

STATEMENT OF REASONS

REVIEW OF ON-STREET PARKING PERMIT COSTS WITHIN THE GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE

Residents' parking schemes are normally introduced where there is local support and a real demand on parking. Often, they are located near to town centres, or areas where commuters park. Such a scheme effectively reserves part of the public highway for the use of residents during the hours it is in operation. In order to be part of a scheme a resident has to buy a permit and display it in their vehicle. The Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone was originally introduced in 1965 but a permit scheme operating within that Zone was not introduced until some years later.

In order to ensure they work effectively, residents parking schemes are enforced by the County Council through civil parking enforcement (CPE).

The fees for residents' and visitors' permit were last reviewed and standardized across the County of Surrey in 2011 and there have been no increases since then. At that time the fee for residents' permits was set at a level to recover administration costs, but it does not now fully recover the true administration, maintenance and enforcement costs of these schemes. It is a recognised principle that the costs of a permit parking scheme should be borne by those that derive a benefit from it and should not be subsidised by the general taxpayer.

The cost breakdown for a permit in a typical scheme of say 50 properties would be:

- Setting up permit scheme and ongoing administration £25 (about 30 minutes officer time per application)
- Enforcement £45 (approximately 1.5 hours per week of civil enforcement officer time)
- Repayment of implementation costs and ongoing maintenance £10

This gives a total of £80 per permit.

A similar situation has arisen in respect of business parking permits, which are now also issued within the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone. The County Council's current Policy for Business Parking Permits is that they should cost in the range from a minimum of £150 to a maximum of £500 per permit. In the case of Guildford, the cost of a business parking permit has not been increased for many years and currently stands at £40 or £32 for vehicles powered by an engine less than 1200cc or by an approved alternative fuel source for the first business permit or £80 and £64 for vehicles powered by an engine less than 1200cc or by an approved alternative fuel source for the second business permit. No further business parking permits are issued within any areas of the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone. It is proposed to initially increase the cost for the first business parking permit to £80 and to £100 for the second business parking permit which would match those proposed for the residents parking permits as indicated above and in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph (1) below. As for residents parking permits, this increase would cover the increased costs involved with running the scheme and bring them more into line with the County Council's Policy. On 1st October 2024 the costs for the first and second business parking permits will be increased to £150 and £200 respectively, which would then be in line with the County Council's Policy.

The existing permit scheme offers a reduced payment structure for vehicles powered by an engine less than 1200cc or an approved alternative fuel source. With the

above breakdown of costs applying to all permit holders regardless of their vehicle choice and the increasing adoption of these types of vehicles it is unsustainable to subsidise this discount. Rather than further increasing the price of a permit for combustible fuelled vehicle owners to maintain this discount it is proposed that this discount is removed. For the avoidance of doubt, this would apply to both residents and business parking permits.

The charge for subsequent permits is proposed to be higher to encourage fewer multi permit applications from a single household or business (while allowing for this eventuality), and to discourage excessive on street parking (and encourage off street parking). It would also encourage less reliance on cars and more use of alternative, more sustainable, means of transport.

Many residents rely on full time assistance to help with child-care, which can sometimes be difficult to accommodate within the constraints of our current permit scheme rules. We are therefore proposing to introduce child-care permits in all permit schemes in order to make it easier for those providing child-care to be able to park. However, in order to prevent childcare permits from being prioritised over residents, in Catchment Area D of the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone where there is a limit on the number of residents' parking permits in issue at any one time, it is proposed that no Childcare Parking Permits would be issued in this area. This would prioritise the limited number of on-street parking spaces in this Catchment Area for residents. The fee for these permits will be aligned with the number of resident's permits issued to the household.

In order to allow residents to have more visitors, we propose to increase the limit on the number of daily visitors' permits issued to a household each year to 150.

In order to reduce the cost to residents for short-term visits, we propose to introduce 2-hour visitors permits at a cost of £1 each. Each household will be allowed to apply for up to 250 of these each year.

There will be no change to the administrative fee of £15, charged for the alteration to or replacement of a permit, and residents will still be able to obtain a refund should they no longer need their permit. This administrative fee of £15 was introduced throughout the whole of the County of Surrey in 2011 following a decision by the County Council to introduce such a charge to defray the costs involved with issuing duplicate parking permits. Unfortunately, it would appear that the Consolidation Order of 2009 (as amended) that enforces the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone was never amended correctly to reflect this change in its entirety. For the avoidance of doubt, it is now intended to so further amend the Order of 2009 to put this matter beyond any doubt. This is to clarify the situation and formalise the current arrangements and involves no changes whatsoever to this charge which, as stated above, has been levied since 2011.

Subject to the Traffic Regulation Orders being amended, the revised charges will be applicable from when residents next renew their permits on 1st October 2022.

The cost of processing the advertisement of the council's intention to make changes to fees for permit parking schemes is significant and therefore it is not financially realistic to carry out the exercise on a regular short-term basis. Therefore, in order to ensure that the residents permit charge is maintained roughly in line with inflation for the next few years, the fees for permits will be increased by £4 every 2 years, starting in April 2024 and continuing until April 2028.

DRAFTING AMENDMENT:

In 2021 a further Amendment Order was made to the existing Consolidation Order of 2009 that currently enforces the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone. The effect of this Amendment Order was to extend the hours of control in certain Catchment Areas of the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone and to increase certain of the parking charges at some of the on-street parking places within that Zone. However, a minor error has occurred within that Amendment Order, which it is now intended to correct. In the Third Part of The First Schedule to the Order of 2009 there are three lists of the roads where parking places are situated where vehicles may be left for a period of either 30 minutes, or 2 hours, or 3 hours. However, in the case of the parking places where the maximum stay is 30 minutes, this period of 30 minutes only applies between the hours of 8.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Mondays to Sundays inclusive. Between the hours of 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Mondays to Sundays inclusive there is no time limit on how long a vehicle may be left in any of those parking places. However, the heading to the relevant part of the Third Part of The First Schedule to the Order of 2009 (as amended) only states the period of 30 minutes without stating the time period during which that limit applies and also does not state that between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. there is no time limit at those parking places. It is now intended to correct these errors so that the Order of 2009 (as amended) correctly states the times at the parking places where the time limit is either 30 minutes or unlimited and when those periods of time apply. The effect of this change is merely to clarify the situation and formalise the current arrangements and involves no actual changes to the way the Consolidation Order of 2009 (as amended) currently operates.

SUMMARY:

It is recommended:

- (1) That a traffic regulation order is advertised to advise that the county council intends -
 - a) to set a fee of £80 for the first annual residents permit,
 - b) to set a fee of £100 for a second permit issued to the same household,
 - c) to set a fee of £80 for the first business parking permit, which would increase to £150 on 1st October 2024,
 - d) to set a fee of £100 for the second business parking permit, which would increase to £200 on 1st October 2024;
 - e) to increase the fees for all annual residents' permits by £4 every two years from April 2024 to April 2028
 - f) to set a fee of £3 each for daily resident's visitors' permits issued in busier locations (e.g., town centres) and of £2 each for ones issued elsewhere,
 - g) to increase the annual allowance of daily residents' visitors permits that can be issued to a household to 150,
 - h) to introduce a 2-hour visitor permit in all permit schemes, at a fee of £1 each, with an annual allowance per household of 250,
 - i) to introduce childcare permits within the current permit schemes in all of the Catchment Areas within the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone (except for Catchment Area D where no such permits would be issued under any circumstances whatsoever), with the fee being aligned with the number of residents' permits issued to the relevant household,
 - j) to remove the fee for carers' permits and issue them free of charge,
- (2) That, if no objections are maintained, the order be made and the revised fees introduced.

(3) That if objections are received which cannot be resolved, the decision on how to proceed will be made by the Head of Highways & Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways.