



WA DRAFT Response

CONSULTATION ON A REVISED BASIS FOR CHARGING IN RESIDENTS' PARKING ZONES

The Widcombe Association has considered the proposals by the Council to change the basis of charging vehicles for parking within Residents' Parking Zones. We understand and agree with the reasons for seeking to reduce emissions from road traffic, but the scheme being proposed by the Council would be unfair and, we believe, would have only a marginal impact on emissions.

At present only part of the City is covered by Residents' Parking Zones. From the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy it is clear that it is the Council's intention to extend Residents' Parking Zones to other parts of the City, but there is no timescale for this and no guarantee that residents in the outer parts of Bath would accept them.

The proposed graduated charges would only apply within Residents' Parking Zones, and would only affect those households with no off-road parking. Residents who have off-street parking or who live outside a Parking Zone would be able to use their cars with no additional charge. Thus, the strategy would be aimed solely at those within Zones with no off-street parking. This means that only a section of the total number of vehicle owners within the City would be charged on the basis of their propensity to create emissions, whilst others, probably the majority, would have no such penalty. Residents who park on the street also have the lowest ability to switch to electric vehicles because of the lack of on-street charging.

This is unfair and discriminatory. Even if the whole of the City was covered by Residents' Parking Zones, there would still be discrimination between those with off-street parking and those without.

It is worth reflecting on the reasons for the introduction of Residents' Parking Zones in the first place. They came about because the Council wished to deter commuter parking on-street within and around the centre, and to encourage journeys to the central area by more sustainable means. Residents in these zones generally accepted the trade-off between the charges levied and the benefit of not having to compete with commuters and others for parking spaces near their homes.

We also believe that the level of additional charges being proposed are unlikely to have any real impact on emissions. An additional charge of say, £25 per annum is not going to suggest to a driver that he or she should change their car. So whilst we appreciate the need to nudge people towards more sustainable travel, we believe that this is a poorly thought-out and unequitable policy that is perhaps aimed more at raising revenue rather than reducing emissions. It is not unreasonable that the Council should seek a modest increase in residents parking charges and visitor permit charges as the current fees have been in place for some years, but this should be across the board.

We believe some aspects of the proposals would be welcomed by residents such as the inclusion of Sundays within the charging regime. In principle the restrictions on hotels, guest house and holidays- lets sound reasonable, however we question whether the option of a city-centre car park only is workable for areas outside of the central zone like Widcombe & Lyncombe.

Over the past two years the Council has introduced a range of policies aimed at reducing the impacts of vehicles across the City, most of which have still to be implemented. We suggest that the Council concentrates on the implementation of those already agreed and sets aside this discriminatory and poorly considered proposal. Differential charging for residents' own vehicles is not, in our view, the best way to reduce omissions.



We believe that there is a compelling case to undertake a fundamental review of transport and parking strategy and bringing together the various new strands of policy that the Council has been promoting over the past two years. As part of that review we suggest that the Council should consider better ways to reduce emissions and control parking, especially within and around the City Centre including a) reconsideration of the omission of Class D vehicles from the Clean Air Zone charging regime, b) provision and extending use of park & rides, c) implementation of the liveable neighbourhood policy, and d) consideration of using existing legislation to introduce a Work Place parking levy.