

Dear Councillor

I am writing to draw your attention to a number of issues surrounding the recent CPZ (Controlled Parking Zone) proposals. I would ask you to seriously consider encouraging your fellow councillors to scrap these plans and go back to the drawing board, to enable constructive meaningful consultation between members, officers and the people that members are elected to represent across the whole of the city.

The plan to introduce CPZ's to a number of areas within the city has been outlined by this current administration in a devious underhand way. It suggests a positive spin on this scheme by outlining an increase in the number of parking bays for residents. Whilst this is true, it neglects to highlight the real and hidden costs of implementing such a scheme in these areas, as well as the flawed way in which the consultation was carried out.

The consultation with some areas started back as far as June 2005. Wellfield Road Traders Association headed by Philip Kay was invited to offer his thoughts on the initial plans from the onset. No other areas were involved at this stage. That Traders Association who fully understood the implications of this scheme, then worked with the officers and the consultants JMP to devise a plan which traders could live with, but meant residents giving up part of their streets to shared resident and pay and display bays. Residents were not involved in the amendments of this plan in that area. In other areas of the city consultants met with local representatives from business and a hastily put together process paid lip service to anything meaningful. The consultation was to last for four weeks, but by the time the paperwork went out, it barely lasted three weeks. Consultants were on hand in the library, but were evasive and vague in the way they answered many constructive questions put to them by residents. It was anticipated, I feel sure the council believed there would be very little opposition to this scheme apart from that of traders. No meaningful informative consultation, where people could be aware of all the facts of implementing this scheme, was passed out to the public. Over 500 people attended a public meeting in Canton, which demonstrates the feelings against this scheme. – This attendance was directly as a result of the full implications of the scheme being made available to the people who turned out.

It is my understanding from the council that in excess of twenty eight thousand questionnaires were sent out across the city. 3700 of the 4200 were deemed appropriate to be included in the return figures (as these were considered residents of the proposed areas) of which just over 2000 people were in favour of the scheme. People based their decision to vote for this scheme on the scant information the council had supplied. Had people in these areas been in receipt of all the facts of the scheme I am sure there would have been a more dramatic number of questionnaires returned. Cardiff Bay returned so few questionnaires the council decided to dismiss their opinion. The fact that less than 10% of the total number of questionnaires sent out were in favour of the scheme does not give this council a mandate to act on behalf of the 90% that were either against it or apathetic as they were not given full information at the beginning of the consultation. This whole process has been poor from start to finish. I urge you to make this council go back to the drawing board, and start again in this process.

This scheme will decrease the number of parking available for residents not increase it. It will not guarantee you the right to park outside your own home, let alone in your own street. The positioning of the bays will decrease the number of parking spaces available, therefore displaced vehicles due to this will be forced onto other streets, eventually pushing the cars out into areas not affected by the zone. This will then cause a problem, and the council will then seek to bring in additional zones as a result of a problem it has created.

An officer told me that Cardiff Council does not have the expertise or the infrastructure to be able to cope with civilianising the enforcement of this scheme, and will therefore have to put it in the hands of a private company. This council assures the public there will be no clamping, but they do not highlight the fact that vehicles will be towed away, at a recover cost of £300 and illegal parking tickets will cost £60. The council initially muted 120 wardens to police the schemes. This alone without infrastructure costs will bring a wages / uniform bill in excess of £2 million a year. The cost of each pay and display machine is £10k. The cost to put in zones and bays and signage is vast also. This will never be met by pay and display bays and car parks. It will have to be met by eventually driving up the cost of the permits, and the punitive enforcement it has planned under this scheme.

The general consensus around residents across the zones, in particular Canton, is there is no parking problem, merely an enforcement problem. Businesses use off street parking during the day, while residents are in work, and are in the main gone by the time resident's return home. There is a problem on Sunday with churches, as most residents are home, but the current system works. The council has now muted the idea to keep churches happy not to extend the zone to work on a Sunday, so the perceived problem would still be there. Churches do not only operate on a Sunday but provide pastoral activities for the whole community during many days through the week. Bringing in these zones would drive people away, and in essence destroy the communities people have strived so hard to build up over decades.

A recent cross party parliamentary committee reported on the effect that out of town retail developments will eventually have on the high street and communities. They found that in the next 10 years, it is possible that they will have affected the closure of every corner shop forcing people out of the towns and city centred to these retail developments. This will then give them carte blanche to put their prices up and then start charging what they like, as they will have driven all competition out of business. This will happen much quicker if you enforce these zones across our city.

I attended a meeting a few weeks ago at County Hall, where one of your officers, Steve Carroll, told the representatives from the local business community that this scheme is only a pilot and if it is successful it will be rolled out across the city as far as Creigiau.

In other places, such as Brighton, this scheme was brought in, with similar guidelines to what is currently suggested for Cardiff. The scheme there has had a dramatic effect on small businesses and many have closed. Brighton residents are only allowed one permit per household which started off at £5 when first introduced is now £80. A book of 20 visitor tokens is allocated to each household if they chose to buy it, and this allocation is for 12 months. Once a household has used the tokens (had

20 visitors) all visitors then have to use pay and display bays. You can guarantee that once this scheme is in it will not be long before it goes city wide, and the cost to local people will be vast. It is ironic that this council also intends to implement this scheme to be fully operational if it goes ahead within 3 months of the next council elections. Surely this is political suicide as once residents understand the full implications of this scheme, they will certainly use their vote to register their protest. – When it comes to the voter deciding on who to vote for, they will understand that this scheme has been implemented with the current administration who does not have an overall mandate to rule, but will be sanctioned by the council overall. I urge you not to underestimate the undercurrent of feeling over the way this has been brought about. Many people I have spoken are indeed frustrated with the parking situation, but they see it more simply as they live with it day to day as the enforcement is so poor, there is no deterrent and people double park, block places, park in existing permit holders places, and on yellow lines. More traffic wardens would help alleviate the situation.

I am seeking your opinion on the scheme, and to establish if you have been aware of the full facts of what has been going on behind the scenes to make sure this scheme is implemented. The Executive Member leading this group has already decided to try and appease people by what appears to be a climb down on considering bribing their way into the implementation of the scheme by applying sweeteners. This may include scraping the scheme on a Sunday, as well as offering the first 15 or 30 minutes free to enable passing trade to small shops. This is just a wicked guise to try and get the scheme in. Once this scheme is brought into one area of the city, this council will have the power to bring in whatever it chooses to review and radically change any scheme it has in place. But once it is here, there will be no turning back. Prices will then be hiked up, and more and more restrictions will be placed on residents. Eventually I have no doubt over time, if this scheme is implemented, just as in other areas across the country, people will be restricted to one permit per household, and it will become virtually impossible for people to visit.

Also, the officer I spoke to, Steve Carrell, was unsure whether the Executive had delegated authority to make the decision on behalf of the council as to whether Controlled Parking Zones could be sanctioned by that group. I urge you to make sure this goes to full council and is properly debated. What appears to be a small operation now, by only affecting 5 areas of the city, will come to the rest of the city, through the back door. Once this scheme is passed by your executive you will not have the opportunity to make them bring any further decisions to full council. Eventually each and every one of your constituents will be affected as the scheme rolls out. This should be properly debated by you now, not wait for the electorate to start making waves because they will bring this to your attention in due course. On the face of it you appear to be disenfranchised from being part of any decision making on this initiative. What eventually will affect ever voting member of this city will be decided by a small minority of people who are still seeking to save face because of the poor way in which they handled the issue surrounding the schools. You need to be asking questions now.

I would like you to answer the following questions?

- Are you aware of the scheme?

- Do you know what the full implications for the areas currently proposed are (ie changes in the way people can park their vehicles, pay bays at the end of streets, restricting resident parking, bays removing small numbers of existing parking places from each street which will eventually cause displaced parking etc)?
- Are you aware that the council intends to roll this out to other areas of the city?
- How do you feel about an executive having delegated powers to be able to make a decision on such an issues that ultimately will affect everyone?
- Do you think this scheme will eventually change the way in which people vote?

I understand from Byron Davies' office that as councillors you are obliged to respond to questions from the public within 21 days. I hope by pointing this out to you it does not appear to be confrontational. However a number of local residents have contacted several members of the executive within the past few weeks, and as yet are still waiting for a reply which has far exceeded any 21 day obligation to respond.

I know this is a difficult emotive topic you as members in this Council have to debate and ultimately have responsibility for. I merely urge you to scrap this scheme, and go back to the drawing board. Ensure this Council are accountable to the people it serves by offering meaningful, timely effective inclusive consultation, and look within communities to empower them to help find solutions to existing problems. I understand you are never going to please all of the people all of the time, but currently you are failing these communities by your intent to enforce these schemes. The current buzz word is consultation; you need to make sure you find proper cross sections of people within localities to be able to represent the views of the people of that area. You have not done this in the case of trying to bring in the CPZ's.

There is a motion coming to you at your the next full council meeting. I urge you to scrap this scheme, and go back to the drawing board. I am not against controlling parking in a meaningful way. I merely want the issues debated with the opportunity of everyone it affects to be enabled to take part in establishing a proper way forward.

If you need any further information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely