

West Bletchley Resident Parking Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General

1. Why are you doing this?

We are undertaking this informal public consultation in response to resident complaints about parking nuisance in their areas. We want to understand how big a problem it is for residents, and if it is a problem, we want to explain the options that could help to address it.

Option 1 – Resident Parking Zone

2. Can a Resident Parking Zone give priority for parking spaces to residents' vehicles over vehicles coming in from outside?

Yes, a Resident Parking Zone involving Resident Permits is the only way we can do this. In order for City Council Parking Officers to know if a vehicle belongs to a resident or not, there must be a Resident Parking Zone in place with a list of number plates with valid resident permits.

3. How does a Resident Permit Zone work?

Residents apply for a parking permit for their vehicle and the vehicle's registration number is added to a database of 'permitted vehicles'. Our parking officers will check the registration numbers of vehicles parked in the zone during the restricted hours against the 'permitted vehicles' list using hand-held devices and any external vehicles not belonging to residents will be issued with a penalty charge notice (PCN), more commonly known as a parking ticket.

4. At what times and on what days would the resident only restrictions apply?

This is for residents to decide, based on the level of inconvenience experienced. They could apply for a short time during the middle of the day (say 12.00-14.00) to prevent all day (commuter) parking, or all day (say 08.00-18.00) if residents wish to eliminate any external vehicles from parking during the day, even for short periods. If the results from this consultation favour this option, then we will engage about the times that restrictions will apply later, in the next stage of the process.

5. How much does a Resident Parking Permit cost?

Permits cost £25 per vehicle per year, or less than 50p per week.

6. What happens if I have someone coming to visit me in a Resident Permit Zone, or tradesmen, or a delivery at a time when the restrictions apply? Will they get a ticket?

Residents will need to purchase either an annual visitor permit (£25), or they can purchase a 24 hour visitor permit for £1. In either case, the resident must notify the City Council of the registration number of their visitor's vehicle to ensure they are added to the 'permitted vehicle' list for that day. Tradesmen who will be parked for some time undertaking work on a resident's property will also need a visitor permit, as described above. However, deliveries that are unloading or collecting goods or materials to/from a property will not require a visitor permit. Vehicles without a valid permit in place will be issued with a penalty charge notice, commonly known as a parking ticket.

7. Why does the permit cost money? Why is it not free?

The City Council must pay for the back office systems that hold the permit information for a resident parking zone and allow our enforcement officers and the necessary equipment to check it. The maintenance of those systems to ensure that residents' registration numbers are kept up to date, as well as making regular changes to accommodate visitor permit applications, also costs the City Council money. Finally, we will also need to deploy enforcement resources to the area to make sure the new restrictions are adhered to, meaning more staff and their transport to and from site are required, which also comes at a cost. So, the £25 annual charge for a resident vehicle permit is to cover all these costs. The City Council does not make a profit from parking permits.

Option 2 – Daytime Parking Restrictions

8. Will daytime parking restrictions be effective at stopping external vehicles parking in the area?

Depending on the times of the restriction, daytime parking restrictions can be effective at reducing the numbers of people parking for long periods. They are less effective at tackling vehicles which park for a shorter time, as they can time their parking to avoid the restricted hours during the day.

9. At what times would the daytime restrictions apply?

This is a matter for residents to decide, but in most cases, restrictions around midday (say 12.00 – 14.00) work quite well, especially at preventing longer stay and commuter parking. If this option is favoured, we will engage about the times of restrictions in the next stage of the process.

10. Would residents' vehicles also be subject to the daytime restrictions?

Yes, they would. As we have previously said, the only way we can tell if vehicles belong to local residents or not is by means of a resident permit scheme where we have a record of all the number plates of the residents with valid permits in the area that we can check during enforcement.

Residents would be subject to the daytime restrictions and residents at home during the day with cars parked on the street would have to move their cars during the period of the restriction.

11. Would there be any roads, or sections of roads in the zone, where the daytime restrictions wouldn't apply?

No, in order to make sure that nuisance parking is not displaced to any streets in the zone without any restrictions, we would have to implement the restrictions across the whole zone.

Option 3 – Junction and Access Restrictions Only

12. What would this option look like?

This option would just implement double yellow lines at junctions and on bends to ensure safety and visibility, by preventing vehicles parking in these locations. It will also ensure that access for larger vehicles, such as refuse lorries or fire engines is maintained.

13. Would this help to deter external vehicles coming into the area to park?

No, it would not introduce any restrictions that would deter external vehicles from parking in the area all day.

Option 4 – Do Nothing

14. Why is this option included?

We have included this option as we know that some residents don't think there's a problem now, or that anything needs to be done. We wanted to make it clear that this is a valid option for residents to choose – we don't have to do anything.

Areas for Parking Controls

15. I live in Area B (or Area C) – Does my area need to be included?

No, we are giving residents in areas B and C the option to be excluded from any new measures, as these areas are quite remote from the station and other trip attractors and are not subject to the same parking nuisance. However, if new parking restrictions are introduced into area A, there is a small risk that there could be some displacement of parked vehicles into areas B and C.

16. Will the responses from Areas A, B and C be considered separately?

Yes, we will ask respondents which area they live in, and we will treat this as three separate consultation exercises for each area.

17. What if Areas A, B and C don't want the same option?

It is quite possible that the three areas may favour different options. That's fine – we will do what people want us to do in each area.

Next Steps

18. What is happening now?

The City Council with the help of West Bletchley Council are undertaking this informal public consultation with residents on these options, to see how well each are supported. We will undertake this consultation on-line, but those without access to the internet will be able to complete a paper form to tell us their views. We'll make these forms available in libraries and other community buildings so everyone can respond easily.

19. How did you alert people to the consultation?

Every household and business in areas A, B and C have been contacted by letter to alert them about the consultation starting, and the letter contains a QR code that will take you straight to the consultation website. We also used the City Council's website and social media channels, and used laminated street notices across the area, with the survey QR code on them.

20. How will you tell us what the outcome is?

We'll produce a short summary of the consultation responses, showing how well each are supported in each area.

21. Once residents have decided on their preferred option, what happens next?

This will depend on the option chosen. If Option 4 is the preferred one, then we will do nothing, as the community doesn't consider there is an issue to be solved. For the other three options, new Traffic Regulation Orders will be needed, so there is a statutory consultation period of 6 weeks inviting any objections to the new restrictions before they can be introduced. In the case of Option 1 or Option 2, we will also need to engage with residents over the times of restrictions.

22. How long will it be before the preferred option we choose is implemented?

Again, this will depend on the option chosen. How long doesn't apply to Option 4, but for the other three options there is a requirement for a statutory consultation period before the new restrictions can be introduced. This period must last 6 weeks, but after that, a decision can be made to 'make' the new Traffic Regulation Order and to put the necessary signs and lines in place.

Option 1 requires the creation of a new permit database and the administration of resident permits to be in place before it can be enforced, so realistically that will take at least 6-12 months after the statutory consultation is completed.

Option 2 is simpler, and does not need a permit system in place, but does need a lot of signs and lines to be introduced – so this could take up to 6 months.

Option 3 could be delivered in just a few months, as it only requires limited new road markings and very few signs.

23. What if the chosen option doesn't solve the problem and there are still parking issues in the area?

Obviously, we'd rather if residents picked the right option for them first time around, but we could repeat this engagement exercise again.

Officers are confident that Option 1 would solve the problem, albeit at a modest cost to residents, but if any of the other options are preferred at this stage for any reason, and the desired outcomes are not met, then we can engage with residents again to see if the preferred option changes. However, it is unlikely that we could consult again any less than a year after the first measures were introduced.