

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE **Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure**

DATE **11 September 2012**

DIRECTOR **Gordon McIntosh**

TITLE OF REPORT **Palmerston – Revised Traffic Management and
Controlled Parking Zone Proposals**

REPORT NUMBER: **EPI/12/178**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report details the results of the parking surveys and informal consultation by letter drop carried out on the streets within and surrounding the proposed Controlled Parking Zone within the North Dee area and of the initial design work carried out. The report discusses accessibility, internal and external connections, traffic management and traffic controls.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended by Officers that:

1. The Committee note the results of the informal consultation and parking survey exercises
2. The Committee instruct Officers to progress the preliminary design of the traffic management proposals and CPZ
3. The Committee instruct Officers to establish cost estimates for the traffic management proposals and CPZ, and develop a business case for the CPZ
4. The Committee instruct the appropriate Officers to report back on the findings of the above to a future Committee meeting.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A business case establishing that the proposed Controlled Parking Zone would be self financing will require to be made. Additionally the installation costs of both the Controlled Parking Zone and the traffic management measures proposed will require to be identified.

Funding for this proposed scheme has not been identified and this would require to be resolved. It is likely that a proportion of this could be derived from developer contributions associated with the regeneration of the North Dee area. Funding may also be required for the Councils Term Consultants to carry out design work.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Substantial parts of the road network within Palmerston will require to be rebuilt in order to accommodate the proposals.

There is a risk that if all the streets within the boundary are not included, they will be subject to the “decanting effect” from the remainder of the zone once the proposals are implemented. Legal procedures could affect the timescale for implementation.

The proposals contribute to the Council’s wider transportation strategy to encourage greater use of more sustainable forms of transport and therefore improvements in air quality by a reduction in traffic congestion. An improved pedestrian environment will encourage more journeys on foot.

Improved local on-street parking and amenity will enhance the quality of life and contribute to community confidence in a safer, healthier living environment.

5. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Background

5.1.1 The Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee agreed at its meeting of 13 September 2011 to instruct Officers to carry out a parking survey and informal consultation in North Dee in respect of the implementation of a Controlled Parking Zone and traffic management alterations, along with the initial design for such schemes.

5.1.2 The North Dee area is subject to continual redevelopment and regeneration from its previous use as an industrial/ fish processing area to a location of high quality offices. This re-development intensifies the density of the developed area, increases the number of people accessing the area on a daily basis and the demand for car parking. North Dee experiences a high level of demand for parking at present and parking provision is considered to operate beyond capacity for the majority of the working day. Traffic management measures have been introduced in North Dee previously in order to alleviate vehicle conflict particularly at crossroad junctions. Significant queuing is regularly observed by vehicles leaving North Dee on Palmerston Road at its junction with Market Street and on Palmerston Place at its junction with South College Street, particularly in the evening rush hour.

5.1.3 These initial stages of work are funded from developer contributions relating to various developments in the North Dee area.

5.2 Parking Surveys

5.2.1 To inform the study parking surveys were commissioned throughout the North Dee and north Torry areas. These surveys recorded the current parking behaviour in the area including the volume and location of the parking, along with the length of time that vehicles are parked in the area. Surveys were conducted on Wednesday 9 May and Saturday 12 May 2012. The Saturday surveys did not take into consideration the north Torry area. The parking surveys were conducted in 1 hour beats allowing the turnover of vehicles to be assessed.

5.2.2 The purpose of the surveys was to ascertain the current parking behaviour in the area and to establish the volume of parking that occurs on street in these areas. The survey results have been analysed and the following key points have been taken from the surveys. Summary results are tabled and appended to this report.

5.2.3 The surveys reveal that within the North Dee area as a whole during the weekday observed parking is as high as 122% of capacity. The corresponding figure for the surveyed area of Torry is 80%. These peaks occur at different parts of the day. At the weekend, the peak level of occupancy in Palmerston is 95% occurring in the mid afternoon period.

5.2.4 In total there are 398 on street parking spaces within Palmerston, including available space on South College Street to the south of Palmerston Place. A further 600 on street parking spaces are available in the surveyed area of Torry.

5.2.5 Not all streets within North Dee operate above capacity, with those towards the south-west of the area being more likely to be parked below their limit. Those in the north and north-east of the area are observed to be significantly over capacity. These streets remain over capacity for the majority of the surveyed period.

5.2.6 The surveys tend to show that there is some capacity within the Torry area to accommodate any displacement of parking arising from the implementation of a CPZ within North Dee.

5.3 Informal Consultation with Residents and Businesses

5.3.1 Following approval from the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on 13 September 2011 an informal consultation was carried out by means of a letter drop to all residents and businesses affected by the proposals. This has included residents of Devanah Mews on South College Street. The consultation letter detailed the extents of the proposed controlled parking zone and included a reply form which allowed consultees to express their views on both the controlled parking zone and traffic management issues. This method of consultation has been used prior to the design of recent

Controlled Parking Zones and has become commonplace for consultation on such schemes.

- 5.3.2 There was a disappointingly low response rate of approximately 10.5%. When reporting the findings of previous informal consultations it has become the norm to do so on a street by street basis. Due to the low response rate on this occasion the summary of the results is presented for the area as a whole.
- 5.3.3 Of the respondents approximately 71.05% supported the introduction of a controlled parking zone in the North Dee area. Of residents, 84.62% supported the controlled parking zone while 64.00% of businesses were in support. A summary of the responses is appended to this report. The majority of both residents and businesses responding to the consultation are in favour of the implementation of a controlled parking zone.
- 5.3.4 The comments received as a result of this consultation will be analysed and used to develop the detailed design of the scheme in terms of the controlled parking zone and alterations to traffic management in the area. The information gathered will be kept on record for reference at the next stage of formal preliminary statutory and public consultation. At that time, residents and businesses will have a further opportunity to comment and formally object to the scheme.

5.4 Current Accessibility

- 5.4.1 Resulting from the parking survey, consultation exercise and site visits conducted by Officers, a review of the current accessibility of the North Dee area has been undertaken. This has incorporated both the accessibility of North Dee from outwith and accessibility of individual streets and premises within the area. Accessibility for both vehicles and pedestrians has been taken into consideration.
- 5.4.2 Primarily vehicular access is currently taken from South College Street, North Esplanade West or Market Street. The one way system operational within North Dee largely dictates the entry and exit points into the area. Entry can be gained from Market Street via Poynerook Road, North Esplanade West via Stell Road and Russell Road, and from South College Street via Palmerston Place. Egress occurs via Palmerston Place to South College Street, Russell Road and Raik Road to North Esplanade West and Palmerston Road to Market Street.
- 5.4.3 Vehicles accessing the area, particularly during peak periods, experience congestion and queuing on all three external access roads. This is however general congestion and is not specifically attributed to the North Dee area.
- 5.4.4 Vehicles exiting the area regularly experience queuing while attempting to enter the external road network from North Dee from all exit points. Findings from the consultation exercise corroborated by observations made by Officers during site visits are that the extent of this queuing can dissuade drivers from making use of the correct exit points. Observations have been made of drivers sighting the end of traffic

queues and turning and travelling against the one way system to find an alternative exit point. Vehicles have been observed exiting the area onto the external road network against the one way system.

- 5.4.5 It is reported in the consultation exercise that drivers find that the one way system necessitates convoluted routes to either access or leave individual properties.
- 5.4.6 Pedestrians are able to access the North Dee area from all the vehicular access points. In addition pedestrians can enter and leave via Union Square immediately to the north. The presence of pedestrian phases in the traffic signals on the streets bounding North Dee allow pedestrians access from outwith the area.
- 5.4.7 A significant pedestrian demand exists through the area, particularly during the weekday lunch period, with employees at the various offices and businesses in North Dee accessing the retail facilities to the north, and subsequently returning to their employment premises. Through the consultation exercise pedestrians have reported issues with footways being blocked through the operations of local businesses and vehicles parked inappropriately. The location of on street parking obstructs the desire line for pedestrians which observations have shown results in pedestrians walking along the carriageway.
- 5.4.8 Further obstacles to pedestrian movement occur in the physical condition of the infrastructure throughout much of the area. Old footways which have received minimal maintenance in addition to granite cassies bordering pavements create environments that bring difficulty for pedestrians.

5.5 Current Traffic Management

- 5.5.1 At present the majority of the North Dee area operates with a one way system, the exception to this being on Palmerston Place to the west of Palmerston Road and Russell Road. Exit and entry points are made using the one way system to North Esplanade West and Market Street. The operation of the one way system has been reported through the consultation exercise as confusing, and regularly ignored by drivers.
- 5.5.2 The one way system was introduced in North Dee as a road safety measure, and in response to the number of accidents accruing at both the Poynerook Road/ Stell Road and Poynerook Road/ Raik Road crossroad junctions. Operating a one way system reduced the number of vehicle movements possible at these junctions, reducing the number of conflict points and consequently the potential for accidents.
- 5.5.3 Paragraph 4.4 identifies that vehicles regularly approach the end of queuing traffic leaving the North Dee area, observe the queues and turn against the one way system to find an alternative egress point. Vehicles have been observed by Officers to travel through North Dee against the one way system both apparently with and without the knowledge that they are doing so.

5.5.4 It is considered likely that this deliberate behaviour is partly in response to the convoluted routes through the one way system that some premises are required to take if adhering to the restrictions. Additionally the width of the streets in North Dee means that should a vehicle be travelling against the one way system and meet a vehicle adhering to the regulations there tend to be no safety issues in passing each other.

5.5.5 It has also been reported through the consultation exercise that the short two way section of Poynerook Road causes confusion. Vehicles are able to travel in both directions on Palmerston Road between the access to Union Square and the Palmerston Road/ Stell Road junction.

5.6 Summary of Findings

5.6.1 From the informal consultation exercise, the traffic surveys, and site visits and investigation undertaken by Officers, it has become apparent that there are numerous issues in respect to accessibility, traffic management and parking in North Dee. The current availability and operation of parking and traffic management no longer meet the needs of the area, the businesses and employees working in North Dee. As the regeneration of the area continues it is possible that current problems will be exacerbated. The current state of infrastructure in some parts of the area could potentially be restricting the desire of developers to further regenerate the area.

5.6.2 As identified throughout this report the problems that are present in the North Dee area are varied, and the implementation of a solution to one of these will not be sufficient to alleviate all the issues. For example in theory it would be possible to introduce a Controlled Parking Zone with the current infrastructure and traffic management arrangements. However this alone would not be sufficient to address traffic management issues or pedestrian accessibility issues and with the physical extent of much of the road network may not be sufficient to address indiscriminate parking. A much wider appraisal considering the use of the overall space between buildings for all road users is necessary at this stage given the range of issues to address.

5.7 Committed Infrastructure Development and that under the Control of Others

5.7.1 The modern transport strategy for city includes long term improvement plans for South College Street and includes alteration to Palmerston Place. The approved changes for the South College Improvement scheme will result in Palmerston Place operating with two way traffic and a traffic signalised junction between Palmerston Place and North Esplanade West being installed. The southern end of Old Ford Road will be stopped up.

5.7.2 Ardent House, a major office development located adjacent to North Esplanade West has been granted planning permission. In association with this planning permission is a condition to signalise the North Esplanade West/ Raik Road junction. However this work will only

proceed if the proposals for Ardent House come forward in their current form.

5.8 Proposed Revisions to Traffic Management

- 5.8.1 The proposals in terms of improvements to the traffic management in North Dee centre around facilitating and ameliorating access and egress to the area, enhancing the environment and infrastructure for both vehicles and pedestrians, alleviating the tendency for vehicles to travel against the one way system and augmenting safety when compared to the current arrangement. A drawing showing the proposed alterations to the traffic management in North Dee is appended to this report. It is recognised that revisions to the traffic management issues in the North Dee area cannot be carried out in isolation from the requirement to revise parking arrangements as discussed in section 9 below. The two will both require to be introduced in a coordinated manner in order to improve all the issues prevalent in North Dee, and derive the maximum benefit for all users of the transport infrastructure in the area.
- 5.8.2 The proposals will promote an improvement to the environment and opportunities for pedestrians in particular. It is proposed to reverse the current eastbound one way section of Palmerston Road between the exit to Union Square and Market Street. Due to the sequencing of the traffic lights and need to prioritise traffic on Market Street limited practical time is afforded to traffic exiting North Dee at this junction. Practical alteration to the light sequence to improve the situation is not achievable and therefore it is proposed that these vehicles will better be able to leave North Dee by another exit, removing the traffic queue that builds up along Palmerston Road and the subsequent temptation for drivers to travel against the one way system to avoid it. However this could only be implemented following the installation of traffic signals at the North Esplanade West/ Raik Road junction.
- 5.8.3 Raik Road and Stell Road between Poynerook Road and North Esplanade West could operate on a two way basis and Russell Road would operate one way northbound. The arrangement for Raik Road is proposed in cognisance of the signalisation of the North Esplanade West/ Raik Road junction in association with private development.
- 5.8.4 Poynerook Road would retain a one way westbound operation and Palmerston Road would retain a one way eastbound operation from Palmerston Place to Raik Road. Allowance would be made for converting Palmerston Road to two way operation between Palmerston Place and Poynerook Road following the introduction of the signalised junction between North Esplanade West and Palmerston Place. Between Palmerston Road and Poynerook Road, Stell Road will continue to operate southbound and Raik Road northbound.
- 5.8.5 It is proposed to introduce raised junctions at the Poynerook Road/ Stell Road and Poynerook Road/ Russell Road crossroad junctions. These traffic calming features would emphasise the junction, reduce speed at the principal vehicular conflict points and provide for pedestrian movements.

5.8.6 Carriageways will be narrowed where appropriate to allow for parking and to prevent vehicles from travelling against one way restrictions. This will also provide space to enhance pedestrian facilities.

5.8.7 A revised speed limit of 20mph is proposed to be implemented in the area.

5.9 Operation of Proposed Controlled Parking Zone

5.9.1 The parking survey, consultation exercise and site visits completed by Officers have each indicated that there is a parking problem in the North Dee area, which can be summarised as:

- Parking demand exceeding supply
- Indiscriminate and inappropriate parking throughout the area

Some issues pertaining to pedestrian and vehicle accessibility and safety in North Dee are in part subsidiary to these overarching issues.

5.9.2 In order to manage the parking issues in this area and regulate the parking to the benefit of businesses, visitors and employees it is proposed to introduce a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). This will:

- Regulate parking by providing designated bays
- Reduce indiscriminate parking by removing the opportunity for this and allowing greater enforcement

However it will be necessary to establish a business case for the implementation of the CPZ, and to show that this arrangement will be self financing.

5.9.3 It is proposed that the CPZ in North Dee operate in a similar manner to the existing city centre zones. It is not proposed to reserve any area for the exclusive use of residents. On street pay and display parking regime would be implemented throughout the North Dee area to allow visitors to park. In addition to this it is proposed to integrate the public road within the Devanah Mews development on South College Street into the existing Ferryhill CPZ. The small car park outside the Arches business units accessed from Riverside Drive would be incorporated into the proposed new North Dee CPZ. A charging regime in this location will assist in achieving vehicular turnover which is important in bringing customers into the businesses located here. South College Street between the South College Street/ Palmerston Place junction and the South College Street/ North Esplanade West/ Riverside Drive/ Queen Elizabeth II Bridge is proposed to be incorporated into the North Dee CPZ.

5.9.4 The CPZ will be operational in line with current city centre zones, between the hours of 08:00 – 20:00 Monday to Saturday and 13:00 – 17:00 on Sunday. Each household within the zone will be entitled to one parking permit allocated to a particular vehicle. Businesses within the CPZ will be entitled to one permit. The operators of garages within the area will be entitled to four parking permits.

5.10 Displacement of Parking

5.10.1 Significant potential exists for the displacement of parking from North Dee following the implementation of the CPZ as drivers look elsewhere to find a location for all day free parking. It is considered that a primary destination for this displaced parking could be Torry, immediately to the south of the River Dee.

5.10.2 The parking surveys have revealed that there is already extensive parking on street in Torry during weekdays with different parking patterns observed on different streets. The surveys also reveal that overall the highest level of demand for parking occurs at the start of the survey period and this gradually reduces during the course of the day. At no point during the survey period was the area at capacity. However the survey revealed that in several locations vehicles were observed to park on double yellow lines and on the footway, indicating that the available parking spaces are not necessarily located where the demand for parking occurs. In particular spaces appear to be available on the following streets:

- Crombie Place (PM Only)
- Crombie Road
- Sinclair Road
- South Esplanade East
- Walker Place
- Walker Road
- South Esplanade West
- Victoria Road
- Walker Lane (PM Only)

5.10.3 The displacement of parking from the North Dee area could result in a significant number of these parking places being occupied, to the detriment of residents and employees in Torry. This may have the consequential impact for the requirement to introduce parking controls within the Torry area.

5.10.4 The scale of parking that will be displaced from North Dee to Torry is difficult to predict. A number of factors will influence the decision of drivers should they choose to seek an alternative parking space. Some of these factors include the additional distance that would be required to walk to the city centre from Torry and the environment within which they would be parking. The River Dee also acts as a barrier, partly psychological, with drivers being less willing to park on the opposite side to their place of work.

5.11 Phased Introduction of Proposals

5.11.1 The introduction of revised traffic management and a CPZ within North Dee have both been identified as being required in order to manage the issues prevalent. Ideally both the implementation of the full CPZ and all traffic management proposals would be implemented concurrently. However it is recognised that financial implications mean that this would be unlikely to happen and that therefore a phased introduction

will be required. A business case will require to be established in order to demonstrate that the operation of the CPZ would be self financing.

5.11.2 The revisions to the one way system will require to be implemented simultaneously throughout the area. It is considered that in order to allow for the necessary traffic movements in the area the traffic signalisation of the North Esplanade West/ Raik Road junction would have to be completed prior to the reversal of the one way on Palmerston Road between Market Street and the Union Square access. The implementation of the revised traffic management operations in North Dee would naturally follow the completion of the signalisation of this junction, likely to be completed in association with private development.

5.11.3 It is proposed that some streets within North Dee retain their current one way operation. It is therefore possible to introduce a phased implementation of the proposals on these streets without dependency on the implementation of the signalisation of the North Esplanade West/ Raik Road junction.

5.11.4 Given the funding issues of a revised traffic management regime it may be necessary to implement the changes to waiting and loading restrictions throughout the area without introducing the wider traffic management changes. However alterations would be required throughout North Dee as the traffic management proposals were introduced and the regeneration of the area continued.

5.12 Further Work

5.12.1 Various pieces of work would require to be completed prior to the Committee considering implementation of the final scheme. A preliminary design for both the traffic management and the CPZ would require to be completed. Costs estimates and an estimation of the deliverability of the scheme would be established. Additionally a funding mechanism for the implementation of the traffic management throughout the area would be developed. This would be likely to involve developer contributions, and therefore specifically a mechanism for calculating these for each development would be established.

6. IMPACT

The Aberdeen City Centre Development Framework and the Harbour Development Framework documents recognise the continuing development of this area from its previous predominant use of fish processing towards new office developments. Both development frameworks recognise that the development of this area offers the opportunity to develop enhanced pedestrian links to the harbour and the River Dee from the city centre.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee meeting
13 September 2011.

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=15601>

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Doug Ritchie
Team Leader, Road Safety & Traffic Management
dritchier@aberdeencity.gov.uk
(01224) 538055

Consultees comments

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee

Convener: Councillor Barney Crockett – *has been consulted 07/08/12*

Vice Convener: Councillor Ramsay Milne – *has been consulted 07/08/12*

Councillor Yvonne Allan – *has been consulted 07/08/12*

Councillor Graham Dickson – *has been consulted 07/08/12*

Councillor James Kiddie – *has been consulted 07/08/12*

Council Officers

Barry Jenkins, Head of Finance, Corporate Governance – *has been consulted*

Jane MacEachran, Head of Legal and Democratic Service – *has been consulted*

Ciaran Monaghan, Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive – *has been consulted*

Gordon McIntosh, Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure – *has been consulted*

Hugh Murdoch, Head of Asset Management and Operations, E,P and I – *has been consulted*

Margaret Bochel, Head of Planning & Sustainable Development – *has been consulted and has no further comments*

Mike Cheyne, General Manager, Operations – *has been consulted*

Neal Carnegie, Community Safety Manager – *has been consulted*

Dave Young, Account Manager, Corporate Governance – *has been consulted*

Laura Watson, Service Co-ordinator E P & I

Mark Masson, Committee Services Officer

Appendix A

Summary of Informal Consultation Findings

Question	Response	Residential Respondents	Business Respondents	All Respondents
Do you have off street parking available to you?	Yes	9	14	23
	No	4	13	17
What are your total parking requirements in the Palmerston Area?	Residential	43	0	43
	Staff	0	241	241
	Visitor	14	51	65
	Service	5	19	24
	Other	0	14	14
How adequate is the pedestrian provision in the area?	Good	9	18	27
	Bad	4	9	13
Does the current one way system in the Palmerston area work well and facilitate vehicle movements?	Yes	9	11	20
	No	6	14	20
Does your business experience operational difficulties as a result of indiscriminate parking in the area?	Yes	2	24	26
	No	1	4	5

Do you experience problems parking a vehicle in the Palmerston area?	Yes	10	22	32
	No	4	7	11
Do you experience problems either entering or leaving the Palmerston area by vehicle at any time?	Yes	11	21	32
	No	1	7	8
Would you support the introduction of a Controlled Parking Zone in Palmerston?	Yes	11	16	27
	No	2	9	11

Appendix B
Revised Traffic Management Proposals

Appendix C

Summary Parking Survey Results