

Response to De-Criminalised Parking Enforcement Consultation from Lenzie Community Council - March 2012

The following response aims to reflect the views of Lenzie Community Council members and residents who have contacted the Council via the website or by handing written comments to members. All residents who have contacted us in this way have been recommended to make their comments directly to East Dunbartonshire Council. We have also benefited from email exchanges with Crawford McGhie, where various issues were clarified and by his attendance at a recent Community Council meeting where further useful discussion took place. We are grateful for these inputs.

The universal criticism is that a 'Park and Ride' strategy has been allowed to develop by default, where the true costs, including the cost of parking provision, have not been addressed by the transport suppliers (SPT, Network Rail, Scotrail, Transport Scotland). Their transport provision now depends on casual on-street parking, to the detriment of residents, businesses, road safety and other problems. Surveys carried out by the Community Council have identified that the number of cars parked on-street is greater than the numbers in the official car parks. Moreover this can only get worse, given the increase in local population and the increased cost of city centre parking. Concern has been expressed that the scheme will gradually push commuter parking out to a wider radius than corresponds to the current five minutes walking time.

The providers have also by default allowed abuse of off-street provision, by failing to take steps to weed out those who are not using the provision to travel on the train, or who could readily use other forms of transport to reach the station i.e. the whole provision is free. The residents and the Community Council are therefore not encouraged to cooperate in fine-tuning the proposal, unless there is some sign that the transport authorities understand this point of view and show serious intent to address the concerns, by providing funded car parks. The proposed parking strategy depends to some extent on cooperation and EDC might not get cooperation from Lenzie residents unless this strategic requirement shows some concrete sign of being addressed. We understand that meetings will be held with transport authorities and we would urge ED Council to transmit these criticisms.

The main source of adverse response to the proposals from residents was related to the designated "Permitted parking..." streets. In fact, the external responses were all from residents of Victoria Road and Moncrieff Avenue and covered similar ground. It was believed, in short, that these streets would attract more cars and the marked-out parking bays would be unsightly. However, feedback from ED Council suggested that these views were misconceived, as the intention is to substantially reduce the number of parking spaces relative to current experience, maintain access to driveways and improve safety. These matters will be the subject of further detailed consultation, including aspects of environment in what are conservation zones. No mention has been made of parking charges or meters in the proposals and we assume that such are not contemplated in these particular streets or in the other areas designated for short-term parking.

We are also aware of negative responses from areas where on-street parking of residents is essential, because they have no off-street space. It was confirmed that these areas will also be subject to detailed consultation to ensure that there is no major inconvenience. The suggestion made in discussion, that the aim is to manage the strategy without a large-scale residents' permit scheme which would incur charging, is welcome.

Another concern relates to the 24-hour, 7-day nature of the proposals. At present, parking is relatively straightforward in relation to activities in the evenings or on Saturdays or Sundays. However, it is understood that the configuration of parking bays and prohibitions will be designed to establish a minimum safety and convenience standard and there should be no reason to relax that at any time.

We have had no positive responses on the proposals, but the Community Council believes that the short-term parking aspect is positive. The absence of short-term parking, in the region of Queen's Buildings especially, has had an adverse effect on services and businesses and some of these, such as the Post Office, the pharmacy and the café are very important for the health of the community.

For that reason, we would support the designation of short-term parking areas in that region and adjacent to other areas such as the public hall, the churches and schools, where there are frequent community activities. There is some urgency in the case of short-term parking provision and consideration should be given to implementation ahead of traffic regulation orders being in place, in the same way as is proposed for certain areas in Kirkintilloch Council-owned car parks.