

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

23 October 2006

Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation

Part 1- Public

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

1 PARKING ACTION PLAN - TONBRIDGE AND BLUE BELL HILL

Summary

Updates are provided on the Tonbridge Local Parking Plan and some proposals for the Blue Bell Hill area where commuter parking is leading to problems for residents.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Tonbridge Local Parking Plan is now at an advanced stage of implementation. We are providing a wide variety of measures designed to bring fair management and safety to the local parking patterns. This report updates Members on progress over the summer months and sets out the remaining areas to be tackled.
- 1.1.2 Members will be aware that any unresolved objections to proposals for Traffic Regulation Orders are reported to both this meeting and the Joint Transportation Board. The Boards will recommend to Cabinet how the objections should be responded to.
- 1.1.3 Objections have recently been received in relation to Zone G, the details of which are set out in the report. This paper provides an opportunity for the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board to offer its advice to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation in parallel with the views from the JTB.

1.2 Zone K – Dry Hill Area

- 1.2.1 The recommended changes have been incorporated into the Draft Order which was advertised on 22 September. If no fresh objections are received by the due date of 25 October this will be implemented in November.

1.3 Zone P – Hectorage Road Area

- 1.3.1 Members will recall that various modifications have been made to satisfy a number of concerns raised.

1.3.2 Each objector has been advised of the revisions to the scheme which will be advertised accordingly.

1.4 Zone L – Mill Crescent Area

1.4.1 This scheme has been implemented with the exception of Mill Street and Mill Crescent where three objections were received. Further consultation with each householder in these two roads revealed that 96% of those that responded did want to be included in Zone L but 56% did not want the bellmouth area in front of 19 - 47 formalised with parking bays.

1.4.2 In view of this level of response it would seem to be appropriate to add these roads to Zone L. The bellmouth area in front of 19 – 47 is an area of unregulated parking used predominately by adjacent residents. It does seem to work well without effecting passing traffic and as such I am content to leave this area as it is.

1.5 Zone M – Baltic Road Area

1.5.1 This Zone was agreed following some minor modifications to reflect local concerns and the order has now been made. The lines and signs should be in place by the date of the meeting.

1.6 Zone G – Douglas Road Area

1.6.1 Two objections have been received to this scheme. This does seem to be a generally popular scheme and, in the light of that, both objectors have been contacted again to see if they wish to stand by their objections. At the time of writing this report one of the two objections has been withdrawn. The remaining objection relates to the following.

1.6.2 Objector - Chichester Road

- Supports parking scheme in principle but objects to the addition of the extra hours restriction 5 – 6 pm on the grounds of inconvenience and loss of flexibility to residents.
- Disproportionate restrictions to the size of the present parking problem.
- Does not achieve a balance for those who genuinely need to park in the area.
- Suggests that there a better solution is to have a single hours restriction later in the day, for example, between 1.30 and 2.30 pm but does not consider the problem to be bad or widespread enough as to require such a move.
- Thinks that the better solution of moving the single hour restriction should have been offered to the residents as an option at an earlier stage.

- Further ground of objection cited if the duration of visitor's vouchers does not cover the additional hours proposal. (Comment – a visitor's voucher is valid for the whole day)

1.6.3 General comments

The details of the proposals for Zone G were developed through consultation with the 567 local households.

There is clearly a need to manage parking over a longer period of time than at present and there are different ways of doing this. Restricting parking for an hour in the morning and then again in the afternoon provides more flexibility for residents to park. Simply moving the existing single hour time restriction to a mid-day restriction would not provide the level of protection that residents are generally looking for.

Whilst the representations made are legitimate, I do not consider that the objections are significant in the context of the whole zone and I feel the scheme should be progressed as planned.

1.7 Zone N – Priory Street Area

- 1.7.1 This is the last Zone to be advertised and covers the Priory Street area. It is partly in Medway Ward and partly in Vauxhall Ward. Ward Members will receive the documentation for this towards the end of November.

1.8 Blue Bell Hill Area

- 1.8.1 The Blue Bell Hill area suffers from the parking behaviour of many commuters who leave their cars in the local streets while they travel to work by either coach or other means. Extensive surveys have been undertaken in close liaison with the local members to ascertain the extent and scale of the problem.
- 1.8.2 Proposals have been developed to prevent daytime waiting between either 11am – 12 noon or 12 noon – 1pm. Double yellow lines will also be provided at junctions and bends where parking has a detrimental effect on highway safety.
- 1.8.3 Public consultation is complete with a high return of questionnaires in most roads. The scheme details have been prepared from the suggestions from local people for the three distinct areas and all residents have been advised of the draft proposals for their road.
- 1.8.4 The coach company that carries out the daily tour of the streets in this neighbourhood to pick up passengers has also been part of the consultation process. Some of those picked up live locally and arrive on foot at the locations where the coaches stop so there is a legitimate reason for the coach company taking a slightly circuitous route before rejoining the motorway. However, many of the commuters arrive by car and are the root cause of the local concerns

about parking in residential neighbourhoods and which we wish to resolve. From a marketing point of view it is in the coach operator's interest to work with the Council to help improve the service and avoid the need to trawl the neighbourhood to pick up additional passengers who could be readily accommodated in the new car park just seconds away from the motorway junction. Consequently, the operator will be working with us to make coach passengers aware of the benefits of the car park including the attractive low parking charges (£1 a day/ £4 for a weekly ticket) and the good level of security provided by the live CCTV monitoring.

- 1.8.5 Plans of the three areas where new waiting restrictions are proposed will be available at the meeting. I hope to advertise the order within the next three weeks. In summary, the effect of the proposals will be to relieve some residential streets of commuter parking and encourage greater use of the purpose built car park that was recently completed.

1.9 Parking Management – Season Tickets

- 1.9.1 For many years the Council has issued season tickets for the main town centre long stay car parks. This is convenient for regular car park customers and it is attractive financially because of the discount price compared to the day rate. For that reason we have been monitoring the steady growth in season ticket numbers to ensure a fair balance between the numbers of spaces available for season tickets and non-season ticket use.
- 1.9.2 Currently there is spare capacity in the group of long stay car parks to the east of the High Street where season ticket use is focused; that is at Sovereign Way East and North and at Vale Road Car park adjacent to the Indoor Bowls Club. That situation is likely to change as a result of additional employers moving into and around the town. The Council has the capacity to support requests for a number of season tickets from the people who will be working there. Once those requests have been met, the combined car park use from season ticket and non-season ticket users will be approaching the maximum capacity of the relevant car parks. Another factor to be taken into account is the potential growth in requests for season tickets from those who had been parking in the new resident preferential parking zones around the town centre.
- 1.9.3 Consequently, in the interests of good parking management, the Council needs to consider limiting season tickets to the number currently issued or committed. In practice this means containing the number of season tickets for Sovereign Way North/East and Vale at 224 against a total number of 270 spaces.
- 1.9.4 There are further season tickets issued for the car parks at Waterloo Road, Upper Castle Fields, Lower Castle Fields. These are all currently operating at capacity so an increase in the number of season tickets could not be justified at this time.

- 1.9.5 Thus we are recommending to the Board that the total number of season tickets be set at what is currently issued and committed. It will however be necessary to monitor usage and capacity very closely to make sure the long term car parks are managed to an optimum level.

1.10 Legal Implications

- 1.10.1 The traffic regulation orders referred to in the report will be made by the highway authority, Kent County Council, using its statutory powers contained on the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984. By considering objections to the proposals the Borough Council is working within the terms of the working agreement set out to formalise this work area after the end of the Kent Highways Partnership in April 2005.

1.11 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.11.1 There is a requirement to re-advertise details of any roads where additions to the original amendments are approved. The cost of re-advertising the amendments to each scheme is estimated at £600 for which there is current budget provision.

1.12 Risk Assessment

- 1.12.1 The proposals represent good highway safety practice and should be implemented but with the amendments that have arisen following consideration of representations made. The option to defer any permit scheme represents the lower risk approach, continuing with what currently takes place.
- 1.12.2 A significant number of local people have supported the proposed RPP during the extensive consultation exercises and will be surprised if the proposals do not proceed at this time. However, bearing in mind the efforts made to date to secure local support and understanding for the various and wide ranging elements of the Parking Plan, the Council will wish to ensure that the objections are given serious and detailed consideration.

1.13 Recommendations

- 1.13.1 The addition of Mill Lane and Mill Crescent into Zone L as set out in the report **BE ENDORSED** and the objectors advised accordingly.
- 1.13.2 The implementation of Zone G as approved **BE ENDORSED** and the objector advised accordingly.
- 1.13.3 The total number of season tickets **BE SET** at the current level of issue and commitment and be kept under regular review.

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

Background papers:

File - Zone L Additional consultation
File - Zone G Objections and Comments

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File ref: P3/Zone K
P3/Zone L

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