



Northumberland

County Council

PETITIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 OCTOBER 2018

PETITION REQUESTING PARKING PERMITS FOR WORKERS IN ALNWICK

Report of the Interim Executive Director of Place, Paul Johnston

Cabinet Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson, Environment and Local Services

Purpose of report

To acknowledge the petition received requesting parking permits for workers in Alnwick and to agree the Council's response.

Recommendations

- 1) The Petitions Committee notes the issues raised in the petition.
- 2) The Petitions Committee notes the significant amount of work and engagement that has taken place following the Parking Study and the ongoing work to secure additional long stay parking.
- 3) The request for workers parking permits is not supported for the reasons set out in this report.

Key Issues

1. A petition of 393 signatures has been received requesting parking permits for workers in Alnwick.
2. The petition has been submitted following recent changes to some of the parking restrictions in Alnwick which were agreed as a result of the recent parking studies. The changes increased the amount of short stay parking by reducing the amount of long stay.
3. The petition states: "*The proposed parking changes will make parking for the workers in Alnwick impossible for the entirety of their shift. We are concerned*

citizens who urge our council to consider our proposal to give the workers parking permits.”

Background

4. In 2017 the County Council commissioned 4 parking studies covering the key market towns of Alnwick, Berwick, Hexham and Morpeth. The parking studies sought to establish the current parking utilisation levels within each area, estimate future demand, identify any issues and concerns and come forward with recommendations for improvements.
5. The findings and recommendations of the consultants' studies were widely publicised in the local media and made available on the Council's web page, with residents, all Town and Parish Councils and other stakeholders being able to submit their comments to the Council for consideration. In addition the studies and recommendations were discussed with each of the four town councils, local County Councillors and other key stakeholders through a series of face to face engagement activities. This provided a strong evidence base upon which to develop Parking Action Plans for each town.
6. One of the issues identified in Alnwick was that the presence of long stay parking was restricting capacity for short stay trips which may be detrimental to the local economy. A quick turnover of short term spaces is critical in providing sufficient capacity and supporting the viability of the town centre. A similar situation is evident in each of the key towns.
7. Survey work undertaken for the parking study showed that car parks in Alnwick fill up quite early in the day and turnover is low. This suggests that they are heavily used by town centre employees for long stay parking. Again a similar situation is evident in each of the key towns.
8. Although providing somewhere for workers to park is important, the Parking Study states that long stay parking in the town centre *“is not considered to be effective use of a limited resource and it encourages reliance on the car, even for those who could walk, cycle or car share. Increasing the turnover of each space multiplies its effectiveness and brings more economic activity to the town centres.”*
9. A common view expressed during engagement with stakeholders was that the introduction of free parking had led to an increase in parking by workers who use up much of the available parking to the detriment of visitors and shoppers.
10. The Parking Study therefore recommended replacing some long stay parking with short stay, with the caveat that alternative long stay provision should be considered to ensure staff can still access their jobs. For each of the towns including Alnwick, this recommendation was endorsed by stakeholders and incorporated into the Alnwick Parking Action Plan.
11. Specifically, the agreed action for Alnwick was to replace the 72 long stay parking spaces in Greenwell Road car park A (located behind Alnwick Playhouse) with short stay parking of up to 3 hours. This change would leave 258 long stay parking

spaces in off street car parks in the town centre. In comparison, Berwick has 285 long stay parking spaces, excluding the railway station.

12. In addition, Alnwick Town Council identified a need to reduce the 2 hour parking bays on Bondgate Within outside Costa coffee shop to 30 minutes in order to increase turnover in the centre of the shopping area.
13. These changes were implemented in July and August this year.
14. Notice of the changes was advertised in the local press and on site which led to the submission of the petition requesting parking permits for workers who would now find it more difficult to park due to the reduction in long stay parking provision.
15. It should be noted that the Council is currently investigating potential sites for the provision of additional long stay parking in Alnwick and the other key towns. This is a further action included in the agreed Alnwick Parking Action Plan.

Existing Parking Permits in Northumberland

16. Currently the following types of parking permits are available in Northumberland:
 - a. *Northumberland Pay & Display Permit*: This is for use in the Council's pay and display car parks and costs £48 for three months, £70 for six months or £130 for one year.
 - b. *Community Worker Permit*: These are available for those who work 'on call' for an organisation that provides emergency/urgent health or social care to patients in the community. They currently cost £15, are valid for two years and can only be used in the vehicle specified on the permit.
 - c. *Residents Parking Permits*: Those who live in a residential property within a residents' parking scheme area, i.e. 'permit holders only', may apply for a permit to park during restricted hours. A permit does not guarantee a parking space outside of a property, because resident bays aren't allocated to individual properties. Eligible residents can apply for up to two permits per property - one for a registered vehicle and one visitor permit at a current cost of £15 per permit for one year.
17. The petition calls for 'workers parking permits' to allow staff to park for 'the entirety of their shift'. This would mean that those with a permit would be able to park for longer than the time limit in place, effectively allowing long stay parking in short stay spaces.
18. If workers permits were to be introduced it is felt that this would be something that would need to be considered across the County rather than just in Alnwick, as workers in similar communities would feel that the same situation applies.
19. As explained above, the short stay parking was introduced following a comprehensive parking study which was endorsed by local elected members and stakeholders, and is intended to support the town centre economy. To allow long stay permit parking by workers in these spaces would clearly be contrary to this. It would also encourage reliance on the private care and provide a disincentive for

workers to use more sustainable forms of transport, such as walking, cycling or the bus.

20. As well as the principle, there are practical difficulties associated with such a scheme, i.e. which workers would be eligible? how do you prove they are town centre workers? how do you prevent permits being swapped or used when not at work? what happens when a worker changes jobs? There would also be significant cost associated with administration and enforcement of such a scheme.
21. It should also be noted that a 24 hour maximum stay restriction is shortly to be implemented in Council long stay car parks in the main town centres, including Alnwick, which will address the issue of long stay parking by those who 'garage' their vehicles for long periods of time. This will help free up spaces for those who need them.
22. Given the outcomes of the Parking Studies, the subsequent Parking Action Plans and their endorsement by local stakeholders, the need to support town centre economies and the ongoing work to secure additional long stay parking, it is recommended that in line with current policy, workers parking permits are not provided.

Recommendations

- 4) The Petitions Committee notes the issues raised in the petition.
- 5) The Petitions Committee notes the significant amount of work and engagement that has taken place following the Parking Study and the ongoing work to secure additional long stay parking.
- 6) The request for workers parking permits is not supported for the reasons set out in this report.

Implications

Policy	The response to the issues raised in this petition is consistent with the Council's current parking policies.
Finance and value for money	A workers Permit scheme is likely to increase administrative costs
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities	None

(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	None
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Alnwick, All

Background papers:

Alnwick, Berwick, Hexham & Morpeth Parking Studies

Report sign off

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
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