

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

24 July 2006

Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation and the Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 PARKING IN BLUE BELL HILL

Summary

Residents in the vicinity of the Blue Bell Hill car park are experiencing problems with commuter cars parked on the street for long periods of time. The report updates members on the progress made to relieve these problems.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Blue Bell Hill Car park opened in October 2004 providing a high standard secure parking facility primarily for commuters. Since then we have been monitoring the level and patterns of parking in Blue Bell Hill Village, the car park itself and the surrounding residential areas. This has provided a clear picture of the first year's operation of the car park and its effect on the surrounding area.
- 1.1.2 The use of the car park is slowly increasing and current numbers show there are some 97 regular users for the 265 spaces provided. It is close to junction 3 of the M2 and the regular coach services to London make this an ideal location. It has recently been awarded with a Park Mark Award following a successful inspection by the Police. These are awarded to parking areas run by responsible operators concerned with the safety of the motorist and their vehicle, and who have done the best they can to reduce crime and the fear of crime on their site.
- 1.1.3 However there are some motorists who still choose to park on the highway rather than pay to use the car park. This is a continuing concern for residents and local Members.
- 1.1.4 The surveys revealed that persistent on-street parking on an all-day basis has increased from 92 to 104 vehicles in the first 12 month period. Many of these vehicles are left by motorists using the commuter coach services but some are left by people who choose to car share. Whilst using commuter coaches and

car sharing are good transportation goals, the action of motorists leaving their cars in the local streets is causing difficulties for residents.

- 1.1.5 Since opening the car park I have received a number of requests to provide parking restrictions to manage parking levels on the highway. In April 2005 all residents were contacted advising them that the parking levels in the car park and surrounding residential roads were being monitored. In February 2006 this Board considered the Parking Action Plan which included a review of parking in Blue Bell Hill Village and surrounding areas
- 1.1.6 The data from the parking surveys has been examined and used to determine the areas where commuter parking is creating problems on the highway. We have met with representatives of The Kings Ferry and Chalkwell coach companies to explore their understanding of the problem and level of support. In principal they have no objections to the introduction of parking restrictions where all day parking has been causing problems, however they are concerned about the transfer of vehicles into less suitable roads as many motorists seem resistant to paying to park.

1.2 Programme

- 1.2.1 A questionnaire will be developed and sent out to all residents to determine the level of support for parking controls and what form these should take. Local members fully support this initiative and have been providing considerable assistance with the investigative and survey work.
- 1.2.2 From this we will develop the details of a scheme for the area for implementation later this year.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 Processing and sealing of the traffic regulation orders is carried out by Kent County Council under powers contained in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The cost of implementing proposals to control on-street parking in Blue Bell Hill can be accommodated within existing Capital Plan provisions.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 There is a risk of objection from commuters who currently park on-street within residential neighbourhoods when the draft notice for waiting restrictions is advertised. That risk is justified by the efforts the Borough Council has made to provide convenient, secure and inexpensive alternative parking opportunity in the extended Blue Bell Hill car park.

Background papers:

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Nil

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