

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 <sup>th</sup> JULY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	REVIEW OF RESIDENTS PARKING PERMIT CHARGES AND NEW RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEMES		
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#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At Policy Committee and Council in February 2018 and February 2019, the Council approved a review of the current charges for residents and visitor parking permits. This review is reflected within the Council's current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 1.2 As a part of the introduction of residents' parking first permit charges in April 2017, improvement to the service was committed to. These changes have now been delivered with a further improvement of a single sign on for residents parking online accounts going live over the summer 2019.
- 1.3 In order to further enhance the current permit scheme for residents and their visitors it is recommended to increase permit charges as follows:-
  - An increase in the first permit charge from £30 to £40
  - An increase in the second permit charge from £120 to £150
  - An increase in the third permit charge from £240 to £300
  - The cost of a book of visitor permits be increased from £22 to £25 (maintain first 2 visitor books for free)
- 1.4 If approved by Policy Committee, the new charges would provide sufficient funding to develop, consult and introduce a new virtual visitor permit scheme and to improve enforcement of the permit areas. The new charges would be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

<b>2.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<p>That Policy Committee approve the proposed changes to parking permit charges as detailed in paragraph 4.1 and consist of:</p> <p>An increase in the first permit charge from £30 to £40  An increase in the second permit charge from £120 to £150  An increase in the third permit charge from £240 to £300  The cost of a book of visitor permits be increased from £22 to £25 (maintain first 2 visitor books for free)  The revised charges will be introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.</p>
<b>2.2</b>	The current permit holders be notified by letter of the changes to the residents permit scheme.
<b>2.3</b>	That future changes to the charges for Residents' Parking Permits be progressed through the Traffic Management Sub-Committee at its November meeting each year in order for recommendations from that sub-committee to be incorporated within the Council's annual fees and charges review considered at February Policy Committee each year.
<b>2.4</b>	That a review of Virtual Visitor permits takes place, consulting with members of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee on any potential scheme.
<b>2.5</b>	That officers progress concept designs of the new residents' parking schemes as detailed in para 3.8 and those schemes be reported to Traffic Management Sub-Committee in September 2019 for approval to progress informal and formal consultations.

### **3. The current Residents Parking scheme**

- 3.1** A first permit charge of £30 was introduced in April 2017. At the introduction of the £30 charge, a commitment of an improved offer was given to residents living within the scheme. This commitment offered:
- Improved enforcement;
  - A new permit application process;
  - And, as an interim, a flexible visitor permit renewal system
- 3.2** The following is provided as an update on those commitments:-

#### **Improved enforcement:**

Significant changes have been made to the enforcement systems employed by our contractor. These include an upgraded IT system with better handsets used by the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs). This has led to improved efficiency of the CEOs resulting in an increase of deployment hours within RP areas. Furthermore, the CCTV enforcement vehicle has been upgraded with new hardware and software. To improve detection of

contraventions the CCTV vehicle can be employed within RP areas although the current focus of the vehicle is to enforce the recently introduced Red Route. The Red Route is currently experimental and should it be made permanent a case will be made to purchase a second enforcement vehicle.

#### **New permit application process:**

An online, self-service application process has been introduced. Once a permit application has been approved online the information is shared with the CEOs through their handsets. Consequently, enforcement has become more efficient. Feedback from residents, indicate that the vast majority of users are happy with renewing their permit on-line. Since this time, we have received some suggestions of further service improvement but they are mainly based on single sign-on which is now being delivered in the summer this year.

#### **Flexible visitor permit renewal system:**

Subsequent to this being delivered, the new online permit application process was put in place and this provides further flexibility for renewing visitor permits.

### **3.3 Fee Benchmarking**

As a part of reviewing the current permit charges, Officers have completed some fee benchmarking of comparable schemes in other Local Authority areas. This is detailed below:-

	READING	OXFORD	BRISTOL	BASINGSTOKE	SWINDON
RESIDENT PERMITS					
Allocation per household	2 permits	2 to 4 permits (zone dependent)	3 permits (1 permit if off-street parking)	1 permit	2 permits
Annual costs	First - £30  Second - £120	First - £60  Second - £60 Third - £120 Fourth - £180	First - Free to £72 (based on CO2 emissions)  Second - £96 Third - £192	£18.50	First - £35  Second - £75
Renewal frequency	Annual	Annual	Annual	Annual	Annual

	SLOUGH	BRIGHTON	NOTTINGHAM CITY	ROYAL BOROUGH WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	MANCHESTER
RESIDENT PERMITS					
Allocation per household	2 permits (third in exceptional circumstances)	1 Permit per resident - no limit on the number of residents who can apply in any one household	3 permits (any mix of resident and visitor)	2 permits	2 permits
Annual costs	First - £25  Second - £50 Third - £100	£65, £130 or £163 (based on CO2 emissions)	First - Free  Second - Free	First - free  Second - free	First - £650  Second - £1300
Renewal frequency	Annual	Annual	2 years	2 years	Annual

	PRESTON CITY COUNCIL	NEWCASTLE	KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	HOUNSLOW	KINGSTON
RESIDENT PERMITS					
Allocation per household	2 permits	2 permits (discount for low emission)	1 permit (Vehicle emission charges - 9 charging bands)	5 permits (vehicle emission charges, 4 charging bands)	Unlimited - one per vehicle
Annual costs	First - £29 Second - £45	First - £25 Second - £75	First - £87-£236	First - £0 - £130 Second - £0 - £210 Third - £0 - £290 Fourth - £0 - £370 Fifth - £0 - £450	First - £90
Renewal frequency	Annual	Annual	Annual	Annual	Annual

- 3.4 This benchmarking shows the permit charges in Reading remain relatively low in comparison to other similar Local Authority areas.

### 3.5 Virtual Visitor Permits

Virtual permits offer a significantly improved customer service empowering residents to manage their own parking needs particularly for their visitors. The current initial allocation of 40 visitor permits (two books) is via the issue of scratch cards presented as half-day permits. Any further allocation of visitors' permits is charged at £22 per book (20 half-day) up to a maximum of 5 books per year. Consequently, where a visitor stays for only one hour, a half-day permit is required. There is no on-line option to extend (or reduce) the session and the physical placing of a further scratch card is required. There are further limitations to the scratch card visitor permit. The half-day is presented as 8am to 2pm then 2pm to 10am. So if a resident has a visitor stay for the weekend and leave their vehicle parked within the permit scheme there is a need for constant renewal of the scratch card. A virtual permit scheme could issue visitor permits as 480 hours to match the current 20 days offered now. Sessions can be offered hourly and managed by the resident through their on-line account where they will draw down their hourly allocation as required. The virtual permit online tool will be accessible 24 hours a day 7 days a week, therefore offering a service out of hours. Virtual permits offer benefits to traders, in temporary situations (replacement car) and special vehicle permits to access the town centre. This offers complete flexibility and value for money to the resident/user.

- 3.6 An example of such a virtual visitor scheme is in place at Slough Borough Council. Slough currently offer an allowance of 720 hours to purchase over a 12 month period. All vouchers are sold in slots of 5 (for example you would pay £2.50 and receive 5 x 3 hour vouchers):

5x3 hours - £2.50  
5x6 hours - £5.00  
5x12 hours - £7.50  
5x24 hours - £15.00.

There is no expiry date to these vouchers.

720 hours per household per year is the maximum a resident can buy. Adults over 60 receive a 50% discount - proof of age will need to be provided.

- 3.7 Subject to Policy Committee approving the recommendations in this report, officers will commence a detailed review of virtual visitor permit systems including benchmarking with other Local Authorities with a virtual scheme in place, such as Slough Borough Council. As a part of the review, members of Traffic Management Sub-Committee will be invited to take part in a demonstration of such a scheme and how it would work in Reading. The member briefing will take place after the summer holidays and officers will prepare a report detailing the outcome of the review for Traffic Management Sub-Committee to consider at the November 2019 meeting.

- 3.8 The review would include information on how the transition to a system of virtual permits, initially within a trial zone, could take place and it would also investigate digital options once virtual permits are in operation that will enable residents to check a registration number so if a vehicle is illegally parked the information is electronically passed to enforcement officers.

### 3.9 Delivery of new Residents Parking Schemes

The following table shows the new residents' parking schemes delivered since March 2017 and new schemes pending delivery or being developed for delivery.

#### Resident Permit Parking - Delivery Since March 2017

Scheme	Approx. Addresses affected	Notes
Warwick Road & Cintra Avenue	95	Implemented. Involved informal and formal consultation.
Little Johns Lane area (Battle)	600	Implemented. Involved informal and formal consultation.
Harrow Court	40	Implemented. Involved informal (at outset and design stages) and formal consultation.
St Stephens Close/The Willows	115	Implemented. Involved informal (at outset and design stages) and formal consultation.
<b>Total</b>	<b>850</b>	
East Reading Area Study	1460	Involved formation of steering group (still meeting regularly), informal consultation (at outset and design stages, with public drop-in sessions) and 2 formal consultations. Decision made to split delivery. Area 1 (approx. 1460 addresses) <b>to be delivered over Summer 2019.</b>
	630	Area 2 (approx. 630 addresses) Subject to residents feedback following the introduction of area 1, (in the context of parking displacement) a further report will be submitted to TMSC in November 2019 seeking approval to implement. <b>Delivery target 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2020 (calendar year).</b>
Lower Caversham	900	Involved informal consultation (at outset and design stages, with public drop-in session) and formal consultation. Results of consultation being reported to June 2019 Traffic Management Sub-Committee (TMSC), where a decision to implement is hoped. Work can then begin on sealing the TRO, detailed signing design,

		<p>preparing back-office systems, instructing contractors and communicating with affected residents.</p> <p>Detailed design of the scheme is underway to prepare for contractor delivery. <b>Scheme is currently planned to be complete by end of 2019.</b></p>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2990</b>	
Charndon Close, Collis Street and Rowley Road area (Katesgrove)	TBC	<p>This area received an initial TMSC priority, following those schemes above. This scheme will likely involve consideration of a number of streets, spread out across an area that contains some elements of existing RPP. <b>Officers will prepare a concept scheme design, and will seek authority to proceed with the informal consultation at TMSC in September 2019.</b></p>
Grovelands Road and Beecham Road area (Norcot)	TBC	<p>This area received an initial TMSC priority, following those schemes above. <b>Officers will prepare a concept scheme design, and will seek authority to proceed with the informal consultation at TMSC in September 2019</b></p>
<p>TMSC prioritisation of remaining schemes on list. List last updated at March 2019 TMSC as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Granville Road</li> <li>&gt; St Giles Close</li> <li>&gt; Portway Close</li> <li>&gt; Kentwood Hill</li> <li>&gt; Hexham Road estate</li> <li>&gt; Shilling Close area</li> <li>&gt; Coley Avenue (South) area</li> </ul> <p>It is highly probable that these would be considered as wider area schemes, incorporating more streets than the entry on the list.</p>	TBC	<p>The remaining schemes on the list have not yet been given a delivery priority by TMSC.</p> <p><b>The list will be updated and reported to TMSC at their meeting in September 2019. An opportunity will be provided for Members to prioritise development of the remaining requests.</b></p> <p><b>Once the schemes are prioritised at TMSC in September 2019, officers will develop a programme and share with members.</b></p>

- 3.10 Progression of these schemes is reliant on a transparent informal and formal (Statutory) consultation where the majority of homeowners on a street are in favour of a scheme. Typically, taking into consideration approval of schemes through Committee, consultations, reporting of objections through Committee and scheme delivery, it will take between 18 to 24 months to introduce a new scheme.
- 3.11 Officers are currently focussed on delivery of the new residents' parking schemes in East Reading and Lower Caversham with completion expected by the end of the 19/20 financial year - in order to meet the savings identified in the medium term financial strategy.
- 3.12 To improve the speed of delivery of new residents' parking schemes, the Network Management Team have recently increased resources. The team have also engaged support from external consultants to progress initial scheme concept design work.
- 3.13 With the focus on delivery, additional income derived from the new RP areas is on track to secure £100k of additional income in 19/20 and £200k in 20/21 also as set out in the MTFS.

#### 4. Increasing Residents Parking permit charges

- 4.1 At Policy Committee and Council in February 2018 and February 2019, the Council approved a review of the current charges for residents and visitor parking permits. This review is reflected within the Council's current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 4.2 In order for the Council to improve the current scheme for Residents and their visitors, the following revised charges are proposed to be introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and consist of:-

Permit Type	Current Charge	Proposed Charge
Business	£275.00	No Change
Business Discretionary	£330.00	No Change
Charity (free)	£0.00	No Change
Charity (charged)	£120.00	No Change
Carer	£0.00	No Change
Doctor	£30.00	£40.00
Health Care Professional	£30.00	£40.00
Resident Discretionary (1st permit)	£30.00	£40.00
Resident Discretionary (2nd permit)	£120.00	£150.00
Resident Discretionary (3rd Permit)	£240.00	£300.00
Resident - First Permits	£30.00	£40.00



Resident - Second Permits	£120.00	£150.00
Non-UK Registered Vehicle Permits	£330.00	No Change
Teacher	£30.00	£40.00
Landlord - Annual	£330.00	No Change
Tradesperson - Annual	£330.00	No Change
Tradesperson/Landlord - Daily	£10.00	No Change
Temporary Permits	£15.00	No Change
Visitor Books - Free	£0.00	No Change
Visitor Books - Charged	£22.00	£25.00
Visitor Business	£22.00	£25.00
Visitor Charity	£22.00	£25.00
Visitor Discretionary (free)	£0.00	No Change
Visitor Discretionary (charged)	£22.00	£25.00
Chester Street	£0.00	No Change
Special Vehicle Annual	£0.00	No Change
Special Vehicle Daily	£0.00	No Change

- 4.3 Separately, officers are in the process of reviewing a future charging structure based on vehicle emissions. This will be reported to a future meeting as such a change will require a further review of the whole charging structure.
- 4.4 Alongside considering the proposed new permit charges detailed in paragraph 4.1, Officers recommend future changes to charges for permits should be progressed through the Traffic Management Sub-Committee at its November meeting each year in order for recommendations from that sub-committee to be incorporated within the Council's annual fees and charges review considered at February Policy Committee each year. This will ensure consistency of reporting of all the Council's fees and charges and provide a transparent and open process.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Policy Committee is asked to note the contents of this report, and, taking into account the benchmarking of permit charges with other Local Authorities, the proposed improvements to visitor permits and enforcement, and progression of the new Residents Parking Schemes, endorse the revised charges for Residents and Visitor permits in order for the Council to further enhance the current scheme for residents and their visitors.

## **6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

6.1 The delivery of the proposals as detailed within this report will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 (refreshed Spring 2019) objectives of:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

7.1 A letter will be sent to each permit holder to inform them of the change to the current charges.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Council is not required to complete a further statutory consultation when changing fees and charges for Residents Parking Permits.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 An initial EIA scoping exercise has been undertaken and these proposals do not affect those with protected characteristics.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The current MTFP includes the proposals as detailed in this report. The proposals to extend residents parking permit areas are on track to deliver an additional £100k in 19/20 and £200k in 20/21. The revised permit charges as detailed in this report (if approved and implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019) are estimated to deliver £137,000 in 19/20 and £81,000 in 20/21. These calculations include the confirmed new schemes that are due for implementation this and next financial year. Any income is ring-fenced for reinvestment in Transport and Highways.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Policy Committee - MTFS reports - February 2018 and February 2019.