

Proposals for the development of the Parking Dispensation Scheme

Report of the Head of Highways and Traffic Management

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) The HATOC consider the development of the Parking Dispensation Scheme to allow flexibility for contractors whilst continuing to meet the needs of residents;**
- (b) The HATOC's view on whether there is a need for management and a desire to continue developing the scheme is sought, particularly in respect of enhancing the scheme to allow greater flexibility for contractors (and landlords) who work reactively or between multiple sites in a single day;**
- (c) Feedback from the HATOCs is gathered, considered and fed back to Cabinet.**

1. Summary

This report relates to the Parking Dispensation Scheme introduced in November 2011 to manage vehicles parked by contractors (and landlords) undertaking works within restricted parking areas. It is proposed that feedback from the HATOCs is gathered, considered and fed back to Cabinet.

2. Background/Introduction

In November 2011, the Parking Dispensation Scheme was launched in Devon to assist in the management of contractors requiring parking close to sites within existing restrictions, particularly residents parking zones. It had been established through feedback from Civil Enforcement Officers, and by customers, that the previous informal approach was causing issues with abuse of restrictions and difficulty with enforcement.

Previously informal schemes had been put in place by the District Councils, but these differed significantly around the County. The Parking Dispensation Scheme was therefore introduced to standardise and formalise the process.

Under the current scheme, contractors are required to give at least 24 hours notice of where they are working and the nature of their work, when applying for a Dispensation Permit. The dispensation is designed for pre-planned work lasting one day or more.

Since its introduction, the scheme has operated without charge, allowing officers to monitor and better understand the activities and needs of customers. In the first year of service, there have been 6,063 transactions processed (See Appendix I).

As a result of feedback on the scheme from customers and local Members a need for a more flexible option has been identified as many contractors move between several sites each day, or have difficulties planning works in advance.

The HATOCs' views on whether there is a need for management and a desire to continue developing the scheme is sought.

3. Proposal

The views of the HATOC are sought so a recommendation can be provided to Cabinet.

It is the opinion of Civil Enforcement Officers, residents, and Officers that a scheme is required to manage contractor parking, and should be further developed to benefit contractors, their customers, residents and other road users. Officer recommendations are contained in the discussion section.

The options for the future of the service are considered in section 12, and an officer recommendation is made.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The original service was developed as a result of feedback from Civil Enforcement Officers and representations from members of the public.

These new proposals to develop the service further result from feedback from contractors and concerns expressed by local Members.

5. Financial Considerations

There would be no cost to the Council in developing the online system.

There would be a cost to the Council in advertising a new Traffic Order to allow further developments.

If a physical annual permit or scratch card were to be introduced, there would be a cost in the printing and posting. Understanding that charges are already levied for residents parking permits, HATOC is asked to reflect whether a charge should be made to those customers using the Parking Dispensation Scheme.

6. Sustainability Considerations

There is not considered to be any sustainability issue – neutral impact.

7. Carbon Impact Considerations

There is not considered to be any carbon emission effect – neutral impact.

8. Equality Considerations

An Impact Assessment was carried out as a result of which it was not found that any group identified would be unduly impacted.

9. Legal Considerations

If the service is revisited a new Traffic Order will need to be advertised, and any objections considered.

10. Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action has been included to safeguard the Council's position.

There is a reputational risk to not addressing issues raised by customers and Members.

11. Public Health Impact

There is not considered to be any public health impact.

12. Discussion/Options Appraisal

The following is an options appraisal by Officers on how the scheme may be reviewed.

Option 1: Cease Operation of the Parking Dispensation Scheme

Since the introduction of the Parking Dispensation Scheme a number of concerns have been raised by contractors/businesses and local Members. In addition, the administration of the scheme has required more officer time than anticipated.

Pros: Reduce officer time and costs, reduce complaints from those contractors wanting to park in restricted areas.

Cons: The cessation of the scheme would lead to a reversion to the previous system of using handwritten notes. Previously this has been open to abuse which has led to complaints from residents who have purchased Resident Parking Permits but have been unable to park.

District parking managers may not be willing or able to re-establish their own dispensation schemes to manage contractor's parking. Enforcement would be impeded and it is likely that District Partners would receive complaints due to perceived inaction.

Option 2: Retain Current System Only

Retain current Parking Dispensation Scheme with customers having to identify each site and duration specifically, and allowing 24 hours notice.

Pros: Retain management of contractors requiring parking close to sites within existing restrictions, particularly residents parking.

Cons: Lack of flexibility, continued customer complaints, risk of high administrative costs for those attending numerous sites. Officer time required and cost to DCC for this administration.

Option 3: Addition of New product - Time Clock

An annual permit valid for 6 or 12 months from date of issue, including a time clock as per the blue badge system, could be issued. This would allow a contractor to set the time of their arrival at a site and would require that they leave the site once the agreed period (suggested 3 hours) has elapsed.

This permit would be linked to a single vehicle registration.

Pros: Well established approach, single annual/bi-annual application required. One-stop enforcement by CEOs

Cons: This would be issued once per year (or every 6 months). Once obtained the contractor is then incentivised to gain the most utility from their permit.

There is risk that a contractor may manipulate the time clock throughout the day, diminishing the ability to reliably carry out one-stop enforcement.

There will be a cost to DCC in the processing and provision of the time clock product.

Option 4: Addition of New Product - Booklet of Scratch Cards

A booklet of 30 scratch cards could be issued; and whilst requiring an expiry date, this could be extended beyond 12 months, for example 3 years, to allow flexibility. Contractors could purchase further booklets as required.

These would not be linked to a specific vehicle, allowing further flexibility for contractors.

Pros: Well established approach, single annual application required. One-stop enforcement by CEOs.

Risk of abuse could be managed by rationing issue, and where abuse is identified, consideration to withdrawing the service, for that contractor.

Once completed, i.e. the relevant fields scratched off, the card could not be manipulated.

Cons: As individual scratch cards will not be linked to a single vehicle registration they could be shared with those that may not have reasonable cause for use.

There will be a cost to DCC in the processing and provision of the scratchcard product.

Recommendation/Conclusion

It is recommended that we build on the Parking Dispensation Scheme currently in place by adding a further product, thus enabling greater flexibility.

Options 3 and 4 have their merits; operationally both approaches are adequate, and enable efficient "one stop" enforcement.

Overall it is considered that the scratch card option (Option 4) is the most flexible and cost effective for the contractor, and less open to abuse. Their issue can be controlled throughout the year, and once completed and placed in the windscreen of a vehicle, they cannot be manipulated.

Regardless of which option is selected, the introduction of the new product will require consideration as to measures to address abuse, for example establishing eligibility as a registered business or landlord.

13. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The recommendation made in section 12 to develop the service with the introduction of scratch cards is made based on public and member feedback, and to provide a simpler and more flexible system for contractors to use. It would also support our District Agents in the delivery of statutory parking enforcement duties.

The views of the HATOCs are sought on the matter.

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Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. Impact Assessment	15 February 2013	www.devon.gov.uk/impact

cr140313exh Parking Dispensations
sc 02 09041313

Dispensations Issued

In the first year of operation, there has been a good uptake of the service by contactors, a total of 6,063 dispensations have been applied for.

Below is a breakdown of restrictions where they were issued:

Restriction	Total Number of Dispensations Issued in Devon (November 2011 – November 2012)
Residents Parking	2,746
Pay & Display	472
Limited Waiting	1,796
Loading Bay	290
Pedestrian Zone	76
Single Yellow Line	224
Double Yellow Line	459

Below is a breakdown of dispensations live on a given day:

Restriction	Total Number of Dispensations Live in Devon (16 November 2012)
Residents Parking	156
Pay & Display	25
Limited Waiting	92
Loading Bay	6
Pedestrian Zone	5
Single Yellow Line	7
Double Yellow Line	24