

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**14 June 2010**

**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 up date on progress in carrying out the Parking Action Plan. The East Malling Local Parking Plan Steering Group recently met to assess and discuss the initial draft of the local parking plan for the village. It broadly approved the document, subject to some amendments, and this is recommended to the Board for endorsement so it can be taken forward to the next round of public consultation

Last year the Board approved a package of measures to deal with parking pressures in the neighbourhood of West Kent College. This was recently formally advertised and a number of representations and objections have been received. The recommended approach is to introduce some of the approved measures as advertised and to accept the objections in some other instances.

The formal advertising of the Traffic Regulation Order for the various locations identified and approved for Phase 5 of the Parking Action Plan is underway. It includes amendments previously resolved by the Board.

Some residents in Zone M in Tonbridge have submitted a petition requesting an additional “permit holder only” period to address the effect of parking by shoppers and office workers in the afternoons

**1.1 A Local Parking Plan for East Malling**

- 1.1.1 A Steering Group is assisting in preparing the East Malling Local Parking Plan. This consists of local County, Borough and Parish Council members together with representatives from the local conservation group and Russet Homes officers.
- 1.1.2 The Group recently met to consider the latest stage of the project, an overall assessment of the survey work and draft Local Parking Plan. The group assessed the draft document and approved it, subject to a number of comments and clarifications. These have now been incorporated in the final draft and it is

recommended to the Board for endorsement so that it can be taken forward to the next phase of the project, a public consultation on the contents of the Plan.

1.1.3 The working draft at **Annex 1** contains a full version of the assessment, street by street, and demonstrates the breadth and depth of this analysis stage. It will shrink considerably after the next phase of the project. For the moment, it reflects a full analysis of the feedback we received from local residents at the survey and fact-finding stage of the project and it also refers to many roads where we are recommending no action be taken in the final version of the Plan. Local residents can therefore see how the many comments and suggestions have been considered and used to shape the emerging document. In summary, the principle recommendations in the draft document are, without being totally inclusive, as follows:-

- Preferential permit parking and revised daytime waiting restrictions on roads around the rail station
- Introduction of controls to balance parking opportunity in the Parish Council car park next to the rail station
- Management of roadside parking spaces outside the village centre to encourage better traffic flows
- Restrictions at identified locations to improve safety

1.1.4 Subject to any further comments and suggestions the Board may wish to offer, I recommend that the draft document annexed to the report be approved for the purposes of public consultation. The consultation is planned during July and this will allow a final draft of the Plan to be considered by the Steering Group in August before submitting it for endorsement to the next meeting of this Board.

## **1.2 Parking Proposals – West Kent College Neighbourhood**

1.2.1 At the last meeting of the Board in March I reported that advertising for the approved waiting restrictions in the roads around the college was imminent. This has now happened and we have received a range of representations and objections to the proposals. The comments, suggestions and objections are summarised and analysed in **Annex 2** together with recommended responses.

1.2.2 Parking conditions over recent months in the roads neighbouring the college have been a strong influence in the nature of the comments received. On any scale of analysis, the conditions have been severe and a source of great concern to local residents in the roads out to some distance from the college.

1.2.3 Until recently, the residents have been commendably understanding about this redevelopment project and most have appeared to acknowledge the challenge of building, what is in effect, a completely new college while it remains fully open for business as an educational establishment. It is an enormous challenge logistically

and it was almost inevitable that there would be some adverse impact on the parking patterns on the neighbouring streets. The problem has been the extent of overspill onto local roads from the development site by the considerable numbers of contractors' vehicles. It has been so great and has had such adverse and sudden local impact that it has had the effect of pushing residents beyond the commendable level of tolerance they had been demonstrating until recently. It was not just about the numbers, because there are legitimate and safe opportunities to park throughout the estate, but about the way a proportion of the drivers were parking. Some were doing so unsafely, entirely unreasonably and with little real consideration for the needs of local residents.

- 1.2.4 The frustrations and concerns of local residents culminated in a public meeting in Hayesbrooke School on 8 April. This coincidentally was the night of the East Malling Steering Group meeting mentioned above and it meant that our Parking Team, already committed to East Malling meeting, was unable to mobilise a full presence at the residents meeting. As it was, our Parking Manager attended to provide the residents with advice on enforcement matters in the neighbourhood of the college site. One of the main results of the meeting was the formation of a group of representatives from each street and, in recent days, we have met them. This focused on whether the parking conditions endured by local residents over recent months might recur, what options there might be in the longer term and the more imminent consideration of the recently advertised waiting restrictions.
- 1.2.5 The major phase of the development that resulted in the recent parking difficulties has just been completed and handed over. The numbers of workers on the site has reduced substantially while a phase of demolition proceeds. The critical concern among the resident group is whether what has just happened is likely to recur during the next phase of building work. I share this concern and I contacted the developer to try and ascertain the trend in worker numbers on the site between now and the end of the job and what this might mean for off-site parking demand, especially as events had made a 'just let it happen' approach entirely unacceptable. The college has responded to explain that the recent parking patterns and major over-spill of contractors' vehicles will not recur between now and the end of the construction works in September next year. It aims to achieve this by making maximum use of space on site to store the contractors' vehicles. The Borough Council is assisting by providing 30 permits, at cost, for the parking area in the country park to provide some extra off-street capacity. This is a welcome assurance from the developer that acknowledges the need to deal with the impact of work-force parking. The position will be to monitor to ensure the aim of constraining such parking on site is achieved and, if it is not, to react with temporary restrictions to prevent obstructive and hazardous parking.
- 1.2.6 In the longer term, I have reassured the resident group that the Borough Council is committed to reviewing local parking patterns once the college redevelopment project has been completed and conditions on the neighbouring roads have settled down.

- 1.2.7 As far as the detailed proposals in the current order are concerned the group reinforced the representations already received that there is no resident support within Burns Crescent for the proposed waiting restrictions. The measures elsewhere are broadly supported as are some restrictions on Brook Street and the Haysden 'triangle' included in the Phase 5 package mentioned elsewhere in this report. There is also a request for some additional waiting restriction at the corner of Burns Crescent and Shakespeare Road to protect forward visibility and this can be included in the next phase of the parking action plan.
- 1.2.8 The residents' meeting on 8 April was held towards the end of the formal notice period for the draft traffic order and this helped prompt a surge in representations before the closing date. After analysing all the replies, the significant change from the original set of proposals is the one just mentioned for Burns Crescent. The proposed interventions do not have the full support of the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) because access is still insufficient for a fire tender. This calls into question whether the existing conditions can be considered acceptable. In contrast, local residents have submitted strong objection to the proposed waiting restrictions in Burns Crescent and would prefer to retain existing numbers of spaces in the road. In the circumstances, it seems perverse to insist in promoting proposals intended to assist local residents in improving access along the road when they are so implacably opposed to them. On balance, I am moved to recommend that the proposal for Burns Crescent be deferred indefinitely unless there is any future directive from KFRS insisting on waiting restrictions to curb parking with the potential to prevent access by fire tenders.
- 1.2.9 Bringing the various recommendations together the suggested approach is as follows:-
- Burns Crescent - Defer the proposed changes indefinitely unless there is any future directive from KFRS insisting on waiting restrictions to curb parking that has potential to prevent access by fire tenders.
  - Scott Road – Proceed with the proposal as advertised.
  - Shakespeare Road - Monitor parking around junction with Masefield Way to see if there is justification for DYL corner protection.
  - Old Barn Close - Proceed with the proposal as advertised.
  - College Avenue - Amend proposals to exclude Saturday daytime restrictions and make them weekday only.

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

- 1.3.1 Following the resolution of the Board in March and in consultation with the relevant local Members, we have amended the proposals for Phase 5. The TRO is currently being advertised. Subject to receiving no objections in response to this statutory notice stage, we can install the parking measures shortly thereafter.

If we do receive objections and we are unable to resolve them through discussion with the objectors, we will report these to the next meeting of the Board in September for a decision.

#### **1.4 Tonbridge Local Parking Plan – Zone M – Petition**

- 1.4.1 Residents of Springwell Road, Woodfield Road, St Marys Road, White Oak Close and Judd Road have presented a petition requesting permit controlled parking arrangements be extended to include an afternoon period between 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm. The petitioners cite increasing difficulty for residents to find a parking place during weekday afternoons owing to an inflow of shoppers and workers for the rest of the day after the end of the current morning restriction.
- 1.4.2 Looking back at the consultation and surveys carried out for the Tonbridge Local Parking Plan in 2004/5, we identified an increasing trend in long stay parking affecting residential roads near the train station and town centre after the morning “permit holder only” periods had passed. Our proposed solution was to introduce a parallel afternoon one-hour restriction to improve parking availability for local residents.
- 1.4.3 The former South Tonbridge scheme was duly advertised as Zone M in 2006 with an additional afternoon restriction included. This prompted a petition from some of the roads in Zone M objecting to the proposal on the grounds that another ‘permit only’ period for the afternoon was unnecessary and it created additional cost for residents who had to purchase vouchers for afternoon visitors. The Board considered the petition in a meeting during 2006. It acknowledged that there was a considerable risk of opportunist all day commuter parking transferring from the roads in the Zone where there would be an afternoon restriction but, in view of the clear and unequivocal desire of the local residents in the particular streets, the Board decided to uphold the objections for the specific streets. The residents were advised accordingly and, in line with their wishes, we installed the measures throughout Zone M later that year with no additional afternoon restriction in the streets cited in the petition.
- 1.4.4 The predicted parking patterns that we forecast might develop have now happened so the latest petition requesting that the previous position be reversed is unsurprising. Acceding to the petitioners request would do no more than was originally intended for the whole of Zone M and it would restore a consistent approach across the area. For that reason, I am recommending the Board approves an afternoon one-hour restricted period for the few streets in Zone M where this does not currently apply and that I confirm to the petitioners that their request has been accepted but with one important proviso. The current Zone M afternoon restriction is from 1 pm till 2 pm. The request is for 1.30 pm till 2.30 pm. The recommended timing is for the afternoon restriction to be consistent with the rest of Zone M; that is 1 pm till 2 pm.

- 1.4.5 The procedure for introducing adjustments to the traffic order will provide all residents and businesses in the affected roads an opportunity to make representations when the changes are formally advertised. This can be carried out as soon as other current parking commitments allow.

## 1.5 Future Programme

- 1.5.1 Later this year, once Phase 5 has been implemented, work will start on preparing the list of sites for Phase 6 (2010/11). There are currently 54 sites on our holding list of requests for parking restrictions and these will need further investigation before we can suggest what the feasible responses might be. Some are already being monitored and others need to be assessed to ensure there is a justified need for waiting restrictions.
- 1.5.2 We continue to monitor the Local Parking Plan work in Borough Green that we installed in 2008. This is due for a review once the major work on the East Malling Parking project reaches a suitable stage.

## 1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 The on-street parking service is undertaken by the Borough Council on behalf of the County Council under the terms of the formal legal agreement

## 1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 Funding to implement the parking action plan is provided within existing approved Borough Council Budgets

## 1.8 Risk Assessment

## 1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That, subject to any further adjustments recommended by the Board, the draft East Malling Local Parking Plan **BE ENDORSED** for the purposes of public consultation.
- 1.9.2 That the recommended responses to the objections to The Kent County Council (Brook Street Area, Tonbridge & Malling) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting) Order 2010 as set out in 1.2.9 above **BE APPROVED**, the objectors be advised accordingly and the Order as amended by installed.
- 1.9.3 That the request of the petitioners to vary Zone M by introducing a one hour period of restriction each weekday afternoon **BE ACCEPTED** as set out in 1.4.4, the petitioners advised accordingly and the necessary changes be introduced.

The 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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Petition Zone M Roads

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