agree with the scheme – will need defining for the policy.
 - (f) Consideration be given to dealing with new requests for residents parking schemes including extent of scheme and potential for displaced parking. There should be clear reasons for implementing a new scheme and not to deal with short term parking issues such as close to a school etc.

Costs of Permits Including Renewal

28. Currently the cost of an RPZ permit is £40 with no maximum number in zones where permits are purchased.
29. Also, some RPZs in Darlington provide free permits to residents with no maximum number. These schemes have been implemented based on decisions to approve planning applications that are likely to attract non-resident parking.

Enforcement

30. Enforcement has improved across the car parking service with the introduction of two dedicated parking officers that has seen an increase in issuing Penalty Charge Notices that will encourage compliance of parking restrictions. The Enforcement team operate across various areas and balancing priorities remains a challenge.

Consultation

31. No consultation has been undertaken to date. Consultation with relevant Ward Members and eligible residents and businesses could be undertaken via questionnaire, a draft is included at **Appendix 3**. The proposals would be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Response to Quad of Aims

The findings of other Local Authorities who have already implemented a similar scheme

32. Other local authorities have successfully implemented schemes where permits are vehicle specific in relation to emissions. There is no evidence of any schemes that are operated

using the weight of vehicles from a road maintenance perspective.

33. Of the schemes implemented outside of London, Bath and North East Somerset Council base permit charges on CO2 emissions or engine capacity if CO2 information is not available. With higher engine emissions affecting air quality, the higher charges aim to reduce the use of more polluting vehicles thereby reducing public health risks from air pollution for pedestrians.
34. Newcastle City Council follow a similar arrangement with permits for Electric Vehicles free of charge. The take up of the free permit for EVs is however relatively low compared to the total number of resident permits issued, with less than 3% of permits for EVs. This could incentivise a switch from a petrol or diesel vehicle, however given the higher cost of electric vehicles it is potentially unlikely to encourage this switch in its own right.
35. It should be noted that both authorities do not allow cross pavement EV charging opportunities that would give residents access to cheaper home tariffs, EV owners are still expected to use public charging. They do not reserve areas of the highway for EV charging except at public charging locations that are available for all EV owners to use.

Assess proposed differential charging and the likelihood of positive behaviour change

36. The principle of proposed differential charging for less polluting vehicles could form one of a number of initiatives to encourage the switch to EVs. Introducing a maximum number of permits or a cost sliding scale whereby residents pay more if they have more permits could also encourage less car ownership.

Assess the method and timescale of implementation

37. The Council's back-office parking system can configure emissions-based permits; however, the system would require a lot of work to reconfigure it and this would be chargeable by the Host Company. The current system is contracted for a further four years until 2029.
38. The first on-street EV chargers to be installed in Darlington will be early 2026. Any changes to the TRO would be subject to the statutory process that typically takes six months. This would not commence until the RPZ Policy had been formally adopted and been through the process.

Recommend to Cabinet the effectiveness of the proposed scheme

39. The emission based scheme could be considered for implementation as it does incentivise the switch to lower emission vehicles and EVs albeit these vehicles are generally more expensive to purchase than petrol and diesel vehicles currently. The proposal needs to be considered alongside the tackling inequalities Council Plan theme. Transport is an enabler to jobs and economic growth and prioritising parking for residents in areas that attract commuter, and non-residential parking helps to address inequalities by focusing on resident needs as well as encouraging the use of public transport by implementing car parking policies that restrict parking for motorists. However, providing financial incentives for those who can afford an electric vehicle should be carefully considered to ensure that others are not disadvantaged.

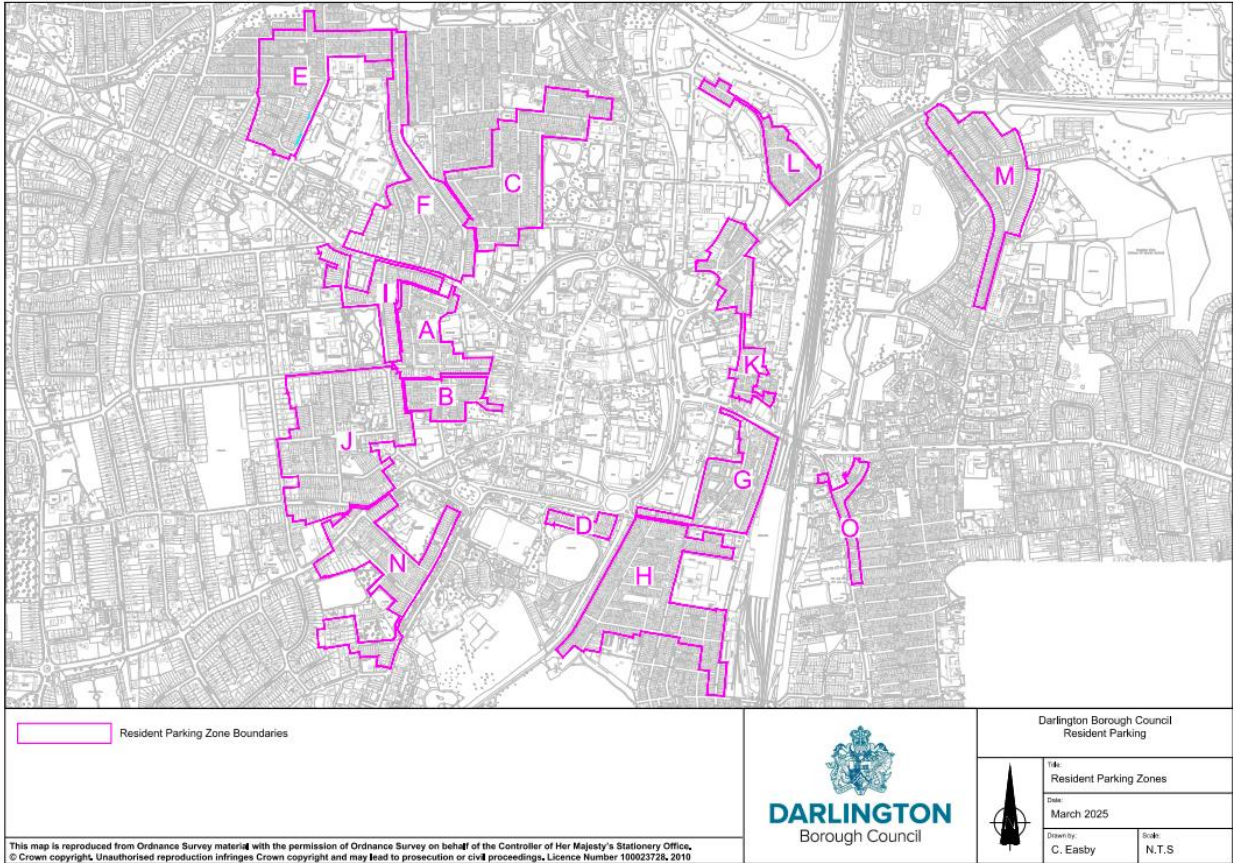
Emerging Themes

40. There are opportunities to implement a restriction on the number of permits per household and to revise the cost of permits with a sliding scale per permit as other authorities have done. This would gradually increase the costs to a maximum amount to discourage multi permit holding households. Also, an approach to discourage more polluting vehicles in residential areas could be similar to the Government vehicle excise duty method with lower emission vehicles paying less, this has been implemented by Bath and North East Somerset Council as well as the London Boroughs who are also subject to ULEZ. Newcastle City Council also have a lower cost permit for vehicles emitting less than 120g/km of CO₂ as well as the free EV permit.
41. On-street Electric Vehicle charging is being rolled out utilising LEVI funding and it is anticipated that the first chargers will be introduced in early 2026. This will help encourage the switch to EVs and decarbonisation. For those residents, however, who don't have in curtilage parking and access to home charging facilities in RPZ areas, the cost of charging will still be higher. Reducing the cost of permits for EV owners in RPZs needs to be balanced against encouraging ownership in areas where charging opportunities are limited.
42. Residential parking areas are provided for properties that have no or very limited off-street parking. In accordance with the recently adopted EV Charging Policy, electric vehicle charging would need to be undertaken at public charge points, meaning residents in these areas are unable to take advantage of the financial benefits of home charging.
43. Some RPZ areas have been implemented because of planning decisions and therefore permits are offered free of charge. Charging for permits can help ensure long term viability of schemes, a consistent approach could be considered, particularly as there is a high turnover of residents in some of these areas because of rental properties.

Next Steps

44. The Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee considers and notes the attached initial findings report.
45. It is recommended that consultation with Members, residents and businesses where appropriate is undertaken.
46. That Officers present the consultation outcome to scrutiny so that members have the opportunity to discuss the findings before a final Policy is agreed.

Resident Parking Zone Locations (excluding Zone Z – Darlington Arena)



Other Local Authority's Schemes

Local Authority	Cost of Permit	Hours of Operation	Local Variations
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	£10 per year per permit, limited to two per household.	Varies – 8am -6pm or 8am – 5pm, (some seven days, six days or five days)	Visitor permits can be purchased, in Yarm this is limited to scratchcards (20 uses per year). Eaglescliffe and Yarm also have dual use bays. No business permits in Yarm.
Middlesbrough Borough Council	Looks like it is currently free, but they are introducing fees.		Business permit Landlord permit Visitor permits
Hartlepool Borough Council	First permit £15 Second permit £25 Third permit £40 Subsequent permits £40 each per year	8am – 8pm Mon -Sat with one scheme Mon - Sun	Business Permits £350 per year. Open (visitor) permits only one per household for short term visits (not assigned to vehicle). Visitor permits for regular visitors (assigned to vehicle). Costs apply whether resident of visitor permits purchased.
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	Free, but still require annual renewing	8am – 6pm Mon – Sat or Mon - Sun	Resident permits are available for vehicles registered at the address. Maximum of two visitor permits can be purchased. Blue badges must also display a valid permit.
Durham County Council	Durham City - £40 per year for first permit, £60 per year for second permit (limited to two per household). Virtual parking permits can only be purchased at additional £5 admin cost. Framwellgate Moor, North	Durham City 8am - 6pm, Mon to Sun including bank holidays (except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day)	Durham City – Business Permits £375 per year and limited to one per business address. Construction permits either £30 per week or £120 per four-week period. Carers permits - Permits for three, six or 12 month periods are available. Visitor permits - Households can choose to purchase either virtual vouchers or paper scratchcards. Framwellgate Moor, North End, Chester-le-Street and Bishop Auckland

Local Authority	Cost of Permit	Hours of Operation	Local Variations
	<p><i>End, Chester-le-Bishop Auckland</i></p> <p>Households can have a maximum of three permits. Permits cost: £7.50 for three months £15 for six months £22.50 for nine months £30.00 for 12 months £45.00 for 18 months (They are not vehicle specific and can be transferred between vehicles).</p>	<p>Varies – not specified on the website.</p>	<p>Visitor permits – scratchcards can be purchased. Construction permits - £20 a week or £80 a month per vehicle.</p>
<p>Sunderland City Council</p>	<p><i>City Centre</i></p> <p>Permits £155 per quarter or £545 per annum</p> <p><i>Community Parking Management Scheme</i> First permit free</p>	<p><i>City Centre</i></p> <p>The council currently operate a city centre residents parking scheme which allows residents who live in the City Centre to purchase a permit that will allow parking at any time (subject to availability) in any of the council controlled multi storey and off-street car parks (except Prince/South Street car parks which are reserved for private permit holders).</p>	<p><i>City Centre</i></p> <p><i>Community Parking Management Scheme</i> Visitor permits – maximum of one - £40, scratchcards also available. Business permit – permit one - £50, permits two to five £50</p>

Local Authority	Cost of Permit	Hours of Operation	Local Variations
	Second permit £20 Third permit £40 Fourth permit £60 Fifth permit £80 Per year	Community Parking Management Scheme Varies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon - Sat 9am - 10am and 2pm - 3pm. • Mon - Sat 9:30am - 10:30am and 2:30pm - 3:30pm. • Mon to Fri 10am - 11am and 2pm - 3pm. • All SAFC home fixtures and any other events held at the Stadium of Light. • Mon – Fri 11am – 12pm and 3pm – 4pm • Mon – Fri 10am – 11am and 4pm – 5pm 	
South Tyneside Council	Two permit limit per household £50 for your first year, then £20 per year to renew. Free if over 65 or Blue Badge.	Not specified	Visitors, each household can have up to eight visitor booklets (25 visitor permits per booklet).
Gateshead Council	Some zones limit one permit and some limit two permits. First permit £30 per year Second permit £50 per year	Not stated on website	Some zones offer visitor parking others do not. Scratchcards (book of 10 vouchers) £5.50 Landlord permit £50 Business permit £160 Health professionals' permit £110 Replacement permit £20 Change of vehicle fee £10 Trade permit £10 flat fee plus £2 per vehicle per day

Local Authority	Cost of Permit	Hours of Operation	Local Variations
Newcastle City Council	Two permit limit per household First permit £25 Second permit £75 Low emissions vehicles: First permit £12.50 Second permit £62.50 Electric vehicles are free	Various (not stated on website) including resident only all day every day.	Visitors permits – scratchcards available Change of vehicle fee £10 Replacement permit £10
North Tyneside Council	Maximum of three per household £25 per permit per year (virtual)	Not stated on website.	Visitor permit limited to one per household at a cost of £25. Business permit, limited to two per business, £250 each
Northumberland County Council	Two permits per property (one for a registered vehicle and one visitor permit) £30 per year You can make a request to be considered for a third permit.	Mon - Fri 9am - 5.30pm Mon - Sat 9am - 5.30pm All days, 9am - 5:30pm	Visitor permit £30 Permit replacement cost £30 Change of vehicle fee £30

Questionnaire

The following is an indication of the types of questions to be asked as part of a consultation questionnaire for households within the RPZs. The questionnaire would require a short introduction then include a short summary on the operation of the scheme in their identified area so that any specific considerations for each area can be identified.

Questions

1. Are there any vehicles registered or used by members of your household?
2. Do you have any off-street parking available?
3. If yes, how many off-street parking spaces are available?
4. Do you have any residents parking permits within your household?
5. If yes, how many?
6. If yes, how often are the parking permits used?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Most weekdays
 - c. Most weekends
 - d. Most weekdays and weekends
 - e. Occasionally
7. Is the current residents parking zone effective in addressing the following issues?
 - a. Prioritising resident parking, yes/no
 - b. Discouraging non-resident parking, yes/no
 - c. Removing commuter parking, yes/no
 - d. Providing sufficient opportunities for visitor parking yes/no
8. Do you experience parking issues in your area?
 - a. Lack of available on-street parking
 - b. Inconsiderate parking
 - c. Non-resident parking
 - d. Long stay commuter parking
 - e. Commercial vehicle parking
 - f. Lack of electric vehicle charging infrastructure
9. Is there a particular time of day that parking problems are experienced?
 - a. Weekdays
 - b. Evening
 - c. Weekends
 - d. Saturday
 - e. Sunday

10. Do you think the scheme benefits the area?

Comments.....

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11. Thinking about the cost of the permits, the Council incurs costs to implement and maintain signing and lining on site as well as undertaking enforcement and administering the scheme.

12. Do you think the cost of the permit is about right?