

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

14 June 2007

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision

1 PARKING ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT

Summary

The final phases of the Tonbridge Local Parking Plan and Blue Bell Hill scheme are complete. A planned and required review of the early phases in Tonbridge has now commenced, starting with Zone J (The Slade area), which had been in operation for 18 months. A response to a recently received petition from some residents in Zone P is recommended. The Hadlow Parking Plan is also underway together with the first part of Phase 4. Work on the remainder of Phase 4 will start later in the financial year and a start will be made shortly on the Local Parking Plan for Borough Green and Snodland.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report updates progress in implementing the Parking Action Plan since the last meeting in February. The phases of the Tonbridge Local Parking plan are now complete. A parking scheme for Blue Bell Hill Village was also recently introduced and is working well. We have just completed a full round of consultation and surveys in Hadlow to assist in developing the Hadlow Local Parking Plan. Finally, a number of individual sites identified as needing parking restrictions and held on the agreed Phase 4 list are underway for the Tonbridge area.

1.2 Tonbridge Local Parking Plan

1.2.1 Installing road markings is an extremely weather dependent operation and the poor weather during February and March severely hampered the programme and held back the final phases of the Tonbridge Local Parking Plan. Nevertheless, it was followed by a dry spell and I am pleased to report that the many and varied elements of the scheme have now been completed and all phases are “up and running”.

1.2.2 Each zone in Tonbridge has been introduced under an 18 month experimental order procedure. During the first 6 months of this period any objections received are considered and, if unresolved, will be reported to this Board with an

appropriate recommendation. At the end of the 18 month period we must confirm the order with any appropriate modifications. Unless this is done enforcement would no longer be possible.

1.2.3 The table sets out the timescales for confirming each zone and some observations.

ZONE	LOCATION	CONFIRMATION DATE	OBSERVATIONS
J	The Slade area	April 2007	The Slade Residents Association (SARA) reminded residents of the end of the 18 month experimental period and encouraged residents to write in with comments on the operation of the scheme. Out of 236 registered properties, 22 wrote mainly in support of the scheme. There were some requests for minor alterations to the times to suit individual circumstances, but no clear consensus on any change. This zone has been working well and, with no outstanding Objections, the Order was confirmed without any changes.
D	Barden Road area	September 2007	There remains one unresolved objection to the working of the experimental "one way" system which created additional on street parking places.
L	Hadlow Road area	February 2008	There will be the opportunity for residents of Kendal Drive that chose not to be part of the scheme to reconsider the need for controlled parking
M	Baltic Road area	March 2008	This review will take on board further assessment of outlying roads such as Hilltop, Silver Close and Quarry Bank where migration of parking by non-permit holders is being monitored.
K	Dry Hill area	May 2008	This will include a review of the number of permit bays in Portman Park following completion of a number of infill development sites. There will be the opportunity for residents of some roads

			that chose not to be part of the scheme to reconsider the need for controlled parking.
			A “knock-on” effect of the Zone K works has been migration of parking to uncontrolled stretch of London Road. This will be dealt with shortly as part of the Phase 4a work described further on in this report.
E	Cannon Lane area	July 2008	No outstanding or unresolved objections
P	Hectorage Road area	August 2008	A petition containing a significant number of names of local residents from Kings Road was received during the formal Notice stage last year and this culminated in the proposed restrictions for resident’s preferential parking being dropped from this road. Subsequently some residents from Kings Road and Goldsmid Road have expressed a wish to be included in the scheme. However unless this aspiration becomes more widely held and expressed there will be no justification for altering the current shape of the scheme. Additionally a petition has been received from residents of Tudeley Lane and Mann Square and this is considered below
G	Douglas Road Area	September 2008	No outstanding or unresolved objections
N	Pembury Road Area	October 2008	No outstanding or unresolved objections

1.3 Zone P – Petition

- 1.3.1 On 20 April a petition was received containing 69 signatures from residents of Tudley Lane and Mann Square. The petition entitled “Here is another Petition against the Parking Zone P and double yellow lines in Tudeley Lane and Mann Square”. The petition is not specific on what the residents actually want to happen to the scheme which was only recently introduced. The main problem seems to be

that petitioners want to be able to park in the turning area at the end of the cul de sac and feel that parking away from the front of their property is unsafe. They state the severe competition for parking spaces has not reduced and that the impact of student parking from the Weald of Kent Grammar school and the parking situation is worse than before the scheme was implemented.

- 1.3.2 It is understood that the petitioners wish to have all day restrictions with parking controlled by resident permits and it is asserted that all roadside parking spaces are taken after 11 am on weekdays.
- 1.3.3 The details for each of the zones were developed from the suggestions of local people following extensive consultation and a comprehensive parking survey. One of the main concerns in this area was the severe competition for roadside parking generated by pupils of the nearby school especially as available off-street parking for residents is limited. The all day parking in the turning area caused problems with larger delivery vehicles, emergency services and the refuse freighter in turning in the cul de sac area.
- 1.3.4 An original scheme proposal was drafted from resident's comments and it included both a morning and afternoon prohibition, each for one hour duration, to prevent all day parking (with exemptions for resident permit holders and vouchers for their visitors). However, there were a significant number of objections to the afternoon restriction during the formal consultation period.
- 1.3.5 After carefully considering all representations this Board and the Joint Transportation Board resolved in July 2006 that the objections should be met by dropping the proposed afternoon restriction.
- 1.3.6 All residents were advised of the decisions by letter with an accompanying coloured plan of the revised proposals in September 2006. The revised scheme was duly re-advertised reflecting the resolution to proceed with an amended scheme for the Zone. No new objections were received so, with all the legal procedures satisfied, installation began and was recently completed.
- 1.3.7 Initially enforcement of this scheme has resulted in a number of penalty charge notices being issued on a daily basis to non permit holders. However, the numbers issued are steadily decreasing as the scheme settles down and drivers comply with the restrictions. I am aware that the petitioners have contacted Russet Homes to explore whether parking spaces could be provided on the grass in front of their homes. This is outside the scope of this project and a matter for Russet Homes to consider.
- 1.3.8 The site has been monitored on different days and at different times and this supports the information coming from our enforcement role. There is some evidence of non-permit holders parking beyond the prohibited hour of the morning restriction (10 – 11am) but the numbers are diminishing and there is parking space on Tudeley lane for residents during weekdays. It is important to bear in mind that all the schemes in Tonbridge have been introduced using an

Experimental Order procedure that allows the Council to be more innovative and flexible than would be the case with a permanent traffic regulation order. Nevertheless the procedure does involve giving any new arrangements a reasonable length of time to settle down and a maximum of 18 months is stipulated. In the present circumstances, there seems to be no overriding reason for interfering with the normal process and that the current arrangements should be allowed to run their course and be reviewed before the end of the 18 month period. If warranted, an afternoon slot for resident permit holders only can then be introduced.

- 1.3.9 This same time frame is relevant to the request that the waiting restrictions be removed from the turning head. However I do believe that this can be considered on a similar basis to the resident preferential arrangements. The principal reason for introducing the waiting restrictions is to allow safe access and turning for the essential functioning of the neighbourhood by vehicles such as the refuse freighter. In essence the request to remove the waiting restrictions in the turning head represents a desire of a small number of residents to park on the highway in front of their home which is seen as more of a priority than safe access and servicing for the wider community. Current monitoring demonstrates that there is some parking availability in the area albeit not in the immediate vicinity of the turning head
- 1.3.10 After careful consideration I am recommending to this board and to the JTB (at its meeting on 11 June) that the principal of introducing an afternoon restriction be put to the residents of Tudeley Lane/Mann Square towards the end of the Experimental period and that it be confirmed in a permanent Order if it has the support of local residents. In parallel I recommend that the waiting restrictions in the turning head should be preserved in the interests of safe access and amenity on behalf of the wider community

1.4 Blue Bell Hill

- 1.4.1 The commuter parking problems in the local streets of the Blue Bell Hill area have now largely been eliminated by way of a more rigorous regime of parking management on the residential streets. This project was developed in close consultation with local Members and is now complete.

1.5 Hadlow Local Parking Plan

- 1.5.1 Consultation commenced in April, following initial discussions with local Members and the Parish Council. Questionnaires were distributed to all registered properties to establish a better awareness of the local concerns.
- 1.5.2 Parking surveys have been carried out at different times on different days to obtain a snapshot of the parking patterns in the area. We have had a good response from the questionnaires. A collated report will be forwarded to ward Members and the Parish Council for comment. We will work closely with local Members to draw up a scheme and bring it back to this Board for endorsement.

1.6 Borough Green & Snodland

- 1.6.1 During the summer we will start to look at the parking issues in Borough Green. We will work closely with local Members and the Parish Council to ensure that we correctly identify the areas of concern. There will be a full consultation exercise to enable the views of local residents, traders and others having a parking need to be identified.
- 1.6.2 Snodland is similarly programmed for analysis this autumn and again we will initially make contact with local members and the Town Council before starting survey work.

1.7 West Malling

- 1.7.1 The review of the West Malling Local Parking Plan has commenced by way of a leaflet drop throughout the New Town area to establish whether there had been any changes in parking patterns or pressure to extend the scheme into these residential roads. The responses will be assessed with local Members during the summer months together with a timetable for any necessary changes.

1.8 The Phased Programme

- 1.8.1 The Tonbridge & Malling Local Parking Plan not only addresses specific areas of the borough where individual parking plans are required but it also contains a number of phases of specific ad hoc concerns across the Borough. The first three phases have been completed. A number of the roads listed in Phase 4 are located in Tonbridge and these have been picked up in the main changes in each zone.
- 1.8.2 The remaining concerns listed in Phase 4 will be looked at later this year **Annex 1**. Phase 5 **Annex 2** is now programmed to follow later during 2007/08.

1.9 Legal Implications

- 1.9.1 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.

1.10 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.10.1 This work is included within existing budgets.

1.11 Risk Assessment

- 1.11.1 There are two factors that merit consideration within a risk assessment. The first is whether the schemes will achieve the aim of promoting a well ordered parking

environment and the second relates to the extent to which the support of the local community is mobilised.

- 1.11.2 To address the first of these, each element of the Tonbridge Local Parking Plan is being implemented using an experimental order process. This provides a degree of flexibility within the scheme arrangements to enable the schemes to be adapted and refined in the light of how the scheme works in practice and also to reflect feedback from the local community.
- 1.11.3 The second factor has been addressed through a consistent and robust concentration on public consultation. There is therefore a high probability of broad community support for the details of the scheme and where that is not the case those elements of the scheme have been shelved to permit further consultation with local residents. A further mitigating factor to reduce the risk of lack of public support is the order process mentioned in the previous paragraph. This should provide the assurance that the Council has the will and ability to adapt the Parking Plan in the light of comment and circumstances to ensure that it achieves a best balance of local parking needs.
- 1.11.4 The review and confirmation of the experimental orders is crucial to ensure that we can correctly and effectively manage on street parking in these areas. The proposals are either introduced for safety reasons or to provide a more appropriate balance of parking needs. All schemes represent good highway safety practice.

1.12 Conclusions

- 1.12.1 The Joint Transportation Board will have met on 11 June and will have received a similar report to this. I will be able to advise Members orally on the night on the outcome of that meeting and suggest that similar recommendations go forward to Cabinet.

1.13 Recommendations

- 1.13.1 The scheme for Tudeley Lane **BE REVIEWED** as described in the report along with the rest of Zone P after it has been in operation for 18 months and the petitioners **BE ADVISED** accordingly.

Background papers:

File - Zone J Comments
File - Zone P Petition and comments

contact: Karole Reynolds

File ref P3/Zone J
File ref P3/Zone P/petition

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure