

WORCESTER RESIDENTS' PARKING SURVEY AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011

Introduction

During canvassing for local elections in May 2011, Worcester Labour Party members spoke to many residents across the city. Parking problems were a recurrent concern, mentioned unprompted by many people. Following the announcement of the Worcester City Council Scrutiny review of parking issues in residential streets, we designed a residents' parking survey to answer the questions posed.

The survey was set up to be completed on line or on paper. It was publicised in Worcester News and emailed to many city residents. In certain streets which have been identified as "parking hot-spots", we also gave residents the chance to complete a survey on the doorstep.

We promised that all survey responses made by 11th September 2011, would be submitted to the City Council scrutiny review. Participants were informed that privacy would be respected and personal data would not be passed on to any outside organisation.

Results

See Appendix 1

710 people completed the survey between 24th August and 11th September 2011 (inclusive). Respondents were located in most parts of the city (Full list of streets available).

59.6% (423) said that parking in their street was a problem

What is the problem? - 52.6% (202) blamed people from outside the area parking on their street and half said that local residents had too many cars. 43.2% (166) believed that outsiders parked on their street because it was free and they didn't want to pay for a car park space and 36.2% (139) said there was no public car park nearby. 23.4% (90) blamed parking students. From additional comments provided it is clear that students refers to a number of educational establishments ie University, King's School, Grammar School, Sixth Form College.

When is the problem? - about 90% of those answering the question, said that the problem was worst between Monday and Friday, with Friday the busiest day. However, more than three-quarters reported problems on Saturdays and two-thirds on Sundays. Afternoons and evenings were the busiest time of day but half claimed overnight parking difficulties. 86.2% of respondents said the problem occurred all year round. The remainder were mostly affected only during school terms.

Possible solutions - from the options offered, 57.3% (220) opted for a residents' parking scheme and 29.7% (114) wanted changes to yellow lines. One in five selected cheaper public car parks with fewer opting for better public transport. 90 people wanted none of these suggestions and 174 people offered individual written suggestions.

More people (585) answered the question about whether residents preferred to have a local neighbourhood residents parking scheme or a unified city-wide scheme. So the response includes the views of those who do not think that they have parking problems on their own street. 35.7% (209) chose separate local schemes and 28.9% (169) opted for a unified city-wide scheme. However, 35.4% (207) wanted neither option or had no opinion.

If there was to be a new residents' parking scheme, 56.4% (330) wanted visitors to be able to park free by obtaining a "visitor's pass" from a resident. However, one in three thought that non-residents should pay more to park on residential streets than in public car parks. Only 17.3% (101) were willing to allow non-residents to park for up to 2-3 hours and considerably fewer for longer periods. 7% would ban all non-residents from parking on their street, including visitors. 90 respondents offered further written suggestions.

At the end of the survey, residents were invited to add their own comments. 265 residents made the effort to do so, which is an indication of how important this issue is to many people. The comments will require more time to collate and analyse and will be made available to the Scrutiny Review when completed. The comments provide a rich picture of local residents' views and concerns, suggestions for improvement and ideas for policy development. See Appendix 2 for a small sample of the valuable thoughts that residents have taken the trouble to contribute to the Scrutiny Review.

Conclusion

Parking is a problem on many residential streets for a variety of reasons which affects many people in Worcester city. Residents are concerned about the risks to road safety and traffic flow due to parking difficulties. Specific local options are supported by many but are far from universally popular. There is significant support for a city wide more strategic approach.

A number of new ideas and innovative solutions have been offered via this residents' parking survey which the Scrutiny Committee and Councils should consider.

Paul Denham
on behalf of Worcester Constituency Labour Party
13th September 2011

Appendix 2 sample comments

Around here the issues could be sorted out by encouraging residents to build private driveways, insisting new developments have space for at least 2 cars per house as this is what people typically have, and reducing the through traffic to residents only.

Fine the people who park their cars on the pavement

Charge residents and others a realistic £600 a year (based on £50 a month as garage prices), not £30 a year, for the privilege of using our roads as a vehicle storage facility. A thorough review of available land that could be used for parking is needed. Current usage is often wasteful.

Scrap parking charges in public car parks so non residents use car parks instead of residential streets

High cost parking within the city (except those w disability). Free buses in. Employers rewarding people for arriving at work by any method other than private car

People who choose to park regularly on residential streets could apply for special parking permits (this would eliminate the need for parking meters) which could be charged at a slightly higher rate than the nearest public car park.

scheme as in Beverley, East Yorkshire

If people are displaying a valid tax disc and are insured they can park where they wish. People on low income cannot afford to pay the high prices charged in local car parks , hence that's why they have to use the side streets to park .

What is needed is a fundamental rethink of the reliance on the motor vehicle. We need an integrated public transport system where priority is given to buses, trains, light railway, cycling and walking. This need to start at the planning stage where new housing developments are made car free (similar to those in other European countries e.g. Holland). Car reliance can not continue at current rates as finite resources will run out in the near future.

Worcester has a vastly underused park and ride system. Negotiating with the school to enforce all 6th form students and parents to use the park and ride system will be a) low cost to implement b) satisfy local residents parking issues and c) generate income for the city. This would also create a huge relief to other traffic trying to get into the city

perhaps you could give a grant to help residents get the kerb dropped outside their homes, then people could not block them in .and where their is no road to park on they could create driveways to park on, keeping a lot of cars off the highways,

Big works vans owned by residents should be banned from the street

Street parking is not always the issue in the city centre, where I live, it is the idiots who park on double yellow lines and cause congestion. I have complained to the council but they say their traffic wardens do their job! Why then are Foregate Street and Lowesmoor continually blocked by congestion caused by illegal parking!

There are a finite number of entry points into the city and these could be covered by number plate recognition cameras. The system for charging could then be automated. Again this is a large investment but with a guaranteed income. Furthermore, the system could be shared with other authorities as it would identify untaxed, uninsured and vehicles that had been used in connection with a crime.

What I find frustrating is that I have invested in off-road parking but cannot guarantee I can get in or out of it at any time I may need to - be it 5:30 in the morning or midday. A short section of double yellow lines would solve this.

you want to charge me to park in my street! - this is just another council money making scheme to create jobs.

Don't forget that many people eg District Nurses, residents loading/offloading, tradesmen making short calls should not be forced to walk significant distances because no parking is available near their clients

none of the Police staff including Police officers working at the Police station have any parking rights to the car parks built for the Police. Consequently the civilian staff in particular park on the 3 hour parking around the square, then every 3 hours come out for a break to swap places on the square. Officers working night shifts are also known to park their cars over night on the square. Surely these staff, and local residents should all have permits for £30 per year to park on the Pitchcroft carparks.

If you want guaranteed parking then buy a house with a garage; I do not support any residents parking schemes. the costs of administration end up being counterproductive

Residents who pay council tax in Worcester by direct debit and are good payers should be offered an annual car parking pass for a certain fee (say £100 pa) - this could be collected at the same time as the council tax direct debit to increase revenue for the council and could be restricted to certain car parks. A pass would need to be displayed. Residents parking is difficult as many

For example, see page 15 of

<http://www.stockton.gov.uk/resources/transportstreets/48506/parkprov/parkingprov.pdf>