

Potential Residents' Parking Scheme for the Heaton part of Ouseburn Ward

Q: Why is a residents' parking scheme being proposed?

A: Your local councillors have received many complaints over the years about the amount of parking congestion in the Heaton part of the ward. The pressure of increased car ownership, and multi-occupancy houses, has clearly played a big role in this. Also, the pressure of some large developments has led to commuters parking in parts of Heaton and Sandyford, and walking to the city centre.

Recently a new office-block development was approved for Portland Road, west of the City Stadium on the site of the demolished garages. This might make the problem worse, if commuters from outside the area park in Heaton and walk to the new offices. A residents' parking scheme would help to prevent this taking place, and it was a good opportunity to require the developers to provide one.

Q: Where would be covered by a residents' parking scheme?

A: It is proposed that all streets east of the City Stadium, as far as Heaton Park Road, will be covered initially. This will include the streets north of Warwick St. The new offices have a 'Green Travel Plan' which will be monitored by the Council. If the aims of the Green Travel Plan are not met, then the Council may ask for the zone to be extended as far east as Heaton Road in future.

Q: How does a residents' parking scheme work?

A: Residents in the zone apply for a permit for their own car(s), plus one visitor permit per household if they wish. The permits are displayed in the car's windscreen. Parking wardens patrol the zone, and any vehicle which does not have a permit will receive a fine.

Q: Why is there a charge for residents' parking permits?

A: There is currently a small charge of £20 per year for each permit, plus £10 per year for a visitor permit. This covers two things: the administration of the permits, and the paying of the parking wardens who enforce the scheme. £20 per year works out at 5p per day.

Q: I already pay my Council Tax. Why should I pay £20 more?

A: Residents' parking zones are not a legal requirement for the Council, and involve us in costs for administration and enforcement. Therefore we have to charge to cover our costs. But there is good news. As part of the agreement described above, **the Council have required the office-block developers to pay the first 10 years' fee for all residents in the new zone.**

Q: Will a residents' parking zone guarantee me a parking place outside my door?

A: No. No-one has the right to park in any particular place on the public highway. And a residents' parking scheme does not guarantee that a space will be available at any location. What it does is give you a much better chance of getting a parking place, by preventing commuter-parkers from outside the area from clogging local streets.

Q: Can you give me an example of how this might benefit the area?

A: One example is around the Depot on Newington Road, where there are many commuters who park in the nearby streets. At the eastern end of Cardigan Terrace and Stannington Avenue, there is considerable 'nuisance parking' by people visiting local leisure attractions. While there might be a small number of dedicated parking bays for shops, both of these problems should be tackled by the scheme (though the latter only if the zone were extended; see above). Elsewhere, the residents' parking zones in High Heaton are popular because they have been very successful in eliminating the commuter-parking from the major DSS complex, which used to plague nearby streets.

Q: How many permits is each household allowed? Will a residents' parking scheme tackle the 5-car households in the area?

A: Currently there is no limit to the number of permits issued, to bona-fide residents in the zone. However, the Council recognises that this is becoming less appropriate, and is proposing to reduce this to 3 cars per household. There is also a proposal that the second and third permits in each household should have an increased fee.

Q: Why haven't I heard about this before? How can I have my say?

A: The office-block planning permission was only granted in December 2007. There will be a formal consultation on the initial zone (from City Stadium to Heaton Park Road) in the coming months. Look out for your letter! Residents will be able to give their views on the proposed parking zone, whether for or against.

Q: What happens if a majority oppose a residents' parking zone?

A: Then it will be very unlikely to go ahead.

Q: If it does not go ahead, but increased commuter parking does then start happening, what next?

A: The opportunity for a residents' parking zone may have been lost, although there is a chance that it could still be installed at a later date.

You can send your views on the proposals, to the address below – but please sure to also respond to the official consultation which comes round.

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Consulting you – all year round!