

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

28 November 2011

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

Summary

An assessment of parking management in Aylesford and West Malling has started. It is recommended that consideration of the detailed proposals for public consultation be delegated to local Steering Groups for each exercise. The aim will be to present proposals approved by the Steering Groups for both reviews to the next meeting of the Board in February and the JTB in March.

In parallel, the Board is invited to consider a response to a further petition from residents of Woodfield Road and Springwell Road in Tonbridge and from Bridgewater Place, Leybourne.

1.1 Context

- 1.1.1 The Parking Action Plan includes a commitment to assess parking management in the village of Aylesford and a general intention to revisit each of the established Local Parking Plans from time to time. This is to ensure that they continue to provide a proper balance between capacity and competing demand and that any changes in circumstances are reflected through appropriate adjustments to the Plan.
- 1.1.2 If we go back to the beginnings of work on the Parking Action Plan some ten years ago, it is possible to see the origins of the two-streamed approach we adopted for dealing with parking requests in the Borough. At that time there were a considerable number of requests from locations across the Borough and these have continued to come forward. Many of these had the character of one-off problems that could be addressed independently from the surrounding neighbourhood. These have been dealt with through a phased programme that has currently reached its sixth stage.
- 1.1.3 However, many others were grouped in self contained areas that warranted a more comprehensive treatment leading to a 'local parking plan' approach. To

date we have carried out such Local Parking Plan work in fourteen areas across the Borough starting with West Malling during 2003/04 and culminating in East Malling during this current year. The final area based project in the programme focuses on Aylesford village.

1.2 Aylesford Village

- 1.2.1 Many years ago, we had recorded a range of disparate and relatively discrete requests from Aylesford, concentrated particularly around the Rochester Road area. At the time, we had no opportunity to assess the situation anything more than superficially. Initial thoughts were influenced heavily by concerns about the risk of transferring problems to neighbouring areas without properly dealing with the underlying causes. This leads us to conclude at the time that a parking plan approach was the best way to deal with parking management matters in the village.
- 1.2.2 From time to time, we have dealt with some critical and particular parking issues in the village as part of the phased programme of work; introducing waiting restriction in Mount Pleasant associated with school drop-off activity is an example of such work. The success of these individual interventions might help explain the absence of serious pressure over time for a wider parking plan. Nevertheless, in recent weeks this work has started and the results from initial assessments are that the matters we are being invited to address in Aylesford do not really merit consideration as a full scale Local Parking Plan. Rather, they fall somewhere in between this and the phased programme.
- 1.2.3 Either way, it is not going to overly influence the process we need to go through. It simply means that the scope of the work can be much more focussed than first envisaged and the end result will be a simpler and more self-contained set of recommendations and proposals centred primarily on Rochester Road and the management of the Council car parks.

1.3 Next Steps

- 1.3.1 Given the scope for the exercise, I am recommending a streamlined approach involving a degree of delegation to a local Steering Group to expedite this project between now and the next meeting of the Board. This Group would be similar to those that have provided the steer on all the previous local parking plans, even if the end product in this case is a more selective and concise schedule of actions rather than a 'Local Parking Plan' document.
- 1.3.2 The group would consist of local Borough and County Council Members and a representative from the Parish Council and be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation.
- 1.3.3 The series of steps between now and the next meeting of the Board are as follows;

- Endorsement of the approach set out above by the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board (PTAB) and this Board;
- meeting of the Steering Group to approve a draft set of proposals;
- public consultation exercise focussed on the immediate area likely to be influenced by the proposals;
- reassessment of proposals in the light of the feedback received;
- further meeting of the Steering Group to endorse the revised proposals;
- report to the next meeting of the PTAB and the JTB for endorsement of the proposals.

1.4 West Malling

1.4.1 The West Malling Local Parking Plan was the first of the 14 plans now in place. It will be the first to be revisited so that it can be adjusted, as necessary, in the light of any changes to the local parking environment or to address deficiencies that have become apparent since the plan was first adopted in 2004.

1.4.2 Since then, we have also carried out some important work that has been beneficial for the town. We purchased the freehold of the Ryarsh Lane car park land. This included some additional land that allowed us to extend the car park from 100 to 124 spaces. More recently, in response to request from the local Chamber of Commerce, the time at which free non-permit use of the car park starts was reduced from 4pm to 3pm.

1.4.3 In overall terms and given the obvious parking tensions and capacity issues and constraints that occur in a vibrant historic town, the parking plan provisions have worked well.

1.5 Scope of the Review

1.5.1 Based on representations we have received from the Parish Council and the Chamber of Commerce, the central focus of the review will be the short and long stay car parks. We will address concerns about misuse of the short stay car park by people staying more than the stated maximum permitted time of four hours and deal with issues related to enforcement by the parking attendants. We will also consider what we can do to resolve a perceived shortfall in long stay car parking capacity and where possible identify some fresh opportunities. This will include consideration of Ryarsh Lane car park and the extent to which the current terms of use align with the needs of the town overall.

1.5.2 Other off-street possibilities are likely to be difficult to exploit in the confines of an old historic town such as West Malling. Nevertheless, thought will be given to viable and affordable ways of doing so, including constructive ways of mobilizing

some of the private non-residential parking in the town. The Chamber may be able to provide useful assistance in this aspect of parking planning.

- 1.5.3 These are important points to be focussing upon and they set the scope of the review. It indicates that the major exercise completed in 2004 has settled down quite well and the broad schedule of what was introduced has achieved a reasonable balance across the competing local parking needs. As a result, this is an exercise involving fine adjustments to what is already broadly in place albeit with a major focus on the two car parks and how they can best operate to support the vitality of the town.

1.6 Next Steps

- 1.6.1 If there are other matters that need to be addressed but which we are currently unaware of, then these can come naturally out of the work we are about to undertake with a newly reconvened local Steering Group.
- 1.6.2 For the same logistical reasons outlined above for the Aylesford work, I am recommending that the West Malling review be focussed. The schedule of items that have to be considered in the review tends itself to some short term consideration and implementation. Therefore, I am recommending that the Steering Group be delegated to press on with the review as expeditiously as possible, taking the proposals that emerge through an appropriate level of public consultation and assessment, with the aim of presenting the PTAB and this Board with proposals for endorsement at the next meetings in February and March respectively.
- 1.6.3 The steps to reach that goal are identical to those set out above for Aylesford and I would hope to be able to convene a meeting of the Steering Group as soon as possible after the meeting of the Board. This group will again be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation and made up of local Borough and County Council Members together with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce.

1.7 Planning and Transportation Advisory Board

- 1.7.1 The PTAB recently considered parking reviews for Aylesford and West Malling and endorsed the principle of delegating detailed consideration of each them to local Steering Groups set up as described in this report.

1.8 Tonbridge Local Parking Plan – Zone M

- 1.8.1 The previous meeting of the Board considered the results of a consultation exercise within Zone M in Tonbridge that was conducted to assess local support or otherwise for an additional period of afternoon permit-only parking. Some of the streets within the Zone objected to an additional afternoon period of restriction when the original scheme of parking management was first introduced in 2006.

Local sentiment in some streets has shifted in the interim and this led to a petition from some residents in the Zone last year.

- 1.8.2 The Board responded to this petition by endorsing a fresh consultation of the area to assess the level of support for the change. This was carried out early this summer and the Board considered the results at the last meeting. The broad conclusion was that the level of support was insufficient to justify introducing the afternoon restriction. **Annex 1** reproduces an extract of the relevant part of the report to the last meeting and it describes the history of this matter in some detail.
- 1.8.3 Following the meeting, all residents of those streets within Zone M that do not currently have the pm restriction received a newsletter informing them about the Board's decision. This prompted a series of letters mostly centred on Springwell Road and Woodfield Road expressing disappointment with the decision and, more pertinently for this report, the submission of a further petition to the Mayor who has kindly forwarded it to me so that it can be tabled at this meeting.
- 1.8.4 Assessing how best to respond to this petition places the Board in a challenging position. It opens a number of issues not the least of which is how repeat representations on the same subject can be reasonably dealt with when there is already a fully committed programme and genuine limitation on the resources the Borough Council can bring to bear on the problem.
- 1.8.5 Members have been consistently supportive of an approach based on recognising that parking patterns and local circumstances change and evolve and that some continuing commitment to review and adjustment is essential. This does, of course, have to reflect the range of commitments already scheduled for attention and the capacity and resources available to address and resolve parking problems.
- 1.8.6 The Boards response to this second petition should therefore follow the routine practices that we have been adopting. This being so, my advice is that the petitioners should be informed that their request has been duly logged for fresh attention when current commitments allow. When that might be, I am happy to be guided by the Board but I consider the earliest that could possibly be justified is following completion of Phase 6 of the general programme, likely to be next summer. Any sooner would displace commitments already well embedded in the programme, for which there is considerable local aspiration as well as the reviews at West Malling and Aylesford discussed above.
- 1.8.7 Importantly, establishing this review in the programme would involve, as an initial step before anything else, a commitment to a further round of local consultations of the streets that currently do not have the pm restriction. This would be essential because any action in selected streets would have the inevitable and automatic effect of moving the problems that the petitioners are experiencing onto the neighbouring streets. That is a matter that should be addressed in the light of the results of the further consultation exercise.

1.8.8 I recommend therefore that the work to address the petitioners' request, including an initial stage of public consultation across the nine streets of Zone M without the pm restriction, be scheduled into the programme in the period beyond the completion of the current Phase 6 work and that the petitioners be advised accordingly.

1.9 Bridgewater Place – Leybourne

1.9.1 The Council has received a petition from a group of residents of Bridgewater Place expressing concerns about parking on the road. There are particular concerns about the adverse impacts on road safety of parking at the junction with Oxley Shaw Lane and in the run up to the junction.

1.9.2 At this stage, we can do no more than formally receive this petition and confirm that it has been duly logged within the phased programme and that it will be followed up just as soon as the current commitments allow.

1.10 Legal Implications

1.10.1 None at this stage.

1.11 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.11.1 Funding for the scale of work expected to come from each of the exercises is already contained within the Borough Council's Capital Plan.

1.12 Risk Assessment

1.12.1 The risk that emerging proposals might not fully reflect local sentiment is being addressed through an overview of the work by a local Steering Group in each case.

1.13 Equality Impact Assessment

1.13.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.14 Policy Considerations

1.14.1 Community

1.15 Recommendations

1.15.1 That;

- 1) the Board endorses the decision of the PTAB to delegate detailed consideration of the parking management reviews for Aylesford and West Malling, including approval of proposals for an appropriate level of public consultation, to local Steering Groups set up for that purpose;

- 2) that the petition from some residents of Springwell Road and Woodfield Road, Tonbridge be noted and;
- 3) the work to address the petitioners' request, including an initial stage of public consultation across the nine streets of Zone M without the pm restriction, be scheduled into the programme after Phase 6 is completed and that the petitioners be advised accordingly;
- 4) the petition from some residents of Bridgewater Place, Leybourne, be formally received and logged within the forward schedule of parking request to be dealt with as soon as currently programmed commitments permit and that the residents be advised accordingly.

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:

contact: Michael McCulloch

Nil

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The recommendation seeks delegation to a Steering Group for proposals yet to be devised.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	n/a	See previous answer
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.