

Planning, Transport and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, 16 September 2014

Statement by Patrick Rotheram, Chairman, Vineyards Residents' Association

1. I am the Chairman of the Vineyards Residents' Association. Together with the Circus Area Residents' Association (CARA) we have been trying for a number of years now to get the Council to make improvements in the arrangements for residents parking in the northern part of the Central Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).
2. The northern part of the Central Zone (the area north of Queen Square, George Street and Paragon) is predominantly residential in character. That fact is recognised in the 'Bath City-wide character appraisal', which is a Supplementary Planning Document. For historical reasons this area is in the Central CPZ, which was originally created in the 1970s to discourage parking in the central area.
3. The Central CPZ is now completely surrounded by the Outer Zones, where parking for non-residents is strictly limited. Visitors therefore head into the centre and drive around looking for a space, adding to the congestion and pollution in the heart of the city. The original idea of the CPZ has been turned on its head and there is close to 100% occupancy of parking bays in this area.
4. As the attached map clearly demonstrates, the north Central Zone (coloured orange) is no closer to the commercial and civic city centre than most of the other Controlled Zones (the so-called 'Outer Zones').
5. Residents in this area are unfairly treated compared with residents in the Outer Zones. Although it is the most densely residential area in the city, there is almost no 'permit-holder only' parking. We do not get resident visitor permits. In the Outer Zones there is a minimum of 50% permit-holder only places and residents can buy day permits for their visitors. Similar arrangements should apply in the residential north Central Zone.
6. This may sound familiar, as we told you about it at your meetings in October 2012 and September 2103, having raised it formally with the Council as far back as 2005. We believe that the Panel was sympathetic to our case, and indeed this time last year the Chair concluded by saying that you wanted to see work progressing on residents' parking outside the collective work on the parking strategy.
7. I expect that it will not have escaped your notice that another year has passed and still you have not seen a parking strategy. I have to tell you that nothing has happened on our residents' parking issues either. We are still waiting for Parking Services to come up with changes that address the unfair arrangement for residents in our area.
8. We are wondering where to go next. The Council's recent parking survey underlined residents' dissatisfaction with the parking arrangements in the Central Zone. We have the support of both our Ward Councillors. Your Panel has asked for our case to be progressed. And yet nothing happens. Is this how the democratic process is meant to work? We ask for your help to finally get something done.