

## Overview and Scrutiny Report

# Permit Parking in North Tyneside



June 2016



North Tyneside Council

## **1. Introduction**

This is the report of the Permit Parking Sub-group following the review of the permit parking system in North Tyneside.

The Sub-group was appointed in November 2015 and tasked with reviewing the current parking permit system, with a view to recommending improvements.

The review has generated a great deal of interest from both residents and businesses. This has highlighted to the Sub-group the significance of this issue, and the importance of ensuring that a clear and accessible permit system is in place. The Sub-group acknowledged the complexities involved, and the need to carefully balance the needs of residents, businesses and visitors across the borough.

At the start of the review the Sub-group noted that the current system has developed piecemeal over time. The system now incorporates many different types of permit, with varying permit charges and inconsistencies across the borough. The Sub-group concluded that the system can be confusing for the public, difficult and expensive to administer and, in some instances, vulnerable to abuse. In addition, it was noted that demand for permit parking schemes is increasing all the time, while the budget to support the implementation, maintenance and enforcement of new schemes has been reduced considerably.

As part of the review the Sub-group has held discussions with officers, residents and business representatives to garner views on the current system and how it could be improved. The Sub-group has developed proposals aimed at implementing a simplified, more consistent and more effective permit system. To this end, the Sub-group has made 18 recommendations which would revise the three elements of the permit system: resident permits; business permits and other/miscellaneous permits.

These recommendations are set out in the body of this report and summarised in Appendix 1. The Sub-group commend these recommendations to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport.

## **2. Reason for the Study**

- 2.1 The Sub Group was established in November 2015 by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, on the request of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport.

The Sub-group was asked to review the current permit system and identify ways to improve and simplify the permit system across the borough.

## **3. Methodology**

- 3.1 Scrutiny members were invited to serve on the Sub-group. The following members volunteered to take part and were appointed to the Sub-group:

Councillor John O'Shea (Chair)  
Councillor Ken Barrie  
Councillor Karen Bolger  
Councillor Sandra Graham  
Councillor Janet Hunter  
Councillor David McMeekan  
Rev Michael Vine (Church representative on the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Sub-committee)

- 3.2 The Sub-group met on 7 occasions to complete its work.

- 3.3 In order to structure the review, the Sub-group divided the permit parking issues into the following three sections:

1. Resident Permits
2. Business Permits
3. Miscellaneous/Other permits

- 3.4 The Sub-group considered each of these areas and have made recommendations to revise the system for each.

- 3.5 The Sub-group also considered whether the introduction of new technology could improve the operational efficiency of the system, and looked at various options that are currently available to achieve this.

- 3.6 In order to obtain the relevant evidence to complete the study, the Sub-group undertook desk based research, and met with officers from Environment, Housing and Leisure, and the Council's technical partner Capita. In addition, the Sub-group met with local residents and representatives of local businesses and business owners to seek their views on the current system and how it could be improved.

- 3.7 The Sub-group identified a link between the permit parking system and more general parking issues in the borough, particularly in town centres and other

commercial areas. However, the focus of this review was the permit parking system only, and wider parking issues were considered to be outside of the scope of this review.

- 3.8 In addition, the Sub-group was asked not to consider the foreshore parking permit under this review as changes had recently been agreed by the cabinet member responsible for Housing and Transport in relation to these permits.

#### **4. Findings and Evidence**

##### **Background Information – The Current Permit System**

- 4.1 The Council's Network Management Plan 2012-17 set out how it proposes to manage its highway to comply with its statutory duty.
- 4.2 The plan aims *"to effectively manage the highway network in North Tyneside for the benefit of all road users, by addressing congestion problems, reducing accidents, responding to incidents and co-ordinating activities, events and works to minimise disruption."*
- 4.3 The management of on and off street parking provision is a key component of ensuring the highway is management effectively.
- 4.4 In terms of residents' parking schemes these are most appropriate where:
- a) the uncontrolled demand for on-street parking will be close to or exceed kerb capacity on a regular basis; and
  - b) extraneous parking (i.e. parking not generated in the area itself) contributes significantly to that demand.
- 4.5 It is of fundamental importance therefore that the criteria measure the extent to which these conditions are met. The assessment and prioritisation should be transparent so that members and the public can readily appreciate the basis on which decisions are made. However, it is also important that the assessment process is cost-effective and does not require an undue level of officer resources to manage.
- 4.6 The Sub-group received information from officers on the current permit system and how it operates.
- 4.7 The Sub-group noted that the existing permit system had developed over time and had become a complicated system with 12 different types of standard permits in operation, different charging levels for different permits, and seven different types of temporary scratchcard. Details of the current permits and temporary scratchcards are set out at Appendix B.
- 4.8 It was noted that the system can be confusing for the public, is difficult and expensive to administer, and some of the permit options are subject to abuse. In addition, the system has been further complicated through the creation of

new permit types to address particular localised circumstances or problems and some of these permit types have a very low take up.

- 4.9 As background to the review, the Sub-group considered information on the costs of the current system, including the cost of introducing new schemes, and information on how permit parking schemes operate in neighbouring authorities.
- 4.10 One of the key issues for consideration was the financial viability of the current system. The Sub-group was informed that the operational costs of the current system are greater than the income generated, leading to a subsidy of around £50,000 from on-street/off-street parking charges to operate the permit parking system. This was not considered to be sustainable in the light of on-going budget reductions and increasing demand for new permit parking schemes across the borough.
- 4.11 It was suggested that one option would be for the Council to withdraw from operating permit parking schemes altogether, or alternatively to stop implementing any new schemes. It was noted that there are examples of other council's in the local area who had taken this approach. However, the Sub Group was in general agreement that, on the basis of evidence heard, there is a need for the Council to continue with a parking permit system, but the system needs to be simplified, there should be consistency across the borough, and the system should aim to be self-financing.

### **Technology Solutions**

- 4.12 The Sub-group explored the options available to introduce new technology as a way of improving efficiency in the administration of the system and therefore to reduce costs. Members stressed the need for any IT solution to be user-friendly and reliable, and to accommodate residents who may not have easy access to the internet.
- 4.13 The Sub-group was provided with information on the options that could be considered. These included:
1. The introduction of a fully virtual on-line permit system managed by the Council, whereby all permits would be electronic permits registered on-line;
  2. A hybrid system based on virtual on-line permits for all non-transferable permits, but paper-based permits retained for transferable permits such as Resident visitor permits;
  3. A virtual permit system operated by an external provider utilising telephone payment technology, similar to that used with cashless parking at pay and display machines operating across the borough.
- 4.14 The Sub-group was informed that a fully virtual system for all permits, based on vehicle registration numbers, would be the most cost-effective solution to

introduce. This would not require the issue of any paper-based permits and would have advantages for enforcement using number plate recognition technology.

- 4.15 However, the Sub-group had concerns about the disadvantages of a fully virtual system in relation to transferable permits, and in particular, resident visitor permits. Under a fully virtual system, residents would be required to log visitor car registration details onto the virtual system each time they were required, rather than have a paper permit to distribute to their visitors. This would be a substantial change and could cause difficulties for residents without direct access to the internet.
- 4.16 The Sub-group had an opportunity to review an example of a virtual permit system when a representative of the Council's existing Notice Processing provider, Mouchel, attended a meeting of the Sub-group to provide a demonstration of their system. This was for demonstration purposes only and Members highlighted that any decisions on the introduction of an IT solution would need to be in line with the Council's procurement procedures.
- 4.17 The Sub-group also considered an alternative to a Council managed virtual system, which would be a telephone based payment system operated by an external company. It was noted that these systems had increased operational costs as they included a transactional charge for each permit processed paid by either the Council or the customer. This charge covered the annual operational cost of the external company managing the service. The Sub-group had concerns that a telephone payment system would be less user-friendly, and would be likely to be more costly to implement and run.
- 4.18 As a result of these considerations into the use of technology, the Sub-group agreed that, in general, Members were in favour of introducing a virtual permit system, subject to further consideration of the most appropriate model/software to meet the Council's needs.

**Recommendations:**

The Sub-group recommend:

- 1 That a virtual permit system be introduced for the administration of parking permits, subject to consideration of the most appropriate model/software to meet the Council's needs.
- 2 That initially a hybrid virtual permit system should be introduced, with non-transferable resident permits being virtual, and transferable permits, such as resident visitor permits, being paper-based. Both options would have an on-line application facility to improve the service to the customer. The hybrid system would be reviewed at the end of the first year to see if a fully virtual option was recommended.

3	That the virtual permit system be implemented across the borough simultaneously, with support for residents available via customer service centres as required.
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### **Resident Permits**

- 4.19 The Sub-group considered the resident permit system.
- 4.20 As background information, the Sub-group received information on the current resident scheme. It was noted that, under the current system, residents in a permit parking scheme can apply for one Resident permit and one residents' visitor permit free of charge. The resident visitor permit is transferable and can be used on multiple vehicles. Households can apply for an unrestricted number of additional resident permits at a charge of £20 each, provided the vehicles are registered to the property.
- 4.21 It was also highlighted that in many town centre areas shared use facilities are in place, incorporating pay and display machines or limited waiting time restrictions with an exemption for permits. This supports town centre vitality by allowing visitors to park in these areas. The Sub-group was asked to consider whether a resident visitor permit should be valid in a shared use scheme or whether all visitors should be expected to use the pay and display facility instead or comply with any limited parking restriction in operation.

### **Resident Permit Charges**

- 4.22 One of the key issues to be considered by the Sub-group was financing of the permit system, and whether permit charges should be introduced and/or increased in order to contribute to the viability of the system and the funding of new schemes, particularly in the light of budget reductions.
- 4.23 Officers highlighted that, historically, funding for new schemes had come from the Integrated Transport Block Capital Allocation which is provided by central government and also covers other areas such as road safety. This funding had been reduced by 44% from 2016/17, although the level of demand for permit schemes has not reduced. It was noted that each new scheme costs around £5,000-£15,000 to implement, with additional costs for ongoing maintenance and enforcement. Therefore the Council is not in a position to implement as many new schemes as in the past. As a consequence, many schemes that meet the Council's criteria for a scheme (approximately 20 schemes in 2015-16) go untreated as there is insufficient budget available to install the scheme.
- 4.24 Members noted that demand for resident permit schemes is significant with around 100 requests received for new schemes per year. Officers suggested that members may want to review the assessment criteria for agreeing new schemes to ensure it is fair. There was also be a need to consider the impact

of resident parking schemes in commercial areas, and whether only shared-use schemes should be considered in these areas in order to support town centre vitality.

- 4.25 Members considered information showing the current income from each type of permit and potential income that would be generated from different cost levels. It was noted that, based on the experience of Gateshead Council, any introduction of a charge for permits is likely to lead to an initial reduction in demand for permits of up to 30%, although the exact impact is difficult to predict.
- 4.26 Members also considered charging levels in neighbouring authorities and noted that whilst most authorities charged, there are a range of charges in place, some on a sliding scale with higher charges for multiple permits per household.

### **Consultation with Residents**

- 4.27 The Sub-group invited a group of residents to attend a meeting of the Sub-group to share their views on various aspects of the current permit parking system and options for changing the system. Residents were invited via the Council's residents' panel. In addition, Councillors identified some residents who had a particular interest in having a permit scheme in their area. The Sub-group also received a number of written submissions from residents with an interest in the issue.
- 4.28 Some of the key points raised during the discussion with residents were:
- There was general agreement that permit systems are beneficial to residents in certain situations, particularly when residents are in competition with businesses and public services for parking space.
  - A particular issue was highlighted of unknown vehicles being parked for lengthy periods in residential areas, causing problems where parking space is limited. In these situations it was felt that a resident parking scheme would be fair and welcome.
  - Resident permit schemes can result in displacement of parking problems to neighbouring streets and there is a need to promote more use of public transport.
  - Many residents were of the view that a permit scheme would be advantageous to their particular street/area.



## Charging for Permits/Financing new schemes

- There was general agreement that charging for permits was reasonable, and that residents would be willing to pay for permits if it helped to address parking issues and could generate income towards new schemes.
- The terms of permit schemes need to be adapted to suit the needs of the situation. For example, in some areas there is a specific issue in relation to evening parking so evening restrictions are more relevant in these areas. In other areas, where commuter traffic was a significant issue, a core-time only i.e. morning and afternoon would be appropriate.
- If charges are introduced or increased this would lead to a greater expectation from residents that schemes would be enforced.

## Use of Technology:

- There was a general view that the current on-line renewal system was easy to use and most would be in favour of the introduction of a virtual permit system.
- Some residents raised concern that some residents may not have access to the internet, or have the skills to use a virtual system, particularly older residents.
- In general, residents' were positive about the introduction of an on-line application with automatic validation/virtual permit system.

## Visitor Parking:

- Multiple visitor permits can be useful in certain circumstances such as social gatherings or when having building work done.
- There is a need to make parking restrictions clear, particularly in pay and display areas, as it can be confusing if there are lots of different restrictions/permit times within a small area.

## Eligibility Criteria

- A residents' parking schemes is most appropriate where:
  - a) the uncontrolled demand for on-street parking will be close to or exceed kerb capacity on a regular basis and
  - b) extraneous parking (i.e. parking not generated in the area itself) contributes significantly to that demand.

- It is of fundamental importance that criteria measure the extent to which these conditions are met. The assessment and prioritisation should be transparent so that members and the public can readily appreciate the basis on which decisions are made. However, it is also important that the assessment process is cost-effective and does not require an undue level of officer resources to manage.

### **Multiple Visitor Parking**

4.29 It was noted that a scratchcard system is also currently in place in permit areas, with residents able to buy scratchcards at a cost of £1 for 3 hours parking. This is intended to cover instances where residents may have multiple visitors for temporary periods, such as social gatherings. In line with a move away from paper based permits where possible, it was suggested that these scratchcards be discontinued and replaced by an online virtual solution. It was also agreed that an additional system be put in place to allow residents to telephone the Parking Control team who would be able to book visitor parking slots for them and take payment. This would support those who may not have direct access to the internet or are unable to use the virtual system. The charge would remain £1 for 3 hours but only be applicable in permit only restrictions. In shared use facilities, multiple visitors would be expected to comply with the restriction in operation i.e. pay and display or a restriction on the length of stay.

### **Conclusions**

- 4.30 Having considered all of the information in relation to resident permits, the Sub-group concluded that the Council should continue to operate a resident permit system as these schemes are valued by residents. However the current system would benefit from being revised and simplified.
- 4.31 The Sub-group was of the view that the system should be self-financing and the income from permit charges should cover the costs of the system, enhanced enforcement and, if possible, provide a surplus to help fund the installation of new permit parking schemes.

### **Recommendations:**

The Sub-group recommend that the following revised scheme be adopted in relation to resident permits:

4 That resident parking permits be made available as follows:

- An annual charge of £25 to be introduced for all resident permits, with the charge reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the costs of the service can be met;

- To allow a maximum of 3 non-transferable resident permits per household, plus 1 transferrable resident visitor permit, each at an annual cost of £25;
- Households with an appropriate off-road parking facility to be restricted to 2 resident permits per household, plus 1 transferrable resident visitor permit;
- Resident permits to be virtual permits registered by vehicle registration number and implemented via a virtual system;
- All permits to be renewed on an annual basis with the charge implemented at the next renewal;
- One transferrable residents' visitor permit to be available per household at a charge of £25 – this would be a transferable paper based permit;
- One transferrable resident visitor permit to be made available to households within shared use permit schemes at a charge of £25
- The current paper-based scratchcard system for multiple visitors be discontinued and replaced with a virtual system, with an option for residents to telephone the parking services team who would be able to book time on-line. This option would continue to be specific to permit only restrictions and charged at £1 for a maximum of 3 hours.

5 That the Council only consider shared use schemes (i.e. limited waiting with an exemption for permits or pay and display with an exemption for permits) in areas that have a high level of commercial demand, to support the vitality of these areas.

This should apply to all schemes moving forward, but would not be retro fit to such areas that already have a resident-only permit scheme.

6 That the income generated from permits to be used to support the operational costs of the permit parking system and consideration be given to any surplus generated to be used to fund new permit parking schemes that meet the Council's criteria and wider network management objectives.

7 That the following modified parking assessment criteria be adopted:

Criteria	Level
1. Amount of on-street parking available	at least 85% of parking space occupied for at least 3 hours per day
2. Amount of on-street parking used by non-residents	at least 30% of parked vehicles estimated to be non-residents
3. Only shared use restrictions to be implemented in areas that have commercial demand	-
4. Hours of restriction to be appropriate to the parking problem identified	-
5. Level of resident support for scheme	at least 51% of households in the street to respond in favour

8 That the introduction of the new system will include a guarantee that permit areas will be monitored for enforcement at least once per day.

9 That existing permit schemes can be withdrawn in instances where a majority of households within a scheme do not wish the scheme to continue.

### **Business Permits**

4.32 The Sub-group considered the scheme for business permits.

4.33 As background information, the Sub-group received information on the current business permit scheme. It was noted that business permits are available for essential operational vehicles only, and are not to be used as a standard parking permit for use by staff working at the business. There are no limits on the number of permits that can be applied for, as long as they are for essential operational use. Permits are transferable between essential operational vehicles.

4.34 This Sub-group noted that it can be difficult for officers make judgements on whether an application meets the criteria of essential operational use, and this has lead to complaints about inconsistencies.

4.35 The Sub-group noted that, under the previous administration, the charge for the first two business permits was reduced from £250 to £50, with additional permits charged at £250. This has resulted in a significant increase in take up of business permits and complaints of alleged abuse from residents about these permits being used on non-essential operational vehicles.

- 4.36 It was noted that a variety of scratch cards are also in use by businesses. Business scratchcards are available to purchase which allow parking for 3 hours in permit only areas and are specific to the zone in which the business is operating. Scratchcard vouchers for business were initially established to support the annual permit and intended for essential operational vehicles only. In addition, some scratchcard vouchers have been made available to businesses in Tynemouth for use by customers. These vouchers were introduced to address specific issues raised by businesses in Tynemouth Village following the introduction of a residents parking scheme.
- 4.37 The Sub-group also considered the approach to business permits in neighbouring authorities. Many authorities also restrict business permits to essential operational use and many have a limit of two permits per business. Others allow an unlimited number of permits and allow permits to be allocated to staff working at the business, but charge on a sliding scale, with very high charges in town centre areas.

### **Consultation with Business Representatives**

- 4.38 As part of the review, the Sub-group invited business representatives to a meeting of the Sub-group to share their views on the current business permit system. Representatives of the North Shields, Whitley Bay and Wallsend Chambers of Trade, and the Tynemouth Business Forum, were invited to attend. In addition some business owners from the borough who had expressed an interest in the permit system were also in attendance.
- 4.39 The key issues raised by the business representatives included:
- The permit system can't be considered in isolation, without including wider parking issues.
  - That different areas of the borough have different issues and may therefore need different solutions. For example, North Shields, Whitley Bay and Wallsend town centres do not have the same issue of a shortage of parking as experienced in Tynemouth Village.
  - Although the current permit system is complicated, some of the additional measures were fought for by businesses and need to be retained – this particularly applies to some of the additional scratchcard options introduced in Tynemouth Village.
  - One business owner highlighted an issue with the criteria used to identify eligibility for business permits and the difficulties she had faced in obtaining a permit and the subsequent impact that this has had on running the business.

- That a balance is needed between the needs of businesses and residents, and that shops and businesses are important to the vitality of towns and villages.
- Some business owners felt that it would be beneficial for all businesses to be eligible to purchase one permit, to be used by the owner of the business to allow them to access and operate their business, without having to comply with any eligibility criteria. This would mitigate the need for Council officers to make judgements on whether a permit is needed for essential operational reasons.
- However if no restriction on numbers were imposed this could impact on the availability of parking for customers in the town centre. It was also highlighted that if parking permits are specific to a vehicle they can't be used to accommodate loading by delivery vehicles in areas with no loading bays, which was one of the original purposes of business permits.
- There were some discussions around current abuse of business permits and some examples were highlighted of vehicles with business permits being parked for long periods of time without any obvious use for operational purposes.
- The North Shields Chamber of Trade representative stressed the need for free parking to be available on the periphery of the town centre, and that the Chambers were not in favour of free parking in central town centre areas, unless the length of stay was restricted and actively enforced, as this could impact on turnover and availability of customer parking space. The representative from the North Shields Chamber of Trade also had reservations about the suggestion to allow all businesses to purchase one permit without restrictions, as this could have a detrimental impact on the availability of spaces in the town centre.
- A view was expressed in favour of the current charges for business permit, with the first 2 at lower charge of £50 per annum and the third and additional permits at a higher charge of £250 per annum.
- A suggestion was put forward for a borough-wide permit that could be purchased by residents and businesses for use in car parks across the borough for a 2 hour period.
- It was suggested that there needs to be a clear process for the allocation of business permits and that this needs to be clearly communicated to the business community. It was also suggested that a clear appeal process should also be in place, possibly with a final appeal to an independent panel.
- There was some discussion about the type of criteria and the evidence that should be provided to make the allocation of permits fairer. It was

acknowledged that it is difficult to develop specific criteria because the needs of different types of business can be very different.

- There was some discussion about encouraging people to use public transport and whether there is any scope to work with Nexus to encourage this.
- There was some discussion about specific issues in Tynemouth Village. It was noted that many town centre areas have shared use facilities to support the needs of residents and businesses. However, in Tynemouth Village there is resident permit only parking at weekends in residential areas, which created operational issues for businesses due to the limited parking provision available and the high demand for parking.
- There were mixed views about the scratchcard system in Tynemouth Village with some businesses suggesting that the 3 hour scratchcard that were being distributed to customers was not as effective as it should be due to logistical issues in obtaining them. Other businesses were in favour of keeping the 4 hour scratchcards for Front Street, Tynemouth in support of customers using services such as hairdressers.

### **Submission from the Chamber of Trade**

4.40 The three Chambers of Trade submitted a joint written submission containing the following points to the Sub-group:

- They recognise the financial pressures the Council is under;
- There is free parking at out of town outlets, which influences customers;
- Parking should be cost-neutral from a revenue generating point of view;
- Car parking is a key factor in business success;
- Free parking in town centres is essential;
- There is not a uniform charging policy across North Tyneside – parking charges are inconsistent;
- There is an issue with delivery vehicles to business in commercial centres;
- There needs to be more public transport and cycling provision in town centres;
- Parking/permits are complicated and there are no easy answers;
- The Chamber of Trade appreciate the Sub-group engaging with them and allowing an opportunity to highlight the needs of the different business communities across the borough;
- It is the view of the Chambers that somebody should be nominated to look at the parking and permit issues and make progress, but that a committee may not be the best way of doing this.

## Conclusions

- 4.41 Members considered all issues in relation to business permits. It was acknowledged that there are difficulties in devising a single system to cover the whole borough, but the Sub-group was of a view that action was needed to reduce the complexity of the current system. It was also acknowledged that wider parking issues are relevant to the bigger picture and have particular relevance in some areas, but recommendations in relation to general parking issues were outside of the remit of this review.
- 4.42 The Sub-group was in favour of recommending a borough wide permit scheme with the aim of achieving consistency across the borough. There would, however, be scope for the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing and Transport to consider the parking conditions of individual schemes, in order to address any issues specific to those areas.
- 4.43 Members recognised the difficulty officers experienced in making judgements on the essential operational need of vehicles due to the diversity of businesses in the borough. For this reason the Sub-group was in favour of moving to a system that would allow all businesses a limited number of permits on request at a standard charge. The Sub-group discussed the impact of this change and acknowledged that there could be an impact on the availability of parking for visitors/customers in town centre areas and some residential areas. It was agreed that this would have to be kept under review. In addition, there would be a potential loss of income from pay and display machines in town centres and this would have to be accounted for when considering viable charging levels for business permits.
- 4.44 The Sub-group were minded to set a maximum of 2 permits per business, however, given that it was difficult to predict the likely take up from businesses, and therefore the possible impact, it was suggested that the option should be introduced in phases. It was therefore proposed that all businesses should be restricted to one business permit per business initially, to be reviewed after a year of operation.
- 4.45 The Sub-group also noted that business permits are currently restricted to a single zone in which the business is located. It was suggested by Members that this be widened to cover an operational area i.e. Whitley Bay, North Shields, Wallsend, Tynemouth rather than the specific zone that the business is based in order to create more flexibility in the system.
- 4.46 In relation to scratchcards, the Sub-group was of the view that the majority of scratchcards should be discontinued, in line with the aim of moving away from paper-based permits. The exception to this would be tradesman permits and the bed and breakfast permit which should continue at an increased charge.



## Recommendations:

The Sub-group recommend that the following revised scheme be adopted in relation to business permits:

- 10 All businesses to be permitted to apply for one transferable business permit, at a charge of £250 per annum, with no requirement for the vehicle to be for essential operational use.
- 11 Permits to be transferable paper-based permits, limited by area rather than zone i.e. Whitley Bay, North Shields, Tynemouth, etc., with an online application process and eligibility checked against business rate information or other verification criteria.
- 12 The impact of this revised system to be reviewed after a year.
- 13 All current scratchcards for business use to be discontinued, with the exception of:
  - Tradesman permit – £1 for 3 hours, only applicable in permit only restrictions;
  - Bed and breakfast permit - to be continued but charge to be increased to £5 for 24 hours, valid in shared use and permit only restrictions.

In line with other proposals, these permits will be temporary virtual permits with an on-line application system.

## Miscellaneous permits

4.47 It was noted that there are currently a range of other permits/scratchcard vouchers available, and these could be rationalised.

### Recommendations:

The Sub-group recommend that the following be adopted in relation to Other/Miscellaneous permits:

- 14 Care home resident permits be retained with the charge increased to £25 in line with the recommended charge for resident permits. These would be transferrable paper-based permits.
- 15 That the community workers permit and clock system be retained, with the charge increased from £20 to £25 in line with the recommended charge for resident permits, and the maximum length of stay reduced to 2 hours.
- 16 That Council permits be retained with the charge increased from £20 to £25 in line with the recommended charge for resident permits.  
  
The above permit options would all have an on-line application process.
- 17 That the current company car resident permit be discontinued, with residents able to use their transferable residents visitor permit, or to register a change of registration number via the virtual system, as required.
- 18 Church and community centre permits be discontinued as current take up is low.

## 5. Background Information

- Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee report, Establishment of Sub-group – parking permits – 5 October 2015
- Background Reports and notes of meetings of the Parking Permit Sub-group
- North Tyneside Council Parking Strategy 2012-2016

## **6. Acknowledgements**

- 6.1 The Sub-group would like to place on record its thanks to the following for the information, support and advice they have provided:

Garry Hoyle – Parking & Regulation Manager (Capita)  
Andrew Flynn – Integrated Transport Manager  
Colin MacDonald – Senior Manager, Technical and Regulatory Services  
Sean Collier – Business and Enterprise  
Joanne Holmes – Democratic Services Officer

### North Tyneside Residents:

Ms D Pearson  
Mr P Shiels  
Mr and Mrs White  
Mrs E Clark  
Mr D Mather  
Mr S Barrigan  
Ms C Hussey  
Dr J Leeson  
Mr S Ovens  
Ms J Smith

### Business Representatives:

Mr D Bavaird – North Shields Chamber of Trade  
Mr M Holmes – Tynemouth Business Forum  
Ms J Tolson – Whitley Bay Chamber of Trade  
Ms J Keddy – Children of the Revolution – Tynemouth  
Ms M Lawson – Green Beret, Howard Street, North Shields  
Ms S Szikora – Howard Street, North Shields

Chris Murphy – Mouchel

## Summary of Recommendations

### Technology Solutions

The Sub-group recommend:

- 1 That a virtual permit system be introduced for the administration of parking permits, subject to consideration of the most appropriate model/software to meet the Council's needs.
- 2 That initially a hybrid virtual permit system should be introduced, with non-transferable resident permits being virtual, and transferable permits, such as residents' visitor permits, being paper-based. Both options would have an on-line application facility to improve the service to the customer. The hybrid system would be reviewed at the end of the first year to see if a fully virtual option was recommended.
- 3 That the virtual permit system be implemented across the borough simultaneously, with support for residents available via customer service centres as required.

### Resident Permits:

The Sub-group recommend that the following revised scheme be adopted in relation to resident permits:

- 4 That resident parking permits be made available as follows:
  - An annual charge of £25 to be introduced for all resident permits, with the charge reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the costs of the service can be met;
  - To allow a maximum of 3 non-transferable resident permits per household, plus 1 transferrable residents visitor permit, each at an annual cost of £25;
  - Households with an appropriate off-road parking facility to be restricted to 2 resident permits per household, plus 1 transferrable residents' visitor permit;
  - Resident permits to be virtual permits registered by vehicle registration number and implemented via a virtual system;
  - All permits to be renewed on an annual basis with the charge implemented at the next renewal;

- One transferrable residents visitor permit to be available per household at a charge of £25 – this would be a transferable paper based permit;
- One transferrable residents visitor permit to be made available to households within shared use permit schemes at a charge of £25
- The current paper-based scratchcard system for multiple visitors be discontinued and replaced with a virtual system, with an option for residents to telephone the parking services team who would be able to book time on-line. This option would continue to be specific to permit only restrictions and charged at £1 for a maximum of 3 hours.

5 That the Council only consider shared use schemes (i.e. limited waiting with an exemption for permits or pay and display with an exemption for permits) in areas that have a high level of commercial demand, to support the vitality of these areas.

This should apply to all schemes moving forward, but would not be retro fit to such areas that already have a resident-only permit scheme.

6 That the income generated from permits to be used to support the operational costs of the permit parking system and consideration be given to any surplus generated to be used to fund new permit parking schemes that meet the Council's criteria and wider network management objectives.

7 That the following modified parking assessment criteria be adopted:

Criteria	Level
1. Amount of on-street parking available	at least 85% of parking space occupied for at least 3 hours per day
2. Amount of on-street parking used by non-residents	at least 30% of parked vehicles estimated to be non-residents
3. Only shared use restrictions to be implemented in areas that have commercial demand	-
4. Hours of restriction to be appropriate to the parking problem identified	-
5. Level of resident support for scheme	at least 51% of households in the street to respond in favour

8 That the introduction of the new system will include a guarantee that permit areas will be monitored for enforcement at least once per day.

- 9 That existing permit schemes can be withdrawn in instances where a majority of households within a scheme do not wish the scheme to continue.

### **Business Permits:**

The Sub-group recommend that the following revised scheme be adopted in relation to business permits:

- 10 All businesses to be permitted to apply for one transferable business permit, at a charge of £250 per annum, with no requirement for the vehicle to be for essential operational use.
- 11 Permits to be transferable paper-based permits, limited by area rather than zone, with an on line application process and eligibility checked against business rate information or other verification criteria.
- 12 The impact of this revised system to be reviewed after a year.
- 13 All current scratchcards for business use to be discontinued, with the exception of:
- Tradesman permit – £1 for 3 hours, only applicable in permit only restrictions;
  - Bed and breakfast permit - to be continued but charge to be increased to £5 for 24 hours, valid in shared use and permit only restrictions.

In line with other proposals, these permits will be temporary virtual permits with an on-line application system.

## Miscellaneous permits

The Sub-group recommend that the following be adopted in relation to other/miscellaneous permits:

- 14 Care home resident permits be retained with the charge increased to £25 in line with the recommended charge for resident permits. These would be transferrable paper-based permits.
- 15 That the community workers permit and clock system be retained, with the charge increased from £20 to £25 in line with the recommended charge for resident permits, and the maximum length of stay reduced to 2 hours.
- 16 That Council permits be retained with the charge increased from £20 to £25 in line with the recommended charge for Resident permits.

The above permits options would all have an on-line application process.

- 17 That the current company car resident permit be discontinued, with residents able to use their transferable residents' visitor permit, or to register a change of registration number via the virtual system, as required.
- 18 Church and community centre permits be discontinued as current take up is low.

### The Current Permit System

There are 12 types of Permits in operations within the Borough:

- Resident Permits (free) – 3,842 (non-transferrable)
- Resident Company Car Permits (free) – 160 (transferrable)
- Resident Permits (charged) – 826 (non-transferrable)
- Resident Company Car Permits (charged) – 84 (transferrable)
- Foreshore Permits (charged) – 286 (non-transferrable)
- Community Workers Permit (charged) – 83 (non-transferrable)
- Residents' Visitor Permits (free) – 5,318 (transferrable)
- Church/Community Centres (free) – 17 (transferrable)
- Care Home Resident (free) – 52 (transferrable)
- Business Permits (charged) – 244 (transferrable)
- Car Park Permit (charged) – 59 (transferrable)
- Staff Permits (charged) – 195 (transferrable)

There are also 7 different types of temporary scratchcards in operation:

- Residents – 3 hour max stay, does not apply to P&D facilities
- Businesses – 3 hour max stay, does not apply to P&D facilities
- Church/Community Centres – 3 hour max stay, does not apply to P&D facilities
- Landlords – 3 hour max stay, does not apply to P&D facilities
- Tradesman – 3 hour max stay, does not apply to P&D facilities
- Hotels/Bed & Breakfast – 1 day max stay, applies in permit and P&D facilities
- Businesses (Front Street, Tynemouth) – 4 hour max stay in P&D facility

(Number of permits as of November 2015)