

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive - 15 October 2008

Report of the Parking and Civil Contingencies Manager

Revisions to the Residents' Parking Scheme (This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Coles)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Following on from work instigated by the then Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel the Overview & Scrutiny Board considered at a special meeting on 10 September a report raising issues surrounding congestion within Residents' Parking Zones (RPZs) and potential for abuse and misuse of permits. The report contained a number of specific proposals put forward by the Executive Councillor and the Parking & Civil Contingencies Manager and is at Annex A.
- 1.2 The Board resolved to support a number of proposals and to recommend them to the Executive for further consideration.

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The original report contained specific recommendations for taking action on congestion and potential for abuse of permits, revisions to Carers' Permit provisions and assisting businesses based within Residents' Parking Zones.
- 2.2 The subject was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Board as it contained proposed departures from existing policies regarding permit availability, allocation and cost base. It also proposed a policy of discounting the price of Residents' Permits for vehicles liable to Band A or B vehicle excise duty due to low CO₂ emissions.
- 2.3 The Executive is requested decide measures they wish to see should be taken forward as proposed amendments to the Traffic Regulation Orders.

3.0 The Proposals

- 3.1 The Board considered the proposals under 'subject headings' as below. The recommendations following each section are extracts from the draft minutes of the meeting.
- 3.2 Congestion

1	Introduce rules to make certain properties ineligible for permits, eg single dwellings converted to flats or HMOs, or brownfield redevelopments where planning policy limits the amount of off-street parking provision.	Needs to be ratified as a Council Policy so that Officers have the authority to implement it. This cannot be done as part of the Development Management process through Planning applications. It would not reduce the current income from Residents' Permits if no other changes were made and current levels of use continued. The income stream would effectively be capped.
2	Reduce Residents' Permit allocation by 1 for each off-road parking space or garage (minimum size 5x2.5m)	Would require careful checking at application stage. Not known how many existing permit holders this would affect. Reduction in income could be mitigated by coupling with proposal 3 and classing Residents' Permit purchased as '2 nd ' permit, ie based on number of vehicles owned by the household occupants rather than permits purchased.
3	Increase the base price of a Residents' Permit to £40 and introduce a price differential for second RP.	301 (17%) households have second Residents' Permit so no significant increase in income. If 2 nd Residents' Permit fee of £50 introduced additional income would be £4,500.

Support the introduction of rules to prevent new residential development or redevelopments within existing Residents' Parking Zones being eligible for permits and to recommend that Parking Services work closely with Development Control to publicise this;

Support the principle of reducing Residents' Permit allocations where properties have off-road parking facilities but for this to be limited to driveways and hard-standings, excluding garages;

Support the introduction of a price differential for the second Residents' Permit, but not to support, at this time, an increase in the basic price of the first Residents' Permit;

3.3 Potential abuse issues

4	Increase Visitor Permit charge to	Serial numbers of cards would allow
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	£20 (no charge if Residents' Permit purchased). Remove second unlimited permit and Introduce scratchcard system. 100 scratchcards per household per year charged at, say, 20p each. Purchased in books of 10 for £2. Cards would show Zone, with users entering vehicle registration mark and address being visited.	follow up action if not properly used. The charge would cover the cost of production and administration (This aspect would be advertised within the TRO process)
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Support an increase to £20 for the Visitors' Permit and to recommend the removal of the 'free' Visitors' Permit currently available if a Residents' Permit is purchased;

Support the replacement of the second Visitors' Permit with a scratchcard system with a maximum of 100 scratchcards per household, per annum;

3.3 Carers' Permits

5	Require annual renewal	Does not require any changes to TRO or policy. Involves additional costs for new permits each year.
6	Introduce charge or deposit for Carers' Permit	Charge should be based on similar grounds to Residents' Permits - cost recovery only. Deposit would not increase overall costs to establishment, but not cover Council's costs.
7	Time limit Carers' Permit to 2 hours in any one street	This would entail additional activity by enforcement staff. There would be cost implications to the Council if the 'clock' option was chosen.

Support the need to better control the availability and use of Carers' Permits and to recommend that a charged scratchcard system be considered with a two hour time limit in any one location;

3.3 Business Permits

8	Provide servicing/delivery type who are based within an RPZ and listed on the NNDR database with a	No operational problems as permits are vehicle-specific.
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	<p>maximum of two Zone and vehicle-specific Business Permits valid between 9am and 5pm.</p> <p>Vehicles must be registered to business or individual named on NNDR bill. Evidence of vehicle use for business must be provided with application.</p> <p>Charge for first permit to be 5 times Resident Permit or 25% Shopper 2 Car Park Season Ticket. Additional 50% charge for second permit.</p>	<p>There is likely to be some discussion with individual businesses as to qualification for permits.</p> <p>Need to define criteria for premises 'adjacent' to Zones.</p> <p>Financial implications not known as take up uncertain. Costs of production would be covered by permit charge.</p>
9	<p>Allow businesses where customer attends the location to buy books of 2 hour Zone-specific scratchcards for use by customers.</p> <p>These to show time date and time of parking and vehicle registration number.</p> <p>Costs to be £1 per card</p>	<p>Serial numbers of cards would allow follow up action if not properly used.</p> <p>Financial implications not known as take up uncertain. If the cost of production exceeds the suggested price (unlikely) this could be offset by the additional income generated from proposal 8.</p>
10	<p>Allow contractors working at empty property where owner does not have ability to provide Visitors' Permit to purchase 'Work Permit' on either daily or weekly basis.</p> <p>Charge to be at all-day Shopper 2 Car Park tariff.</p>	<p>There will have to be a bedding-in period for this to allow time for all contractors to become aware of the requirement.</p> <p>The actual 'Work Permit' will be a short-lived document in letter format so costs will be minimal.</p>

Support the introduction of Business Permits for businesses located within Residents' Parking Zones, inclusive of scratchcards where appropriate, as described with time limits designed not to increase congestion within the Zones for residents;

Support the introduction of Work Permits as described;

3.5 Houses in Multiple Occupation

11	Allow registered HMO owners to purchase scratch cards for each	If the cost of production exceeds the suggested price this could be offset by
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	Zone in which they own properties, up to a maximum of 50 in each Zone annually.	the additional income generated from proposal 4. Refunds should not be available for 'lost' scratchcards.
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Support the Visitor scratchcard being available to registered HMO owners subject to a maximum of 50 in each Zone annually;

3.6 Environmental issues

Introduce 100% and 50% discount on Residents' Permits costs for cars liable to VED Band A or B respectively. This discount to apply only to the first RP purchased by any individual household.	The number of vehicles falling in to the discount bands is likely to be small. The effect on income would be only marginal.
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Support the introduction of discounts of 100% and 50% on Residents' Permit charges for cars liable to Bands A and B Vehicle Excise Duty respectively;

3.7 Other recommendations

The Board also resolved that the Executive be recommended to:

- 1) Support the introduction of these measures from the beginning of the next financial year, subject to the formal Traffic Regulation Order process, whilst noting that the proposed changes would not be fully effective until all annual permits had come up for renewal; and
- 2) Request that the results of such changes that were effected, be closely monitored and reported back to Members after twelve months of operation.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Whilst the primary purpose of the Residents' Parking Scheme is traffic management and control within the various Zones, several of the proposals have financial implications for the Council. Where possible, these implications are shown based on current usage and prices.
- 4.2 The Delegation Agreement with Somerset County Council under which this Council carries out On-Street management and enforcement specifies that if there is an overall surplus on the account that surplus must be ring-fenced and its use discussed with the County Council.

5.0 Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 The Transport Corporate Aim is to minimise the growth of traffic congestion. Whilst the Residents Parking Scheme itself can not limit growth in vehicle ownership, positive management of the Scheme can help to control vehicle movements within residential areas.

6.0 Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to

- Approve the change in emphasis in the Residents Parking Scheme in moving away from administrative cost recovery in recognition of the need to better manage parking congestion
- Approve the adoption of the ban on permit allocation to additional dwellings created in existing RPZs
- Approve a reduction from two to one Residents' permits for properties with a driveway or vehicle hardstanding
- Approve the introduction of a price differential for second Residents Permits and set the charge for 2009/10 for these at £50 (The price for the first Residents Permit to remain at £35)
- Approve the removal of the non-charged status of the first Visitor Permit if applied for with a Residents Permit (ie all Visitor Permits will be charged for)
- Approve the increase of £5 to £20 for Visitor Permits for 2009/10
- Approve the introduction of scratchcards to replace the present second Visitor Permit. These to be sold in books of 10 for £2 subject to a maximum of 100 cards per household per annum.
- Approve the principles of annual renewal, charging and time limits for Carers Permits
- Approve the introduction of Business Permits and scratchcards for use by businesses based within Residents' Parking Zones with operating hours and charges as outlined
- Approve the introduction of 'Work Permits' for use within Residents' Parking Zones. These to be charged for at the all-day Shopper 2 tariff.
- Approve the availability of Visitor scratchcards for purchase by HMO landlords subject to an annual maximum of 50 cards for any one Zone in which properties are owned.
- Approve the introduction of environmental discounts of 100% and 50% on Residents' Permit charges for cars liable to Bands A and B Vehicle Excise Duty respectively
- Confirm that the approved proposals be advertised as amendments to the Traffic Regulation Orders with a view to the new arrangements coming into effect from the beginning of the next financial year.

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**Overview and Scrutiny Board
Wednesday 10 September 2008**

Report of the Parking and Civil Contingencies Manager

**Revisions to the Residents' Parking Scheme
(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Coles)**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In September last year the then Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel considered a report raising issues surrounding congestion within Residents' Parking Zones (RPZs) and potential for abuse and misuse of permits. The report is at Annex A.
- 1.2 The Panel resolved that specific proposals should be produced in conjunction with the Executive Councillor and brought back for detailed consideration. This report includes proposals under four headings; reduction of congestion, reduction in potential for abuse, Carers' Permits and help for businesses based within RPZs.
- 1.3 Annex B shows the distribution of Residents' and Visitors' Permits as at 1 July this year.

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report contains specific recommendations for taking action on congestion and potential for abuse of permits, revisions to Carers' Permit provisions and assisting businesses based within Residents' Parking Zones. It also proposes a policy of discounting the price of Residents' Permits for vehicles liable to Band A or B vehicle excise duty due to low CO₂ emissions.
- 2.2 Some proposals are a departure from the existing policies regarding permit availability, allocation and cost base.
- 2.3 Members are requested to consider these and indicate which measures they recommend should be taken forward as proposed amendments to the Traffic Regulation Orders.

3.0 Background to Residents Parking

- 3.1 Residents' Parking Schemes were considered in the late 1990s as part of the Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council Joint Transport Strategy raft of measures needed to combat the ever growing traffic congestion issues in Taunton. This was part of the exercise that led to Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement (DPE) and the introduction of on-street charging bays in the town centre. DPE moved the enforcement of

waiting restrictions and issuing penalties from the criminal law environment to the civil one. This moved the responsibility for enforcement from Police to the Highway Authority, Somerset County Council. Since February 2001, when DPE came into being, the Borough Council has acted as agent for the County Council for on-street enforcement.

- 3.2 There was concern that residents in streets adjacent to the town centre were experiencing great difficulty in parking near their homes because of all day parking by, in the main, commuters. This also contributed to traffic congestion in those areas during the peak morning and afternoon rush hours. The town was divided into several Zones comprising a number of streets and schemes designed to introduce 'residents only' areas. These would be controlled by the issue of permits for residents' own vehicles and those of their visitors. In the most central Zone no residents parking would be available because of the traffic management controls already in place. The main decisions on the content and nature of the overall schemes were taken by the Parking Strategy Panel, which in turn reported to the Strategic Planning Committee
- 3.3 The proposals were based on Zones as there was insufficient road space to allow individual street schemes, especially in high density terraced housing streets. Public meetings were held in each of the proposed Zone areas. These resulted in some schemes going ahead immediately and others, where the residents deemed there was not a problem they wanted addressed, not. There were also serious in principle objections to having to pay to park on a public highway 'outside my own house'. The first Zones came into operation in 2001.
- 3.4 The Zones are covered by Traffic Regulation Orders. They operate generally from Mondays to Saturdays, commencing at 8.00am and finishing at 6.00pm, 8.00pm or 9.00pm depending on locality. During those hours all vehicles parked within the specially marked and signed areas are required to display a valid permit.
- 3.5 Permit allocations for each household were set at two Residents' and two Visitors'. Residents' Permits are vehicle specific, with the vehicle having to be registered to the resident at the address within the Zone. Visitors' Permits are intended for temporary display in vehicles belonging to residents' family, social and business vehicles, including delivery vehicles. They show the address being visited. Permits are valid for one year from the date of purchase.
- 3.6 Charges for permits were introduced to cover the costs of administering the scheme. These were set initially in 2000 and not increased until April this year. The current charges are
- Residents' Permits (RP) – maximum of two, cost £35 each;
 - Visitors' Permits (VP) – maximum of two, cost £15 each (one free if Residents' Permit purchased);
 - Motorcycle Permits – interchangeable with Residents' Permits, cost £17.50 each.

- Blue Badge holders have one Residents' Permit free (but not a free Visitor Permit)
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) have the standard household allocation and cost.

4.0 Congestion Issues

- 4.1 Car ownership within RPZs continues to increase but the amount of roadspace available does not. Increases to the number of dwellings in each Zone with no restrictions on permit allocations bring additional pressure to the Zone and potential conflict between residents for the limited space available.
- 4.2 Stability on congestion could be achieved by curtailing the allocation within a Zone to the existing number of households. This would require the rules to be changed to remove automatic allocations for 'new' properties. 'New' properties would include conversion of single dwellings into flats or HMOs and redevelopment of brownfield sites where planning policies restrict the amount of off-street parking provision. Such a change would put 'new' properties into the same category as all residential properties within the E10 Town Centre Zone where no residents' parking is allowed. Potential developers could be made aware of such a new policy through the Development Management advice channels. This measure would act to the benefit of all existing residents.
- 4.3 There is no recognition within the present scheme of the existence of individual property off-road parking facilities. Changing the present allocation of two Residents' Permits to all households by reducing it for each available off-road parking space or garage (minimum size 5m by 2.5m) would encourage householders to make greater use of such spaces and potentially increase the road space available for others. Impact would vary between Zones according to prevalent house type. Many households with off-street provision do make use of it and do not hold Residents' Permits.
- 4.4 Similarly, the scheme does not take into account the different impact on congestion caused by single and multi-vehicle households. Many Councils have approached this aspect of congestion by charging a higher fee for a second Residents' Permit. If the suggestion regarding off-street provision is adopted then such properties should pay the second vehicle charge for a permit.

4.5 Proposals

1	Introduce rules to make certain properties ineligible for permits, eg single dwellings converted to flats or HMOs, or brownfield redevelopments where planning policy limits the amount of off-street parking provision.	Needs to be ratified as a Council Policy so that Officers have the authority to implement it. This cannot be done as part of the Development Management process through Planning applications. It would not reduce the current income from Residents' Permits if no other
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		changes were made and current levels of use continued. The income stream would effectively be capped.
2	Reduce Residents' Permit allocation by 1 for each off-road parking space or garage (minimum size 5x2.5m)	Would require careful checking at application stage. Not known how many existing permit holders this would affect. Reduction in income could be mitigated by coupling with proposal 3 and classing Residents' Permit purchased as '2 nd ' permit, ie based on number of vehicles owned by the household occupants rather than permits purchased.
3	Increase the base price of a Residents' Permit to £40 and introduce a price differential for second RP.	301 (17%) households have second Residents' Permit so no significant increase in income. If 2 nd Residents' Permit fee of £50 introduced additional income would be £4,500.

5.0 Potential Abuse Issues

- 5.1 Residents' Permits are vehicle specific and the potential for abuse or misuse is very limited. Visitors' Permits are not vehicle specific and have no time limits. There is therefore considerable scope for them to be misused. The report at Appendix 1 (para 4.4) indicates how this can happen. The potential for abuse or misuse is probably greater in areas nearer the town centre and major employers. The scheme's generous provision of two unlimited permits is not matched by any of the other schemes examined around the country. Some schemes do not have provision for any free visitor parking at all.
- 5.2 The intention of visitor provision is to ensure that residents' legitimate social and business visitors can park within the Zone for the duration of their visit, usually a few hours at most. In this context business visitors includes delivery drivers, service engineers, and tradesmen. It would also cover clients of small businesses run from private residential addresses. It is obviously not a requirement for the visitor to be physically present at the property for the whole time. Any proposals that limit the use of visitor permits would also contribute positively to the congestion issue.
- 5.3 The simplest way of reducing the potential for abuse would be to reduce the allocation immediately to one Visitors' Permit per household. This is thought to be too drastic a measure if taken on its own and would unduly penalise those who use the scheme properly.
- 5.4 The number of Visitors' Permits in circulation might be reduced by removing the 'no cost' element of the permit provided when a Residents' Permit is purchased. Some residents who take this free permit and buy a second might not buy the second if they had to pay for the first.

- 5.5 Many Councils have opted for a scratchcard system whereby each household is able to purchase a maximum number of daily cards for use over an annual period. One card has to be used each time a visitor's vehicle is parked in the Zone. A combination of one unlimited permit and number of scratchcards would move some way towards limiting the potential for abuse whilst allowing residents to choose how they wanted to manage their visitor requirements. There will be a cost element as scratchcards are more expensive to produce than the current permits.
- 5.6 Any proposal that increases the cost to residents will not be popular, but this has to be weighed against the perception of abuse that exists.
- 5.7 Proposal

4	<p>Increase Visitor Permit charge to £20 (no charge if Residents' Permit purchased). Remove second unlimited permit and Introduce scratchcard system.</p> <p>100 scratchcards per household per year charged at, say, 20p each. Purchased in books of 10 for £2. Cards would show Zone, with users entering vehicle registration mark and address being visited.</p>	<p>Serial numbers of cards would allow follow up action if not properly used.</p> <p>The charge would cover the cost of production and administration (This aspect would be advertised within the TRO process)</p>
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6.0 Carers' Permits

- 6.1 These are available to all social care establishments free of charge. They can be used for unlimited times in all Zones. It is not possible to determine whether any permit is being used for its intended purpose of limited parking by peripatetic carers whilst providing actual social/medical care to residents. There is also no onus on the care establishments to manage the use of permits. Inevitably some are more rigorous than others. Carers' Permits are not provided to individual care providers not working through another establishment.
- 6.2 The management aspect would be helped by making Carers' Permits renewable annually in the same way as Residents' and Visitors' Permits. This would involve the Council in some additional expenditure.
- 6.3 A charge or deposit system would contribute to positive management and encourage establishments to limit the number of permits requested. A charge would increase annual costs to all establishments and cover the Council's costs of permit production. A redeemable deposit would limit the establishments' costs but not cover the Council's costs.

- 6.4 To limit potential misuse of permits a maximum stay of, say, two hours in any one street could be introduced. This should not affect service delivery in any major way as most peripatetic care visits are for shorter periods than this. This would be enforced by treating the vehicle as being parked in a limited waiting area, with tyre valve positions being recorded.

6.5 Proposals

5	Require annual renewal	Does not require any changes to TRO or policy. Involves additional costs for new permits each year.
6	Introduce charge or deposit for Carers' Permit	Charge should be based on similar grounds to Residents' Permits - cost recovery only. Deposit would not increase overall costs to establishment, but not cover Council's costs.
7	Time limit Carers' Permit to 2 hours in any one street	This would entail additional activity by enforcement staff. There would be cost implications to the Council if the 'clock' option was chosen.

7.0 Business Permits

- 7.1 The issue for businesses in RPZs is the ability to park legally, not congestion or perhaps cost. The difference between them and businesses located in the town centre is usually the distance to public car parks. Any proposals need to differentiate between businesses where the proprietor or employee is frequently coming and going with the same vehicle, for example service engineers or delivery based businesses, and those where the customers necessarily visit the base or location, for example retail outlets like 'corner shops' or hairdressers and small offices.
- 7.2 Business use has to be defined carefully and should not include businesses where a vehicle is used infrequently or solely as a means of travel to and from home to workplace.
- 7.3 To qualify businesses would have to be listed on the National Non-Domestic Rates register at an address within the RPZ. It would be possible to extend this to businesses on main thoroughfares adjacent to RPZs, where there is very limited on-street provision during the day.
- 7.4 In considering the needs of businesses it is important not to overlook the main purpose of RPZs and increase congestion when most residents' vehicles are likely to be parked on-street during the morning and evening peak hours. Business Permits could be restricted for use between 9am and 5pm, with a maximum number per business. To prevent potential abuse they should be vehicle specific and priced at, say, several times the cost of a Residents' Permit or a percentage of the Shopper 2 Car Park Season Ticket.

7.5 Businesses where the customer attends the location could be allowed to purchase a limited number of time-restricted scratchcards for display by customers. The time period would have to be relatively short to prevent parking beyond the time needed for the service.

7.6 In situations where, for example, builders are working on unoccupied properties for which the owner does not qualify for a Visitors' Permit daily or weekly 'work permits' could be made available charged at the all-day Shopper 2 off-street rate. These would have to be purchased in advance with applications supported by evidence of accepted quotations or written instructions.

7.7 Proposals

8	<p>Provide servicing/delivery type who are based within an RPZ and listed on the NNDR database with a maximum of two Zone and vehicle-specific Business Permits valid between 9am and 5pm.</p> <p>Vehicles must be registered to business or individual named on NNDR bill. Evidence of vehicle use for business must be provided with application.</p> <p>Charge for first permit to be 5 times Resident Permit or 25% Shopper 2 Car Park Season Ticket. Additional 50% charge for second permit.</p>	<p>No operational problems as permits are vehicle-specific.</p> <p>There is likely to be some discussion with individual businesses as to qualification for permits.</p> <p>Need to define criteria for premises 'adjacent' to Zones.</p> <p>Financial implications not known as take up uncertain. Costs of production would be covered by permit charge.</p>
9	<p>Allow businesses where customer attends the location to buy books of 2 hour Zone-specific scratchcards for use by customers.</p> <p>These to show time date and time of parking and vehicle registration number.</p> <p>Costs to be £1 per card</p>	<p>Serial numbers of cards would allow follow up action if not properly used.</p> <p>Financial implications not known as take up uncertain. If the cost of production exceeds the suggested price (unlikely) this could be offset by the additional income generated from proposal 8.</p>
10	<p>Allow contractors working at empty property where owner does not have ability to provide Visitors' Permit to purchase 'Work Permit' on either daily or weekly basis.</p> <p>Charge to be at all-day Shopper 2 Car Park tariff.</p>	<p>There will have to be a bedding-in period for this to allow time for all contractors to become aware of the requirement.</p> <p>The actual 'Work Permit' will be a short-lived document in letter format so costs will be minimal.</p>

8.0 Houses In Multiple Occupation

8.1 These have the same permit allocation as other households, irrespective of the number of separately let rooms. One HMO owner has put forward the view that they are likely to have more tenant drivers per household than other types of households and would therefore like an allocation of three Residents' Permits for each HMO. Given the rise in the average 'leaving home' age and the increase in vehicle ownership in younger age groups this premise may not be completely accurate. Allowing this would be treating one part of the private rented sector more favourably than another. It would also act against the congestion curtailment argument.

8.2 HMO owners are able to use the Visitors' Permit to park at their properties. A reduction in the number of Visitors' Permits could affect their ability to do this if the permit was already in use. This could be overcome by allowing registered HMO owners to buy scratchcards for the relevant Zones, subject to an annual maximum.

8.3 Proposal

11	Allow registered HMO owners to purchase scratch cards for each Zone in which they own properties, up to a maximum of 50 in each Zone annually.	If the cost of production exceeds the suggested price this could be offset by the additional income generated from proposal 4. Refunds should not be available for 'lost' scratchcards.
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9.0 Environmental Issues

9.1 The Government has introduced banding of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) based on the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from cars in recognition that lower emissions are less damaging to the environment. Cars emitting up to 100 grams of CO₂ per kilometre (g/km) are charged zero (Band A) and those emitting up to 120g/km are charged at Band B rate, currently £35 per annum. Cars emitting more than 121g/km are charged at Bands C-G dependant on their actual output.

9.2 These bandings apply only to cars. They do not apply to Private/Light Goods Vehicles, where VED is charged either at Band C or G.

9.3 Introducing a parallel discount system for Residents' Permits would show the Council's wish to encourage the use of smaller cars.

9.4 Proposal

Introduce 100% and 50% discount on Residents' Permits costs for cars liable to VED Band A or B respectively. This	The number of vehicles falling in to the discount bands is likely to be small. The effect on income would be only marginal.
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discount to apply only to the first RP purchased by any individual household.	
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10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 Whilst the primary purpose of the Residents' Parking Scheme is traffic management and control within the various Zones, several of the proposals have financial implications for the Council. Where possible, these implications are shown based on current usage and prices.
- 10.2 The Delegation Agreement with Somerset County Council under which this Council carries out On-Street management and enforcement specifies that if there is an overall surplus on the account that surplus must be ring-fenced and its use discussed with the County Council.

11.0 Corporate Priorities

- 11.1 The Transport Corporate Aim is to minimise the growth of traffic congestion. Whilst the Residents Parking Scheme itself can not limit growth in vehicle ownership, positive management of the Scheme can help to control vehicle movements within residential areas.

12.0 Recommendations

- 12.1 Members are recommended to
- Approve the change in emphasis in the Residents Parking Scheme in moving away from administrative cost recovery in recognition of the need to better manage parking congestion
 - Approve the adoption of the ban on permit allocation to additional dwellings created in existing RPZs
 - Approve the increases in permit charges as outlined
 - Approve proposals to change the way the Scheme operates as outlined in items 2 to 12 above
 - Recommend the Executive to proceed with advertising the necessary changes to the Traffic Regulation Orders with a view for the new arrangements coming into effect from the beginning of the next financial year.

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TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**STRATEGIC PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW PANEL – 25 SEPTEMBER 2007**

**REPORT OF THE PARKING & CIVIL CONTINGENCIES MANAGER
(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Coles)**

RESIDENTS' PARKING

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To review the operation of Residents' Parking and consider options for changing some parameters to the scheme, following previous Panel discussions and recommendations within the approved Taunton Parking Strategy.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report identifies issues affecting the effectiveness of Residents' Parking. It addresses the issues of costs and allocations and presents avenues for discussion and decision. It recommends that action be taken to maximise the road space available to residents, and also to limit the potential for abuse by reducing the total number of permits available.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Taunton Parking Strategy recommended that the type and number of permits available under the scheme be revisited. A Member Task & Finish Group also concluded that the number of permits available, because of the number of eligible households, meant that there was considerable congestion in some Zones. Residents have also echoed these concerns, with particular reference to brownfield redevelopment and conversion of single dwellings into flats – both of which take place without increasing the road space available for parking. The Executive, at its 19 July meeting last year, requested that any proposals to change the way Residents' Parking operates should be the subject of full consultation.
- 3.2 Residents' Parking was introduced in 2001 to enable Taunton residents in areas with little or no off-street parking provision to park during the day within reasonable proximity of their homes. The town is divided into a number of Zones for enforcement and administration purposes. There is no Residents Parking provision within the most central Zone.
- 3.3 The system provides for two Residents' Permits and two Visitors' Permits to be available to each residential property within a Zone. The costs are annually £30 for each Resident's Permit and £10 for each Visitor's Permit. One Visitor Permit is supplied free of charge if a Residents' Permit is purchased. A Motorcycle Permit is available at £15 in lieu of a Residents' Permit. Rules

regarding eligibility, documentation, cost and use are laid down in the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Carers Permits are available free of charge to those involved with care in the community. Business premises sit outside of the scheme and have no permit entitlement. The rules are the same in each RPZ, although the hours of operation vary. Appendix 1 gives details of each Zone. Plans will be available at the meeting for ease of reference.

- 3.4 Residents' Permits are vehicle specific and state the registration number of the vehicle to which they relate. Visitors' Permits state the address of the property which the driver of the vehicle is visiting. Carers Permits are transferable between carers of the organisations to which they are issued.
- 3.5 The numbers of valid permits within each Zone as at 1 August each year are at Appendix 2.

4.0 OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 4.1 The Residents' Parking Scheme is administratively easy to operate. The £30 permit charge was fixed to cover the costs of permit production and issue. No costs of enforcement were included as in 2001 the areas involved were already in part subject to Waiting Restrictions in some form or other and would have required patrolling in any case. The £30 charge has not been increased since its introduction. This Panel recommended last July that the Executive Councillor consider an increase to £35.
- 4.2 There have been a number of changes to the Zones which have resulted in enforcement patrols being introduced into areas not previously subject to widespread Waiting Restrictions. There is currently a consultation exercise under way over the introduction of Residents' Parking in the William Street/Herbert Street area where no restrictions exist at present. Such changes increase the workload, but patrol staffing levels have not been changed since 2001.
- 4.3 The Residents' Permits work well and there is no room for misuse or abuse as they are vehicle specific and renewed annually. However, there is potential for abuse of the Visitors' Permit as it can be displayed on any vehicle for any length of time. The intention behind this component of the scheme was to enable residents' occasional social and business visitors to be able to park within the Zone without contravening the regulations.
- 4.4 Both the Residents' and Visitors' Permits of the type in use are to a limited extent self-policing, and this was one of the factors leading Members deciding on them initially. Residents do take notice of what is happening in their streets. Over the years Parking Services have received complaints from residents of alleged misuse by neighbours. We have responded with letters to permit holders reminding them of the conditions of use. This has resolved a number of issues. There is also a body of anecdotal evidence that leads us to believe there is wider abuse happening, but which is difficult to substantiate. There have been allegations that Visitors' Permits are
 - lent to family members and friends to enable "commuter" parking;

- “rented out” for considerable sums of money;
 - used by residents to avoid paying for a Residents’ Permit or to exceed the two vehicle limit;
 - used by businesses (residential properties over shops) to allow commercial or customer parking; and
 - held by residents but used by businesses.
- 4.5 Such allegations and anecdotes can lead to the scheme being viewed with some disrepute and dissatisfaction. Some situations lead to conflict with enforcement staff as genuine visitors are not able to access permits but still wish to park. We do carry out random checks and in the third scenario above do take action. The TROs do give us the power to cancel permits. To date we have not done so.
- 4.6 Vehicle ownership is growing. The more vehicles there are owned by residents the less road space there is available for visitors. There is therefore a greater pressure on the permit scheme to be more rigorous in its attempts to ‘share out’ the road space.
- 4.7 The policy of brownfield redevelopment, with extremely limited off-street parking provision, in the more central areas of the town is generally putting the whole resident parking provision under increased strain. Conversion of single properties into flats also immediately increases the number of eligible households with Zones. The Highway Authority’s ability to object to such proposals is limited by PPG statements. This is leading to dissatisfaction from residents, especially those who have held permits for some time, and is a cause of friction between them and Parking Services staff both in the office and on the ground.
- 4.8 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are treated as one household and are therefore entitled to two resident and two visitor permits. This leads to conflict between tenants and Parking Services as permits are allocated on a first-come first-served basis irrespective of the number of tenants. There have been requests for the entitlement for residents’ permits to be increased in respect of HMOs, in recognition of the service such properties provide. To do so in isolation would inevitably increase the pressure on Zones with a high concentration of such properties.
- 4.9 There are increasing pressures to extend operating hours later into the evenings in several Zones as a result of conflict between residents and customers of the “evening economy”. Such extensions result in increased expectations of attendance and action by enforcement staff.
- 4.10 Carers’ Permits are intended for use only when Carers are actually undertaking formal caring duties. We have problems with them being used by staff attending meetings or training courses in restricted areas. Also not all care organisations are efficient at recovering permits from staff that leave their employment.
- 4.11 Businesses located within RPZs have no permit entitlement and therefore are

prevented from having vehicles on-street near their premises. This has been a source of friction with the enforcement staff.

5.0 WHAT HAPPENS ELSEWHERE?

- 5.1 Residents' Parking schemes operate in many areas of the country. They vary in terms of permit allocations and charges depending on particular circumstances and traffic management requirements. Some have higher charges in more central or sensitive zones and some have differential charges for second or subsequent permits.
- 5.2 Although this Council's operation of the scheme for residents is generally in line with most other schemes we have not found anywhere provision for visitors to be as generous in allocation or application. Some schemes provide one 'unlimited use' visitor permit only, whilst some do not provide any. Many involve the use of daily scratchcards, either in place of a permit or in addition to it. Appendix 3 lists examples of schemes operating in other areas.

6.0 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 6.1 The Residents' Parking Scheme is intended to benefit residents who have little or no off-street parking. It is aimed at maximising the use of the available highway by the whole Zone. The Scheme necessarily must include limitations on the numbers and types of permits available and will therefore inevitably not meet the needs of every individual household.
- 6.2 There is extremely little ability to provide more designated road space within the existing Zones. There is always a balance to be drawn between the needs of residents and businesses, without losing sight of the primary purpose of the highway to enable safe free passage of traffic.
- 6.3 The availability of parking is becoming an increasingly important part of decision making on house purchase. Potential residents should be able to assess the likelihood of actually being able to park rather than just knowing the property is within a Zone.
- 6.4 The present scheme takes no account of any off-street parking facility, garage or drive, available at any individual property. In the interests of each Zone as an entity should permit allocations reflect the existence of such facilities?
- 6.5 Every household has an entitlement under the scheme to purchase permits irrespective of the amount of road space available within any Zone. This can give the impression the Council is interested more in making money than managing the parking situation. Should there be a limit to the number of permits available within each Zone, with length of residence used to establish a waiting list?
- 6.6 What is the relative worth of Residents' and Visitors' Permits? Should residents be able to exercise choice over the balance of any permit allocation? Should they be able to change this balance during the life of the permits?

- 6.7 What level of charge should residents bear because of where they live? Should second permits carry a premium to reflect the congestion level attached to them?
- 6.8 Residents' and Visitors' Permits are valid for 12 months from the date purchased rather than any 'block' date. The timing of any changes will need to reflect this.
- 6.9 How can care organisations be encouraged to be more responsible in overseeing the use of their permits? Should there be a charge on each organisation or each permit? What provision can be made for emergency care responders?
- 6.10 How can the scheme be adapted to help businesses within the Zones?
- 6.11 The Scheme needs to be simple to understand and operate for all parties. It also must be reputable and have very limited potential for abuse.
- 6.11 As the allocation, eligibility rules and charges are laid down in the TRO, all suggested changes will be subject to a formal public consultation process.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The purpose of Residents Parking is primarily traffic management. Several of the issues raised above do not in themselves have financial implications in relation to direct costs to the Council. Any changes to allocations that reduce the overall number of permits available will put a ceiling on income. The scheme is intended to be self-financing so permit charges must reflect that.
- 7.2 Increases to the size or operating hours of Zones will bring extra enforcement requirements. This will inevitably mean either an increase in enforcement resources or a reduction in the level of enforcement provided across the whole traffic management front.

8.0 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 8.1 The Transport Corporate Aim is to minimise the growth of traffic congestion. The positive management of the Residents' Parking Schemes is one of the tools available to achieve this.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 In relation to Residents' Permits, Members are recommended to consider the options available to maximise parking opportunities for residents through permit allocation, eligibility criteria and charges.
- 9.2 In relation to Visitors' Permits, Members are recommended to support measures to reduce actual and potential abuse of the system by reducing the

number of permits available to each household.

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RESIDENT PARKING ZONES

N02 Railway Street - Designated Bays – 253 metres

Railway Street, Thomas Street, Grove Terrace, Kingston Road (part)

W03 Albemarle - Designated Bays – 552 metres

Whitehall, Albemarle Road, Beaufort Road, Belvedere Road, Station Road (part)

W04 The Avenue - Designated Bays – 1420 metres

The Avenue, Birch Grove, Elm Grove, Linden Grove, French Weir Avenue, Woodstock Road, Staplegrove Road (part), Elm Close

W05 Greenbrook - Designated Bays – 1161 metres

Wood Street, Greenbrook Terrace, Portland Street, Cleveland Street, Clarence Street, French Weir Close, Northfield Road

W08 Manor - Designated Bays – 556 metres

Permits required only in Manor Drive, Manor Close, Bruford Close

E09 Wilton - Designated Bays – 642 metres

Wilton Street, Westgate Street, Mount Nebo, Vivary Road, Burton Place, Shuttern, Upper High Street, Middleway, Cann Street, Broadlands Way, Broadlands Rise

E11 St Augustine - Designated Bays – 2483 metres

St Augustine Street, Laburnum Street, Stephen Street, Stephen Way, Eastbourne Road, Eastbourne Terrace, Gyffarde Street, Winchester Street, Priory Avenue (part), Duke Street (part), East Reach (part), Canon Street (part), Gloucester Street, Haydon Road, Wilfred Street, Cranmer Road

E12 Trinity - Designated Bays – 3353 metres

Trinity Street, Trinity Road, South Street (part), Viney Street, Noble Street, Queen Street, Grays Road, Church Street, Princes Street, Blake Street, Gordon Road, Victoria Street, East Reach (part), Eastleigh Road, Northleigh Road, Southleigh Road, Westleigh Road, Holway Road, Holway Avenue, Savery Row, Midford Road, Wordsworth Drive (part)

E14 Victoria Gate – Designated Bays – 399 metres

Victoria Gate, Mitre Court, Alfred Street, East Reach (part)

APPENDIX 2

ANNUAL PERMIT HISTORY AS AT 1 AUGUST 2007

R – Residents’ Permits, V – Visitors’ Permits

Zone	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
	R	V	R	V	R	V	R	V	R	V	R	V
N01 Railway Street	38	49	42	48	40	52	43	51	57	98	59	100
W03 Albemarle	36	68	146	227	146	236	152	245	161	252	159	244
W04 The Avenue	107	141	116	146	125	171	134	176	150	190	145	190
W05 Greenbrook	44	56	184	266	180	273	191	288	195	303	193	285
W08 Manor	2	4	10	20	7	19	9	20	8	21	8	20
E09 Wilton	22	46	133	214	135	223	133	228	123	220	129	228
E11 St Augustine	59	99	292	410	460	641	444	657	466	703	481	728
E12 Trinity	152	223	226	293	209	292	206	306	203	314	432	680
E14 Victoria Gate					41	88	48	94	50	111	47	113
Total	460	686	1149	1624	1343	1995	1360	2065	1413	2212	1653	2588

DISTRIBUTION OF PERMITS PER HOUSEHOLDS AS AT 1 AUGUST 2007

R – Residents’ Permits, V – Visitors’ Permits

Zone	No of Households							
	0R/1V	0R/2V	1R/0V	1R/1V	1R/2V	2R/0V	2R/1V	2R/2V
N01 Railway Street	3	2	0	22	11	0	2	1
W03 Albemarle	25	12	0	67	46	0	9	12
W04 The Avenue	10	11	0	36	27	0	17	24
W05 Greenbrook	30	16	2	77	44	0	15	20
W08 Manor	8	2	1	6	1	0	0	0
E09 Wilton	23	26	2	61	28	0	7	12
E11 St Augustine	45	48	1	171	137	0	36	51
E12 Trinity	56	62	6	159	103	0	30	55
E14 Victoria Gate	22	18	1	22	10	0	1	6
Total	222	197	13	621	407	0	117	181

SCHEMES OPERATING IN OTHER AREAS**CHELMSFORD**

Residents Permits	one per vehicle belonging to a resident; same cost per permit
Visitor Permit	one per property, valid on any vehicle up to four hours NB Resident and Visitor Permits cannot be issued to the same address
Visitors Tickets	sold in books of ten valid for one, four or six hours cost £3, £9 and £12 respectively; only one ticket can be displayed at a time

SALISBURY

Residents Permits	two per residence reduced by one per off-road parking space available within the residence (defined as driveway or garage measuring 5x2.5m minimum)
Visitor Permit	one available only to residents who are over 60 or housebound, do not own a car and live in a household to which no resident permit has been issued
Visitors Tickets	100 daily scratchcards per household annually at 20p each additional cards available at cost equivalent to all day parking in city centre

AYLESBURY VALE

Residents Permits	one per vehicle owned by a resident
Visitor Permits	none
Visitor Tickets	max 50 per address within three month period; cost 50p each

ASHFORD

Resident Permits	maximum two per household reduced in consideration of any off-street provision
Visitor Permit	none
Visitor Tickets	£1 each with no limits

THREE RIVERS

Residents Permits	maximum two, second permit costs double first
Visitor Permit	central areas no entitlement, outer areas one per household
Visitor Tickets	sold in book of 10 for £10

WINCHESTER

Inner Area	one Resident Permit, one Visitor permit and 20 scratchcards pa first permit £22, second (of any type) £50, scratchcards £1
Outer Area	two Residents Permits, two Visitor Permits and 20 scratchcards pa first permit £22, subsequent permits (of any type) £50, scratchcards £1 (scratchcards available only if a permit has been purchased) restrictions on converted properties – eligibility limited to pre-planning permission status

SOUTH SOMERSET (YEOVIL)

Residents Permits	one per car driving resident
Visitor Permits	one per household

POOLE

Residents Permits	one per vehicle registered at property
Visitor Permits	none
Visitor Tickets	£1 each with maximum 20 per household per year

BOURNEMOUTH

Resident Permits	two per household
Visitor Permits	one per household

ANNEX B**ANNUAL PERMIT HISTORY AS AT 1 JULY 2008****R – Residents’ Permits, V – Visitors’ Permits**

Zone	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	R	V	R	V	R	V	R	V	R	V	R	V	R	V
N02 Railway Street	38	49	42	48	40	52	43	51	57	98	59	100	39	50
W03 Albemarle	36	68	146	227	146	236	152	245	161	252	159	244	150	239
W04 The Avenue	107	141	116	146	125	171	134	176	150	190	145	190	153	203
W05 Greenbrook	44	56	184	266	180	273	191	288	195	303	193	285	193	300
W08 Manor	2	4	10	20	7	19	9	20	8	21	8	20	9	18
E09 Wilton	22	46	133	214	135	223	133	228	123	220	129	228	146	247
E11 St Augustine	59	99	292	410	460	641	444	657	466	703	481	728	479	746
E12 Trinity	152	223	226	293	209	292	206	306	203	314	432	680	476	778
E14 Victoria Gate					41	88	48	94	50	111	47	113	50	121
Total	460	686	1149	1624	1343	1995	1360	2065	1413	2212	1653	2588	1695	2702

DISTRIBUTION OF PERMITS PER HOUSEHOLDS AS AT 1 JULY 2008**R – Residents’ Permits, V – Visitors’ Permits**

Zone	No of Households							
	0R/1V	0R/2V	1R/0V	1R/1V	1R/2V	2R/0V	2R/1V	2R/2V
N02 Railway Street	3	1	0	18	9	0	5	2
W03 Albemarle	22	14	4	53	46	0	8	15
W04 The Avenue	8	13	1	34	32	0	15	27
W05 Greenbrook	26	18	1	70	60	0	14	17
W08 Manor	8	0	1	6	2	0	0	0
E09 Wilton	28	26	2	62	25	0	8	21
E11 St Augustine	48	51	1	172	140	0	30	52
E12 Trinity	68	67	5	184	129	0	31	50
E14 Victoria Gate	23	18	1	25	11	0	0	6
Total	234	208	16	624	454	0	111	190