

From: Gee, Anne (Cllr) [mailto:AGee@cardiff.gov.uk]
Sent: 07 June 2006 10:48
To: ***
Subject: RE: Controlled Parking Zones in Cardiff

Dear ***

I refer to your e-mail dated 4th June 2006 regarding Controlled Parking Zones in Cardiff. I am able to comment on the points you raise as follows.

I am disappointed that you consider the consultation process to be flawed. The Council has made significant efforts to engage the public, by way of articles in the Capital Times and South Wales Echo, by information packs delivered to approximately 20,000 addresses, by public exhibitions and by information posted on the Council's web-site, and indeed with follow up meetings with individuals and groups. It is clear that the information is getting out to people, as seen by the level of response and discussion that has followed. It is important to note that the consultation phase is a time for the public to raise any concerns they have about the project, so that those issues can be considered and addressed as far as possible.

The Wellfield Traders' Association is a long established organisation and was in consultation with the Council on parking issues in that area before the idea of controlled parking zones was raised. Their perception of the parking issues was broadly in line with the Council's. Unfortunately, other areas did not have equivalent traders' organisations which we could approach during the consultation process, although in several cases these have subsequently formed and are now in discussions with the Council. In all areas, however, the needs of the traders are similar, and the project is seeking to deliver more shoppers to the shopping centres by moving long stay commuter parking away from the hearts of the commercial areas.

I am aware of the public meetings that have been held in Canton as a consequence of the commencement of the consultation process. However, I can confirm that prior to these schemes being released to the public, some representatives of local residents and businesses were invited to view the initial schemes, and changes were made as a result of their contributions. The whole point of the consultation exercise is to find the issues affecting people living and working in these areas, and there is a presumption that the schemes will change to reflect these concerns. Therefore, any change coming forward from this process is a direct response to those concerns arising from consultation, and should not be perceived as "appeasing people" or "bribing their way towards implementation of the scheme by applying sweeteners", as you state. To put it simply, you cannot have consultation unless you are prepared to make changes.

In terms of the responses to the questionnaires, the level of returns overall was about what was expected, but some areas were below expectation and some above. I do not accept your comment that the information provided was "scant" - indeed there was a lot of information to be imparted and that had to be done in as clear a manner as possible. The important point is that we have written to all

those people and have provided an opportunity for them to express their opinions.

In terms of actual parking space for residents, many streets will see an increase in the amount of space reserved solely for residents and their visitors, some even receiving 100%. Those streets currently having a 50% provision will at least retain that. However, as you rightly point out, this may not guarantee residents a space outside their own home, as in many streets the number of residents' cars exceeds that amount of parking space available. Nevertheless, many commuters cars will be removed from these streets and this must by definition increase the amount of space available for residents and shoppers. There will inevitably be a change in the parking patterns associated with such a scheme and this will be monitored closely if the scheme progresses.

You refer to the permit scheme in Brighton, which has a limit on the number of permits available to residents and their visitors. The Cardiff scheme would not be a replica of that, indeed, consideration is being given to increasing the permit scheme for visitors. Currently, one permit per household is available, but under the zone arrangement, this could be increased to two, with daily scratch cards available for larger gatherings. Provided that the scratch card system is not abused to favour commuters, I do not see that a limit on those needs to be applied.

It is widely known that the Police are not enforcing the current regulations effectively, and this gives rise to widespread illegal parking, safety issues at junctions and congestion along through routes, to illustrate only a few issues. Either the situation can be left as it is, or the Council can intervene and take over the role of enforcement. If so, the Council has the option to use an experienced parking company to operate under strict guidelines set by the Council, or it could recruit Council staff for this function. Clamping and removals will be used only as absolutely necessary, perhaps in the case of persistent offenders or of dangerous parking, but neither practice will be relied upon as a means to increase revenue into the scheme. Clearly, the set-up costs for such a significant project will be large, but the permit charges and the parking tariffs have been carefully set, as low as possible, to help balance the financial equation. Those potential costs have been published in the documentation sent out in the consultation packs.

Churches, mosques and other meeting places do present a difficult issue in terms of the zones, as they attract many people from outside who require to park. Discussions are taking place on how to accommodate these people, so that the communities are not "destroyed" by the parking proposals, as you suggest.

I note your comments about the projected demise of the corner shop due to the out-of-town retail activities, but the point of these zones is to allow shoppers easier access to the local shops by increasing the turn-over of parking space in the main streets, by removing long stay commuter parking. This is an opportunity which a number of shopkeepers could see during the consultation period.

As to the extent of the project, as mentioned at a meeting with an officer, this is in two parts. The first relates to parking enforcement, and if the Council takes this on, it will cover the whole county and will extend to Creigiau, which you refer to. The second relates to the CPZs, which are local issues around the district shopping centres where the majority of the issues exist, and I do not anticipate that such zones will extend to Creigiau as there are not the traffic management issues there to be resolved.

On the issue of the decision making process, recent legal advice has now confirmed that as the CPZ issue falls within Council policy, the decision on whether to proceed or not can be made by the Executive.

Finally, you mention "*Many people I have spoken to 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.*" What is clear is that the Police will not be providing more resources to enforce parking restrictions, and therefore, ultimately, it will be down to the Council, as Highway Authority, to deal directly with this problem. This is the reason behind this consultation process.

I do hope that this will reassure you, we certainly regard shopping centres such as Canton as vital and the whole point of the scheme is to make it easier for shoppers to park.

Yours sincerely

Anne Gee