

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2014

CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration Community and Culture

Author: Andy McGrath, Assistant Director, Frontline Services

Summary

This report updates the Committee on a Members' meeting to discuss the size and operation of Medway's controlled parking zones.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 This paper provides a report on the discussion and subsequent actions arising from a meeting of representatives from the Regeneration Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee together with Ward Councillors from Chatham Central and River Wards held on 30 October 2013.
- 1.2 The control of on street parking is contained within the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Regeneration Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee heard a petition referral from residents of the New Road area in Chatham on 11 April 2013. This referral complained about the allocation of parking permits for New Road, Chatham; specifically about residents of a property called Carton House who benefit from being able to apply for residents' parking permits to allow on street parking, even though Carton House itself has a number of parking bays within its boundaries. Similar concerns were expressed concerning the parking arrangements for the Probation Office in New Road.
- 2.2 The Director's comments submitted in response to the petition, as set out in the report, indicated that the arrangements for New Road (as it lies on a ward boundary) had been changed in 2008 and New Road was incorporated into the Chatham Central Zone (Council's C area) for both sides of the road. The comments indicated that the address of Carton House is 137 New Road and that any property within the area are entitled to apply for residents or business permits, as appropriate. The comments further indicated that although it would not apply retrospectively, that using the planning process for new developments would enable the impact of new properties on parking in

controlled areas to be carefully considered. Effectively, it could be appropriate to exclude properties with significant areas for off street parking from the ability to apply for on street parking permits.

- 2.3 At the meeting, the Lead Petitioner also identified that spaces were often used in the evenings by people attending Krystals nightclub and therefore the petitioners requested an extension to the time restrictions beyond 10pm
- 2.4 Members also commented that the size of controlled parking zones was an issue. This was because it encouraged residents to drive from the outer parts of zones to park close to areas in the same zones, such as train stations.
- 2.5 Following their consideration, the Committee noted the petition responses and the officer action as set out in the report. The Committee also asked for a meeting with Members of Chatham Central and River Wards and officers to give detailed consideration to parking permit zones and to report back to this Committee.
- 2.6 A meeting between Members and Officers took place on 30 October 2013 to discuss the issues. Prior to the meeting, one of the Members for River Ward had provided a list of vehicle registration numbers and locations where there was some suspicion that the vehicles were not owned by residents in the immediate area. Council Officers checked that information and could find no examples where the vehicles were parking a significant distance from the address associated with the vehicle.
- 2.7 There were discussions around
- The operation of business and visitors permits
 - Whether the Council should limit the number of business or residents parking permits per property in the future
 - The rationale for the introduction of controlled parking zones, accepting that they are there to balance the needs of residents for on street parking against parking to access High Streets and railway stations etc
 - What is the tipping point where changes in an area would trigger a review of a controlled parking zone
 - Officers were also asked to look at the vehicles parking on street near to Chatham Railway Station and New Road.
- 2.8 At the meeting Officers accepted that there was no rationale for areas to be based on a Ward in the future. Consideration should be given to the effect that a zone was expected to achieve, allowing for the dispersal effect of excess parking demands into surrounding areas. However it would be wrong to make significant changes to parking arrangements that either reduced parking capacity or affected the geographic area of the zone (e.g. dividing into smaller areas) without consultation of existing businesses and residents in the zone. Officers also made the point that the Council was not conducting wide area reviews unless there was a 3rd party source of funding such as S106 contributions to cover the costs of design, consultation and implementation.
- 2.9 Parking Services carried out a series of checks on the use of residents' parking permits on morning of 5 November 2013. The checks covered residents' on street parking in New Road, Rochester Street, Ordnance Street,

Albany Terrace, Charles Street. Fort Pitt Street and Boundary Road in order to assess if there was evidence of people using residents' parking permits for the controlled parking zone but using cars registered to addresses a long way away from where the vehicle was parked. In relation to New Road, the survey showed that all the permits were registered back to addresses in New Road with the exception of two vehicles registered to addresses in High Street Chatham and King Street Chatham. A further two vehicles were registered to addressees which are closer to the Railway Station than New Road. At the time of inspection, there were no daily voucher permits on display. In addition the permit for one vehicle was registered to an address in Carton House.

- 2.10 The checks on the other areas showed vehicles being parked within a reasonable distance of the registered addresses of the vehicles in question, given that the parking arrangements work on a zone basis.
- 2.11 It is accepted that this provides a single snap shot of the use of residents' parking in the area. It was, however, timed to see if commuters were using the facility to park and there was no evidence this was the case.
- 2.12 Taking the above advice into account, Officers reaffirmed the action to consult on extending the residents parking hours of operation in New Road to minimise the impact of the night club located in New Road. Officers also suggested that they could seek agreement to reduce the hours of charged for parking in the Upper Mount car park, which is located in Old Road close to the junction with New Road. The suggestion was that this could provide free parking in the late afternoon and evening and at weekends. The proposal was based on the combination of the proximity to Chatham High Street, the Railway Station and a night club putting pressure on on-street parking in the immediate area, even though the survey did not indicate that there was a significant problem with the use of residents' parking permits from elsewhere in the zone.
- 2.13 As a result the Council's Traffic Management Team was asked to arrange a consultation exercise. Officers from the Traffic Management Team hand delivered **180** questionnaires to residents and businesses of New Road (from junction with Star Hill to junction with Old Road).
- 2.14 The consultation resulted in **25 (14%)**, responses: of these;
- **16 (9%)** were in support of the scheme to operate All day (24/7).
 - **5 (3%)** were in support of the scheme Mon – Sunday; 8am – 12 mid night.
 - **4 (2%)** did not indicate support to the scheme.

	Mon – Sun (8am – 12midnight)	All day (Operational 24hrs)	Other
Results	5 (3%)	16 (9%)	4 (2%)

- 2.15 This response rate is low and indicates that only 12% of residents want change.

3. Options

- 3.1 That the committee notes the report.
- 3.2 That Officers take into account the views expressed, as set out in section 2 of the report, on the size, design and operation of future controlled parking zones.
- 3.3 That Officers are asked to take parking issues in controlled parking zones into account in the consideration of planning applications in relation to residential properties with significant off street parking associated with them.

4. Risk Management

4.1

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
No risks exist aside from insufficient parking spaces for residents	Insufficient parking spaces for residents	Possible use of on street car park at night time Consultation undertaken regarding possible on street parking changes

5. Financial and Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.
- 5.2 The control of on street parking is contained in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and The Traffic Management Act 2004. It should however be borne in mind that whilst the Council tries to achieve best balance between all road users and residents, the purpose of the Highway is to allow traffic to pass and re-pass, parking on the Highway is a concession.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are recommended to note the report and request that the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture explore the potential implementation of the options outlines at 3.2 and 3.3 of the report.

Lead officer contact

Andy McGrath, Assistant Director, Frontline Services
Andy.mcgrath@medway.gov.uk, Tel: 01634 333163

Background papers

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee *Petitions* 11 April 2013
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=19487>