



# Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Report of: Environment and Economic  
Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny  
Panel

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2005  
**OPEN REPORT**

## Decriminalisation of On Street Parking

### 1. Background

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005, it was agreed to invite the Environment and Economic Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel to carry out a review of the Decriminalisation of On Street Parking prior to the Council considering the budget implementation. The purpose of the review would be to consider the available options. (Minute CAB.54 28/07/05 refers).
- 1.2 At the Panel's meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005, the Panel considered a briefing note and partially completed scoping form from the Operational Services Manager, and the following matters were noted.
- a) Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils had already opted to decriminalise on-street car parking; and discussions between the District Council and Wychavon District Council to share services had already commenced.
  - b) The Council's Forward Plan requires the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services to present to the Cabinet a report on the proposed cost of provision of this new service. The Cabinet is scheduled to consider this matter at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2005.
  - c) The options are to maintain the status-quo, or a dedicated workforce dealing with on and off street parking enforcement or a multi-tasking workforce to deal with this, plus other minor enforcement actions such as the dropping of litter.
  - d) The Council had previously engaged consultants to advise on the cost and practicalities of decriminalising On-Street Car Parking within Wyre

Forest. Colin Buchanan and Partners were engaged to report on these matters. They compiled a report in June 2005, and Members were reminded that the Study was available for viewing on the Council's intranet/internet websites.

- e) In view of the short timescale in reporting back to the Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2005, it was agreed that a meeting of the Panel be convened for 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005 to which relevant stakeholders, including members of the public, would be invited to present views and evidence. It was also agreed that an additional meeting of the Panel be held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2005 where the Panel's draft report and recommendations would be considered. These two in-depth meetings would ensure a thorough scrutiny review was undertaken in the allotted time.
- f) The Panel agreed its terms of reference as reviewing the various options prior to the Council considering the budget implications.

## **2. Summary of Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005**

At the Panel's meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005, the Group met with the following stakeholders.

- Andy Walford, Highways Partnership Manager, Worcester City Council/ Worcestershire County Council
- Tim Deakin, Wychavon District Council
- Christine Hyden, Wychavon District Council
- Councillor Terry Spencer, Executive Board Member for Environment, Wychavon District Council
- Derek Fradgley, Stourport Business Association and Stourport Forward
- Councillor Mrs E Davies, Mayor of Bewdley
- Councillor Michael Freeman, Mayor of Stourport-on-Severn
- Ian Connolly, Traffic Management Assistant, West Mercia Police
- Peter Picken - Chairman - Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership/Stourport Forward

Mr Arthur Lynch (member of the public from Bewdley)  
Mr Richard Brine (member of the public from Bewdley)

Opportunity Bewdley were unable to attend but sent a letter with their comments.

The notes from the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005 are summarised as follows.

## **2.1 Worcester City Council Comments**

- a) The officer from Worcester City Council advised that a Decriminalisation policy had been in place for some time. The decision to decriminalise stemmed from several issues including congestion caused by motorists parking in unsuitable places and the Police being unwilling or unable to enforce.
- b) The company that acted as consultants recommended a higher level of staff than was finally appointed. They currently have 3 back office employees and 11 Parking attendants.
- c) The Council started a 'drip feed' process over a 12 month period in order to educate local residents and to encourage good relationships between the police, the Council and local residents. Liaison with the local media ensured that members of the public were kept fully informed with the Council's proposal to decriminalise.
- d) During the first month of operation, warning notices were placed on vehicles warning that the Council had introduced Decriminalisation and would be prosecuting offenders in the future.
- e) Parking Attendants (PAs) wear reflective jackets and give a very visible presence.
- f) There has generally been a positive feedback from residents.
- g) He pointed out that a good compliance record actually means that the income that funds, inter alia the PAs reduces and that this should be borne in mind when considering how many Pas to employ.

## **2.2 Wychavon District Council**

- a) Wychavon District Council serves a more rural district than Worcester City Council, with 3 large towns.
- b) The PAs target the main town areas but also attend outlying areas as a deterrent.
- c) Again, the consultants recommended high level of staff, but the Council appointed fewer PAs. They currently employ 10 PAs, including two officers on temporary contracts.
- d) The education process is ongoing, and surprisingly repeat offenders are still being issued with tickets.
- e) They pointed out the administrative demands in connection with the huge amount of correspondence generated, including from

Members who could be demanding where they have a particular hotspot in their ward.

- f) They have a 7 day operation until 7pm but are flexible if there are particular problems in the evenings.

### **2.2.1 Debt Recovery**

Following a request from Members, Wychavon District Council's officers explained the process of debt recovery.

Following decriminalisation, recovery would no longer be via the Criminal courts. Enforcement would be a paper driven process through Civil Recovery Procedures including via certificated bailiffs. There would be a requirement for an adjudication and appeals service which initially would be done at a local level but ultimately by appeal to the National Parking Adjudication Service..

At Wychavon District Council, there are few mitigating circumstances and all cases are considered on an individual basis. Members were informed that 30% of all cases were challenged, and of these, only 12% were successfully appealed against.

Both Councils have agreed grounds for appeal in addition to the 6 statutory grounds and encourage all authorities in the County to have the same grounds to prevent one authority being "played off" against another as part of the appeals process.

### **2.2.2 Staffing Issues**

The officers advised the Group that a great deal of correspondence had been generated by the introduction of Decriminalisation, and that the peak of work is likely to be in the few months after the new operation has started, when the new systems are under their greatest strain and staff are least familiar with how to deal with the workload. Crucial to the new system is a dedicated I.T. System to process the high volume of correspondence.

Members are asked to note that the I.T. System would need to deal with inter alia; credit card payments, cheques wrongly completed, bounced cheques, refunds processed, DVLA requests, manual VQ5's received, notice to owners sent, notice to owners returned undelivered, charge certificates sent, returned and delivered, debt registration sent, returned and delivered, statutory declarations made, bailiff warrants issued, warrants unable to be executed, representations received, meter checks made, TRO/Site visits, suspension details checked, pocket books checked, map checks made, appeals received, appeals refused, appeals not contested, cancellations, etc.

A High degree of automation is essential for efficient enforcement and collections.

In Wychavon and Worcester, PAs just deal with parking issues, not others such as littering penalties which tend to be more confrontational. PAs should be able to concentrate on the parking enforcement.

**2.3 Councillor Terry Spencer, Executive Board Member for Environment, Wychavon District Council**

- a) Councillor Spencer gave very positive feedback from Members' point of view. As the Cabinet Member he had been involved from the start of the Decriminalisation process.
- b) He admitted that he had been full of trepidation to start with but was pleased to report that Decriminalisation process had proved very successful, with an improvement after just 2 months of introducing the initiative.
- c) His view was that since the introduction of Decriminalisation, residents rarely abused the Disabled parking displays or risked parking outside shops in the area, thus allowing a free flow of traffic in areas that used to get targeted by motorists.
- d) Retailers had been positive about the introduction of Decriminalisation, because cars did not take valuable space in front of their shops over a prolonged period, thus creating a turnover of shoppers. Positive feedback had also been received from members of the public.
- e) However, he admitted that Hot Spots were targeted on a regular basis, and Members were surprised to learn that the same people tended to re-offend.
- f) There was generally much better liaison with the Police, who supported the initiative and released them to carry out other duties.
- g) With regard to a query concerning parents parking outside schools, Councillor Spencer felt that this was a national problem. He did not feel that PAs could adequately target parents waiting in cars because they would drive off and return later. Instead he suggested working with the County Council on introducing initiatives such as 'zig zag' lines.
- h) He did feel that the Council needed to consider Decriminalisation as a traffic management tool, not a money generator.
- i) Generally speaking, Councillor Spencer felt that the introduction of Decriminalisation had proved very effective in the Wychavon area.

#### **2.4 Ian Connolly, Traffic Management Assistant, West Mercia Police**

- a) PC Connolly advised that West Mercia Police and Worcestershire County Council are encouraging all Districts within Worcestershire to consider taking on board the Decriminalisation of On Street Car Parking. Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council have already Decriminalised their off street parking.
- b) He concurred with the views of the officers from Wychavon District Council and Worcester City Council that Enforcement of Traffic Orders in relation to On Street Car Parking was not a key priority for West Mercia Police. This leads to inadequate resources being made available to fully enforce the current Road Traffic Orders and parking provisions, particularly within town centres.
- c) Regarding Parking Attendants "Multi Tasking"; whilst the Police recognised the potential benefits of this, their view was that the PAs should focus primarily on Parking Enforcement. Other tasks would detract from the primary focus of parking enforcement and dilute any benefits of Decriminalisation.
- d) Information provided by West Mercia Police indicates that there is a high incidence of either the Road Traffic Orders, road marking or signage relating to this provision being inadequate which leads to difficulties with enforcement. These inadequacies would have to be reviewed and rectified prior to Decriminalisation being confirmed and transferred to the relevant District Council.
- e) Regarding the situation with the current Traffic Wardens employed by West Mercia Police, PC Connolly advised that as part of the consultation process WMP agreed that it would be in favour of the Traffic Wardens being transferred under TUPE. However, he would need to clarify whether there would be any TUPE implications in Wyre Forest or whether wardens would be offered a transfer to other functions.
- f) Enforcement of Access Only Orders would remain a Police responsibility due to this being classed as a moving traffic offence.

#### **2.5 Derek Fradgley, Stourport Business Association and Stourport Forward**

Mr Fradgley advised the Group that he was fully supportive of Decriminalisation particularly in view of the significant problems in the Town Centre.

#### **2.6 Councillor Mrs E Davies, Mayor of Bewdley**

Mrs Davies referred to the problems with regard to people parking in unsuitable areas such outside shops and in the narrow roads adjacent to

the High Street, due to the lack of appropriate parking in the town. She felt that the problem was getting worse, and there was a real problem with policing. She supported Decriminalisation in principle, but was concerned about the financial issues falling to the tax payer. She believed that there needed to be a strong element of education for residents in Bewdley, one of whom seemed to believe that they could park anywhere in the Town.

Mrs Davies expressed doubt at whether a dual role with litter enforcement would work. She said that there was concern amongst traders who thought it may put people off visiting the Town.

## **2.7 Councillor Michael Freeman, Mayor of Stourport-on-Severn**

Councillor Freeman agreed that he was happy to support Decriminalisation based on the other evidence that had been given. He particularly felt that Stourport High Street and York Street would be good places to introduce the initiative.

## **2.8 Members of the Public**

Two members of the public from Bewdley had attended the meeting and were pleased to see that the Mayor of Bewdley had taken the time to attend and give her views, which they concurred with. One of the attendees lived in Riverside South in Bewdley and he felt that there were a number of issues that could be addressed by the introduction of Decriminalisation, such as the enforcement of bikers as well as car drivers. They approved the presence of PAs wearing fluorescent jackets.

## **2.9 Peter Picken - Chairman - Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership**

- a) Peter Picken advised the Group that in principle the Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership supported the introduction of Decriminalisation. He raised a concern relating to the original consultant's report and the issue of staffing levels. The original consultant's report had suggested 16 additional staff, 11 of these being Patrol Officers. Mr Picken felt that further investigation needed to be undertaken before this was agreed.
- b) He also didn't think that clearways should be included in the calculation as it gave a false impression. The officer from Worcester City advised that clearways was an important part, even if it only needed occasional attendance by PAs. They had recently had an occasion where there was a car boot sale in a field and visitors had parked all along the clearway.

## **2.10 Opportunity Bewdley/Transport Steering Group of Opportunity Bewdley**

A letter received from Opportunity Bewdley was circulated to the Group for their consideration and their comments are summarised below.

- a) In areas of the town centre, non-badge holders use designated disabled spaces and people parking illegally frequently block no parking zones and bus stops.
- b) On-street parking time limits are rarely enforced.
- c) On Severnside South cars are now parking in an area designated as civic space.
- d) In Severnside North motorbikes are frequently parked in a 'no parking' zone, particularly at weekends.
- e) A residents' time limited short stay free parking disc would be worth considering.

Generally the organisation expressed support to the enforcing of current parking restrictions, and would be supporting of Decriminalisation, should it prove a workable mechanism.

#### **2.11 The Operational Services Manager's comments and responses:**

The Operational Services Manager gave his views on Decriminalisation.

- a) He advised Members that the secretary of state did not support partial decriminalisation. If a particular geographical area was identified then this would include all non-moving traffic offences.
- b) With regard to a query about how long the system would take to get up and running, Mr Burgess responded that officers would have to work with Map Traffic Road Orders, Worcestershire County Council and Secretary of State, and the Council would therefore be looking at Spring 2007 before Decriminalisation was introduced.
- c) The Council had received advice that they should allow approximately 18 months lead in period before Decriminalisation was introduced. If on-street parking was introduced, however, it was felt that this could potentially be reduced to something more like 14 months as a minimum. Depending on the decision of the Cabinet it was likely that Decriminalisation of on-street parking in Wyre Forest could be introduced by Spring 2007.
- d) With regard to the issue of staffing levels the original consultant's report had suggested 16 additional staff, 11 of these being Patrol Officers. Further investigation had suggested it was likely that the number of Patrol Officers could be reduced to 8, with 2 of these being appointed on the basis of a short term fixed contract. This would allow the Council to review progress and consider the number of parking tickets being issued by each Patrol Officer. Officers were concerned that as enforcement activity is increased



the number of offences may reduce requiring the need for fewer patrol officers.

- e) The Cabinet will be asked to consider the number of staff to be employed as part of a financial model, yet to be presented to Cabinet.
- f) It was anticipated that the On Street Parking Patrol officers would merge into the existing Street Scene section which currently manages the Council's car parks and off-street enforcement, together with street cleansing.
- g) The Operational Services Manager mentioned about the opportunity of using leaflets in Council officers and reception points to further promote Decriminalisation, and posting 'Frequently Asked Questions' on the Council's internet site. A selection of questions is appended at Appendix 1 of this briefing note.

### **3. Conclusion**

Members admitted that they felt reassured on the number of personnel to be employed and the financial implications, having heard all of the evidence presented. It was also acknowledged that some Members felt that through the consultation exercise, the disadvantages of parking patrol officer undertaking additional duties such as litter enforcement had been highlighted.

### **4. Recommendations**

#### **It is recommended that:**

- 4.1 A dedicated team of On Street Parking Supervisors is established for the decriminalisation of On Street Parking and Off street parking enforcement who would also have the power (but not the primary function) to exercise enforcement powers in respect of littering, dog fouling, fly posting, graffiti, sales of cars on the highways and other related environmental protection and enforcement matters.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Panel agrees, in principle, with moving towards the Decriminalisation of on-street parking. The Panel recognises the potential advantages of working in partnership with other authorities such as Wychavon District Council to help administer the scheme.
- 4.3 The Panel note the need to employ additional staff and recommend that a staffing level of approximately 8 additional patrol officers (2 of whom would be on temporary contracts) would be prudent in the first instance rather than the 11, as suggested in the consultant's report. This would be on the

basis of the experiences of other Councils who have employed fewer patrol officers than originally recommended by their consultants.

## **9. Background Papers**

- Wyre Forest DPE Feasibility Study Final Report from Colin Buchanan and Partners.
- Cabinet report , 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005

## **10. Appendices**

- **Appendix 1** : Frequently Asked Questions from other Local Authorities

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **DECRIMINALISATION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

**Basildon District Council**  
Car Park Operations  
Barleylands Depot  
Barleylands Road, Billericay  
Essex, CM11 2UF

Telephone: 01268 294970

#### **Q: What has happened?**

A: Prior to 1st April 2003 the responsibility for enforcing waiting and loading restrictions in Basildon was the job of traffic wardens employed by Essex Police. Any driver who parked illegally (such as on a double yellow line) was issued a parking ticket. If this was not paid, the debt was pursued through the criminal court.

Essex County Council has been granted, by central government, the power to allow Basildon District Council to enforce waiting and loading restrictions since 1st April 2003. Maldon District Council also be joined us on that date and Harlow District Council adopted these powers on 1st October 2003.

Any driver who contravenes restrictions in Basildon from 1st April 2003 onwards will be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). If this is not paid, the debt will be pursued through civil rather than magistrates courts i.e. it is 'decriminalised'.

#### **Q: Why the change?**

A: As the Police Force has many other responsibilities, parking enforcement has a lower priority than crime fighting and other traffic offences. With the local authority taking on the enforcement of waiting and loading restrictions, local councillors will have the opportunity to provide enforcement to meet local needs.

#### **Q: Can I now park where I like?**

A: No. The increased amount of enforcement means that you are much more likely to be caught if you park illegally.

#### **Q: How much does a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) cost?**

A: £60, which is reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days.

**Q: How do I avoid getting a PCN?**

A: Don't park illegally. Look out for the lines and signs when you park. These will tell you about any restrictions. ECC has a website ([www.essexcc.gov.uk](http://www.essexcc.gov.uk)) with useful information about parking and the Highway Code explains what the signs and lines mean.

**Q: What do I do if I get a PCN?**

A: The details of what to do will be shown on the PCN. The local authority that issued the ticket will be able to advise further if you have any problems.

**Q: What happens if I dispute the PCN?**

A: Full instructions on what to do will appear on the ticket: you should at least write to the authority issuing the ticket explaining your reasons. If you do not agree with their reply, they will advise you how to take your complaint further.

**Q: Are the new Parking Attendants different from the old Traffic Wardens?**

A: Although parking attendants will look similar to traffic wardens, they will be employed by the local authority, not the Police.

**Q: Will Parking Attendants have targets to meet and issue PCNs to everyone just to achieve them?**

A: No, there will not be a target of the number of tickets that a parking attendant must issue. They are salaried staff and have undergone comprehensive training to achieve nationally recognised standards of competence.

**Q: Why are local authorities, rather than the County Council, going to enforce?**

A: Most local authorities already enforce parking in their car parks and some also enforce Residents' parking and other 'On-Street' restrictions. They are therefore best placed to expand their existing operation, having the expertise and equipment to do so. Decriminalisation will also allow local councillors to decide what waiting and loading restrictions are required in response to community needs, and so provide the appropriate enforcement activity.

The county council will support its local authorities both technically and financially as required to ensure that the most efficient and cost effective service is delivered to the public. The enforcement will be in accordance with the policy and practice requirements determined by Essex County Council.

**Q: What are the benefits to me?**

A: Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) will:

- Keep Essex Moving. Main roads will be kept clear of illegally parked vehicles. Bus lanes, taxi ranks, disabled bays, junctions and school entrances will also be targeted, thereby improving safety and easing congestion.
- Support local Businesses. Areas of short-term parking such as outside local shops will receive more attention. As drivers will no longer be able to park illegally for longer periods it will be easier to find a space when you need it. This will also benefit local traders.
- Support Town Centre needs. Commuters and other drivers requiring long stay parking will be encouraged to use appropriate long stay car parks, freeing town centre short stay spaces and residents zones' for drivers who need them.
- Increase Parking for residents. Residents currently paying for permits to park near their home will continue to benefit from local authority enforcement. The Parking Attendants will also be able to take action about cars that are parked on adjacent yellow lines. It is possible that more permit zones may be introduced in response to community needs to deter commuter parking.
- Increase Blue Badge benefits. Increased enforcement of parking spaces for disabled drivers will improve availability for Blue Badge holders.

**Q: Is this another 'stealth' tax?**

A: No. Though more drivers may have to pay to park, the income from enforcement will come only from drivers who park illegally - their 'voluntary payment' if you like! There are strict regulations on how the income can be spent.

**Q: What will happen to any profits?**

A: Local authorities are not profit making organisations. They are there to provide a service to the local community. Some authorities will generate a surplus both from drivers who park illegally and those who pay to park. Any surplus will be used by the authority to improve traffic conditions and must be spent in accordance with legislation.

**Q: Why aren't there more car parks?**

A: Drivers may not always get a space in the car park of their choice. However, all local authorities have additional space available at alternative car parks. The integrated management of both off-street and on- street parking helps to identify where more spaces are required.

**Q: Why don't commuters benefit?**

A: They do. Commuters continue to pay to park as before, but will find that using the main routes through the town will be easier. Also, in time, surpluses may be spent on initiatives to help commuters such as Park & Ride.

**Q: Will these changes mean local businesses suffer?**

A: No. Areas of short-term parking such as outside local shops will receive more attention. As drivers will no longer be able to park illegally for longer periods it will be easier to find a space when you need it. This will also benefit local traders.

**Q: What will happen to Residents' Permit Parking schemes?**

A: Nothing, they will remain as they are. The local authority controls these and you should apply for a permit in the usual way through the car parks office. Residents currently paying for permits to park near their home will continue to benefit from Local Authority enforcement and it is possible that more permit zones may be introduced, in response to community needs to deter commuter parking.

**Q: How will this affect Care Workers employed by Social Services?**

A: Care Workers who need to visit clients as part of their job may be eligible for a special permit. They should ask their employer to contact the relevant Borough or District Council Parking Office for details.

**Ipswich Borough Council**

Civic Centre  
Civic Drive  
Ipswich  
IP1 2EE

Telephone: 01473 432000

**Q. Will Parking Regulations be changing under DPE?**

A. No, the regulations are remaining the same, the only change is in who enforces them.

**Q. Why do parking controls exist?**

A. Most people would like to use their cars when they want to, park close to their destination and have a space outside their homes on return.

There is, however, too much demand for this type of use and just not enough space on the roads and in parking facilities to allow this to happen.

To many people, cars are the source of accidents; cars littering streets have a negative impact on the environment of residential streets; and traffic trapped in congestion causes severe pollution.

Consequently, the Council has adopted policies to control the use and the parking of cars throughout the town while still accommodating access to all the attractions of the town and residential properties.

**Q. Why are things changing?**

A. The Council has a duty to manage the streets for the benefit of users and residents. Consequently controls and restrictions are introduced for reasons of safety, traffic flow, environment and ease of access.

The controls and restrictions require resources for enforcement so that the objectives of the controls can be achieved. The Police have not been able to provide the increased resources as restrictions have increased in number and size.

Recent legislation has encouraged local authorities to take on the responsibility for enforcement so that the transportation objectives can be achieved.

From 1 October 2005, one body, the Borough Council, will be accountable with responsibility for both the introduction of controls and restrictions and their enforcement.

**Q. Do other areas have similar arrangements?**

A. Many towns and cities nation-wide have adopted the powers, including the whole of London. Locally, Norwich, Cambridge, Peterborough and all authorities in Essex are already established as decriminalised parking enforcement areas.

**Q. Where are you introducing DPE?**

A. DPE covers most roads and car parks within the borough of Ipswich and operates within a 'Special Parking Area' (SPA). In Ipswich, this will cover the entire town except for the A14, which is covered by the police; the Park & Ride sites are outside the Borough boundary.

Enforcement could be carried out on any day and at any time that a waiting or parking restriction is in force. In practice enforcement will usually be carried out within normal working hours and days with the frequency of patrols adjusted for different areas of the borough to meet local demands. Enforcement outside of these hours will be carried out in response to specific needs and demands subject to economic considerations.

**Q. When do the new arrangements start?**

A. DPE starts on October 1, 2005.

From this date the Police will cease to have any powers to enforce yellow lines and other parking restrictions. All enforcement will be carried out by and on behalf of the Council.

The changes apply to all of the streets in the town. The parking controls and restrictions which applied in the streets will not change but we have taken a tougher line on enforcing them.

Parking Attendants issue Penalty Charge Notices to those cars contravening the on-street parking regulations. The same team also cover pay and display parking facilities both on street and in car parks.

The Penalty Charge is £60. The charge is reduced to £30 if payment is made within 14 days and increased to £90 if payment is not received within two months.

The Council has enforced the parking controls and restrictions rigorously from day one for everyone's benefit and will continue to do so.

The new team of recognisable Parking Attendants will enforce the restrictions. Priority is given to areas where illegal parking causes the worst problems. Their patrols also include council-operated car parks.

Illegally parked vehicles cause congestion and slow down other road users. They also create inconvenience for everyone, including legitimate parkers, delivery vehicles, the emergency services, and bus users.



Road markings such as yellow lines, loading bays, bus stops and resident's zones, indicate that some sort of restriction applies. Notices nearby will always explain what the restriction is. If in doubt check the notice. You are responsible for making sure that your vehicle is legally parked and not causing an obstruction. If you are parked legally, you will not get a parking ticket.

**Q. If parking is now decriminalised, does this mean I can park where I like?**

A. No! Although parking offences have been decriminalised, other powers have been given to local authorities to allow them to enforce parking restrictions. The increased level of enforcement under DPE means that you are much more likely to receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) if you contravene the regulations both on-street and in car parks.

**Q. What are the benefits of DPE?**

A. Local parking enforcement will keep Ipswich moving, reduce dangerous and inconsiderate parking, discourage parking in bus lanes, assist loading and unloading, improve conditions in resident parking areas and reduce abuse of blue badge holders parking bays.

**Q. What are the roles of Councils – who's doing what?**

A. The County Council has applied for the powers to undertake DPE. The County and Borough Councils have agreed that the Borough Council will undertake enforcement as agents to the County Council by providing parking attendants. Following guidelines issued by the councils, Parking Attendants will be responsible for issuing Penalty Charge Notices (parking tickets) to people who ignore parking restrictions and park inappropriately.

**Q. Why is Ipswich Borough Council, rather than the County Council, going to enforce?**

A. Ipswich Borough Council already enforces parking in car parks and the Residents' parking zones. Because we have an existing team, we are best placed to expand the existing operation, having the expertise and equipment to do so. Decriminalisation will also allow local councillors to decide what waiting and loading restrictions are required in response to community needs, and so provide the appropriate enforcement activity.

The county council will support Ipswich Borough Council both technically and financially as required to ensure that the most efficient and cost effective service is delivered to the public.

The enforcement will be in accordance with the policy and practice requirements determined by Suffolk County Council.

**Q. Where does the money go?**

A. Local authorities are not profit making organisations. They are there to provide a service to the local community. It is a requirement of Central Government that

DPE must be a self-financing scheme. By law, income from the payment of Penalty Charge Notices is received by the Council and primarily used to fund reasonable costs of enforcement.

There are strict regulations on how the income can be spent. After the costs of enforcement have been paid, we will continue to invest any surplus funds for the provision and maintenance of on and off-street parking facilities. Thereafter, the Council may consider support to public transport initiatives.

Surplus money cannot be added to the general Council funds. Any surplus will be used by the authority to improve traffic conditions and must be spent in accordance with legislation.

**Q. How much is it costing to set up the scheme?**

A. Provision has been made in the annual budget for this so the costs are covered by the normal operating expenditure of the Council. As mentioned before, the system is required by law to be self-financing once it has been set up.

**Q. How will the Parking Attendants differ from Traffic Wardens?**

A. Parking Attendants will look similar to Traffic Wardens but the Borough Council, rather than the police employs them. Parking Attendants will issue a different type of parking ticket called a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) rather than the Fixed Penalty Notices issued by Traffic Wardens.

**Q. Will the police be responsible for any parking enforcement?**

A. The Police will not be responsible for enforcing any permanent waiting, loading or parking restrictions. They will still enforce some temporary waiting restrictions such as areas marked with “police no waiting” cones, at special events, e.g. football matches etc.

The enforcement of moving vehicle offences and those Parking offences that carry penalty points will remain the responsibility of the police. In addition they will continue to issue parking tickets for temporary waiting restrictions (shown by kerb side waiting restriction cones).

The Police will continue to issue parking tickets for parking on pedestrian crossing zig-zags as this offence also carries penalty points.

Keeping footways clear where there are no parking restrictions will remain the responsibility of the Police.

The Police will also continue to deal with obstruction and all moving traffic offences and can take action against any vehicle where security or other traffic policing issues are involved.

**Q. Will the issuing of tickets be down to the discretion of Parking Attendants?**

A. All Parking Attendants will be required to follow the enforcement policy guidelines issued by the County Council. There is no set target for the number of parking tickets to be issued. They will be issued as and when required.

Parking Attendants will not have targets and will not be paid any bonuses for issuing a higher number of tickets. All parking attendants will undergo comprehensive training to achieve nationally recognised standards of competence.

**Q. How do I avoid getting a PCN?**

A. Motorists who don't contravene parking regulations will be unaffected by DPE. Look out for the lines, signs and notices when you park. These will tell you about any restrictions or charges in force. The Highway Code will help explain what the signs and lines mean.

**Q. Will vehicles that are parked irresponsibly be clamped or towed away?**

A. There is no intention at the moment to introduce tow away or clamping, but this is an option which could be considered in the future.. However, the police still have powers to remove a vehicle under certain conditions.

**Q. Will DPE make parking easier?**

A. It will improve parking by ensuring that parking bays are not abused and that any time limits on the length of stay are observed. This will give more opportunities for parking as more spaces are available. Ensuring that inappropriate parking does not block roads and cause congestion will make it easier for everyone to reach car parks and parking bays.

**Q. Do you expect more people to use car parks?**

A. It is expected that improved parking enforcement will encourage more drivers to use car parks or pay and display parking on street.

**Q. I am a blue badge holder, how will the changes affect me?**

A. The blue badge scheme will continue to operate as before when parking on-street. If you park in accordance with the Blue Badge scheme you will not receive a PCN. A booklet is supplied with every blue badge giving details of correct usage.

Within the Council car parks all blue badge users should check the tariff boards as regulations vary from car park to car park.

**Q. Will there be any increase in the number of blue badge holder parking bays?**

A. There are no plans to increase the number of blue badge holder parking bays as part of the introduction of DPE. The provision of blue badge holder parking is reviewed whenever changes are made to parking controls in the town. The blue badge holder parking spaces that currently exist will be more effectively monitored and enforced to ensure that only blue badge holders use them.

**Q. Will this stop any abuse of Blue Badges?**

A. Parking Attendants can report incidents back to the County Council for further action if they believe a blue badge is being used inappropriately. If you feel there is a persistent misuse of a blue badge you too can report it to Social Services. However, Parking Attendants can issue parking tickets to any vehicles parked inappropriately in blue badge holder parking bays.

**Q. I am a medical professional and sometimes have to park on yellow lines to make urgent calls, will I receive a PCN?**

A. We will continue to operate the Certificate of Identification scheme currently available in Resident Parking areas. Provided you comply with the scheme rules you should not get a PCN. Dispensation notices may also be available upon application to the parking office, although a small admin fee will be payable.

**Q. Will residential areas have an expectation of more robust enforcement?**

A. Residents parking schemes will be enforced to a level designed to minimise inappropriate parking. Enforcement levels will be reviewed and adjusted periodically.

**Q. How will it affect Residents' Permit Holders?**

A. There will be no change – the areas will be enforced as required.

You can apply for a permit in the usual way through Ipswich Parking Service, using your original Council Tax Bill as proof of residency.

**Q. Does my Residents Permit entitle me to park outside my own property?**

A. Public streets are for the passage of people and traffic and no one has a right to park on any specific part of the highway.

Technically, parking is an obstruction of the highway unless the Council makes provision for parking by introducing parking bays. Conditions may be applied to the parking bays, e.g. time limit, payment, permit holders only, goods vehicles only, etc.

What the Council cannot do is to reserve the area outside specific properties for the owners of the property. This would give private rights over what is a public

asset and would be unfair in respect of those properties where adjacent parking places cannot be provided.

**Q. How will it affect businesses if passers by can't stop to make a quick purchase?**

A. Our primary aim is to keep traffic moving and avoid parking that causes unnecessary congestion and delay.

Areas of short-term parking such as outside local shops will receive better enforcement. As drivers will no longer be able to park for longer than permitted it will be easier to find a space when you need it. It should also be easier for businesses to load and unload.

Parking spaces are provided near businesses where practical. If parking restrictions are considered to be too onerous they can be reviewed.

**Q. Can I park on a single yellow line to pick up a newspaper or buy a sandwich?**

A. No, unless outside of the times of the regulations in force, these will be shown on signs indicating the times of operation near to the kerbside. Parking for even short periods within these times is not permitted and you could be issued with a PCN.

**Q. What happens if a person parks in a restricted area to grab fast food or a video?**

A. They risk receiving a parking ticket. Buying takeaway food or selecting a video is not a legitimate reason to park on yellow lines. Some sections of the main road network have restrictions that prohibit drivers from stopping except to allow passengers to get into and out of vehicles. If drivers park on these sections of road during the peak periods they also risk receiving a parking ticket.

**Q. Why don't commuters benefit?**

A. They do. Commuters continue to pay to park as before, but will find that using the main routes through the town will be easier. Also, in time, surpluses may be spent on initiatives to help commuters such as Park & Ride.

How will this help avoid footways being blocked by parked vehicles that cause problems for those with disabilities, the elderly and parents with prams and buggies?

Under DPE vehicles parked inconsiderately on footways alongside roads with yellow lines will be issued parking tickets. Keeping footways clear where there are no parking restrictions will remain the responsibility of the police.

**Q. Can I get a permit to park on the yellow lines outside my house or business?**

A. No. There is no permit scheme that allows parking on yellow lines, however in some cases you may park for sufficient time as is necessary to load or unload goods.

**Q. Can I get a permit to park on yellow lines whilst carrying out building works etc?**

A. In certain circumstances a waiver can be issued for specified day/s or time/s to allow for certain activities such as building works or removals etc.

Details of the application form and costs can be obtained from the Parking Office.

**Q. Will I receive a PCN for parking on the pavement or verge?**

A. You can receive a PCN if you park partly or wholly on a pavement or verge that is adjacent to yellow lines. If you park a HGV on a pavement or verge you may receive a PCN even if no yellow lines exist. Parking on footways obstructs the way for pedestrians and causes damage to the surface and equipment underneath.

**Q. Can a PCN be issued to a vehicle parked across or obstructing my driveway?**

A. No, unless yellow lines or other parking restrictions are also in force. The Police will retain responsibility for dealing with these matters of obstruction.

**Q. If I receive a PCN will I get penalty points on my driving licence?**

A. No. Penalty points are received for certain driving offences dealt with by the Police under criminal law.

**Q. Why is the price of parking (the tariff) so costly?**

A. We aim to set the tariff to be in line with towns and cities in the region where similar facilities are available.

**Q. I have a "disabled badge" and all the "free" spaces are full. Do I have to pay the normal tariff?**

A. It depends - check the tariff board carefully. In Off-Street car parks, you must purchase a ticket if you wish to park in one of the standard bays because only the dedicated reserved bays are free of charge for "disabled badge" holders and then only when visibly displaying the badge and clock.

**Q. Can I buy a Season Ticket for your car parks?**

A. Yes. We sell Season Tickets for some of our larger car parks, at a discount, saving you money. Please see the "Season Tickets" Page for prices and details of the locations for which Season Tickets are available.

**Q. Can I get a refund on a Season Ticket or Resident Parking Permit?**

A. Yes, but we will deduct a fee to cover our administration from the amount you can reclaim. You can reclaim to the nearest unused complete quarter on Residents Permits, and the nearest unused complete week on Season Tickets.

**Resident Parking Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q.I live in a Resident Parking Zone. Can I get a second permit?**

A.No. There is a strict limit on one permit per household. This is because of the limited amount of physical space in each street.

**Q.How can I get residents parking extended to my street?**

A.Ask your neighbours to see if there is a consensus. Then write a letter to the Transport & Engineering Department.

**Q.In the Residents Parking Scheme am I limited to parking in my street?**

A.No. If there's not a space in your street, then you are able to park in adjacent streets (provided there are Resident Parking boxes) as long as they are in the same zone as your street. Please see Resident Parking Zones page for further streets.

**Q.I got booked for parking in a limited waiting area, yet my permit was on display.**

A.You must be parked in a resident parking box to make use of the permit. Check the signs adjacent to the boxes carefully. Please see the "Parking Signs" Page to see different signs, and which boxes/bays you may use.