

Parking Issues in Residential Areas

Introduction

I was the Labour Party candidate in the local elections of May 2011 for Cathedral ward. During the campaign in the spring, colleagues and I spoke to over 3,000 residents on the doorstep and over the phone. It was clear that parking on residential streets was the biggest concern of the electorate.

It was a recurring theme in different parts of Cathedral ward and is the issue that residents most want the City Council to address. Different residents' groups have spent a great deal of time and effort to find local solutions for their roads and lobby city and county councillors. Whilst a few schemes have been implemented, widespread problems and enormous frustration remain.

Effect of Parking Issues

Local residents' lives are blighted daily by their inability to park outside their own home in many different ways

- Impossible for family and friends to visit home
- Difficult to fetch and unload shopping
- Poor parking on pavements present hazards to pedestrians, no space for pushchairs so have to walk in the road with small children
- Overparking clogs city streets and impedes traffic flow
- Overparking frequently results in damage to residents cars e.g. broken wing mirrors etc
- Residents are frequently fined for parking infringements in their own road whilst perceiving that outsiders 'get away with it'
- Causes considerable ill feeling between neighbours, neighbouring streets and businesses

Specific Problems Identified

1. Commuters go to residential streets to park for free, taking up the spaces vacated by Cathedral residents driving off to work
2. Specific commuter groups mentioned include users of Shrub Hill station, city workers, Kings School and police working at Castle Street.
3. Kings' School parents cause problems at school drop off and pick up times. They park on double yellow lines in Edgar Street, creating both noise and engine fumes.
4. Existing parking restrictions are not respected and perceived as not enforced
5. Residents access schemes to City Council car parks are too expensive, inflexible and not practical for many
6. Some new housing developments don't have sufficient residents' parking spaces eg Armstrong Drive, exacerbating parking problems on nearby streets
7. Difficult to get permission to implement residents' permit schemes

8. Difficult for disabled people to get designated space for own home
9. Occasional problems with excess parking around the mosque on Tallow Hill
10. Excessive taxi parking in some residential areas

Conclusions

Parking is a problem in residential areas in the city centre, despite the numerous car parks provided. Small scale residents' permit schemes and yellow lines only move the problem to the next streets along.

Lynn Denham
Local Labour Party Organiser Cathedral Ward
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