

Division(s): Abingdon East; Henley-on-Thames

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 2 MARCH 2017**

### **PROPOSED REVISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITORS PARKING IN RESIDENTS PARKING ZONES IN ABINGDON AND HENLEY**

#### **Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery**

#### **Introduction**

1. This report presents objections and comments received in the course of the statutory consultation on proposals to introduce new arrangements for the issuing of visitor parking permits in Abingdon and Henley-on-Thames within the residents parking zones in these towns.

#### **Background**

2. New Pay and Display parking machines are due to be installed in Abingdon and Henley in spring 2017 to replace the current obsolete machines. The new machines will not support the current arrangements for issuing parking tickets for visitors in the residents parking zones, and it is therefore proposed to issue Visitors Parking Permits using 'scratchcards', as successfully used in Oxford for many years.

Under the proposals, any person who normally resides at an eligible address within the zones and who is at least 17 years of age and provides proof of residency may apply for Visitors' Parking Permits. Permits are only for use by guests visiting a resident at the application address. At the start of each year, each eligible resident would be entitled to 25 days' worth of Visitors' Parking Permits free of charge. A second set of 25 may then be applied for during the second six month period but these would be charged at a rate of £20 (for the set). Residents aged 70 or over would not be charged for the second set.

Both town councils – who manage the current residents parking zone arrangements on behalf of the County Council - were consulted informally on the above proposals in the autumn of 2016 and expressed no objection.

#### **Consultation**

3. These proposals require an amendment to the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders for the residents parking zones in both towns, and accordingly, a formal consultation was carried out between 5 January and 3 February 2017, comprising the publishing of a notice in the local newspapers, the provision of street notices, and letters being sent to premises within the zones. The local members, and the respective Town and District councils, together with the

police and other statutory consultees were also consulted. A dedicated page was also added to the County's online consultation portal to allow people to view and respond to the proposals.

4. Four responses were received, including one objection.
5. Thames Valley Police expressed no objection to the proposals.
6. Abingdon Town Council expressed no objection to the proposals, but noted that residents of Christ's Hospital were not entitled to permits and requested consideration that a review should be carried out into this specific matter.
7. One objection was received from a resident of Abingdon, on the grounds that the proposed eligibility for visitors parking permits was too generous, and that premises with multiple eligible residents would lead to excessive demand for the limited number of parking spaces available. This objection also expressed strong concerns that the annual fee for residents parking permits in Abingdon was being increased from £100 to £120, and that this fee was considerably higher than applied in Henley.
8. One letter was received from a resident of Abingdon expressing concern that the new arrangements for visitors would lead to an appreciable increase in their costs for parking, and also expressed a concern over the increase in the annual fee for a residents parking permit.

### **Response to objections and concerns**

9. Thames Valley Police's comments are noted.
10. The response of Abingdon Town Council is noted, and officers will review with the town council the eligibility for permits for residents of Christ's Hospital, although it should be stressed that this change is not directly related to the proposals as advertised.
11. The objection that the proposed eligibility for visitor's permits is too generous is noted, and it is accepted that the demand for parking spaces within the residents parking zones is often high. However, the proposals aim to balance – through the restriction in the number of visitor permits which any eligible resident may apply for each year – the demand for parking spaces against the provision of adequate opportunities for resident's friends and family etc. to park without undue difficulty or cost.
12. The increase in fee for the residents parking permits, and the difference between the fees applying in Abingdon and Henley is not material to the proposals as advertised, having been approved in 2015.
13. The concern of the Abingdon resident over the increased cost for visitors parking appears to be due to a misunderstanding that the new visitor permits would limit the time a visitor's vehicle could wait to a maximum of 2 hours (i.e.

the same permitted time as for a vehicle without a resident or visitor permit displayed), rather than the 24 hours permitted under the current arrangements. The new scratchcard permit will however apply for the whole of the date that is shown on the card and will not require a vehicle to be moved after two hours. The scratchcard may also be transferred by the resident to other vehicles visiting on that date.

### **How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives**

14. The proposals are required to enable the introduction of new pay and display parking machines to replace obsolete equipment, thereby maintaining the effective management of on-street waiting in the residents parking zones.

### **Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)**

15. Funding for the proposal is being provided as part of the project to replace the Pay & Display machines; the appraisal of the proposals and consultation has been undertaken by Communities officers as part of their normal duties.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

16. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the implementation of proposals as advertised,**

DIRECTOR FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

February 2017

Background papers:            Consultation responses

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