



Petitions Panel

11 January 2019

1. Background to the Petition Scheme

- 1.1 The County Council's Petitions Scheme was adopted on 29 April 2010 and came into effect on 15 June 2010. The Scheme was subsequently updated by the County Council on 21 July 2016 and 15 February 2018.
- 1.2 If a petition is supported by 50 or more signatories then it will be dealt with by a small customer focussed panel. If a petition is supported by 4,250 or more signatories it will be scheduled for a debate at the next meeting of the full County Council.

2. Petition – Review of Permit Allocations Policy (for Weymouth Park District)

- 2.1 The County Council received a petition organised by The Park Community Centre on 29th October 2018. This reads as follows:

The residents of the Park Area who hold parking permits believe that the existing residents' permit policy is out of date and not fit for purpose in 2018.

There is an imbalance between the availability of spaces and the number of eligible permit applicants.

The Park Centre organises a questionnaire on this issue and called at every house in the areas, collecting signed returns from 163 residents and 5 returns online.

Between the months of June, July, August and September, many residents do not go out after 5pm and weekends as there is additional pressure on available spaces from holiday-makers and family visitors. Parking after this time is only available in non-permitted areas away from homes and necessitates a long walk back home, often with bags, buggies etc. Older residents, disabled residents, young families and people employed during non-social hours including many hospital workers are particularly affected by this problem. They are unable to park in the permitted areas they pay for.

This obviously impacts upon social life and many reported that they feel trapped throughout the summer and many weekends. People who have lived here for many years talk of wanting to move after years of loving the area.

Issues frequently discussed on the doorstep

- * More cars parking in the area originating from sea front hotels and guest houses
- * Insufficient numbers of Parking Enforcement Officers.
- * Multi occupancy flats taking the place of B and B's and increasing the number of cars requiring parking spaces.
- * MiPermit. Unavailable by phone on weekends. Difficulty obtaining refunds for pre-booked visitor permits and no parking places on arrival.
- * Use of car parks for permit holders free of charge if no roadside spaces available.
- * One hour wait. Discussed but a majority of residents felt it was a necessity.
- * Permits restricted to two per household.

We therefore request a Policy Review to look at:

- * Seafront hotels to incorporate use of the Park and Ride scheme. Permits only allocated to visitors unable to access this scheme.*
- * B and B's to incorporate use of the Park and Ride scheme. Permits only allocated to visitors unable to access this scheme.*
- * Parking Enforcement Officers. To enable better coverage, could residential parking officers and car park officers in the same area, work together and deploy numbers more effectively.*
- * MiPermit is working to the outdated 2012 policy. A review needed to include better telephone services.*
- * Permits restricted to two per household.*
- * Visitor parking to be restricted*
- * The one hour waiting rule to be abolished*
- * Better use made of overnight parking in main car parks.*

We appreciate the new Unitary authority is most likely to take over this matter but a policy review on car parking in our area is an issue of real concern to the residents.

- 2.2 As this petition contains more than 50 signatures, the Panel are invited to note and discuss this.
- 2.3 This discussion should conclude with a decision as to how to respond to the petition. This may include one or more of the following:
- taking the action requested in the petition
 - considering the petition at a council meeting
 - holding an inquiry into the matter
 - undertaking research into the matter
 - holding a public meeting
 - holding a consultation
 - referring the petition for consideration by the council's Audit and Governance Committee
 - calling a referendum
 - writing to the petition organiser setting out the Panel's views about the request in the petition.
- 2.4 Alternatively, the Panel may determine a combination of the options above, or decide on another course of action as appropriate.

3. Context

- 3.1 The County Council's Parking Service Team have the responsibility for managing the parking enforcement in the Park Area of Weymouth, the back-office legal procedure for Penalty Charge Notice appeals, and liaising closely with the external agency (MiPermit) who administer the applications for resident permits.
- 3.2 A Resident Permit costs £70 per annum with pro-rotta reductions for a six-month permit.
- 3.3 The residents' permit policy to which the Parking Service Team currently work was written in 2012 by the Weymouth and Portland Borough Council and covers the whole of the Weymouth Town Centre area which have resident parking areas. **Appendix A**
- 3.4 Under the 2012 policy, there are no restrictions on the number of permits per household unless the property as a private parking space or garage, but a restriction of a maximum of 100 visitor permits per annum.

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- 3.5 The Park Area is predominantly two or three story terraced houses with no frontal private parking areas.
- 3.6 Within the policy there are some restrictions on bed and breakfast, hotel accommodations which fall within the area depending on the number of bedrooms in each property.
- 3.7 The existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is the legal mandate which governs the parking restrictions in the area, and currently has a permitted one-hour wait (no return within one hour) restriction for any visitors to the area and sits alongside the Residents Permits.
- 3.8 The one-hour wait in the area undoubtedly adds to the strain on the already over-subscribed parking space availability.
- 3.9 The existing TRO is in place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 3.10 At the request of the Park Community Centre Forum, the Parking Services team undertook some audit work during May 2018 to try and gauge the volume of potential permits currently in circulation, against the number of possible parking spaces available in the Park Area.

The key findings from the audit undertaken during the last fortnight of May 2018 were:

- In the Park District Area (Zones A, B and C), there were 593 resident permits, 156 hotel/guest house permits, 34 business permits and an average of 30 visitor permits per day in circulation. Total 832 permits.
- The audit counted approximately 625 available on-street parking spaces for these zones.
- There are 916 buildings in the area

Zone	Resident Permits	Hotel/Guest House Permits	Business Permits	All Permits	Spaces Available	Number of Buildings
A&C	525	147	26	698	526	704
B	87	9	8	104	99	212
A& C Visitor's permit/day	30	0	N/A	30	N/A	N/A
Total	642	156	34	832	625	916

- There are a ratio of 1.33 permits per space, or 33% more permits than spaces
- Upon several visits to the area at different times of the day, around 17% of the vehicles observed were making us of the unlimited waiting times (45 vehicles using the 1 hour free parking, and 17 vehicles displaying a blue badge)

3.11 Although the above figures are only a snap-shot from a fixed period of time, the figures are indicative of both the perception of the residents, and the evidence from Civil Enforcement Officers when enforcing in the area.

3.12 The strain on parking is particular felt during the summer months and Easter period when the Town enjoys an increase of tourists and visitors to the area.

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- 3.13 The tensions caused by the imbalance of parking demand and availability prompt regular and repeated complaints to the Council by residents living in the district.
- 3.14 Whilst there is no realistic scope of increasing the availability of parking spaces for residents there is scope to try and manage the demand with a review of the existing policy although it is recognised that this could lead to a displacement of vehicles which would need to be accommodated elsewhere.
- 3.15 I believe that the 2012 Policy is out of date and has not kept pace with the changing demographic of the area (increased number of flats and houses of multiple occupation), and the undeniable fact that there are more vehicles per household than ever before.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Panel is invited to note the receipt of this petition and decide how to respond to it.

Officer Contact

Name: Paul Hutton

Tel: 01305 221812

Email: p.hutton@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Director's name Matthew Piles

Service Director for Environment, Infrastructure and Economy

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Appendices

A Permit Allocations Policy