



CPZ POLICIES TASK GROUP

REVIEW OF THE POLICIES FOR WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES

FEBRUARY 2015

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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Watford Borough Council

Members - Task Group

Councillor Karen Collett

Councillor Kareen Hastrick

Councillor Peter Jeffree

Councillor Anne Joynes

Councillor Darren Walford

Chair of the Task Group and
Councillor for Woodside Ward

Councillor for Meriden Ward

Councillor for Park Ward

Councillor for Leggatts Ward

Councillor for Tudor Ward

Officer Support

Andy Smith

Justin Bloomfield

Liam Hornsby

Sandra Hancock

Rosy Wassell

Transport Infrastructure Section Head

Parking Services Manager

Deputy Parking Services Manager

Committee and Scrutiny Officer

Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRESENT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Vehicle Length Limits

- 1 The 5.25m length limit to be retained for all residential permits.
- 2 To extend the length limit for business permits (in CPZs) to 6.0m.

Business Permits

- 3 Criteria to be revisited
- 4 Vehicles should be registered to the company address (i.e. Head office) but not necessarily at the CPZ address – not to an individual at a residential address
- 5 Vehicles must realistically be usable for the stated operation
- 6 Vehicles to be used during the day rather than parked throughout entire business hours.

Blue Badge Drivers

- 7 Free permits be retained for drivers who hold a Blue Badge.
- 8 Extend free permit issue to cover parents caring for disabled children under 16 years old who hold a Blue Badge

One Permit Per Person

- 9 The current Rule should remain: up to two permits to be available to each household but only one permit per person.

Funerals

- 10 The policy to remain unchanged

Visitor Voucher Abuse

- 11 Amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to allow for the revocation of vouchers when they are abused and confirm that all minutes on Visitor Vouchers must be scratched, including zero.

Doctor and Health Visitor (DHV) Permits

- 12 The price of DHV permits to be: £25 for the first five permits for any one organisation and subsequent permits to be priced at £55 each.
Charges to be reflective of the residents' pricing structure. A formal criterion to be created and a clause inserted in the TRO to reflect this.
- 13 All current DHV permits to be revoked and reissued to applicants under the new criteria and pricing structure

Staff Permits

- 14 A formal criteria for use to be created and a suitable clause inserted in the TRO to reflect this.

Late Night Enforcement (Residential Roads)

- 15 To continue with the current arrangements and to be reactive to specific yellow line complaints in circumstances where safety or access concerns may exist.

Period of Residency (Vehicle Ownership)

- 16 Proof of residency to be produced for each renewal of permit.
- 17 The requirement for a V5 or insurance document to be produced each year should be removed if the renewal relates to the same vehicle.

Refunds

- 18 That a standard administration fee of £10 is deducted from the refund due on each permit and a pro-rata refund for the remaining months is provided by BACS upon application. This rule to apply only to those permits with more than three months remaining.

Driveway CPZ Parking for Permit holders

- 19 A suitable clause to be written into the TRO in order that persistent instances of abuse can be dealt with.

Residents' Permits – Minimum tenancy period

- 20 To formalise a minimum six months tenancy period to qualify for a 12 month permit. All other residents remain entitled to visitor vouchers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At a meeting on 20 November 2014 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to review policies in relation to Controlled Parking Zones and to consider whether to establish a task group for this issue.

The meeting agreed that a task group on this subject would be wise.

It was suggested that the group should comprise councillors who did not represent a ward in which a CPZ was established. Councillors whose wards contained a CPZ were asked to attend as witnesses; enabling them to contribute the experience of residents in their wards.

In lights of complaints received by the Parking Service the proposal had asked that the task group consider aspects of policies relating to the allocation of residents' and business permits and to test whether current policies were reasonable or whether a review would be justified.

It was proposed that evidence be gained through:

- Current policies
- Officers' views and comments from residents, the public and business users
- Member views
- Examination of other CPZ schemes

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Task Group must complete their work by the end of the current financial year.

It was agreed that the Task Group would comprise:

Councillor Karen Collett	–	Councillor for Woodside Ward
Councillor Kareen Hastrick	–	Councillor for Meriden Ward
Councillor Anne Joynes	–	Councillor for Leggatts Ward
Councillor Rabi Martins	–	Councillor for Central Ward
Councillor Darren Walford	–	Councillor for Tudor Ward

At the Task Group's first meeting it was agreed that Councillor Peter Jeffree, Park Ward, would replace Councillor Rabi Martins.

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

First Meeting - 18 December 2014

Councillor Collett was elected Chair.

It was agreed that the task group would not review the entire parking scheme; the group would address those aspects specified in the scope.

Suggested areas for review included:

- Residence permits
- Visitor Vouchers
- Business Permits
- Exemptions
- Length of Vehicles
- Match day parking

It was recommended that transport and parking services officers prepare documents for the group listing comments and questions received from residents and members of the public. This could then be considered at the following meeting.

Members discussed the aims and contents of the report.

The following ACTIONS were AGREED:

1. That the Committee and Scrutiny Officer would research parking provision at other nearby local authorities and to then pass the information to the task group.
2. That the Transport Infrastructure Section Head and the Parking Services Manager be asked to attend the following meeting of the Task Group
3. That the Committee and Scrutiny Officer would
 - email the task group members and the Head of Regeneration and Development for suggestions for questions in a survey to be sent to those Councillors whose wards had a CPZ: Callowland, Central, Holywell, Nascot, Park and Vicarage
 - look at questions posed by the consultant to residents and businesses in the CPZ areas and email these to the group
 - finalise the survey and send out to Councillors immediately after the Christmas break; the survey to be returned by 20 January.

The minutes for this meeting can be found in Appendix 2 to this report

Second Meeting - 20 January 2015

The Task Group had received a report of the Parking Services Manager addressing issues raised by residents and members of the public in respect of a number of rules and policies relating to the administration of the scheme. The task group had also received the results of a survey sent to Councillors whose wards had a CPZ.

The Parking Services Manager asked for guidance on whether any changes should be introduced to the current policies.

The task group considered each of the items outlined by the Parking Services Manager and then made its recommendations.

The recommendations are detailed on pages 4 and 5 of this report

The minutes for this meeting can be found in Appendix 3 to this report

Third Meeting - 2 February 2015

The Task Group had received the draft report to be sent to Cabinet in addition to an example of parking details in the vicinity of places of worship and two documents from the Parking Service regarding Business Permits.

The Task Group considered the documents and recommended that they be presented to the Cabinet at their next meeting on 16 February 2015.

The minutes for this meeting can be found in Appendix 4 to this report

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

VEHICLE LENGTH LIMITS

Recommendation 1

The 5.25m length limit to be retained for all residential permits.

Recommendation 2

To extend the length limit for business permits (in CPZs) to 6.0m.

The Parking Services Manager advised that 5.25m was a standard length for cars and a maximum length of 6.0m was standard for vehicles in business use. He advised that applicants make a declaration stating the length of their vehicles when applying for a permit.

BUSINESS PERMITS

Recommendation 3

Criteria to be revisited

It was felt that the rules were not sufficiently stringent to prevent abuse of the scheme.

The meeting agreed that where criteria were changed permit holders be fully informed of all aspects of the new regulations. It was also agreed that it would be wise to inform residents and businesses that parking staff would monitor CPZs to ensure that the regulations were complied with.

Recommendation 4

Vehicles should be registered to the company address (i.e. Head office) but not necessarily at the CPZ address – not to an individual at a residential address

Recommendation 5

Vehicles must realistically be usable for the stated operation

It was noted that in some cases vehicles were not such as would generally be used for business purposes eg luxury cars where normally it would be expected that a 'trades' van would be used. It was agreed that the type of vehicle to be used for a business permit should be specified if this were possible.

Recommendation 6

Vehicles to be used during the day rather than parked throughout entire business hours.

The meeting noted that business vehicles were occasionally parked in the CPZ and then were not moved for the whole day; i.e. the parking permit was

being used for parking rather than for business use. It was agreed that rules specify that vehicles be used rather than parked and then left in situ throughout the working day.

BLUE BADGE DRIVERS

Recommendation 7

Retain free permits for drivers who hold a Blue Badge.

Recommendation 8

Extend free permit issue to cover parents caring for disabled children under 16 years old who hold a Blue Badge.

The meeting noted that requests for free permits had been received from applicants who had caring responsibilities for members of the family in the same household. It was agreed that only Blue Badge drivers and parents caring for children under 16 years of age should be granted free permits.

ONE PERMIT PER PERSON

Recommendation 9

The current rule should remain: up to two permits to be available to each household but only one permit per person.

Increasing numbers of residents were requesting two permits where they had two vehicles registered in their name. It was agreed that to introduce a change in this rule could potentially result in an increase of vehicles parking on the highway.

FUNERALS

Recommendation 10

The policy to remain unchanged

Under the current regulations only hearses and limousines for mourners were exempt from parking restrictions in CPZ areas. The meeting noted that changes to the current policy could significantly impact on residents and businesses in some areas of the town.

Officers agreed to produce leaflets indicating available parking near to places of worship and to distribute these to churches etc and to funeral directors for use by guests on these occasions.

VISITOR VOUCHER ABUSE

Recommendation 11

Amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to allow for the revocation of vouchers when they are abused and confirm that all minutes on Visitor Vouchers must be scratched, including zero

Under the current regulations the parking service had no power to act on abuse of the voucher scheme. The meeting agreed that an amendment to the TRO would be wise; this would then allow residents who had abused the system to be penalised through the loss of vouchers.

DOCTOR AND HEALTH VISITOR (DHV) PERMITS

Recommendation 12

The price of DHV permits to be: £25 for the first five permits for any one organisation and subsequent permits to be priced at £55 each. Charges to be reflective of the residents' pricing structure. A formal criterion to be created and a clause inserted in the TRO to reflect this.

Recommendation 13

All current DHV permits to be revoked and reissued to applicants under the new criteria and pricing structure.

The task group was advised that there were no formal criteria for applications for DHV permits, that the cost of DHV permits were cheaper than those for residents and that a number of problems were associated with their use, for example drivers use them for personal and social reason.

The meeting discussed charges and it was agreed that a tiered pricing system be introduced at a cost equal to those of residents.

STAFF PERMITS

Recommendation 14

A formal criteria for use to be created and a suitable clause inserted in the TRO to reflect this.

For a number of Council staff, their role required them to visit sites within CPZs for which they were issued with parking permits. The permits were used on a 'pool' basis.

The meeting noted that no formal criteria for application for these permits existed and agreed that a criterion should be created and then inserted into the TRO.

LATE NIGHT ENFORCEMENT (RESIDENTIAL ROADS)

Recommendation 15

To continue with the current arrangements and to be reactive to specific yellow line complaints in circumstances where safety or access concerns may exist.

The meeting noted that problems occurred in roads which included a 'turning point' at the closed end of the street. Yellow lines had been installed to facilitate turning but this had raised complaints from residents who stated that this had minimised parking spaces. It was agreed that whilst officers would not monitor residential roads after 6.30 p.m. they would act in cases of specific complaints.

PERIOD OF RESIDENCE (VEHICLE OWNERSHIP)

Recommendation 16

Proof of residency to be produced for each renewal of permit.

Recommendation 17

The requirement for a V5 or insurance document to be produced each year should be removed if the renewal relates to the same vehicle.

The Parking Services Manager advised that proof of residency was required for each renewal as this acted as a safe-guard to ensure that permits were not issued to individuals who were no longer residents. It was not, however, necessary to update details of vehicles unless they had been changed since the previous permit had been issued.

REFUNDS

Recommendation 18

That a standard administration fee of £10 is deducted from the refund due on each permit and a pro-rata refund for the remaining months is provided by BACS upon application. This rule to apply only to those permits with more than three months remaining.

Significant numbers of requests for refunds were received which equated to considerable staff time spent in administration. There was no formal rule on the sums concerned.

The meeting considered the refund tables in the agenda and agreed that the structures indicated in the second table be introduced. The figures in this table included an administration fee of £10 having been deducted from the pro-rata refund for those months of the permit where more than three months remained.

DRIVEWAY CPZ PARKING FOR PERMIT HOLDERS

Recommendation 19

A suitable clause to be written into the TRO in order that persistent instances of abuse can be dealt with.

This issue had been referred to the task group as officers had received complaints of permit holders parking in front of vehicular access points and driveways. Residents signed a declaration agreeing not to park across driveways but there was no formal provision in the TRO allowing the Council to withdraw the permit in these circumstances. The group agreed with the Parking Services Manager's recommendation as detailed in his report.

RESIDENTS' PERMITS MINIMUM TENANCY PERIOD

Recommendation 20

To formalise a minimum six months tenancy period to qualify for a 12 month permit. All other residents remain entitled to visitor vouchers.

The Parking Services Manager advised that applications for permits were occasionally received from individual who had short lets on properties in CPZ areas. The task group agreed that proven residency of at least six months should be a requirement for a parking permit and that residents for shorter terms should remain entitled to visitor vouchers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND APPENDICES

Bibliography

The following documents were found to be useful:

1. Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meeting – 20 January 1997:
2. Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meeting – 26 February 1997
3. Minutes of Special Planning and Highways Committee – 10 July 1997
4. Minutes of Cabinet meeting – 3 September 2007
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?CommitteeId=121&MeetingId=164&DF=03%2f09%2f2007&Ver=2>
5. Report of the Head of Planning and Development on Controlled Parking Zone Consultation – Outcomes and Recommendations
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Cabinet/200709031930/Agenda/att764.pdf>
6. 'Your Parking Your Choice' consultation
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Cabinet/200709031930/Agenda/att765.pdf>
7. Minutes of Cabinet meeting – 2 December 2013
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=1199&Ver=4>
8. Watford High Level Parking Review
<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s6157/Appendix%20Ai.pdf>
9. Comparator information on parking permits (meeting on 20 January 2015)
10. Additional Comparator information on parking permits (meeting on 20 Jan 2015)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Task Group scope
- Appendix 2: Minutes 18 December 2014
- Appendix 3: Minutes 20 January 2015
- Appendix 4: *Minutes 2 February 2015*
- Appendix 5 Report: Controlled Parking Zone Issues