

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	12 JANUARY 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME - TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR T PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
	COUNCILLOR T JONES		CHAIR OF SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP
SERVICE:	PARKING SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Residents Parking Review and to report the options for future changes to the Residents Parking Scheme that has been identified by the Task & Finish Group established in June 2016.
- 1.2 Appendix 1: Residents Parking Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That, on consideration of conclusions of the Residents Permit Parking Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, the Sub-Committee makes a recommendation to Policy Committee (16th January 2017) to:

2.1.1 Recommend a charge for the first permit.

2.1.2 Recommend the permit charge for the first (and second) residents permit as set out in 4.3.2 Options 1-5 and to which of the following groups of discretionary permits are also charged and what the charge should be as set out in 4.3.4:

Discretionary Resident Permits (first permit)
Charity first permit
Carer (first and second)
Doctor (Medical Practitioner)
Healthcare Professional
Teacher

2.1.3 Introduce the charges from 1st April 2017.

- 2.2 That the Sub-Committee agree to amend/add to the permit scheme rules and definitions in relation to: Teacher permits (4.4.2), Transitional Arrangements (4.4.4), Proof of vehicle ownership (4.4.5), Visitor Permits renewals (4.4.6) & Refund/Transfer Policy (4.4.7).
- 2.3 That the Sub-Committee agree the service improvements outlined in paras 4.3.8 - 4.3.13.
- 2.4 That, subject to Policy Committee agreeing the recommendation of the Sub-committee, that the current permit holders be notified by letter on the changes to the residents permit scheme.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with current Transport and Planning policy.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 Residents' Permit Parking (RP) was established in Reading over 40 (1976) years ago and the Council provide a permit scheme through its parking services teams within the transport service area.
- 4.1.2 The current RP scheme was approved by the Council's Cabinet in December 2010, this followed a review of the service undertaken in 2009-2010 and reported through Cabinet and scrutiny processes in September 2009, February 2010 and July 2010. A revised scheme was introduced in April 2011.
- 4.1.3 Further amendments to the RP scheme and permit management rules were taken through Cabinet, Full Council and Traffic Management Sub-committee (and formally Traffic Management Advisory Panel) meetings in July 2011, September 2011, June 2012, February 2013, June 2013 and January 2014.
- 4.1.4 A further review of the service was undertaken through the Council's scrutiny process at the meeting in January 2013.
- 4.1.5 The Policy Committee meeting held on the 30th November 2015, agreed to increase the 2nd and 3rd resident permit charges to their current levels of £120 and £240 respectively from the 1st February 2016.
- 4.1.6 At Traffic Management Sub-Committee meeting held on the 14th January 2016 it was agreed to amend the charges for second discretionary permits, 2nd to 4th charity permits and community agency permits to £120 from the 1st February 2016. Other amendments to the permit scheme rules and definitions were also agreed at that time.
- 4.1.7 At Traffic Management Sub-Committee meeting held on the 15th June 2016, it was agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to review the Parking Permit Scheme.

4.2 Current Position

4.2.1 Previously there were 52 Residents Parking zones across the Reading Borough but this has been revised to the current 19 Residents Parking Zones.

4.2.2 The 19 Residents Parking zones across the Borough encompass all the areas and residential properties covered by the previous scheme but they now provide more space on-street throughout the larger zones. These changes are in line with previous decisions by Cabinet and reflect the outcome of the survey of all residents within the Residents Parking Scheme.

4.2.3 In 2015-2016 the following permits were issued, the current charges are set out below:

Permit Type	Total issued in 2015/2016	Current Charges
Business	19	£275
Business Discretionary	15	£330
Charity (free)	26	£0
Charity (charged)	13	£120
Carer	133	£0
Doctor	52	£0
Health Care Professional	490	£0
Resident Discretionary (free)	236	£0
Resident Discretionary (charged)	64	£120
Resident Discretionary (3rd Permit)	3	£240
Resident - First Permits	7,536	£0
Resident - Second Permits	1,463	£120
Non-UK Registered Vehicle Permits	4	£330
Nanny	0	£330
Teacher	64	£0
Tradesperson - Annual	86	£330
Tradesperson - Daily	598	£10
Temporary Permits	3,482	£15
Visitor Books - Free	9,543	£0
Visitor Books - Charged	1,973	£22
Visitor Business	107	£22
Visitor Discretionary (free)	314	£0
Visitor Discretionary (charged)	139	£22
Total	26,360	

4.2.4 Residents have been able to renew residents and visitor permits online since April 2012. The table below shows that the majority of residents preferred this method of renewing their permits. The number of permits being renewed online is increasing year on year as more residents are using this facility.

Permit Type	Total Renewed Online 2015/2016	Total Issued 2015/2016 (first & second)	Percentage renewed 2015/2016	Percentage renewed 2014/2015	Percentage renewed 2013/2014
Business	10	19	53%	33%	29%
Resident	4,866	8,999	54%	52%	53%
Visitor	2,065	11,516	18%	13%	10%

Processing requirements

- 4.2.5 New applications for residents' permits require one proof of residency and one proof of vehicle ownership. The majority of applications are currently received by post, however, applications can also be received by e-mail or hand delivered to the Civic Offices.
- 4.2.6 Resident permits are valid for 12 months. Permits can be renewed online without the requirement for further proofs; however, if a resident chooses to renew their permit by post, they require the same level of proofs as a new application.
- 4.2.7 Residents are sent a reminder letter approx. 1 month before their permit expires reminding them to renew. Visitor permits are also valid for 12 months from issue and can also be renewed online. However, if the renewal date is missed, they are required to complete a new application and provide the proof of residency.
- 4.2.8 Temporary permits are issued if a resident changes their vehicle, has a temporary change or has just moved into a Residents Parking Zone. The majority of temporary permits are issued via the Civic Offices Customer Services reception.
- 4.2.9 Further detailed scheme information is available on line at - <http://www.reading.gov.uk/parkingpermits>

4.3 Options for Consideration

- 4.3.1 The current RP scheme has now been in place for 5 years and the Residents Parking Scrutiny Task and Finish Group has now concluded its review. Attached at Appendix 1 is a summary of the meetings and the recommendations made.

Changes to Permit Charges

- 4.3.2 First Resident Permit charges - in order for the scheme to cover its costs and that of enforcement of the permit scheme, the introduction of a charge for the first residents permit is recommended. The various options the Task and Finish Group considered and estimated income generated from this is set out below:

Option 1

Permit Type	Total Issued in 2015/2016	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Income
Resident First	7,536	£0	£30	£226,080
Resident Second	1,463	£120	£120	£175,560
Total				£401,640

Option 2

Permit Type	Total Issued in 2015/2016	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Income
Resident First	7,536	£0	£50	£376,800
Resident Second	1,463	£120	£120	£175,560
Total				£552,360

Option 3

Permit Type	Total Issued in 2015/2016	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Income
Resident First	7,536	£0	£30	£226,080
Resident Second	1,463	£120	£90	£131,670
Total				£357,750

Option 4**

Permit Type	Total Issued in 2015/2016	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Income
Resident First	7,536	£0	£25	£188,400
Resident Second	1,463	£120	£120	£175,560
Total				£363,960

Option 5**

Permit Type	Total Issued in 2015/2016	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Income
Resident First	7,536	£0	£25	£188,400
Resident Second	1,463	£120	£145	£212,135
Total				£400,535

- 4.3.3 The Sub-committee is asked to recommend to Policy Committee which charge should be applied for a first resident permit from the options set out in 4.3.2.
- 4.3.4 Discretionary Permit charges - the following permit types are issued free of charge: Discretionary First Resident, Carer, Charity (including Community Agency), Doctor (Medical Practitioner), Healthcare Professional (HCP) and Teacher permits. The Committee is asked to decide if the first permit charge

should be applied to some or all of the other free discretionary permits as listed below and what that charge should be:

Permit Type	Total Issued in 2015/2016	Proposed Charge	Income	Proposed Charge	Income
Resident Discretionary - first	236	£30	£7,080	£50	£11,800
Charity - first	26	£30	£780	£50	£1,300
Doctor	52	£30	£1,560	£50	£2,600
Healthcare professional	490	£30	£14,700	£50	£24,500
Teacher	64	£30	£1,920	£50	£3,200
Carer	133	£30	£3,990	£50	£6,650
Total			£30,030		£50,050

**Option 4 and 5 charge at £25 income charge has not been calculated in the above table

- 4.3.5 If Option 3 or 5 (as set out in 4.3.2) is the preferred option, the second permit charges for resident discretionary, charity 2nd to 4th should be changed to match the second permit charge or retained at £120.
- 4.3.6 Other Permit charges - there is currently no proposal to amend any of the other permit charges.
- 4.3.7 It is understood that residents may be resistant to the new charges, without seeing some benefit to themselves. It is proposed that the following service improvements are implemented (if first permit charges are introduced):
- 4.3.8 Online Permit application process - Software upgrade to the back office permit processing system will open up the opportunity for residents to manage their permit needs. It will provide a quick simple method to order additional visitor permits, and make new applications. The new improved service offer would be available to residents by September 2017 through the new first permit charges.
- 4.3.9 Upgrade the Approved Device (CCTV) vehicle for permit parking patrols - the Council has the opportunity to upgrade the Approved Device vehicle with permit parking date for quicker detection of illegally parked vehicles in the permit zones. The Approved Device vehicle is not permitted to issue a Penalty Charge Notice, but can direct resources to areas for a rapid response to vehicles parking without a permit. The upgrade is expected to take three months through the new first permit charges. Other potential benefits to the upgrade: Bus Lane/Bus Stop improved enforcement and vehicle surveys (to collect data on parking habits).
- 4.3.10 Improved Enforcement of the permit zones: The Council will work with the Contractor to increase visits to the Resident Permit Zones. If there is any additional income, this could be used to employ an additional Civil Enforcement Officer to the Permit Zones.

- 4.3.11 Report vehicle parking illegal via online reporting tool/application (e.g. Love Clean Reading). This can be implemented within a month of the new charges.
- 4.3.12 Renew Visitor permits without the need to re-apply (see point 4.4.6 for further information)
- 4.3.13 Explore options for print at home or virtual visitor permit option - allows residents to book their visitors parking in advance and without the need to display a visitor's permit. Visitor permits by session rather than am/pm which provide more flexibility to the resident's visitor permit allocation.

4.4 Other Options Considered

- 4.4.1 In addition to the recommendations outlined in 4.3, the Task and Finish Group considered other changes to the Residents Permit Scheme as set out below:
- 4.4.2 Teacher Permits: Amend the current permit rules to establish the local need for an individual school needs rather than maximum of 15 permits per school. The Council currently has the following schools applying for permits:

	Sub-Address	Permits Issued	Notes
Oxford Road Community School		15	No on-site parking
Cranbury College	Cranbury Road	11	No on-site parking
Cranbury College	College Road	5	No on-site parking
Battle Primary School		13	10 Parking Spaces
Redlands Primary School			New - no permits yet issued. Currently requested 35 Permits No on-site parking

- 4.4.3 Councillors are asked to decide the allocation of parking permits per school.
- 4.4.4 Transitional Arrangements: to amend the rules/definitions to include a provision for households recently added to a new/expanded permit zone to be granted a discretionary third permit (by Council Officers) at third permit cost for one year. Referrals to the Committee will be made if requests above the third permit are received and request for permit after the first year.
- 4.4.5 Proof of Vehicle Ownership: amend the current permit rules/definitions to exclude permits being issued where the vehicle is not registered at the household the permit is being applied for e.g. temporary residence and use a vehicle registered outside the permit zone or registered to a non-resident. This does not affect residents who use a vehicle for employment purposes and may have a "company car".
- 4.4.6 Visitor Permit renewals - when a resident has missed their online renewal window, they are required to re-apply for the books of visitor permits (and provide proof of residency). It is recommended that until the new online

permit application system is brought in that these could be renewed by the permit team without the need to re-apply if they meet the following criteria:

A valid residents (or carers) permit is on issue to that resident

If the resident does not own a vehicle, other visitor permits currently valid and on issue

If all permits have expired - but only expired in the last 3 months

4.4.7 Refunds/transfer: It is recommended that no refunds are issued for first permit charges. It is recommended the first permit can be transferred to another household as per the current process for second permit charges.

4.4.8 **Other points considered but does not affect the Resident Permit Scheme rules/definitions:**

4.4.9 Criteria for the introduction of Residents Permit Scheme: to include roads or streets where there is a high proportion of off-street parking already in place.

4.4.10 Consideration the aligning of the entitlement to vehicle permits to the existence of any off-street parking: Reducing the number of permits available to resident in a Residents Permit scheme if off-street parking is available at a property. However, due to current resources, capacity and other competing work-load priorities, it is not an issue being pursued at this time.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and contributes to the Council's strategic aims, as set out below:

- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 The Residents Parking Review included a survey of all 12,000 households within the current Residents Parking zones completed in 2010.

6.2 The Council will write to resident permit holders to advise them on the changes to the permit scheme charges.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As set out in Section 4.3.2 there may be additional income from first permit charges, however, the amount depends on the charge agreed and which discretionary permits will also be charged for as per 4.3.4.

8.2 The Financial implications are based on a full year of charges.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 September 2009, February 2010, July 2010 and December 2010, July 2011 and June 2012 Cabinet reports. January 2013 Scrutiny Review and February 2013 Full Council reports.
- 9.2 Traffic Management Advisory Panel June 2012
- 9.3 Traffic Management Sub-Committee reports January 2014, January 2016 & June 2016
- 9.4 Policy Committee report 30 November 2015

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix 1 - Residents Parking Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report

Transport Management Sub Committee – 12 January 2017

RESIDENTS PARKING SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Task and Finish met three times. However a final meeting, to consider a draft submission, has not been possible and therefore this report is tendered in the name of the Chair of the T&F Group only, Councillor Tony Jones.

Summary

Following consideration of the existing arrangements of the Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) in Reading, the following recommendations are made to the Transport Management Sub Committee:

1. That the criteria for the introduction of RPS be expanded to include roads and streets with a high proportion of off-road parking.
 2. That the criteria for the allocation of vehicle permits to schools in future be considered on the basis of the particular circumstances of each school.
 3. That where a RPS is introduced or expanded, sympathetic consideration be given to the allocation of personal discretionary permits to existing residents.
 4. That permits not be allocated to vehicles (except “company vehicles”) not registered at the RPS address.
 5. To allow the issue of visitor permits books be verified by existing vehicle permit data rather than treating as a separate requirement.
 6. To consider, at some future date, the aligning of the entitlement to vehicle permits to the existence of any off-road parking.
 7. Support the introduction of a charge on the first vehicle permit.
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Recommendations

- 1. That the criteria for the introduction of RPS be expanded to include roads and streets with a high proportion of off-road parking.**

Past practice has suggested that RPS should not be considered in roads or streets where there is a high proportion of off-street parking already in place. However, this takes no account that circumstances can change over time – where more house-holders create additional off-road parking in an existing RPS – or that considerable extra pressure can be brought where a RPS is newly introduced or expanded in streets adjacent or in the vicinity of properties with off-road parking. The recommendation is that bar on consideration should be removed.

- 2. That the criteria for the allocation of vehicle permits to schools in future be considered on the basis of the particular circumstances of each school.**

Current arrangements give each school an entitlement to 15 permits. However this “one size fits all” approach takes no account of whether there is any on-site capacity for parking. To remove this anomaly it is recommended that where a school falls within a RPS, discussions are held to establish the level of local need.

- 3. That where a RPS is introduced or expanded, sympathetic consideration be given to the allocation of personal discretionary permits to existing residents.**

The entitlement of two permits per household has been at the centre of Reading's RPS for many years. However the growing demand for schemes can mean that some existing residents may be disadvantaged where a RPS is introduced where they live. It is recommended that sympathetic consideration be given to the allocation of additional discretionary permits be allocated on an on-going personal only basis when schemes are newly introduced.

4. That permits not be allocated to vehicles (except "company vehicles") not registered at the RPS address.

Reading has a well-established approach of issuing permits where residents can demonstrate that they need a permit for a vehicle they are required to use for their employment – for example, so called "company cars". However, it recommended we avoid issuing permits to residents who may be temporary in their residence and use a vehicle which is registered at an address outside the RPS or registered to a non-resident.

5. To allow the issue of visitor permits books be verified by existing vehicle permit data rather than treating as a separate requirement.

The process to renew vehicle permits is now a very fast and efficient service. However, some improvements should be made to the way the issue of visit permits books is undertaken. Residents can sometime find that on seeking the issue of further books that they have to resubmit basic information regarding proof of residency, even though they may still have valid data in the RBC system supporting their vehicles. The T&F Group were advised that this system can be improved, so it is recommended that arrangements be made for the stream-lining of this part of the RPS service to change during 2017.

6. To consider, at some future date, the aligning of the entitlement to vehicle permits to the existence of any off-road parking.

Some councils such as West Berkshire, reduce the number of permits available to residents in a RPS if off-street parking is available at a householder's property. While there may be merit in such an approach, given current resources, capacity and other competing work-load priorities, it is not an issue which should be pursued at this stage.

7. Support the introduction of a charge on the first vehicle permit.

For many years RBC has been able to protect residents from charging for the issuing of the first vehicle permit. However, in light of current financial pressures and the need to ensure sufficient resources to meet the expanded RPS areas in Reading, this is no longer sustainable and it is recommended that a new charge be introduced for the first permit.

It is recommended that the charge be introduced from 1st April 2017 and be implemented for new permits issued on or after that date and only at the date of renewal of an existing permit.

Vistors permits

Current position

Free books – 9,548 issued

Paid for books – 1,973 issued

RBC can issue two free books of 20 x ½ day permits to each household in a residents parking zone. Five more books can be bought (at £22 each), with an officer discretion to issue up to four more. Any applications in excess of these figures are considered by the Transport Management Sub Committee.

Arrangements in other councils

Residents Parking Permits	1st permit	2nd permit	3rd permit	4th permit
Reading	Free	£120	£240	
Berkshire				
West Berkshire	£30	£30	(£70 in some areas)	
Wokingham	£30	£30		
Bracknell	Free	Free	£20	£40
Windsor & Maidenhead	Free	(only if no off-road parking)		
Slough	£25	£50		
Other South East				
Basingstoke	£30 includes a visitor permit			
Buckinghamshire	£52			
Brighton	£100 or £130			
Crawley	£41	£83		
East Hampshire	£30	£50		
Guildford	£50	£80		
Maidstone	£25	£50	£100	
Medway	£27			
Oxford	£60	£60	£120	£180
Portsmouth	£30	£60	£120	
Sevenoaks	£35	£70	£125	£250
Southampton	£30 (area based range from £0 to £1,000)			
Winchester	£22	£50	£50	£50
Woking	£50	£75		

Residents vehicle permits in Reading

Current position

1st permit – 7,536 issued in 15/16, free of charge.

Revenue raised £0

2nd permit - 1,463 issued, at £120.

Revenue raised £175,560