



Environment and Transport Select Committee  
18 May 2011

**Report of the On-Street Parking Task Group**

**Purpose of the report:**

The Transportation Select Committee's On-Street Parking Task Group was established to consider the detailed proposals for the introduction of charging for on street parking across the county and how these could be implemented in a manner more acceptable to residents, but not the policy itself.

The Task Group has put forward a number of recommendations that are detailed in the report. The Select Committee is asked to approve the recommendations of the Task Group, which will be submitted to the Cabinet on 24 May 2011.

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. The Transportation Select Committee established the On-Street Parking Task Group following the decision of the Cabinet Member for Transport on 12 January 2011 to introduce charges for on street parking in locations across the County. The Committee had previously requested Cabinet to defer the decision on the basis that there was insufficient information available on the detailed proposals. There was also public concern over the introduction of the policy as publicised. The Task Group was established in January 2011 and has the following members: Steve Renshaw (S), Stephen Cooksey, David Goodwin, Pat Frost and John Furey. The Transportation Select Committee approved the draft scoping report at its last meeting, which outlined the areas the Task Group would be looking at and made it clear that it would not consider whether the policy itself was correct as that decision had already been made. The report of the Task Group is supported in its entirety by the majority. However, D.Goodwin feels unable to support Paragraph 9 and Recommendation (v), while S.Cooksey objects on principle and does not accept the basis of the report.
2. A number of Members and officers hold the view that parking enforcement in Surrey is inefficient at present due to the uncertainty of when a vehicle has parked in any given space. Effective enforcement requires a timed display, which requires machines to issue a ticket and those machines

require funding. On-street parking charges are a potential source of this funding.

3. The Task Group examined the detailed proposals for each area excluding Reigate and Banstead and Elmbridge, which were already the subject of public consultation. Local Committee Chairmen were invited to attend a Task Group meeting to give their views on the currently published proposals and to suggest possible changes – all did so, other than Woking. Although a number of Members would have liked the Task Group to consider a substantial amount of detail, this was not possible within the time frame available. The main focus was therefore around the principles involved, as the detail could more readily be addressed as a result of the formal public consultation. However, the Task Group did look at how sites were identified, the effect of the policy on small businesses, the charging tariffs, machine types, locations and payment methods, how any surplus income will be spent, by whom and how the policy fits with the overall parking policy.
4. The Committee is asked to consider the recommendations of the Task Group, which will be submitted to the Cabinet on 24 May 2011.

<b>DETAILS:</b>
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### **Legislation**

5. The Task Group sought legal advice on the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 on the powers to introduce charging for on-street parking and for what purposes any surplus income can be used. This advice is summarised at **Annexe 1**. It is important to note that there is no legal right for the public to park anywhere on the highway, although it is recognised that members of the public have become accustomed to doing so, often free of charge. All spaces currently identified for charging are on the public highway even if they are in lay-bys and would therefore be covered by the regulations.

### **Business Case**

6. One of the main concerns arising, following the decision of the Cabinet member was the apparent lack of a clear business case to prove that the introduction of on-street parking charges would firstly, work towards eliminating the current deficit on the parking account and secondly, generate sufficient income to cover the cost of introducing charging for on-street parking and its enforcement. A business case for the County as a whole was originally proposed as a result of a 'top down' exercise, but the Task Group recognised that a valid case could only be built 'bottom up' in order to reflect the variance in local circumstances. The business case for the County is attached at **Annexe 2**. A financial case has therefore been constructed District by District, which is outlined in **Annexes 3-11**, culminating in a county wide case that is attached at **Annexe 12**.

## Identification of Sites

7. The original proposals had been suggested by officers, with neither consultation, nor any input from members. The sites currently selected for charging and identified on the plans submitted to Cabinet on 12 January, had been selected on the basis of examining some of the existing short term parking bays around shopping areas, in consultation with some of the local parking managers. These had then been assessed to determine whether there were sufficient spaces in a given location to make charging viable. The Task Group felt that there could be scope for additional locations in some areas, particularly those associated with commuter parking and to help residents with local parking problems. This additional income could then be used to balance losses resulting from allowing a period of free parking in more commercially sensitive locations in order to provide support for the retail trade. It was also felt that parking displacement would inevitably result and was an issue that needed to be addressed. Local Committee Chairmen were therefore invited to comment on the current proposals and to put forward any alternative suggestions as appropriate. A brief summary of their views have been incorporated with the comments of the Task Group and together with the location maps are set out in **Annexes 3–11**.

## Effect on Local Business

8. Much of the feedback received from both local members and the public has focused on the potential effect the proposals may have on the viability of small local shops and businesses during the current period of difficult economic conditions. A lot of this comment appears to be an emotive response linked to the uncertainty of change, as despite extensive research, officers have been unable to find detailed statistical evidence to suggest that the impact on businesses would be significant. In fact in some areas where charging for parking has been suspended for a period, shopkeepers have reportedly noted a decline in business, due to passing trade being unable to find a space to park, as a result of the spaces being used by workers for long term parking.
9. One of the reasons for establishing the Task Group was to address the suggestion that a 'one size fits all' approach may be applicable across the county. Clearly, differing conditions and circumstances prevail, with residents accepting the need for on street charging in major retail centres and off-street charging in the vast majority of cases. There are some towns around the county where the proposals have been largely welcomed as a way of reducing congestion, improving churn and making it easier for customers to park by removing long-term parking from the area. However, the Task Group recognises that there are also some small parades of shops and villages in commercially sensitive locations where any charging at all would be inappropriate, although in the majority of cases allowing a period of free parking of up to half an hour, would be appropriate. This would allow customers sufficient time to pick up a few groceries, visit a bank, post office or small shop for example, but those parking would still be required to display a ticket for the free period so that parking could be effectively enforced. However, those wishing to stay for

a longer period would be required to pay for the whole period of parking and would not be entitled to the initial free period.

### **Charging Tariffs**

10. For simplicity the published proposals had identified three levels of charging – high, medium and low. As on-street parking spaces are usually nearer to shops and facilities than car parks, they are considered to be premium spaces. Tariffs were therefore determined by the charges in nearby off street car parks operated by District and Borough Councils and the relative attractiveness of the location to shoppers. Major town centres would therefore generally be at a high tariff. The intention is that the introduction of a premium charge would lower congestion by reducing the number of vehicles driving along streets looking for a place to park, as spaces would now become available more readily. In addition, those wishing to park long term would be directed away from the road to off street car parks, in order to keep spaces available close to the shops for short-term parking. On street parking charges will also therefore make the business case for off street-parking schemes much more viable.
11. While a valid intention, it was felt that the three levels of charging was too simplistic and failed to sufficiently recognise local variations. The Task Group considered increasing the number of tariff bands to more effectively reflect different off-street charging patterns across the County, but felt that wherever possible there should instead be a link to off-street charging tariffs by means of a premium on-street tariff based on the cost of parking off-street plus around 20%. For reasons of simplicity, the reference to a high, medium and low tariff has been retained, but this is indicative only and will vary with location. Low tariff areas where there was a proposed half hour free period were non viable and all Local Committee Chairmen preferred a medium tariff with 30 minutes free of charge, to a low tariff with no free of charge period.
12. Although there was some discussion about whether ‘blue badge’ holders should pay too, it was agreed that they should not, given that no specific spaces would be marked out for them.

### **Type and location of machines**

13. The cost of purchasing and maintaining the machines is set out in the business case at **Annexe 2**. The Task Group noted that the Cabinet member for Transport would be agreeing a contract for the supply of machines at a decision-making meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011, but considered this to be acceptable, as it was noted that this would be a call-off contract and hence did not predetermine how many machines would be purchased ahead of the consultation exercises.
14. The Task Group examined the specification for the machines. Most will be solar powered, which is considered to be the industry standard and avoids the need for costly connection to the electricity mains. The machines need to have access to the mobile phone network in order to send information to the control centre and while there are areas of Surrey with poor mobile

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coverage, given the locations proposed for the machines this should not prove problematic. It was also felt that all machines should be able to record the registration numbers of vehicles and contain a modem to report faults and operational status, for more cost effective maintenance. Machines are available in a wide range of colours, do not require planning permission and as per their introduction elsewhere, there are no special requirements relating to their use in conservation areas. Payment machines are already in existence within conservation areas in Surrey, such as in Guildford town centre, but it is intended that the machines that will be used are sympathetic to their surroundings and Natural England will be advised.

15. It had been suggested that in these areas the machines could be located away from the edge of the highway, adjacent to, or even affixed to buildings. However, the Task Group felt that this solution would be too costly, as it would mean that the County Council would have to enter into numerous legal agreements with the owners of the land or buildings. Despite this, the Task Group is aware of the impact on street scenes that machines may have (particularly in less urban areas), and as such the number of machines per location should be kept to a minimum.
16. A similar concern relates to road markings and while the Task Group appreciates the legal necessity for bays to be marked on the carriageway, it believes that wherever possible, these should be kept to a minimum.
17. The Task Group considered the different payment methods possible by machines and the impact on the cost of the machine itself (**Annexe 2**). The basic coin machine is relatively inexpensive, but the cost of those that provide change are significantly higher and were therefore discounted. Payment by coin only requires both the more frequent emptying of the machine and for those parking to have sufficient coins, so alternative methods of payment were also considered. Payment by phone was seen as both a convenient method of payment, but also beneficial in that the machines did not need to be emptied with the same frequency and hence would be less costly to operate. However, the Task Group recognised that not everyone would either feel comfortable or able to pay by phone and therefore all the machines should take coins. The Task Group also concluded that the cost of upgrading the machines to take card payments, together with the transaction costs themselves, prohibited its introduction at the outset. However, it is proposed that machines for those locations where this could be appropriate in the future should be equipped with the appropriate technology from purchase rather than being upgraded at a later stage, given the incremental cost of retro fitment.
18. The Task Group considered that payment by coin, although an essential option, is the most expensive in terms of operational costs and that alternative payment methods should therefore be encouraged. As such, payment by phone and subsequently by card should be encouraged to the extent whereby there is no cost penalty for doing so. Accordingly, tariffs should be set at a level whereby the same sum is charged regardless of payment method, which is easy for those parking to

understand and has the added advantages of both operational simplicity and consistency.

19. The operational timings should be the core hours of 08.30hrs – 18.00hrs, with any variance by exception.
20. The current agreement, which expires in April 2012, is that any surplus arising from enforcement and the introduction of on street parking charges will be split 65:35 between SCC and the enforcement authority (see point 24), so there is a clear need to have an agreed understanding of the respective costs. (**Annexe 2** outlines the purchase and maintenance costs of the machines to be borne by SCC). Although the cost of purchasing a machine is subject to variation pending the number purchased, the 'average' installed cost for a machine that accepts payment by both coin and mobile phones has been calculated at £3,000. It is accepted that this should be a standardised cost across the County. There is also an 'average' maintenance costs of £2,500, although again there will obviously be slight variances. The two together give a capital and revenue cost per machine per annum, making it relatively easy to calculate the total cost of the machines in any District / Borough (see **Annexes 3 –11**). After costs, any surplus from on street charging, combined with any surpluses from enforcement should be at the disposal of the Local Committee.
21. However, calculating the costs of enforcement by the different enforcement authorities is more complex given the different circumstances of each, but in light of the history this needs to be addressed more seriously than has previously been the case, both in the degree of transparency and the ability to challenge both the data and the rationale. As such, SCC should insist that all enforcing authorities complete a standardised spreadsheet to satisfy themselves, both centrally and on behalf of the Local Committees, that the costs allocated against enforcement are both valid and verifiable.
22. SCC should also detail the performance criteria it expects that enforcement authorities should meet on its behalf, such as perhaps suggesting an appropriate ratio between the number of enforcement officers to the number of machines deployed, before signing any future agreement, or contract extension beyond April 2012. Failure to meet those designated criteria should attract a penalty.
23. Given the need for tickets, the Task Group recommend both the sale of the space on the reverse for marketing purposes and the introduction of split tickets from the outset, in order to allow retailers to refund the cost of parking to customers, should they wish.

### **Use of any surplus arising**

24. The current agreement with those Districts and Boroughs undertaking enforcement on behalf of the County extends to April 2012 only and permits any surplus to be split 35:65 between the District/Borough and the County to be spent in accordance with the provisions of the regulations.

This cannot be changed, but the Cabinet will consider proposals to renew/extend these agreements for a four/five-year term later in the year and all related recommendations refer to the period post April 2012. The Task Group feels very strongly that firstly any surplus made under the new agreement should be regarded as over and above the existing highways budget. Secondly that the 65% from County should be returned to the Local Committee from the District where that surplus arose and that where an authority enforces in its own District, that their 35% should also be returned to the Local Committee. Therefore, 100% of this surplus would be spent as directed by the Local Committee for use on appropriate local schemes that are in compliance with the guidelines.

25. Further to Point 24, in cases where it is proposed that one local authority enforces in a different authority, it is recognised that the enforcing authority should make a small profit for undertaking that function. However it would be unreasonable for the enforcing authority to retain the full surplus of 35%, with nothing being returned to the Local Committee of the District from where that surplus arose. SCC should therefore ensure that there is a clear agreement between the two authorities, detailing how the 35% surplus will be allocated between the two Local Committees. Therefore an authority which does not enforce in its own District will not receive 100% of the surplus – only the sum of the 65% from County, plus whatever has been agreed to be returned by the enforcing authority.
26. Officers should report to the Environment and Transport Select Committee on an annual basis in order to assess the success (or otherwise) of the policy. This report will include details of how the Local Committee has allocated any funding under their control from on-street parking.

### **Overall Parking Policy**

27. Introducing charging for parking is an unpopular measure given that in many places people have become accustomed to parking on the street free of charge. Therefore, any proposals to charge for on-street parking will inevitably lead to avoidance behaviour and displacement parking in adjacent non-regulated streets and a more holistic approach should be adopted where possible. The Task Group therefore recommends that where parking reviews are currently taking place, they should try to anticipate the results of the introduction of charged parking and wherever possible consider the simultaneous introduction of residents parking zones, should residents wish, to provide an immediate protection. The Task Group appreciates that the permit charges have only recently been reviewed, but with the proposed introduction of more widespread payments for on street parking, believe that the cost of permits should attract a more realistic charge in reflecting the benefit gained, as opposed to the current token charge of £50 per annum for the first vehicle. Further consideration should also be given as to whether a permit for a second vehicle at the same address, should be offered at a lower, or a higher sum, in order to discourage multi vehicle ownership, at locations where there is no off street parking.

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28. However, residents should still be enabled to purchase books of visitor permits at a cost of £2 per each permit, valid for one vehicle for one day. A further review should be scheduled within 6 – 12 months after introduction to ensure that these problems have been appropriately addressed. At a later date, consideration should also be given to assisting local workers to park more closely to their place of work, with the introduction of a slightly more expensive permit scheme.
29. While the introduction of on street charging may improve the vitality of shopping areas, it is unlikely to solve the problems arising from any incremental occurrence of traffic itself. Whilst such a policy will inevitably improve the financial case for the construction of either private sector, or District/Borough off street car parks, consideration should subsequently be given to limiting traffic congestion by the use of any profits to extend the capability to park off street, or to enhance the provision of park and ride schemes, for example.
30. Furthermore, depending on how extensive the introduction of pay and display becomes, in time it may well influence the view of the local planning authorities and SCC's Transportation Development Planning, as to how to more realistically address the acceptable provision of parking. This could perhaps include a minimum off street provision, both for new developments and particularly for conversions of larger properties into apartments, as necessary through a review of the current policy.
31. Due to the contentious nature of charging for on street parking, the Task Group will monitor the results and effects of its implementation closely and in order to aid this process, enforcement authorities should report back to the Parking Team on a quarterly basis.

### Views of Local Committees

32. Excluding Reigate and Banstead and Elmbridge which are the two areas currently the subject of formal public consultation, the Chairmen of the remaining 9 Local Committees were invited to comment on the current proposals and to put forward any alternative suggestions as appropriate. A brief summary of their views have been incorporated with the comments of the Task Group and together with the location maps and the business case for each District, are set out in the following Annexes:

Epsom & Ewell	<b>Annexe 3</b>
Guildford	<b>Annexe 4</b>
Mole Valley	<b>Annexe 5</b>
Runnymede	<b>Annexe 6</b>
Spelthorne	<b>Annexe 7</b>
Surrey Heath	<b>Annexe 8</b>
Tandridge	<b>Annexe 9</b>
Waverley	<b>Annexe 10</b>
Woking	<b>Annexe 11</b>
Whole County	<b>Annexe 12</b>



### Equalities implications

34. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken. This has identified potential negative impacts for certain groups, especially those with a low household income. However parking charges are small compared to the overall cost of running a motor vehicle.
35. Blue badge holders can park in disabled parking bays or on yellow lines for up to 3 hours and are exempt from charges.
36. The impact on minority, disadvantaged, vulnerable and socially excluded groups is likely to be minimal. Paying for parking on street is not a new phenomenon (it is just not widespread in Surrey) and most drivers will have encountered it previously either at locations where it already exists in Surrey (car parks) or at locations outside the county. The proposed tariffs are reasonable when compared with off street car park charges and should contribute to only a relatively small rise in the overall costs of running a motor vehicle. The introduction of a free period in some locations reduces this impact.
37. Although some users may have difficulties using pay and display machines or mobile phones, two alternatives should help minimise those issues, as should careful consideration of the structure and location of the pay & display machines. In all cases equipment used to collect parking charges should be assessed for Disability Discrimination and Equality Act compliance.

### Risk management implications

38. There is the risk that this proposal to increase parking charges will lead to more requests for parking schemes to be reviewed or removed by Surrey Highways, generating additional correspondence, political concern and media coverage.
39. There is also a risk that parking will be displaced in some locations and additional restrictions will be needed. These can be followed up by area parking reviews.

### Implications for the Council's priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement targets

40. On street parking charges help contribute to the objectives of Surrey's new Transport Plan by:
  - Increasing turnover of parking spaces making shopping areas more accessible. This provides a better service for customers and helps the local economy.
  - By maintaining a differential between on and off street parking charges drivers are more likely to go straight to a car park rather than look for free or cheaper on street space, helping to reduce congestion.

### **Climate change/carbon emissions implications**

41. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.
42. The introduction of more widespread on street charging does this by reducing congestion and causing motorists to consider alternative transport methods as a means of saving parking costs.
43. On street charges can cause drivers to go straight to car parks rather than looking for free spaces. This can reduce congestion and vehicle emissions.

### **Legal implications/legislative requirements**

44. The County Council has the necessary legal powers to operate parking enforcement through the Traffic Management Act 2004 and introduce or amend Traffic Regulation Orders through the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Further details are provided within **Annexe 1**.

### **Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications**

45. This proposal has no foreseen impact on the Council's corporate parenting role or looked after children.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>
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#### **Recommendations to Cabinet:**

- (a) That where parking reviews are currently taking place, they should try to anticipate the displacement parking that may result from the introduction of on-street charging and that a further review should be scheduled 6 – 12 months after introduction, in order to ensure that any problems are appropriately addressed.
- (b) That the enforcement authorities report to officers in the Parking Team on a quarterly basis regarding the results of the implementation in different locations.
- (c) That in any future agreement, SCC should contractually stipulate the performance criteria that it expects enforcement authorities to meet, where failure to do so attracts a penalty.
- (d) That the recommendations of the Task Group incorporating some of the suggestions proposed by Local Committees, as set out in Annexes 3-11, be approved as the basis for the formal public consultation.
- (e) That any surplus arising from on-street parking charges and their enforcement covered by any new agreement from April 2012, should be viewed as over and above the forecast highways budget.

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- (i) That any surplus arising from on street parking charges, should be split 35:65 between the enforcement authority and the County.
- (ii) That in all cases, the 65% of any surplus arising that is due to the County should be spent on appropriate local schemes that are in compliance with the guidelines, at the discretion of the Local Committee from where that surplus arose.
- (iii) That in cases where the enforcement authority is the same District from where any surplus is generated, the 35% that is due to the District, should be spent on appropriate local schemes at the discretion of the Local Committee. (The result under these circumstances would be that 100% of any surplus is available to the Local Committee, where District Members will continue to have voting rights for highway functions, as has already been established.)
- (iv) That in cases where it is proposed that one local authority enforces in a different authority, SCC should ensure that there is a clear agreement between the two authorities, detailing how the 35% surplus will be distributed between the two Local Committees. (It is recognised that where an enforcement authority enforces on behalf of SCC in a different District, only the respective portions of the 35% surplus which have been agreed between the enforcement authority and the enforced authority, are returned to each respective Local Committees. This means that under these circumstances, the Local Committee of the enforcing authority will receive an additional sum to the 100% of the surplus that may have arisen in its own District. Correspondingly, the District where that surplus arose will still receive the 65% from County, but only the portion of the 35% that has been agreed with the enforcing authority, which inevitably will result in less than 100% of any surplus that has been generated in its own District, being at the disposal of it's Local Committee.)
- (f) That a period of free parking of up to half an hour be permitted in commercially sensitive locations identified by Local Committees and agreed by the Task Group, as identified in the annexes to this report.
- (g) That to more effectively reflect local variances across the County, there should be wherever possible a link to off-street charging tariffs, by means of a premium on-street tariff, based on the cost of parking off-street, plus around 20%.
- (h) That as a result of (f) and (g) the original proposal for a 'low' tariff be discontinued and that where reference is made to tariffs in general, the terminology is indicative rather than absolute, in that the cost of these tariffs will vary across the county.
- (i) That consideration should be given to the simultaneous introduction of residents parking zones wherever possible, to better manage displacement parking and increase resident's acceptance of the proposals.

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- (j) That where necessary, the number of machines per parking slot are kept to a minimum in order to minimise their impact on the street scene, particularly in less urban locations.
- (k) That wherever possible, road markings for the parking bays are kept to the legal minimum in order to minimise the impact on the street scene, particularly in less urban locations.
- (l) That the basic machine to be purchased should be able to record the registration numbers of vehicles, contain a modem to report faults and the operational status and accept payment by both coin and phone.
- (m) That those machines in locations where payment by card could be appropriate in the future should be equipped with card technology at purchase, rather than being upgraded more expensively at a later stage.
- (n) That the cost to those wishing to park on street should be the same, regardless of the method of payment and that tariffs should be set to reflect this. There should be no premium for paying by phone, or where applicable, card.
- (o) That SCC accepts the sum of £2,500 as the 'average' operational cost per machine, which cumulatively results in the SCC cost per District / Borough and then across the county itself.
- (p) That SCC insists before any extension to any of the current enforcement contracts is considered, each authority completes a standardized spreadsheet, detailing the cost base for its enforcement measures, set against measurable performance criteria of officers employed and their frequency of patrol etc.
- (q) That further to (o) and (p), where an enforcement authority enforces in a District / Borough other than its own, SCC ensures that the 'enforced' authority has had sight of the spreadsheet and agrees, both with the accuracy of the cost base and that there is a clear agreement as to how any surplus should be shared between the enforcing authority and the enforced.
- (r) That the space on the reverse of tickets be sold for marketing purposes, which would contribute to any surplus for SCC.
- (s) That on introduction, there should be split tickets to allow retailers to refund the cost of parking to customers should they wish.
- (t) That while it is not possible to park in a given space, it should be possible to purchase an annual season ticket in order to park in a given area, or zone.
- (u) That the viability of payment by smart cards, or similar technology, be investigated with a view to their subsequent introduction.

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- (v) That given the more widespread introduction of charging to park on the street, the fees for parking permits again be reviewed and set to be more realistic in reflecting the benefit gained, rather than the current token charge of £50 per annum.
- (w) That consideration should also be given as to whether a permit for a second vehicle at the same address should be offered at a lower, or a higher sum, in order to discourage multi vehicle ownership at locations where there is no off street parking.
- (x) That the number of permits to be allowed per residence again be reviewed in order not to exacerbate the problem of on street parking by encouraging multi car ownership
- (y) That residents who reside within parking zones be enabled to purchase a book of visitor permits at a cost of £2 per permit per day.
- (z) That SCC's Transportation Development Planning should continue to work closely with local planning authorities in determining how best to realistically address the acceptable provision of parking, both for new developments and particularly for conversions of larger properties into apartments, as necessary through a review of the current policy.

<b>Next steps:</b>
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The recommendations, amended, as necessary, to be agreed by the Environment and Transport Committee meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May, to be submitted to the Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> May and subject to their agreement, the Committee will keep the implementation of the policy under review.

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**Sources/background papers:** None.