

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 JANUARY 2026

RESIDENT'S PARKING ZONE CONSULTATION UPDATE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an update on the consultation and emerging themes following the recent Borough wide Resident's Parking Zone (RPZ) consultation.

Summary

2. The Council operates an RPZ to prioritise on-street parking for residents in areas where there can also be demand for visitor parking. The existing policy has been in place for a number of years and the consultation is part of the review process that is also considering the Quad of Aims submitted by members to consider the implications of vehicles of different sizes and emissions parking within the zones. This report also considers the initial findings that were presented to members of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee on 10 April 2025.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee considers and notes the attached report detailing the consultation responses and emerging themes that are being considered as part of the RPZ Policy review.

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Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

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LC

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 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	All
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	Not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

4. 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.
- 5. 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.
- 6. This report presents the outcome of the consultation with residents across the borough along with emerging themes.

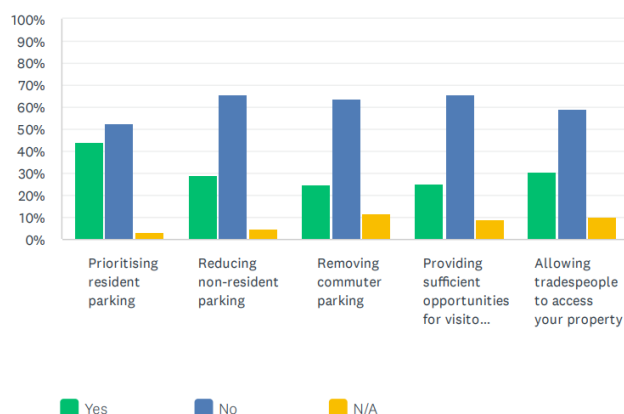
Emerging Themes from the Initial Findings Report presented to Members in April 2025

- 7. Other Local Authorities have successfully implemented 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.
- 8. 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.
- 9. 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.
- 10. 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.

Consultation

11. In terms of the process of the consultation itself which ran from 16 September until 3 November, a number of arrangements were made to ensure the consultation was as accessible as possible:
 - (a) Households within existing resident parking zones were contacted by letter and informed of the consultation and how to access it.
 - (b) Paper copies of the questionnaire were available from Customer Services at the Town Hall and both Cockerton and Crown Street Libraries.
 - (c) A dedicated phone line was set up so that residents could make contact to request a paper copy by post, complete the survey over the phone, or ask for it in an alternative format if needed.
 - (d) Where Councillors identified specific streets or groups of residents who may have found it difficult to access the consultation, paper copies were delivered directly to those areas.
 - (e) A press release was issued and published in the Northern Echo along with a number of social media posts published on various platforms.
12. A total of 1373 responses were received that indicated the following:
 - (a) Approximately 73% from households within a residents parking zone and 27% not within a current zone.
13. Of those responses from **within a zone**:
 - (a) 23% of respondents have driveway parking.
 - (b) 112 responded that they have a parking space for one vehicle.
 - (c) 96% of those who responded have access to a vehicle.
 - (d) 56% have access to one vehicle, 35% have access to two vehicles, 6% have access to three vehicles and 2% have access to four vehicles.
 - (e) 11% of respondents are Blue Badge holders.
 - (f) 74% of residents who live in a residents parking zone have a permit.
 - (g) 0.3% have more than four permits; 2.7% have three permits; 32% have two permits and 65% have one permit.
 - (h) Over 90% of respondents said parking permits are most effective during the working week, with a slight reduction of 86% on a Saturday and 79% on a Sunday. This is due to issues occurring during the working week, over 95% identify weekdays as an issue and 67% of people experiencing problems on a Saturday and 53% of people experiencing issues on a Sunday.
 - (i) Over 80% of respondents stated that parking a parking permit is most useful during the working day with a reduction to 61% on an evening. It was noted that parking issues are least likely to occur on an evening but all daytime parking hours was an issue.
 - (j) 92% of respondents experience parking issues in their street. The highest issue is non-resident parking (84%), followed by lack of available on-street parking at 76%. Inconsiderate parking was ranked the third highest issue at 73%, long stay commuter parking at 50%, commercial vehicle parking at 32% and lack of electric vehicle infrastructure at 8%. Other issues include, obstruction of driveways or garages, short term parking associated with local businesses, households with too many cars, school drop off and pick up, residents who don't have permits, parking associated with air bnb's, vehicle vandalism, parking associated with destinations such as cricket club, hospital, station users and QE College.

- (k) 72% of people believe there is too little enforcement with 25% of respondents believing it is about right.
- (l) 62% of respondents believe the cost of a permit is about right and 32% of people believe it costs too much.
- (m) Currently there are no limits to the number of permits permitted per household. 23% of respondents believe it should be limited to one per household, 50% of respondents believe it should be limited to two per household, 8% believe it should be limited to three per household and 19% of respondents believe it should be unlimited.
- (n) During the benchmarking and research phase looking into residents parking across the country it was found that a number of Local Authority areas charge more for additional parking permits after one has been purchased. 41% of respondents felt this should be adopted by Darlington and 59% of respondents felt that additional permits should not be charged more.
- (o) 20% of respondents felt that a permit should be cheaper for low emission vehicles, 80% felt that it should not be.
- (p) 28% of respondents felt that a permit should be cheaper for smaller vehicles, 72% of people felt it should not be cheaper.
- (q) 86% of respondents receive visitors with cars to their homes with 54% stating their visitors always have difficulty finding a parking space and 39% sometimes finding it difficult to find a parking space.
- (r) 72% of visitors use unrestricted parking areas, 41% use maximum two hour limited waiting, 11% pay for on street parking, 3% park on waiting restrictions, 7% park in a resident only bay, 6% have blue badges and other visitors will park in other streets, residents move their own vehicles to facilitate their visitors parking, using their own or neighbours' driveways, public car parks, or visitors come outside restricted hours.
- (s) 40% of respondents indicated that they support visitors parking in resident parking bays, 60% of respondents think visitors should not be permitted to park in resident parking areas by removing unrestricted parking.
- (t) As part of the consultation process, questions were asked whether a resident's parking zone is effective in addressing parking issues. The following graph indicates the responses to each issue that largely demonstrates that in most circumstances, a resident's parking zone is not effective in addressing parking issues:



- (u) Finally, 76% of respondents within a residents parking zone indicated that the parking zone benefits the area.

14. Of those responses from people **living outside a current zone**:

- (a) 48% have a driveway and 52% do not have a driveway.
- (b) 83% reported parking problems near their home of which, 76% is non-resident parking, 52% of which prevents access to their own driveway or garage.
- (c) Issues are caused by visitors to neighbour's properties, including carers, school parking, commuters, station users and visitors to destinations such as pub, church, restaurant, local shops and takeaways, Hopetown, medical facilities and South Park.
- (d) 63% of residents who completed the survey responded that they would be willing to pay for a permit (currently £40).

15. As part of the consultation, there was an opportunity to provide comments, each comment has been considered, and the following issues have been identified:

Theme	Number of Mentions	Response
Lack of enforcement (including need for a camera car) and charge more for permits to pay for enforcement	162	This theme is supported in the questionnaire responses as 72% believe there is too little enforcement.
Reduction in cost of permit for smaller and less polluting vehicles	1	Responses to the questionnaire indicate that 20% felt less polluting vehicles should pay less, 80% did not support this. 28% felt smaller vehicles should pay less and 72% of respondents did not.
Free Permit Some suggesting that the first permit could be free and further permits are charged for, some feel that the cost is too high, also suggesting that zones should be treated equally as some are currently free and some people feel they pay too much in Council tax already	37	62% of respondents to the questionnaire felt that the cost of a permit is about right, 32% feel it costs too much.
Visitors should not be permitted to park in RPZ	1	86% of respondents to the questionnaire have visitors to their home who travel by car, 54% stated their visitors always have difficulty finding a parking space.
Visitor permits Visitor permits should be provided, suggestions include transferable permits, weekly permits for visitors staying with residents, day permits at minimal cost, more two hour limited waiting, visitor permit booklets and visitors should be permitted as resident areas are empty during the day.	82	86% of respondents to the questionnaire have visitors to their home who travel by car, 54% stated their visitors always have difficulty finding a parking space.

RPZ permits should be restricted Including price should incrementally increase the more permits purchased, limit to a maximum of two per household.	22	In the questionnaire responses 41% of respondents felt this should be adopted by Darlington and 59% of respondents felt that additional permits should not be charged more.
Tradespeople Permits Request for tradespeople centred around either people not being aware they are available or cost currently is too high, some suggesting they should be free	32	86% of respondents to the questionnaire have visitors to their home who travel by car, 54% stated their visitors always have difficulty finding a parking space. Tradespeople permits already exist at a cost of £5 per 24 hours.
Inconsiderate Parking by Neighbours Parking over two bays Request for individual marked bays No unrestricted parking in zone Bays should be allocated to households	16 86 32 22	92% of respondents experience parking issues in their street. The highest issue is non-resident parking (84%), followed by lack of available on street parking at 76%. Inconsiderate parking was ranked the third highest issue at 73%. Individual marked bays can overall reduce the amount of parking available as they are required to be a minimum length of 5m. It is not possible under the Highways Act to reserve areas of the highway for particular households.
Inconsiderate Parking by non-residents Short term parking to local businesses, driveway obstruction and causing perceived issues for the emergency services.	23	This is supported by the responses to the questionnaire that 92% of respondents experience parking issues in their street. The highest issue is non-resident parking (84%).
Issues for elderly and disabled residents Carrying shopping and access/parking by carers	6	11% of respondents are blue badge holders. It is noted that the scheme does not guarantee parking outside individuals' properties, blue badges do permit parking in

		other areas in the zone than marked resident bays.
Co design schemes with residents/hold meetings	2	Any future recommended schemes will undertake full consultation with residents
Schemes should operate 24 hours a day seven days a week	37	Over 90% of respondents said parking permits are most effective during the working week, with a slight reduction of 86% on a Saturday and 79% on a Sunday. This is due to issues occurring during the working week, over 95% identify weekdays as an issue and 67% of people experiencing problems on a Saturday and 53% of people experiencing issues on a Sunday. These responses do indicate issues occur outside of the current scheme operation.
Issues caused by vans Vans, commercial vehicles, campervans and motorhomes should not be permitted, issues can be caused with pavement parking	16	92% of respondents experience parking issues in their street. Commercial vehicle parking issues was recorded by 32% of respondents.
Permits for vans should be more	5	Although this was noted several times, overall 28% respondents to the questionnaire, felt smaller vehicles should pay less and 72% of respondents did not. The question was specifically asked about smaller vehicles and it may have been interpreted that a small vehicle is a car and larger vehicles are vans.
Resident permits should also be valid in limited waiting and on street pay and display areas within zone	4	74% of residents in a zone who responded have at least one parking permit. The Traffic Regulation Orders as currently enforced do not permit parking outside of marked resident bays for

		permit holders, such as pay and display and this would require changes to Traffic Regulation Orders and be subject to statutory advertising.
Physical Permits should be re-introduced Residents would like to be able to see if someone is permitted to park	36	The responses to the questionnaire demonstrate that residents feel there is a lack of overall enforcement and the physical permit is seen as a deterrent if enforcement patrols increased this may not be an issue and the reintroduction of a paper permit would be at a cost to the Council.
Enforcement data should be published	1	Noted
Rules should be reminded to permit holders Some feel that people should be reminded of the RPZ rules – including no right to park outside an individual property, permits only valid in zone indicated and rules on blue badge parking should be clear.	7	The terms and conditions explain current rules, as part of the updated policy communication will be considered.
Park and Ride For hospital and QE sixth form and key routes	3	This is not currently in scope as no sites have been identified. There is potential for car parks on the town centre fringe such as Skerne Bridge to be utilised by commuters in the town centre already.
Better signage Including at eye level so people can see it easily and during events at zone Z.	4	Signage must be mounted at a minimum height of 2.1m to prevent people striking them and causing a head injury. As part of the updated policy communication will be considered including around events.
Road markings should be renewed	15	Noted
Reduce cost of parking in town centre Some suggesting reintroducing free parking	12	Parking charges in the town centre is outside of the scope of the Residents Parking Policy update.
Council should provide driveways or off-street parking for residents	3	This is not something the Council provides free of charge, residential driveway crossings can be provided so

		long as the location is suitable and does not adversely affect highway safety at a cost to the resident.
Unrestricted parking should be available for residents within an RPZ who do not have a permit Where unrestricted parking exists outside of properties within a zone a free permit should be provided for residents of those properties	5	Residents can park in unrestricted areas and no permit is necessary, this is not reserved and parking is on a first come, first served basis
EV charging should be available in RPZ areas Via lamp column, cross pavement, home charging and fully accessible	11	The Council has an Electric Vehicle Charging Policy and this does not form part of the scope of the updated Residents Parking Policy.
Public transport for commuters should be encouraged	3	The Council encourages and supports all sustainable modes of transport for commuting and other journeys. This does not form part of the Residents Parking Policy update and details of interventions can be found in the Darlington Transport Plan.
Flood/drainage issues making parking inaccessible	2	Noted
Blue badge parking affects safety Shouldn't be permitted to park on double yellow lines in resident parking areas.	13	Blue badge holders are permitted to park on double yellow lines.
Number of permits issued within in a street should be the same as the number of spaces available Residents want to be able to see their car	4	Currently permit holders are permitted to park anywhere in the zone they have a permit for so that parking can be utilised across the zone. Enforcement would be difficult if it was limited to individual streets.
Permit numbers per household should not be restricted	3	23% of respondents believe it should be limited to one per household, 50% of respondents believe it should be limited to two per household, 8% believe it should be limited to three per household and 19% of respondents believe it should be unlimited, giving a

		total of 81% of respondents believe there should be limits to the number of permits per household
Residents have too many cars in household	12	There are no current restrictions to the number of permits per household and limited and unrestricted parking is also provided to maximise the amount of parking available across an area. This will be considered as part of the updated Residents Parking Policy.
Hardstanding of grass verges should be provided to increase parking	2	This is outside of the scope of the Resident Parking Policy update, any changes to the highway would require funding to be identified, this is not the case for providing hardstanding parking on grass verges.
Community areas should be provided instead of parking	1	This is outside of the scope of the Residents Parking Policy update.
Issues with taxis	1	Noted
Permits should be issued to businesses within a zone	1	This is noted and will be considered as part of the Resident Parking Policy update.
Scheme has improved parking	3	76% of respondents within a residents parking zone indicated that the parking zone benefits the area
Permit hours and restrictions should be less restrictive	4	This is noted and falls within the scope of the Residents Parking Policy update.
Inappropriate speeds and other traffic management requests such as one way operation, double yellow lines on Hollyhurst for ambulances and in alleyways	5	This is noted but does not fall within the scope of the Resident Parking Policy update. Any traffic management improvements need to be identified, evidence led and funding identified.
Issues with HGV delivery to businesses in zones	1	Businesses within zone areas are serviced and it is not always within the control of the business how this

		happens. Issues will be considered on a case-by-case basis in terms of impact on highway safety.
Review schemes and permits to see where needed	1	This will be considered as part of the Resident Parking Policy update.
Limited waiting and unrestricted should be amended to pay and display	2	The appropriate parking control for areas of the highway will be considered as part of the Resident Parking Policy update.
Pleased to receive permit renewal notification by email	1	Noted
Adverse economic impact of residents parking on local businesses	1	The appropriate parking control, such as permit, unrestricted or limited waiting for areas of the highway will be considered as part of the Resident Parking Policy update, including for businesses within a zone.
RPZ is not the right solution, penalising residents with costs who have multiple cars should better use under used parking	1	This is noted, the Residents Parking Policy update will consider how best control parking in areas of the highway.

Discussion

16. The consultation generated a high level of responses from both residents within and outside resident parking zone areas. The main themes the responses are telling us are:
17. Most people who responded to the questionnaire within a zone do have at least one permit. This tells us that residents parking is supported and should continue within the Borough and that prioritising parking for residents in these areas is valued.
18. There is potential to limit the number of permits per household as only 0.3% of respondents have four or more permits, evidence held by the Council shows a small number of households have multiple permits. 19% of respondents were against limiting the number of permits. This is an emerging theme that could be explored further as part of the updated policy. There were a number of references to households owning too many cars so this could displace resident's vehicles to wider areas, but this is likely to be a minimal impact.

19. 62% of people felt the cost of the permit was about right. If permits are to be limited, that would see a slight reduction in the overall current number of permits, the financial pressure is considered to be minimal.
20. People find the permits most useful during the working week, although there is support for evening and weekend operation. There was support for investigating whether the current time restrictions could be extended, some of this is around the destinations that are attracting visitors and the hours they operate, such as the hospital. This can be considered as part of the further analysis of individual zones to understand to what extent this is an issue.
21. 92% of respondents experience parking issues in their street, ranging from long stay commuter parking to lack of available parking. There is potential for a business case to be considered that looks at increasing the number of enforcement officers to include undertaking more RPZ enforcement. This supports the view that 72% of respondents feel there is too little enforcement.
22. There is minority support for reducing the cost of permits for less polluting or smaller vehicles, there is some evidence of support that people feel larger vehicles such as vans or campervans should pay more. A pricing strategy should be considered as part of the review; this will be evidence led and ensure value for money.
23. 86% of residents have visitors arriving by car and 54% of visitors have difficulty finding a parking space. There is potential to further explore the issues of visitor parking by analysing further the consultation responses from the individual zones and identifying specific issues that may help inform what the future policy on visitor parking should be. Although 60% of respondents did not agree with removing unrestricted parking to create more residents parking and allowing visitor parking.
24. There are a number of destinations and specific streets that were identified in the responses that have requested residents parking. This is noted and further schemes will be considered once the updated policy is in place.
25. There was a lot of respondents who highlighted issues with tradespeople so this will be considered as part of the review of policy. There is currently a policy in place, and it is unclear whether it is not well communicated or whether it is felt too expensive so is under used at £5 per 24 hours.
26. There are some issues experienced by disabled and elderly residents not having close access to their vehicle. The review will ensure that an EQIA is undertaken and no adverse impacts for any groups should occur.
27. There were a number of comments around physical permits being reintroduced, this would come at additional cost and has no impact on enforcement methods. This is not recommended to be considered and if additional enforcement is undertaken this issue will be mitigated.

Next Steps

28. The Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee considers and notes the consultation findings.
29. That Officers take the findings from both the Initial report and consultation to prepare an updated draft Policy for approval that will standardise the process for implementing and operating resident's parking.

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

