

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas, to ask The Minister for Infrastructure:

What the process to change disc parking zone use policy and locations is; what changes have been made since 2016; what changes are being considered; and what the reasons are for any implemented and proposed changes?

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The Minister for Infrastructure (Dr Haywood):

Any proposed changes to the operation or extent of disc parking zones are subject to a structured and transparent process, designed to ensure that decisions are informed, equitable, and aligned with the wider strategic objectives of the authority.

The process begins with a comprehensive review of the current system, considering parking demand, enforcement data, operational challenges, and feedback received from residents, businesses, and service users. In many cases, changes in land use, population growth, or shifting travel patterns necessitate a re-evaluation of how parking zones are allocated and managed.

This review is conducted in the context of our broader policy framework — in particular, the Island Plan, Transport Strategy, and Island Strategy — to ensure that any changes support our goals around sustainable transport, accessibility, economic development, and environmental impact.

Where policy changes are being considered, the Department carries out targeted stakeholder engagement, including with residents, local businesses, healthcare providers, and other relevant groups. This phase is essential for understanding how proposed adjustments may affect daily life and service delivery in the community.

Should the changes require amendments to the legal operation of parking zones, such as adjusting boundaries, hours of enforcement, or eligibility criteria, the Department is required to undertake a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. This involves:

- Publication of the proposed changes,*
- A statutory notice period, and*
- Consideration of any objections or representations received.*

Final decisions are made by the Minister or by a delegated authority, depending on the scale and scope of the proposal.

Implementation follows thereafter, including the updating of signage, permit systems, enforcement protocols, and clear communication to affected parties. The Department also maintains a commitment to post-implementation monitoring to assess effectiveness and make further adjustments where necessary.

The extant disc zone policy in 2016 was incorporated into the current Divisional Policy Document DP-06-014 Parking Restrictions Policy which can be found on the Highway and Asset Management webpage. The policy document was issued in 2018. The policy has not been revised. <https://www.gov.im/media/1368673/parking-restrictions-policy.pdf> Since 2016 a small number of additional disc zones have been introduced, e.g. Onchan in 2018.

As part of our ongoing review of parking management, the Department is considering a range of policy changes to ensure the system is fair, effective, and aligned with the needs of our community. Areas under review include:

- Permit allocation, to ensure availability is managed more equitably.*
- Permit charges, to reflect usage fairly and support investment in sustainable transport.*
- Zone sizes, with the aim of improving efficiency and better managing demand.*
- Provisions for visitors, businesses, doctors, and healthcare workers, recognising their essential roles and access needs.*
- Special permits and waivers, to ensure appropriate support remains in place for those with specific needs.*

The Department's goal is to modernise our approach to parking in a way that supports residents, key services, and the wider goals of our transport and Island plans.

It is anticipated that full public engagement on proposed changes to resident disc zone operation and management will commence in July 2025.

The Department has commenced a review of disc zone parking to ensure the system remains fit for purpose. The current policy and its application across locations require modernisation for several key reasons:

- The existing policy no longer reflects actual parking demand, with clear imbalances between permit allocations and on-street capacity in some areas.*
- Enforcement needs to be clearer and more consistent, with updated rules and signage to reduce confusion for both residents and enforcement officers.*
- The Department is aligning this review with the Island Plan and our wider Transport Strategy, ensuring that residential parking supports our broader goals for accessibility, sustainability, and community wellbeing.*
- New technology offers opportunities to modernise the system, including digital permits and more efficient ways to manage visitor parking.*
- Ongoing development and changes in land use are placing new pressures on existing parking zones, and our policies must adapt to manage this growth effectively.*

This review is an important step toward creating a fairer, smarter, and more responsive parking system that works for everyone