

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

RESIDENT PERMIT PARKING SCHEMES OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

Resident permit parking schemes (RPZs) may be offered to assist residents living in areas where on-street parking demand significantly exceeds supply and where it is not appropriate to manage parking problems using conventional parking restrictions.

This document supports the policy framework that governs the prioritisation, implementation and operation of RPZs in East Herts.

2. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF AN RPZ

Implementing an RPZ can bring advantage and disadvantages:

Advantages

- Discourages commuter/long term parking in residential streets
- Enhances the environment in residential areas
- Residents find on-street parking is easier and more convenient
- May engender improved traffic management
- Can deliver road safety benefits
- Encourages the use of alternative, more sustainable modes of travel
- Can reduce traffic and congestion

Disadvantages

- Possible negative effects of displaced commuter parking
- Costs of implementation and management
- Residents and their visitors have to pay to park in their street
- Permits do not absolutely guarantee a parking space
- May only help manage an under-supply of spaces, not solve underlying supply problems
- Can lead to inefficient use of on-street parking spaces

- Possibility that a RPZ may reduce availability of on-street parking, with consequent problems for visitors and businesses

Permit Scheme Design

To ensure the efficient use of available on-street parking, RPZs should only be implemented on a 'shared use' basis whereby resident permit parking is shared *on a managed basis* with non-resident motorists such as local business workers (in the form of a permit scheme) or 'casual' users parking on a virtual (e.g. pay by phone) basis.

3. INITIAL CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION OF AN RPZ

Criteria that should be met before an RPZ request can be shortlisted:

- There should be early evidence of resident and District Councillor support for an RPZ (e.g. petition, build-up of email requests or letters).
- The kerb space occupied by non-residents should be greater than 40% at times when parking problems caused by non-residents occur (survey required).
- There should be sufficient kerb space to enable a minimum of 75% of all households within the proposed scheme area to park at least one vehicle on-street (survey required).

4. FINAL CRITERIA FOR RPZ PRIORITISATION

Final criteria that will inform the order of progression of shortlisted RPZ requests:

- Availability of external funding.
- Current resourcing available to move this work forward (i.e. only 2 schemes will be processed at any one time).
- Any beneficial tie-in with other work being undertaken e.g. town centre enhancements.
- Resolves problems for emergency and utility vehicle access.
- The availability of off-street parking for non-residents in the area.
- The impact of displacing non-resident cars.
- The size of the proposed RPZ.

The final decision as to whether to progress a shortlisted RPZ to design and consultation stage and the outline terms on which that scheme should be developed will rest with the Portfolio Holder acting in consultation with the Head of Service and on the advice of the Parking Manager.

The geographical area of a proposed RPZ will be based on officer judgement, informed by considerations such as the presence of natural or man-made boundaries, requests logged, input from District Councillors and any conditions attached to external funding (where applicable).

5. CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PROTOCOL

All proposed RPZs will be subject to consultation. The process will comprise:

- Preliminary consultation with District Councillors for the affected ward(s) and wards immediately adjacent to the proposed scheme area.
- A survey of all residents and businesses within the proposed area to identify the level of concern regarding parking difficulties and to establish the level of support for an RPZ. This consultation will also be used to identify the community's outline requirements for a RPZ. The results of this questionnaire will be used to inform the development of a proposed RPZ.
- To qualify for progression to design stage, a simple majority of the total number of households in streets where a scheme is proposed (50% +1) must respond formally to this initial questionnaire and a simple majority of these respondents (50% + 1) must vote in favour of a scheme.
- Officers may re-consult in streets where the vote is tied, where residents' wishes appear unclear or where officers are aware of decisions made in nearby streets may make impact the situation elsewhere; however any decision by officers to depart from the above position must be clearly justified in relevant commissioning reports and communicated to affected residents.
- Except in the case of very small scale schemes, a second round of consultation should be by means of a public exhibition or public meeting as appropriate to the size and scale of the potential RPZ. This will allow officers to answer questions on a one to one basis and to further refine elements of the proposed scheme's design.

- The next, formal stage of the process will involve the advertisement of a Traffic Regulation Order in the local media, on-street Notices and using the Council's social media where appropriate.
- The resolution of statutory objections to a Traffic Regulation Order is a matter for officers; however in exceptional circumstances where the volume and/or type of objection is viewed by officers as significant and/or when a petition has been received that qualifies the lead petitioner to address the Council, the matter may be referred to an appropriate committee of the Council for review.
- All RPZs will be reviewed approximately six months after implementation. This review will include a survey of District Councillors, residents and businesses in and around the scheme area, following which point modifications may be made following the promotion of an Amendment Order, where these are seen as beneficial to the needs of residents and others.

6. DETAILED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

When designing an RPZ there should be a clear understanding of the parking problems in the area and the implications of the introduction of the RPZ. Accordingly, when considering the needs of the residents and determining the layout of an RPZ the following detailed points must be addressed:

- Maintaining traffic flow & visibility at junctions
- Vehicle access
- Emergency vehicle access
- Loading/unloading requirements
- Bus stops
- Needs of blue badge holders
- Limited waiting areas for local businesses
- Needs of visitors and other categories of drivers who need to park within the zone
- The mix of the area (residential/commercial).
- Safety of the public and other road users within the zone

The objective in all cases should be to maximise amenity for residents whilst taking into account the needs of the wider community.

Signage and markings are required to be in accordance with the current Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions and the relevant sections of the Department for Transport Traffic Signs Manual. Special authorisation will be obtained from the Department for Transport before any non-standard scheme is implemented. Individually marked or designated parking bays will not normally be provided.

Residents of new housing developments within established scheme areas (e.g. apartment buildings or existing buildings converted into apartments) will not automatically be considered for inclusion in that scheme where private off-street parking is included in the development. In other cases, primarily where new houses are built that do not have private off-street parking there should be a presumption towards creating on-street permit eligibility for that new address and in such circumstances the developer should be required to meet the costs of amending and advertising the relevant TRO as part of the planning process.

Private roads and roads that are not maintained at public expense will not be considered for inclusion in a resident permit parking scheme.

7. SCHEME CHARGING PRINCIPLES

Permit charges shall be determined by the Council and set at a level that recoups the implementation costs over a defined period and also meets the annual operational costs of individual RPZs.

Residents within a proposed scheme area will be given the Council's best estimate of the likely permit charge at the earliest possible stage in the consultation process. Residents will be required to signify their agreement to these charging principles before a scheme is progressed to design and formal consultation stages.

8. RPZ OPERATIONAL TERMS

Outline operational terms of a proposed RPZ will be set out at the start of the consultation process and will be refined through the process of consultation with residents, local Members and through the TRO process.

The following principles will apply:

- The number of resident permits offered per household will be based on an officer assessment of the availability of kerb space versus the number of households within the proposed scheme area.

- The quantity of visitor parking hours offered per annum will be approximately 20% of the annual operating hours of the RPZ. (For example, if a scheme operates for 10 hours a day, 6 days a week, approx. 600hrs of visitor parking time will be issued per household).
- The operational hours of a scheme will be considered on an individual basis and as a rule they will be set at the minimum necessary to secure the primary objective of that scheme whilst maximising its potential for legitimate use by other motorists.

9. SPECIAL PERMITS

To qualify for a special parking permit an organisation or individual will be required to demonstrate:

- That they are providing essential care, health or other essential community service for residents within the RPZ.
- That there is a need for them to park within the RPZ to provide that service.

A carer individual or organisation will be required to apply using the Council's online permit management system. If their application meets the Council's criteria they will be granted permits. The Council may require additional, supporting documentation in support of an application.

10. REVIEW OF AN RPZ

Review of Schemes

The Council will review resident satisfaction with a newly introduced RPZ approximately six months after implementation. This review will also canvass the views of residents, affected Councillors and others from a wider area outside the scheme's boundary, to ensure its full effects are understood. Where beneficial, the scheme may then be modified as per the process set out in Section 6 of this document (Consultation and Implementation Protocol).

11. REMOVAL OF AN RPZ

Significant evidence of local support for the removal of an RPZ will be managed in the same manner as the process set out in Section 6 of this document (Consultation and Implementation Protocol).