

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**20 November 2012**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure**

**Part 1- Public**

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

**1 WEST MALLING LOCAL PARKING PLAN REVIEW**

**This additional item has been submitted following consultation with the Chairman.**

**Parking conditions in West Malling were recently reviewed with the assistance of a local Steering Group. The Group is recommending that some measures should be introduced on-street to provide additional parking opportunities. In the High Street car park, the Group's recommendation is that the current management arrangements should be retained, subject to continued monitoring, and a reduction in the maximum stay from 4 to 3 hours.**

**1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 The West Malling Local Parking Plan was the first of 15 plans now in place across the Borough. It is also the first to be revisited so that it can be refined, if necessary, in the light of any changes to the local parking conditions or to address any deficiencies which may become apparent since the plan was first adopted in 2004.

**1.2 Background**

1.2.1 Earlier this year we undertook the planned review of parking in West Malling. The context and scope of the review was set out in a report to the meeting of the Board last November. The results of the public consultation were considered by the West Malling Local Parking Plan Steering Group at a meeting earlier this month.

1.2.2 The report to the Steering Group is attached in **Annex 1**.

### 1.3 Steering Group

- 1.3.1 The approach to local parking plans involving a Steering Group to guide the work has proved to be successful in all the local parking exercises that the Borough Council has undertaken over the years.
- 1.3.2 The West Malling Steering Group comprises local members, the Parish Council, the local County Council member and the Chamber of Commerce and is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation. This report sets out the recommendations coming from the Group.

### 1.4 On – Street Proposals

- 1.4.1 The on-street suggestions in the consultation exercise focussed on solutions to parking problems by providing additional on-street capacity at the following locations in the town:
- St Leonard’s Street
  - Water Lane
  - Town Hill and Nevill Court
- 1.4.2 The suggested approach for each of these locations is shown on the drawings in **Annexes 2, 3 & 4** which have subsequently been adjusted to reflect feedback from the community. The Response to the consultation exercise is summarised in the report to the Steering Group. The recommendations of the Steering Group for the on-street proposals are as follows.

Location	Steering Group Recommendation
Water lane	Details set out on drawing no DD/561/1
Town Hill and Nevill Court	Details set out on drawing no DD/561/2  Note. Proposals for additional on-street parking on Town Hill were not supported in the informal consultation and are not being recommended by the Steering Group for implementation
St Leonard’s street	Details set out on drawing no DD/561/3

### 1.5 Off-Street – the Public Car Parks

- 1.5.1 Clearly there are some local frustrations about the way this car park is used and there is a view held by many that long stay parking here is restricting its capacity

for short-term users. There are occasions when those wishing to park cannot find a space due to this low turnover and are forced to look elsewhere or perhaps return to park at another time. On balance this can be a deterrent to parking to the detriment of local businesses and inconvenience to local people.

- 1.5.2 The consultation leaflet posed a question concerning charging in the High Street short-stay car park. It invited comment on whether they thought that people using this car park should pay directly to do so in order to encourage more turnover, assist in enforcement to the same end and ultimately make the car park more accessible to shoppers and visitors to the town.
- 1.5.3 Currently enforcement within this car park is time consuming and an inefficient use of the Civil Enforcement Officer's time. The introduction of charging, as explained in the report to the Steering Group, would provide better and timelier opportunities to enforce the short-stay restrictions here. Although there was good support for charging from those who responded to the consultation the Steering Group recommended that long-stay users should be encouraged to park in some of the additional on-street spaces at Water Lane, Neville Court and/or St Leonard's Street and that this should be implemented for a period to see if that initiative alone would make a difference in the use of the High Street Car Park. My view remains that a mechanism of charging is the most efficient way of managing and enforcing parking patterns, although I understand the cautious approach favoured by the Steering Group. The Parish Council and the Chamber of Commerce offered to contact businesses in the town and promote the alternative parking to their staff.
- 1.5.4 The Borough Council is also confronting financial challenges require that consideration how costs can be abated across all service areas. Car parks require a revenue commitment to support the maintenance and rates. In addition, the costs of providing CCTV, much valued by the local community, are considerable. Car parks therefore cannot be isolated from these wider financial pressures and it is legitimate to consider whether direct users should contribute towards some of the cost of the facilities.
- 1.5.5 Overwhelming public support was given to the suggestion that the maximum stay should be reduced from 4 to 3 hours and the Steering Group recommends this approach. Tesco share the ownership of this car park and any decision will require their agreement. Initial discussions with them suggest that they would support this initiative.

## **1.6 Other Areas**

- 1.6.1 Additionally the Steering Group recommends that consideration be given to the some other issues which arose during the consultation process:
- The introduction of permit parking in Offham Road and Norman Road to address concerns about displacement and obstructive parking.

- There are ongoing concerns about a relatively recent problem relating to commuter parking on the A20 at the entrance to Leybourne Woods. This parking at this location has escalated following the resurfacing of the small parking area by KCC which seems to have triggered an awareness of the car park. Ideally Chalkwell, the commuter bus operator, would pick up its customers from a location where parked cars are not going to cause a problem. KCC has advertised a Traffic Regulation Order to promote waiting restrictions at this location to try and minimise the impact on the highway. However, I do not believe that to be the whole answer and so discussions are being held with KCC officers and Chalkwell to identify and potentially promote alternative suitable parking opportunities elsewhere on the A20 which would remove the nuisance of the commuter parking blocking the woods car park, the grass verges and footways. This may be changed or extended to reflect the developing station car park 'kiss and ride' facility which may alter the parking usage on the A20.
- A little further westward along the A20 between 267 and 283 London Road we have had a request to consider extending the Residents' Preferential Parking (RPP) on the footway in front of these residential properties. The footway here is wide enough to cater for parked cars without obstructing passing pedestrians and is tolerated by KCC in recognition of this. Increasing pressure coming from commuters, new housing in the area, and use by Parkfoot garage customers is making it sometimes impossible for residents to use these spaces. I understand the residents of these properties are keen to join the RPP scheme and are aware that they would all need to pay the annual fee. I also understand that KCC has no objection in principle to the extension of the scheme to a pavement area.
- Tesco has asked that the loading bay in the High Street fronting their store start at 6am rather than the current 8am.

1.6.2 If the Board is minded to approve the Steering Groups recommendations that these additional areas are included in the review then these can be taken forward for informal consultation.

## **1.7 Legal Implications**

1.7.1 Tesco share the ownership of the High Street car park and their agreement will be necessary for any changes to the management of this car park.

## **1.8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.8.1 The on-street proposals would be met within current capital plan budget provisions for implementing the Parking Action Plan.

## 1.9 Risk Assessment

1.9.1 The risk of no refinement to the local parking management is that problems highlighted within the town would not be addressed.

## 1.10 Equality Impact Assessment

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

## 1.11 Policy Considerations

1.11.1 Community.

## 1.12 Recommendations

1.12.1 The Steering Group's recommendations for:

- 1) the on-street proposals set out in this report **BE APPROVED**;
- 2) the reduction in the maximum stay in the High Street car park to be reduced from 4 hours to 3 hours **BE APPROVED**;
- 3) the development of additional on-street proposals set out in this report **BE APPROVED**;

1.12.2 The Parish Council and Chamber of Commerce **BE REQUESTED** to lead an approach to the business community and encourage those requiring long-stay parking to park within the Ryarsh Lane car park or within the additional on-street spaces as described in the report.

1.12.3 A further report **BE MADE** in 6 months time to further consider the use of the Short Stay High Street car park.

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: Mike O'Brien

Nil

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
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	n/a
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	The proposals are neutral in terms of quality impact.
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.*