
Residents Parking Schemes in Bury - A Strategy for Implementation

Introduction

Bury Council currently has 9 live residents parking schemes across the Borough. The first scheme was introduced in 1998 and was implemented to prevent town centre workers and shoppers parking in nearby residential streets.

In 1983 Greater Manchester Council produced a "Code of Practice" for the assessment of "Residential Privileged On-Street Parking Schemes". In 1999 Greater Manchester Transportation Unit produced a document headed "The Assessment, Prioritisation and Operation of Residents Parking Schemes in Manchester". This utilised relevant parts of the information contained within Greater Manchester Council's Code of Practice to build a policy that Bury has used as guidance over the years to implement Residents Parking Schemes.

In order to provide a transparent framework we have built upon this further and developed a Policy that sets out the process we will follow in relation to the introduction of residents parking requests.

Objectives of a Residents Parking Scheme

The objective of a residents parking scheme is to provide car-owning residents, with a reasonable chance of being able to park near to their homes, where the regular and frequent parking of non residents prevents this. It is intended for those who cannot provide alternative space rather than those who choose not to.

It should be recognised that no car owner has an inalienable right to park on any specific section of the highway and it should, therefore, also be recognised that residents parking schemes will never guarantee the car-owning resident a parking space.

Implementing and enforcing residents parking schemes is costly. Areas will only be considered for such treatment where all alternatives are thought to be inappropriate and where the schemes in themselves will not create other traffic problems.

It is recognised that local businesses situated in residential areas play a valuable part in the community and it is not intended to exclude these businesses but to try and consider their needs and include them where possible.

The needs of visitors, essential callers and the disabled should also be considered.

The Assessment Process

Requests are generally received directly from residents, via Councillors or as a result of the Council investigating complaints about other issues. Requests will be dealt with in date order. There may be, on occasion, the need for the Council to review parking in areas without receiving a request from any other source.

Initial Assessment – Stage 1

Stage 1 of the process will involve an investigation by a Traffic Engineer (or other suitably skilled individual). This will be in the form of a minimum of 2 site visits at different times of the day and week.

Criteria that the engineer will be assessing an area against will include the following:-

- A minimum of 50% of the kerb space occupied by non-residents for more than six hours a day on at least four days a week.
- At least 85% of all available kerb space is occupied by all parked vehicles for the same six hour period.
- The majority of properties must not have off street space that they are able to park within (or make available at a future date to park within).

If after the Engineer has been and observed the site there is no obvious problem, the original requester can be notified in writing. The dates and approximate times of the site visits should be supplied to the requester, who will be prompted to respond if they feel there are circumstances that have been overlooked.

The objectives at this stage would be to determine:

Is there a genuine problem for residents?

The initial correspondence from residents etc can be used to inform this assessment.

What type of residents parking problem is it?

The initial site visits should identify what nearby issues are causing a problem. Wherever possible local knowledge (or information provided by the requester) should be used in advance of site visits to help determine suitable observation times.

There could be one or a number of combined factors such as commuter parking, nearby town centre with pay and display parking restrictions, large colleges etc.

What type of land uses are in the area?

This information will help to determine potential conflicts between residents parking schemes and other road users. Again it may help determine suitable observation periods.

What is the Geographical extent of the problem?

This information is useful in looking at the impact on an area as a whole. Introducing a residents parking scheme in an area where the number of streets experiencing a problem is outweighed by the total number of streets is unlikely.

Data Collection – Stage 2

Once a problem has been confirmed and investigated as above, information will need to be collected on:

- The number of on-street spaces currently occupied by residents and non-residents.
- The length of times these are occupied
- The amount of kerb space available for parking
- The number and location of residential off street spaces.

This information will be used not only to gain an insight into the problem, but also provide information that could assist with any future scheme design.

The most effective way of collecting this data is to carry out parking duration surveys; however, observations on an hourly basis all day are not usually practical and can be very time consuming. If a site observation shows heavily parked traffic on a morning visit then registration numbers should be documented and a return visit should be carried out on the same day at a later point. This will indicate if there is a high proportion of long stay parkers.

If it is felt that there is possibly a problem that could be treated with a scheme, questionnaires will be sent to residents. This will request information including the number of vehicles they own, how many visitors they have a week, their perceptions of a problem as well as other relevant data collection. These questionnaires are useful for assessing whether the problem is caused by the residents and their visitors. Where it becomes clear that this is the case a residents parking scheme would not be proposed.

The number of days to be surveyed would normally be at least 2 weekdays. In particular circumstances it may be necessary to carry out observations during a weekend but this would only be the case if a significant problem is identified during at least one of the weekdays surveyed.

Design, Public Consultation and Implementation

The preliminary scheme design would use observations obtained in stages 1 & 2 relating to the physical environment and current parking characteristics, together with a consideration of some or all of the following:

Local traders/businesses

Effects on adjacent area's

Needs of visitors and essential callers

Any complimentary traffic management measures

Other relevant policies and schemes

Once a proposed scheme has been designed a consultation will be carried out with residents within the area and their views will be sought. Depending on the scale of the scheme it may be cost effective to formally advertise the scheme at the same time. If this is the case, residents will be notified in writing of the time period during which they can submit their comments to the Council Solicitor.

Once the public consultation has been carried out a summary of responses will be collated. The results of the consultation will then be discussed with Ward Councillors and a decision will be made on whether a scheme is likely to proceed. It is at this point that a decision may be made to amend the design to incorporate comments made during the consultation period.

Generally, schemes will not be implemented where there is an indication that more residents object to its introduction than support it.

There may on occasion be the need to refuse the implementation of a scheme even when evidence shows there is a problem and residents support the introduction of the scheme. This could be due to a number of reasons including financial restraints or excessive setting up costs.