

# Council to review its parking strategy



The City of Edinburgh Council is looking at ways of improving parking in the city, and although one of the effects might be a leap in revenue for the council if they were to introduce 7 day parking charges, this is not at present the main aim of the proposals.

The council is working on a pricing strategy for parking which would support other transport policies in the city, but at present are concentrating on the traffic congestion on Sundays in the city centre as a priority.

As part of the Local Transport Strategy the council has already carried out some investigation into whether introducing shared parking, make parking spaces available for carers and ways of ensuring that city centre parking on a Sunday is less chaotic, all in response to concerns raised by city centre residents who pay for a parking permit and other stakeholders. Now they will carry out a full blown consultation when the draft Parking Action Plan is drawn up later this year.



The council aims to increase the number of available spaces for those living in Parking Zones 1 to 8, but the design work already underway will also increase the number of spaces available for others who are visiting the area. There is a suggestion that giving residents visitors' permits for those who come to see them might also be planned. This would allow carers or tradesmen to park nearby without incurring additional costs.

Some residents explained that they have difficulty in finding a parking space in the vicinity of their home if they arrived back when paid parking restrictions had ended at either 5.30 or 6.30pm. One way round that would be to extend parking charges later in the evening. The council will undertake parking surveys to establish whether that would improve matters. They will also undertake market research to identify where the parking demand is coming from and their Parking Action Plan will then be devised for approval by the council at their June Committee meeting. Following consultation the plan will be given final approval in August.

Such research and any consequent changes might mean that public transport would have to be improved on a Sunday to offer an alternative to bringing the car to the city centre.



One of the main objections to charging for parking on a Sunday apparently comes from churches who do not want their congregations to be put off by costs of parking nearby. The council feels however that the culture of 7 day a week retail means that they have to look at ways of avoiding congestion on Sundays in particular.

One suggestion being examined at might mean that the charging period during the day would be extended into the evening. This extension might allow those with residential permits to return to their homes and find a parking space nearby.

The main idea is to improve parking for residents and visitors, and a central idea is to make all parking bays dual use for either pay and display drivers or those who have paid for a residential permit.

The cost of the research and preparatory work to allow council officers to draft the Parking Action Plan will be approximately £110,000 which the council states is within its budget allocation for parking operations and parking policy.

The Transport Convener was adamant that the aim of the action plan is to maximise the effective use of all parking spaces rather than increasing the council income from parking, but we would suggest it would be no bad thing if the revenue did increase. What do you think?