

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

19 November 2013

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

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

The local Steering Group has recently met to review the outcome of the recent changes and is recommending a series of Action Points to improve parking management in West Malling.

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 was also the first to be revisited for any refinements, 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. The Steering Group met again last month and has identified a series of Action Points as set out in the report.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The Steering Groups request for the on-street initiatives in St Leonards Street, Water Lane and Town Hill/Nevill Court were implemented earlier this year and, although working as intended, there is still scope for further take up of spaces in St Leonards Street. The Parish Council and the Chamber of Commerce have been asked to encourage long-stay parkers to use St Leonards Street and free-up the town centre.

1.3 High Street (short-stay) car park

- 1.3.1 There is currently no charge to park in the busy, central short-stay car park but motorists have to take a free (currently 4-hour) parking ticket from one of the two ticket machines. Parking enforcement in this car park presents a significant operational enforcement challenge for the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) whereby time-related breaches of the regulations require a number of visits and a full record of the registration numbers of all parked cars to establish which cars may have stayed beyond the permitted time. The Steering Group is keen to see the current long-stay abuse of this short-stay car park curtailed and last year Members agreed with the Steering Group that the maximum stay should be

reduced from 4 to 3 hours. The implementation of this has been delayed whilst an effective way to enforce these restrictions, within available resources, can be found. The Steering Group would now also like to go one stage further and in addition to implementing the 3-hour time limit it asked that it be **additionally to be extended to include Saturdays**.

- 1.3.2 Approximately 180,000 free tickets are issued from the machines in this car park each year and the Steering Group was advised that if we were to apply a scaled charge to park in this car park this might make its users consider how long they actually needed to park and it is likely that they would buy a ticket for a shorter period and thereby free-up spaces for other users. That would result in the best management of the car park and would mean that CEOs could carry out meaningful enforcement at all times of the working day and be able to also enforce on-street issues whilst they are in the town.
- 1.3.3 However, recent developments in technology now give an opportunity for better enforcement than we can currently. This is explained further below.
- 1.3.4 We now have the opportunity to modify the two ticket machines in the car park so that a car's registration number would have to be inputted on a key board before a ticket was issued. The machine could be programmed not to issue a further ticket to that registration number until the no-return period had expired. Tickets could still be free of charge although even a nominal a charge could free-up space further as described above.
- 1.3.5 The Group welcomed this initiative and requested that the two ticket machines be upgraded to require registration numbers, but did not ask that charging be introduced. Funding is identified in the Capital Renewals allocation for ticket machine replacement across the Borough for 2015/16 and some of this, estimated to be £10k, can be brought forward to fund this work albeit a little earlier than intended.
- 1.3.6 Tesco share the ownership of this car park and any decision will require their agreement. Initial discussions with them last year suggested that they would be receptive to the 3-hour change but we will need to seek their written agreement to this and the inclusion of Saturdays plus a change to the ticket machine as set out above.
- 1.3.7 Action Point 1 – in consultation with Tesco implement the 4 to 3 hour change and extend to cover Monday to Saturday. **Indicative timescale – April 2014.**
- 1.3.8 Action Point 2 – in consultation with Tesco upgrade ticket machines to require motorists to input registration number before ticket is issued. **Indicative timescale – April 2014.**

1.4 Ryarsh Lane (long-stay) car park

- 1.4.1 Ryarsh Lane Car Park has capacity for 124 cars. Currently we have 217 season tickets issued.
- 1.4.2 For many years and following strong representation from the business community we have regularly sold more season tickets in this car park than there are spaces because it was argued (by the business community) that many cars were used by part-time or job share workers. This worked well for a number of years however some 18 months ago and as a result of complaints from some season ticket holders, the decision was taken to "resist" new applications until there was clearly regular spare capacity. At times there is some spare capacity but this seems to vary from day to day and we cannot be exactly sure why this is. Following recent requests and a further review of this variable "spare" capacity we have just issued five additional season tickets and we are currently monitoring the impact of this. Further season tickets will be sold to those on the waiting list within the next few weeks providing we are confident that capacity now exists and we can continue to release more if capacity problems do not return.
- 1.4.3 The Group also discussed the merits for possible options to:
- guarantee spaces for a limited number of users with season tickets until, say, 10am, though this would create a further enforcement demand.
 - "test" the need for a business to be eligible for a permit by establishing whether they have their own off-street parking.
 - bring forward the time when any motorist can park in the Ryarsh Lane car park – currently it is free to park between 3pm and 8am, Monday to Friday
- 1.4.4 It was agreed these ideas could be considered at a later meeting of the Steering Group.
- 1.4.5 Action Point 3 – we would now write to the two companies who currently have a large number of season tickets and check that they were still needed.
- 1.4.6 Action Point 4 – applications for large numbers of season tickets from Businesses should be challenged and where appropriate a lower number sold to give other users on the waiting list a chance to purchase a ticket. **Indicative timescale – as and when tickets come up for renewal.**
- 1.4.7 Action Point 5 – consideration be given to advance signage along Town Hill directing motorists to the car park. **Indicative timescale – December 2013.**
- 1.4.8 Action Point 6 – consideration be given (if necessary) to a sliding scale of charges for bulk applications for Season Tickets from large companies. Steering Group to review this at future meetings. **Timescale – to be agreed.**

1.5 Potential for new parking zones(areas) in Offham Road, Norman Road, and London Road (A20)

- 1.5.1 Inevitably the process of discouraging long-stay parking in the High Street car park is going to displace cars into the residential streets in the town. Already some cars are being left all day in Offham Road and Norman Road and consideration needs to be given to restricting parking in these areas in favour of residents whilst acknowledging that some provision will have to be made for long-stay parking but in a managed way. Free structured parking is also now available in Water Lane and St Leonards Street for long-term use.
- 1.5.2 Some early **draft** options to refine the current residential parking areas were presented to the Steering Group. The Group welcomed this approach and requested that residents of Offham Road and Norman Road be consulted on the potential for a permit parking scheme to control the balance of parking in favour of residents.
- 1.5.3 The Steering Group also requested that residents of London Road between 267 and 283 to be consulted about a potential new footway Permit Parking area.
- 1.5.4 **Indicative timescale - preparation of proposals for informal consultation in time for next Steering Group meeting to be arranged for early 2014.**

1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 Tesco share the ownership of the High Street car park and their agreement will be necessary for any changes to its operational management.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 The proposals would be met within current capital plan and capital renewal budget provisions for implementing the Parking Action Plan.

1.8 Risk Assessment

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

1.9 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.9.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

1.10 Policy Considerations

- 1.10.1 Community.

1.11 Recommendations

The report **BE NOTED** and the Steering Group's Action Points as set out in the report **BE APPROVED**

The Director Of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health 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, Housing and Environmental Health

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	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.