

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**24 August 2009**

**Report of the Director of Planning Transport and Leisure**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matter for Recommendation to Borough Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 PARKING ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT**

**Summary**

**The report provides an update of current work of the Parking Action Plan and focuses on the following**

- **The Snodland Local Parking Plan**
- **The general parking improvement programme Phase 5**
- **East Malling Parking Review**
- **The parking review arising from the development of West Kent College**

**1.1 Introduction**

**1.1.1 The current work on the Parking Action Plan is focussed on the following schemes**

- **Snodland Parking Plan – implementation and monitoring**
- **Phase 5 of the Parking Action Plan - assessment of individual sites**
- **East Malling Parking Review – Road surveys and preparation for consultation**
- **West Kent College – The developers report on resident consultation and surveys on parking conditions around the college**

**1.2 The Snodland Parking Plan**

**1.2.1 The Snodland Parking Plan has now reached the implementation and monitoring stage. The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was made on 6 July and installation of the associated signs and road-markings started the following week. Progress with**

the roadmarkings was hampered by wet weather in the early stages but installation of the signs is now complete.

#### 1.2.2 The scheme became operational in mid-August 2009.

- An estimated total of 59 daytime parking spaces were restored around the town centre after removal of unnecessary single and some double yellow line restrictions in the area of Queens Avenue and High Street.
- The parking bays in this area remain uncontrolled. Some additional double yellow lines were required around junctions to maintain access and safety.
- The scheme has provided 3 disabled parking spaces in the car park nearest the High Street and another outside the Chemist.
- A short section of limited waiting was established in the car park and on Rocfort Road to help to create a regular turnover of parking spaces to support customers to local businesses and shops.
- The three schools have all access points protected with clearway markings to create an unobstructed zone to reinforce safety for pedestrians and assist with promoting Safer Routes for Schools and the School Travel Plans.
- Bus stop clearways have been marked on local routes to prevent obstruction to public transport services and assist with maintaining the published timetables. This has been particularly welcomed by the Operators especially in the vicinity of Malling Road and St Katherine's Lane.

#### 1.2.3 The scheme has been implemented using the same procedure of experimental traffic order used previously for the Parking Action Plan. It will operate for a period of 18 months and during that time monitoring of parking patterns and any consequential transferred parking will be carried out each month to measure the effect of the scheme. Local people will be encouraged to feedback their thoughts on how the scheme is working. All comments will be reported to the Board at the end of the experimental period including any recommended adjustments to address local concerns or to keep the scheme as effective as possible.

#### 1.2.4 In a parallel exercise, a further round of consultation was undertaken with residents of Bramley Road and Recreation Avenue to determine if there was support for the proposal to install one-way traffic flows. All 83 properties in the roads were consulted and there was a specific message in the letter to say that absence of reply would be considered to indicate satisfaction with the current two way flow arrangement. 40% responded (33) and of these 70% (23) recorded support for introducing one way traffic flows.

- 1.2.5 With fifty households not replying to a consultation that was carried out under the clear understanding that a non-response implied contentment for the two-way traffic flows, it can be inferred that 73% of the residents wish no change and 27% want the single way working. On that basis the residents have been advised that there is no mandate for justifying any alteration to the current two-way traffic arrangements.

### **1.3 Parking Action Plan – Phase 5 (Various Locations)**

- 1.3.1 **Annex 1** shows the progress of the current list of sites. Monitoring and assessment is underway to assess what parking management measures, if any, might be appropriate and effective in the particular circumstances of each location. Sites which are identified as meeting the criteria for a parking restriction will be subject to an informal consultation stage, the results of which will be reported to the Board later this year.

### **1.4 East Malling Local Parking Plan**

- 1.4.1 The surveys of current parking patterns and consultation work are programmed to begin during September/October. Preliminary informal meetings will be held during September with local Members and Parish Council representatives to explain the process of how a parking review is developed and refined through consultation and to receive initial views on local perceptions of parking problems.
- 1.4.2 The review is to concentrate on areas of East Malling where there is extreme competition for roadside and off-road parking space between residents and commuters to see if an acceptable balance can be found between competing demands.

### **1.5 West Kent College**

- 1.5.1 The developer of the site has carried out the parking surveys and consultation with residents surrounding the campus. The draft report presented in **Annex 2** gives a comprehensive analysis of the results of the surveys and consultation exercise. The outline recommendations detail some practical parking management proposals in response to identified issues reported by the residents. Local Members received a copy in advance to give them an early opportunity to discuss the findings with officers. Before commenting on the views of the local Members, it is worth considering an overview of the survey findings.
- 1.5.2 The report reveals which sections of road in the residential area are subject to most parking pressures and it is possible to draw some general messages from the analysis and results.
- The degree of parking demand identified in the surveys shows an average of 178 vehicles on the relevant days parking in an area where there are assessed to 280 legitimate roadside parking opportunities. The nature of the survey work is such that it is unable to distinguish between vehicles

associated with residents, the college, contractors, commuters or pupils of nearby schools.

- As might be expected, there is a clear difference within the estate in how seriously the parking problems are felt to be and it is closely related to how close the household is to the college.

1.5.3 The draft report reveals concerns about parking in that part of the neighbourhood most affected by overspill parking from the college. However, even there the survey indicates that the number of people expressing a wish for some change to the current parking arrangements amounts to 49% of the total number of households in that area. This offers scant support for any radical changes in local parking management arrangements, such as permit controlled parking. Taken across the whole neighbourhood the lack of support for change is even more apparent and it leads me to recommend that, whatever parking management work might emerge, it should not involve permit controlled parking.

1.5.4 Nevertheless, the survey does make it clear that the reduced on site parking during the current phasing of the works on the campus is creating parking problems that warrant some intervention in the interests of road safety and traffic flow. Sections of roads under most pressure should really be partially restricted during the day. The aim of this would be to accommodate some roadside parking where it is reasonable to do so but also to provide passing places and protect residents' access points from obstruction and also allow the buses more access. This will have the effect of reducing the concentrations of parking in certain locations and dispersing it more evenly around the area. Any such restrictions would be focused on weekday daytime activity. Evening and weekend parking should remain unrestricted.

1.5.5 The consultant has suggested the following works to reduce obstruction on the highway and remove areas of vehicle conflict:

- Provide single yellow line waiting restrictions (Monday to Friday, 0800-1800hrs) on Scott Road bus turnaround area to ensure access for buses and prevent obstruction to the through route on Shakespeare Road (Photo 2.6). The proposed restrictions are indicated on Drawing No. 2821-100;
- Provide single yellow line waiting restrictions at intermittent locations along College Avenue from Burns Crescent to beyond West Rise to provide passing places for cars on the main carriageway. This will have the effect of displacing cars further south along College Avenue into Zone 12, however additional parking capacity is available in this area. College Avenue provides an important distributor road within the Consultation Area feeding side roads such as Hillside, The Spinney, West Rise and Brindle's Field and as such carries a higher volume of traffic flows throughout the day. The existing markings and crossover locations are shown on Drawing

No. 2821-101 and the proposed restrictions are indicated on Drawing No. 2821-102;

- Provide single yellow line waiting restrictions at intermittent locations along Burns Crescent to provide passing places for cars on the main carriageway. These passing places will assist two-way traffic flow along this narrow road and improve visibility for pedestrians where the public footpath crosses Burns Crescent. The existing markings and crossover locations are shown on Drawing No. 2821-101 and the proposed restrictions are indicated on Drawing No. 2821-102 ;
- Extend the existing double yellow lines at the Old Barn Close entrance to the limit of public highway at the granite sett boundary.

## **1.6 Discussions with the Local Members**

1.6.1 This package of interventions deals with the most serious of the localised parking problems in a proportionate and balanced way and I would recommend it to the Board. In discussions with the local Members they have requested that the proposed measures be extended to include some additional lengths of single yellow lining:-

- On College Avenue just to the south of the junction with Burns Crescent,
- On College Avenue opposite West Rise junction,
- On one side of the road on the short spur of Scott Close between Brook Street and Shakespeare Road.

1.6.2 Of these, the first has merit as it is on an incline and a bend in the road. On balance it is a suggestion that I would support. However the case for the other two needs to be considered in the light of the effects of parking in these areas on the local bus service before moving towards additional displacement of existing parking to stretches or roadway where there is no current parking pressure. If the bus operator for this route is experiencing regular difficulties with obstruction and delays to the timetable then there is a reasonable case to include extended restrictions at these sites. The bus operator will be consulted and any necessary adjustments made to the proposals to reduce any reported problems with obstruction to the local service.

1.6.3 Local parking plan schemes have generally been implemented using an experimental order procedure that allows adjustment after a suitable period in the light of experience in practice. The local Members have suggested that the process here should be similar and I am happy to recommend that this be so.

1.6.4 They have also drawn attention to parking patterns at the corner of the Lower Haysden Lane junction with Brook Street. This location lies outside the scope of the planning commitment on the developer but it is clear that at least some of the

parking stress is College related. While it is not covered as part of the survey findings, it has nevertheless been scheduled as one of the cases for consideration as part of the general programme of parking action listed in the Phase 5 list (see Annex 1 to this report).

- 1.6.5 Parking on the verge just to the south of Shakespeare Road is a concern of local Members and they have suggested that bollards should be installed to prevent this happening. Installing posts at a sufficiently close spacing to prevent vehicle encroachment would have a major impact on the appearance of this area. It would have considerable implications for the cost and efficiency of grounds maintenance works. So it is a measure that would need careful consideration before taking it any further, especially as it would be a permanent response to a temporary problem. The amount of parking on-site at the college is currently at its most constrained. This situation will improve from the late summer of 2010 when in excess of 120 spaces are restored. Once the work is completed, there will be a further increment in the number of spaces, approaching the amount before the works started. In such circumstances, the case for installing bollards is less than compelling.
- 1.6.6 Similarly, they have also raised again the question of a one way system in Burns Crescent. As far as the parking scheme is concerned this has no real influence or effect of the parking arrangements in the road. For this reason it does not feature in the parking survey work. It is a moving traffic matter and, as such, it is the County Council in its role as highway authority that deals with it. The Board will recall that the request for one way working in Burns Crescent featured on previous lists of potential schemes for the LTP programme. In response to a question from one of the local Members at the March meeting of this Board, the County officer confirmed that this proposal had been already been assessed and the result was that it had insufficient priority for further inclusion on schedules of potential schemes.

## **1.7 Conclusions**

- 1.7.1 Subject to the Board's endorsement of the findings, the additional points aired by the local Members and any further steer by the Board, it is recommended that these measures be put to statutory consultation and implemented if there are no unwithdrawn objections. If there are any objections and these remain unwithdrawn after discussion and explanation, then these will be reported to the next meeting of the Board for resolution.
- 1.7.2 The survey form circulated to the residents asked whether they wished to receive a summarised report of the results of the survey. The developer will be invited to prepare this summary and distribute it to those who indicated that they did wish to receive it. In the meantime, the survey will be available on the Borough Council's website and copies will be available for reference at the Castle Gateway and at the reception in the College.

## **1.8 Legal Implications**

- 1.8.1 The Borough Councils powers to carry out parking management derive from the existing contractual arrangement with Kent County Council

## **1.9 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.9.1 The cost of implementing the works on the Parking Action Plan are to be met within existing Borough Council capital and revenue budgets

## **1.10 Risk Assessment**

- 1.10.1 The assessment and consultation process applied to parking management should provide the assurance that the Borough Council has the will and ability to adapt the Parking Plans in the light of comment and circumstances to ensure that it achieves a best balance of local parking needs. A regular review of the schemes is crucial to ensure that we can correctly and effectively manage on street parking in these areas as the proposals are either introduced for safety reasons or to provide a more appropriate balance of parking needs.

## **1.11 Recommendations**

- 1.11.1 That, subject to the response to the local Member comments and to any further views expressed by the Board, the package of measures from the WKC developers Parking Report **BE APPROVED** for formal consultation and implementation, subject to there being no unwithdrawn objections.

The Director of Planning Transport and Leisure confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Snodland Local Parking Plan File P4/SLPP

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning Transport and Leisure