
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	30 October 2014
Report By:	Acting Corporate Director Environment Regeneration & Resources	Report No:	2014/E&R/AP/3
Contact Officer:	Alan Puckrin	Contact No:	712764
Subject:	Decriminalised Parking Enforcement & Associated Traffic Regulations Orders Update		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with an update on the introduction of DPE within Greenock Town Centre and to propose that consultation commences on variations to two of the traffic regulation orders.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The 5 Traffic Regulations Orders required for decriminalised parking enforcement in Inverclyde came into force on 6 October 2014 after an extensive period of development and consultation. The response by the local community, businesses and visitors has been mixed and officers have received a large amount of feedback directly and via Elected Members over the first 2 weeks of operation.
- 2.2 This feedback plus the results of the survey undertaken on all businesses within the inner Greenock Town Centre leads Officers to recommend that changes to the inner Greenock traffic on street and off street regulation orders are required in order to ensure that the use of parking spaces within the inner Greenock area is optimised.
- 2.3 The variations to the inner Greenock area on which consultation is proposed are, firstly, an extension to the maximum duration of on street parking to 2 hours. This would bring a consistency for all on street parking within inner Greenock. Secondly it is proposed that the restrictions in inner Greenock, both on street and off street, apply from Monday-Friday (8.00am – 6.00pm) only thus treating Saturday, when there are far fewer workers parking all day, the same as Sunday. Finally, it is proposed that Terrace Road and West Stewart Street be removed from the parking disc operation area and become an on street unlimited parking area which will help alleviate some of the concerns in the residential areas immediately outwith the inner Greenock area.
- 2.4 It is recognised that there is also a need to increase the use of the Bull Ring car park and to this end Officers are progressing signage to better advertise this three hour, free car park and the all-day Council car park at the Waterfront.
- 2.5 The Committee has already instructed Officers to bring reports back on the parking strategies in the other town centres within Inverclyde and also to bring a report back in terms of resident parking permits for inner Greenock. The timescales for reporting back on both these issues are contained in the report.

- 2.6 In the interests of expediting the proposed variations Members are asked to agree to a special meeting of the Committee to deal with any report which recommends the making of the relative variation orders. It should be noted that a special meeting of the full Council will also be required.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee agree that Officers commence consultation at the earliest opportunity to increase the duration of on street parking within inner Greenock to 2 hours, to reduce the parking restrictions period to Monday-Friday (8.00am-6.00pm) for both on street and off street parking in inner Greenock and to remove Terrace Road and West Stewart Street from the parking disc operation area.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Committee agree that a special meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Committee be called to deal with any report relating to the potential variation orders at the earliest opportunity.

Alan Puckrin
Acting Corporate Director Environment Regeneration and Resources

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following the withdrawal of Parking Wardens by Strathclyde Police in 2011 which resulted in significant parking problems and safety issues within Inverclyde's town centres, traffic regulation orders required for decriminalised parking enforcement in Inverclyde came into force on 6 October 2014. This followed detailed development, consultation and an Independent Reporter's Hearing.
- 4.2 Prior to the effective date an extensive campaign informing the public of the imminent introduction of parking restrictions being enforced was implemented. This involved several half page adverts in the Greenock Telegraph, use of social media, details on the Inverclyde Council website, radio adverts and posters.
- 4.3 At the same time 50,000 parking discs were procured and have all been distributed with a further 25,000 in the process of being supplied to the Council.
- 4.4 Despite this it is clear that many individuals and businesses did not appreciate nor fully understand what the waiting restrictions and options were and where they applied. This has resulted in a large number of comments and complaints being received directly by Officers and via Elected Members.
- 4.5 This allied to the observations of Officers as to how drivers are reacting to the restrictions has resulted in Officers proposing variations to the current inner Greenock on street and off street parking TROs.

5.0 OBSERVATIONS

- 5.1 Having three different on street parking waiting time restrictions within inner Greenock is leading to confusion. At present waiting restrictions can be either ½ hour, 1 hour or 2 hours depending on where the vehicle is parked.
- 5.2 Businesses and members of the public have highlighted that ½ hour is generally not enough time to undertake visits to many businesses within Inverclyde and that they would wish this time limit increased.
- 5.3 The Bull Ring car park which is restricted to 3 hours short stay parking (using a parking disc) is not being used at the level anticipated. This is a concern as it was hoped that this would become one of the main Town Centre short term car parks. Officers would propose to improve the signage highlighting this car park and to thereafter monitor whether there is an increased uptake.
- 5.4 Whilst there is a heavy concentration of parking in the streets immediately adjacent to the inner Greenock Town Centre area, not all the all-day parking spaces are being utilised especially at the Greenock Waterfront Council car park. Again Officers will look at improving signage in an effort to encourage all day parkers to use this car park as opposed to the residential areas.
- 5.5 There have been many positive comments on both the visual impact of the implementation of the inner Town Centre restrictions but also from individuals who are now able to come into the town centre for a short stay and transact their business without having to spend time looking for a parking place. Positive comments have also been received by the elderly and those with restricted mobility who can now get nearer to the shops they wish to visit.

6.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

- 6.1 On the 14th and 15th October 2014, Officers from Economic Development carried out a survey stretching from Grey Place to the east end of Cathcart Street including the Oak Mall. This involved 178 premises.

- 6.2 The key messages which came from this survey are that businesses felt that some of the parking restrictions had an adverse impact on their business and that they would wish to see an increase to a 2 or 3 hour on street parking period. Concerns were also raised regarding lack of all-day parking.
- 6.3 There was also a view that action needed to be taken now to make amendments rather than wait for the previously agreed annual review.

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 It is proposed by Officers that a variation order to the Inverclyde Council (Various Roads) (Inner Greenock) (Controlled Parking Zones) Order 2013 be progressed as soon as practicable for consultation on the basis of an extension to the maximum duration of on street parking to 2 hours. This will simply increase the "free" element of the disc parking scheme and help improve understanding by changing all on street parking to 2 hours.
- 7.2 It is also proposed that the restrictions in inner Greenock to both on street and off street parking apply from Monday-Friday (8.00am-6.00pm) only. This will treat Saturday, when there are far fewer all day workers in the Greenock Town Centre, the same as Sunday.
- 7.3 Finally it is proposed that Terrace Road and West Stewart Street are removed from the disc operation area. This should help alleviate some of the all day parking in residential areas.
- 7.4 The minimum timetable for this assuming no sustained objections is as follows:-

Any change to a Traffic Regulation Order must undertake a specific consultation period of 21 days and requires approval by both this Committee and the Council, who formally make the Order. Thereafter a 6 week period is allowed for any objections to the Council's process in promoting the Order. Subject to there being no objections then the Order will be effective at the end of the 6 week period.

Subject to approval of this item it is proposed to advertise and commence the consultation period on Monday 3 November 2014. The consultation period will end on 24 November 2014 and, subject to there being no maintained objections, it is proposed, subject to approval today, to hold a Special Committee to approve the amended TRO with a view to having the Order made by the Council on 4 December 2014. The effective date of the TRO would therefore be 16 January 2015.

- 7.5 Whilst the majority of the comments and complaints have been from traders and shoppers there are continuing concerns amongst residents within and immediately outwith the inner Greenock area regarding the impact the restrictions are having on them. It is proposed therefore that a report be brought back to Committee before the end of February 2015 with options for Members to consider.
- 7.6 Finally Committee are reminded that there is a commitment for Officers to bring back reports outlining the parking strategies for the other town and village centres within Inverclyde and it is envisaged that this will be done prior to 2015 summer recess.

8.0 COMMENTS

8.1 Head of Environmental and Commercial Services

Following the launch of DPE on the 6th of October, the Head of Environmental & Commercial Services has visited a number of local businesses in both Cathcart Street and West Blackhall Street; this included a walk around with wardens and discussions with members of the public and shop customers. The overall feedback received from local businesses was constructive and generally supportive of the scheme, however a number of businesses mainly hairdressers, cafes and restaurants felt that the on street parking time limit was too short for their customer base and requested that this be increased to 1 to 2 hours. All local traders

visited confirmed that they do not want to see a return of no restrictions and appreciated the scheme needed more time to bed in. The Head of Environmental and Commercial Services has been consulted on this report and supports the proposals to commence consultation at the earliest opportunity to increase the duration of on street parking within inner Greenock to 2 hours. Subject to Committee approval of the recommendations contained within this report meetings will be held with local businesses to confirm the proposed changes and the process the Council requires to go through to implement.

8.2 Head of Regeneration and Planning

The existing parking situation was not meeting the needs of Inverclyde's town centres with Greenock, in particular, experiencing inconsiderate and illegal parking problems. Following representation from local businesses to Inverclyde Council in relation to the impact of the new parking arrangements, a decision was taken that a baseline survey should be undertaken.

The confidence levels on the survey results are high as Officers were able to make contact with one hundred and seventy eight businesses out of a total of just over two hundred within the survey area (87%).

Only three percent of the business community surveyed felt that there should be no parking restrictions which shows that the vast majority support parking measures, however since the introduction of parking measures seventy percent of businesses have experienced a slightly negative (20%) or negative (50%) impact on the customer numbers engaging with their business.

In terms of the duration of parking times, six percent felt that status quo could be maintained; twenty percent felt one hour was appropriate, thirty five percent felt two hours was appropriate and just over thirty five percent felt three hours was appropriate, the balance of three percent felt that there should be no parking restrictions.

8.3 Head of Safer and Inclusive Communities

The Parking Attendants who work for Safer & Inclusive Communities have been charged with implementing the Council's DPE policy and in the first 2 weeks issued approximately 440 parking tickets.

The reasons for issuing the tickets cover the whole range of potential violations including; Parking in Disabled Bays, Parking at Bus Stops, Over Staying the Waiting Time, Not Displaying a Valid Ticket, Not Displaying a Parking Disc and Parking in Restricted Areas.

There have been a number of cases of abuse and even physical threats to the employees and the Police have been involved on some occasions. It is therefore important that the Attendants continue to receive appropriate support and guidance from Officers and that the Committee recognise the difficult role they are performing.

To this end it is important that any changes are easy for the public to understand and that any changes are minimised and clearly communicated to avoid confusion.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 9.1 If implemented then the variations proposed will reduce parking income as Saturday's income will be foregone. This will reduce income by approximately £8,000/year. Officers will examine all aspects of the scheme budget to ensure that overall the scheme remains cost neutral.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
Parking	Income	January 2015	8		Loss of income due to no longer charging on Saturdays for all day parking

9.2 Legal

If this report is approved, the Orders cannot be implemented until the making of the Orders has been advertised to allow any persons who so wish a period of six weeks to question the validity of the Orders made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Enforcement of the Orders in the period between the date on which they are made and the date falling six weeks after that date is not considered to be good practice so as to avoid both reputational and financial recompense should any Order be successfully challenged. Roads authorities normally insist on this so that they ensure proper, successful completion of the process.

9.3 Human Resources

There are no HR implications.

9.4 Repopulation

The amendments proposed are intended to increase the attractiveness of Greenock Town Centre for shoppers, hence contributing to the aims of the repopulation agenda.

9.5 Equalities

Part of the consultation being carried out will require any Equalities Impacts to be considered in line with usual practice.

10.0 CONSULTATIONS

10.1 This report has been produced in consultation with all the Officers outlined in Section 8 of this report plus the Head of Legal & Property and Head of Finance.