

Residents Parking Zone Policy

Criteria, Process, Eligibility and Enforcement



Policy details

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DRAFT

Introduction

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, acting as the local highway authority, possesses a variety of powers and responsibilities under which it maintains and enhances the highway network. This policy offers a framework for considering the introduction or expansion of Resident Parking Zones (RPZs) in a transparent and consistent manner across the Borough, especially in light of the growing pressure on the highway network due to the increase in motor vehicle ownership.

This policy serves as a guideline for those submitting requests, outlining the criteria that potential RPZ should meet before they are considered for further investigation. It ensures that all proposals are evaluated fairly and effectively, contributing to the overall improvement of our transportation infrastructure.

What is a Residents Parking Zone?

Resident Parking Zones (RPZs) prioritise residents over other motorists by providing designated parking bays for permit holders. While it doesn't guarantee a space outside one's home, it manages on-street parking effectively, discouraging shopper or commuter parking and encouraging the use of off-street facilities.

There is no legal right to park on the highway, nor do residents have an entitlement to park on the street in front of their property and instances of limited parking may occur in residential areas near town centres, hospitals, and railway stations is common.

Process

Whilst an RPZ must meet our approved criteria, and whilst they may provide a better opportunity for residents to park near their homes, it is important to be aware of the implications of a residents parking zone from the outset.

Advantages of a zone:

- Gives priority to residents to park in a particular area during specified times.
- Vehicles parking in designated bays in an orderly manner.
- Improved road safety due to reducing the number of vehicles parking in an obstructive or unsafe manner.
- Encourage the use of alternative modes of transport through limited on-street parking.
- Improved air quality through more efficient traffic movement and fewer vehicles.

Disadvantages of a zone:

- No guarantee of a parking space even with a valid permit and you still may not be able to park directly outside of your property.
- Reduced number of vehicular spaces once parking bays are marked out in accordance with requisite standards.
- A permit is issued at a cost to the applicant for parking, permits are not free.

- May not solve the problem when there are more resident or visitor vehicles than road capacity, especially at night.
- The introduction of a scheme may create or worsen parking problems in adjacent areas or inhibit commercial and non-residential activities in the area.
- Additional street furniture including road signs and road markings will be required for enforcement of the scheme.
- Cost of introduction and management.

Any scheme implemented would need to be the most effective way of addressing the existing parking issue and be designed to balance the needs of the area so, for example, a commuter parking issue may need a different approach to an area where issues are mainly associated with hospital parking.

The legal process

An RPZ is implemented by a Traffic Regulation Order using the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Residents and businesses within a proposed scheme and interested parties such as a Business Forums in addition to local Ward Councillors and Town /Parish Council are consulted and given opportunity to feedback their views. Traffic Regulation Orders are processed in accordance with statutory procedures and advertised as required by the “Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales)) Regulations 1989” as amended. This includes observing an objection period for a minimum 21 days during which representations to the proposed Order may be made and considered in accordance with the Council’s constitution. Legislation does not allow for a residents parking scheme to be introduced on a temporary or experimental basis.

Designated parking bays are marked out (at a minimum of 1.80 metres wide) on the road and generally designated for use by permit holders only, although in some RPZ’s bays are dual use and have limited waiting or Pay & Display controls also in place, the times of operation and any other applicable parking controls in effect are displayed on upright signs at required intervals.

These signs and markings are required for enforcement of the scheme and cannot be omitted. Traffic signs and road markings are prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2016 and Traffic Signs Manual.

Where road width does not allow for parking bays to be marked on both sides of the road, one side may be provided with yellow lines to prohibit parking, to ensure parking is not simply displaced to the other side of the road.

Where can a zone be introduced?

For newer developments, consideration of parking and car ownership levels should be considered at the Planning application stage, reducing the need for resident parking zones.

Requests for individual roads may be considered only in exceptional circumstances, such as a significant road safety problem, or unique situations to the area, but not arising from an individual household. Other options to address the issue on an individual road will be investigated first.

Eligibility criteria

The Council will investigate requests to provide new RPZ upon request from a residents group or association, a community group or stakeholder association. Prior to an investigation, all requests must be able to demonstrate the following:

- High demand for on-street parking due to factors like nearby parking charges.
- Availability of alternative parking such as off-street car parks.
- Limited or no off-street parking for residents, resulting in at least half of the properties in an area relying on on-street parking.
- Difficulty for residents to find a parking space near their homes that is not caused by neighbours, other residents, or visitors.
- Parking issues that are not related to school traffic or high use areas such as leisure facilities and parks.
- Parking issues that are not temporary due to construction works or enforcement of existing restrictions.
- A proposed area that consists of clearly defined streets to prevent parking displacement to surrounding streets.
- Affected roads must be adopted highway.
- Evidence of support in principle from local Ward Councillors

Investigation

If all of the above criteria are satisfied, the Council would progress an investigation to include:

- Formal parking survey to determine:
 - The on-street capacity and demand, considering both traffic and pedestrian needs.
 - Extent and source of non-resident parking in the area.
 - If there is sufficient on-street capacity to accommodate capacity demands
- Officer survey to determine minimum carriageway widths as follows:
 - A minimum of 3.25 metres between bays marked on both sides or between outer edge of bay and kerb line for bays marked on one side only.
 - A minimum of 5.05 metres for marked bays on one side only or 6.85 metres for marked bays on both sides.
- Support from the Civic Enforcement Team, including Parish Council or Business Improvement District where appropriate.
- Support from two thirds of respondents supporting the proposed scheme in the consultation.

A scheme will not be progressed if it fails to meet the specified criteria.

Funding for residents parking zones

The implementation of an RPZ may require a parking survey to be carried out, consultation with properties within the proposed scheme as well as the Traffic Regulation Order statutory consultation and associated signing and lining. There are also ongoing costs associated with

administration of the permits, enforcement of the final scheme and maintenance of the signs and road markings to ensure it continues to be effective.

Funding can be from core Council transport budgets where there is a demonstrable road safety or highway network benefit or via Ward Transport Budget if it is a priority for elected Members or by securing planning agreements if there is a need for a scheme because of new development in the area.

Any RPZ must be self-financing with the costs of permits covering the ongoing costs of administration and enforcement. This will be reviewed within 18 months of the implementation of an RPZ and periodically following that.

Permits

Permits must be renewed annually, and it is the responsibility of the permit holder to ensure applications and renewals are submitted in a timely manner and that the information provided is up to date. Paper permits where applicable should be displayed in the vehicle windscreen. Permits are issued for cars or other passenger vehicles with seating for not more than 8 people and goods vehicles under 1.5 tons.

The types of permits eligible to park within the residents permit zone may include:

Residents Permit

To reduce the demand for parking, we must limit the number of parking permits to three per property. Residents of properties within the RPZ can apply for a permit to park in the designated bays during the hours of operation. If residents do not need this option, they do not need a permit. The permits are linked to the vehicle registration and the eligible properties are listed on the Council's website. Applicants must also provide the following documents:

- For hire and lease vehicles: the agreement from the company that shows the applicant's name and other evidence as listed on the Council's website.
- For company vehicles: a letter from the company Secretary/Director on headed paper that states that the vehicle on the V5 is used solely by the applicant and other evidence as listed on the Council's website.

The V5 document must show that the property is the applicant's main place of residence.

Blue Badge holders are currently exempt from the residents parking bay restrictions providing a valid badge is correctly displayed and may also park on single or double yellow lines for up to 3 hours in places where it would not cause an obstruction or danger to other road users.

Visitors Permit

Residents can buy visitor permits for their guests to park in the residents permit bays. Applicants need to show proof of address, such as a utility bill. Each property can have one visitor permit, or two if they have no resident permits. This applies to all zones except those areas that may have unique circumstances.

Business Permit

Businesses within an RPZ can buy business parking permits for vehicles that are needed for frequent business operations. The permit is only valid when the vehicle is being used to carry out works and is intended to facilitate the essential operations of a business, such as deliveries and client visits, not to provide cheaper parking for employees.

Applicants need to provide the vehicle details and proof that it is used for business purposes, such as a letter from the company Secretary, Director or another authorised person on business headed paper.

All-zone Permit

An all-zone permit will be issued to people whose work requires multiple visits within resident parking zones on a regular basis such as health care visitors, social workers, and carers.

The application must be formally supported by a letter from the company Secretary, Director or person with suitable authority stating that the vehicle which the permit applies to is used for the purpose intended and not for an entitlement to park outside a place of work within or near to a residents parking zone.

Only an 'All Zone' permit is transferrable between other residents parking schemes.

Permit Costs

There is an annual cost per permit of £10 for residents, visitors and all zone permits, and £50 for business permits. Business Permits are charged a higher fee than Residents Permits to help manage parking on-street parking demand and encourage the use of off-street parking or sustainable transport models.

If a paper permit is lost, destroyed, or stolen a duplicate can be issued and the original permit can be cancelled. An administration charge of £10 applies; if the permit is stolen and a crime number can be produced the fee will be waived. If a paper permit becomes faded or defaced, it should be handed in at a Customer Service Centre for a free replacement to be issued.

The cost of permits should cover administration and enforcement of the scheme and therefore may incur incremental increases to ensure the scheme is self-funding.

Electric Vehicles

All Electric Vehicle's (EV) will require a permit to park within an RPZ. It is not permitted to run cables from an EV charge point across the pavement to a vehicle parked within an RPZ.

Enforcement

Following Decriminalised Parking Enforcement powers delegated to Stockton Borough Council in 2004, enforcement of residents permit parking zones is undertaken by the Council's Civic Enforcement Team using permit management software for virtual permits if available, or by visually inspecting windscreens for a permit to identify whether a vehicle is eligible to be parked. Penalty Charge Notices will be issued to vehicles parked in contravention of parking controls within a zone and that applies to both the inspection of permits and compliance with yellow line restrictions or limited waiting restrictions.

These notices can vary in value. The initial penalty charge is either £70 or £50 depending upon the contravention, but an early payment discount of 50% is available if paid within 14 days. If it is left unpaid and action is required by the Council (to include obtaining registered keeper details, sending further notices out) it can increase by 50%. Any unpaid notice is passed to the Council's Enforcement Agents who are permitted to add on their costs. A right of appeal does exist at various stages, even on the day the notice is issued. This process applies to both the inspection of permits and the compliance with yellow line restrictions.

Enforcement is evidence led to ensure that it assists with the delivery of the Council's wider objectives. Streets receiving the highest number of visits are those where contraventions have the greatest impact on road safety, and severely affect free-flowing traffic conditions and motorists are most likely to require assistance to find parking opportunities and avoid potential penalties.

The Council reserves the right to revoke permits in situations where misuse is suspected including, but not restricted to; tampering with a permit, no longer meeting the eligibility criteria for a permit, or supplying a permit to others who are not eligible.

Monitoring and review

Following the introduction of a new Resident Parking Zone, the scheme will be evaluated between 6-18 months from the date of implementation based on the following criteria:

- Officer surveys to assess the impact of the scheme on traffic flow and parking availability.
- Financial analysis to determine the cost and revenue of the scheme.
- Resident and Ward Councillor consultation.

Any further amendments could then be consolidated into a single package of improvements based upon evaluation results.