

How are residents' parking schemes considered?

If there is community support for the proposals as a result of a community survey, a detailed design would be prepared for the area.

If local residents have any comments or suggestions about detailed design issues, for example the amount and type of parking that would be most suitable for the area, or double yellow lines across driveways, then the Town Council would be interested in receiving your views at this time.

These proposals will be subject to a statutory consultation process before a final decision is taken about whether or not to proceed. Notices will be put in the press and attached to lamp posts throughout the area to let you know that the scheme is being advertised and what to do if you want to object, or request a minor amendment.

The decision about whether the scheme will be implemented or not will be made once any comments which are received during the statutory consultation have been carefully considered. If a decision is made to implement a scheme, everyone will be written to in the area to let them know.

How long would it take to implement a residents' parking scheme?

It is likely to take around 18 months to implement a residents parking scheme from the time that an initial enquiry is received although there must be strong community support for a scheme before it is introduced.

Who should I contact?

For further information please contact:

Stowmarket Town Council

Milton House
Milton Road South
Stowmarket
Suffolk
IP14 1EZ

T: 01449 612060
W: www.stowmarket.org
E: info@stowmarket.org

For information about alternative options please contact:

Suffolk County Council

Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX

T: 0845 606 6067
W: www.suffolk.gov.uk

your residential parking



Stowmarket Town Council

Stowmarket is growing fast and with this comes the growth of traffic in our town. Planning regulations have also changed over time meaning that new development is of a higher density than in previous years. The result is an increase in parking issues with car ownership on the rise and many homeowners now choosing to use their garages for storage rather than parking their vehicles.

This factsheet identifies what can be done if a community joins together and wishes to introduce a residential parking scheme. Although Stowmarket Town Council is not in charge of parking in the town, it is willing to help support local residents consider the implications of introducing a residential parking scheme. It is also willing to work as an intermediary between local residents and the agencies that have defined responsibilities with regard to highways and parking such as Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and the Police.

Is there anything we can do about the number of cars parked by the kerbside near to our house?

In general, parking in residential areas is unrestricted. In the majority of residential communities this works well. However, there are various reasons why unrestricted parking can become annoying or even hazardous:

- Failure by householders to use their garages or driveways (if they have them)
- Ownership of multiple vehicles by one household
- Use of residential areas near the train station to avoid daily parking charges
- Parking by shoppers near to the town centre
- Parking of business vehicles or the vehicles of employees near to offices where there is insufficient space on the premises
- Parking of workers' vehicles near to a construction site whilst a building project is taking place

Although the introduction of traffic regulations might appear to be the answer to the above problems, their introduction has significant consequences because they apply, generally, to all parking within a defined area. They would prevent householders from parking at the roadside directly outside of their properties during certain hours of the day. This restriction would also apply to visitors, contractors and those providing home support services for the elderly and vulnerable.

The Highways Authority is prepared to consider parking restrictions such as a yellow line on one side of the road or restricted parking along a road for a short period of an hour or so every day.

If you are interested in finding out more about these options it would be useful to contact the Highways Team at Suffolk County Council.

What happens when cars are parked in such a way they can potentially restrict access for emergency vehicles?

The Emergency Services assess each individual situation before deciding how to proceed. They often do not have time to find out which car belongs to who in order to get them moved and will, therefore, adapt their approach. For example, the Ambulance Services will travel on foot with equipment to the patient and then take the person back to the Ambulance if required. The Fire & Rescue Service will use available hoses to access incidents that they are unable to park near to.

What are residents' parking schemes and could we introduce such a scheme in our neighbourhood?

It is possible to introduce a controlled parking zone. Within the zone, parking is wholly or partly restricted to vehicles displaying a permit. In normal circumstances, the permits are only issued to residents living within, or within immediate proximity, of the controlled zone. The hours of operation vary according to each zone but generally schemes operate during the working day from Monday to Saturday every week. The times of operation are shown on roadside signs at the entrance(s) to the residents' parking area.

Anyone parking within a restricted parking zone who does not display a valid permit would receive a fine. If a resident does not comply with the agreed conditions of the scheme, it is possible that a permit may not be renewed.

This sounds good — what are the advantages of a residents' parking scheme?

There are some significant advantages as follows:

1. Residents that do not have any, or sufficient, off-street parking, have a better chance of parking nearer to their homes.
2. There may be improved accessibility for residents and emergency vehicles and a lower risk of accidents.
3. There may be less risk of conflict between local residents and others seeking to park in the area.
4. The appearance of the area may be improved with fewer vehicles being parked during the working day although extra signage would be required.
5. The removal of opportunities for commuter parking in residential areas encourages consideration of alternative modes of transport and contributes to the reduction of congestion.

Are there any disadvantages of introducing a residents' parking scheme?

There are some significant disadvantages as follows:

1. There are no guaranteed parking spaces on the roadside even if parking permits are purchased. The ability to park will depend upon the capacity of the road and the number of permits issued.
2. Temporary permits may be required at additional cost for visitors including friends, relatives, home help services, tradespeople etc.

3. The area of the scheme can be difficult to determine. Only a limited number of properties may be experiencing a problem but the proposed scheme would have to cover a wider area or otherwise, the outcome would be to displace the problem further down the road, or into a neighbouring street. Therefore, the introduction of a scheme would have to offer a solution for the whole of the local community if it is to be implemented.
4. Community support for a residential parking scheme can be restricted to a few individuals who are passionate about the issue. Obtaining wider support and a clear consensus from the local community is important. Because the introduction of a residents' parking scheme can have significant implications for the local community, it is important that we receive at least a 60% response rate from those living within the proposed restricted parking zone and of those responding, at least 60% support the scheme before it is introduced.
5. The scheme would need to be self-financing and meet the following costs:
 - Funding start-up costs of preparing a traffic order for the scheme;
 - Providing and installing local infrastructure including signage and road markings;
 - Meeting administration costs in dealing with enquires, processing applications, handling payments, issuing permits and dealing with non-payment by householders; and
 - Enforcement costs in funding staff to monitor parking and issue fixed penalties.

How much would a scheme cost to run each year?

The costs of a scheme will depend upon a number of factors such as the size of the area, the number of participating households, the frequency of enforcement in the locality and the scope to combine with another residents' parking scheme in the town to share costs. Therefore, it is difficult to predict the costs and they may fall within a broad range of £40 to £100 per permit each year.

What should you do if you are interested in introducing a residents' parking scheme in your area?

Although Stowmarket Town Council is not responsible for highways or parking, it has agreed to help with enquiries about residents' parking schemes. Therefore, in the first instance, you are welcome to contact the Town Council to discuss the problems that you are facing and the implication of introducing a residents' parking scheme in your area. This initial meeting is likely to involve the Town Clerk and/or your local Town Councillor. Contact details for the Town Council are provided at the bottom of this factsheet.

If you are interested in pursuing the introduction of a scheme following this initial meeting, the next step would be for you to invite local residents to a public meeting to discuss the matter further.

At the public meeting, it will be necessary to establish the level of public support for the introduction of a residents' parking scheme. If there is strong local support, an expression of interest should be submitted to the Town Council.

The Town Council will notify Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and the Police that there has been an expression of interest made. The viability of such a scheme will be considered and draft proposals developed as a basis for local consultation. Meetings will also be held with local Councillors and key stakeholders to brief them on the proposals.

A community survey would need to be undertaken using a questionnaire. Information about the public survey would be provided on the Town Council's website and details provided to the local media.

The survey will be used to establish the level of public support for the introduction of a residents' parking scheme and to obtain suggestions from the local community about how it might operate in practice. The costs of the survey would fall upon the local community involved in the survey.