

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

8

TITLE OF REPORT: BALDOCK PARKING REVIEW

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE MANAGER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING &
ENTERPRISE

**THE ATTACHED REPORT IS A LATE ADDITION TO THE BALDOCK AND
DISTRICT AGENDA FOR THE MEETING ON 14 JUNE 2010.**

TITLE OF REPORT: BALDOCK PARKING REVIEW

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE MANAGER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENTERPRISE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members agreement to the scope and indicative programme (See Appendix 1) for progressing the town-wide review of parking for Baldock, including parking related issues arising from the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement (TCE) scheme.
- 1.2 This report will form part of a series of reports to come before Members as the review process progresses.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This Report contains a key recommendation that was first notified to the public in the forward Plan on 1st June 2007 in terms of the Baldock Town Centre Strategy and on 1st June 2009 for the NHDC Car Parking Strategy Review.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting in March 2010 the Area Committee considered a report on a number of matters for consideration following completion of the TCE scheme. Several of these issues were parking related and the Committee resolved to include some of the issues in the town-wide Parking Review for Baldock.
- 3.2 The other TCE review issues listed in the report to the Area Committee in March relating to scheme design and traffic management are under investigation and will be the content of an updated report to the Committee in July.
- 3.3 In addition to the TCE review, the Parking Strategy for the district sets the policy for parking management. The Parking Strategy Action Plan sets out that there will be a review of parking in Baldock in 2010/11. The review is in part to cover the outstanding TCE issues and in part to cover some longer standing issues related, in the main, to non-residential parking in residential areas.
- 3.4 The parking issues arising from the TCE and agreed for further consideration by the Area Committee can be summarised as follows:

- Re-location of the loading bay in Church Street
- Design and layout of Disabled Bays in Whitehorse Street and outside Costcutter in High Street
- The need for a town wide parking review with specific reference to Church Street, Thurnall Close and The Twitchell. Several other roads will also need attention (see 3.5)
- The overnight lorry ban in Baldock needs to be re-instated and enforced.

3.5 In addition to the TCE, officers have been monitoring requests for parking management over a period of time from a number of sources. The following summarises this demand, based on basic zonal demarcations (no order of preference is suggested at this stage):

- Zone 1: The Twitchell, Thurnall Close, Simpson Drive. Possibly including Clothall Road. Issues are likely to be a result of long stay parking displacing after TCE completion. This zone also includes the Twitchell off-street car park (see 3.8).
- Zone 2: Church Street, Football Close, Jackson Street, Icknield Way area. Issues are likely to be a result of long stay parking displacing post TCE and also long standing rail commuter parking mixed with insufficient private off-street parking for residents and relatively narrow streets.
- Zone 3: Bygrave Road, Salisbury Road, Larkins Close area. Issues in this area are likely to be a result of rail commuter parking.
- Zone 4: Mansfield Road, Park Drive, Holroyd Crescent area. Parking issues in this area are likely to be long stay parking after TCE mixed with residents competing for space due to insufficient off-street parking. Possibly extending into Weston Way.

3.6 The Committee will no doubt be aware of the potential for parking issues to migrate. Other 'zones' that may be under existing or future pressures could include:

- Zone 5: The Tene, Pinnocks Lane, Pembroke Road area. Probably town centre related parking, mixed with residents competing for on-street space.
- Zone 6: Limekiln Lane, Providence Way area. Displacement of town centre long stay parking mixed with school parking and relatively narrow roads.
- Zone 7: Grosvenor Road, Sale Drive, Stane Street or more generally, the western and southern edges of Clothall Common. Displacement of rail commuters and/or employees of business on west side of Royston road. Also possible competition with residents where off-street parking is insufficient.

3.7 The Committee's views on the issues and areas set out in 3.4 - 3.6 would be welcomed. In particular officers would welcome feedback on parking issues that may have been reported to Members by residents and businesses.

3.8 The Council's Corporate Business Planning for 2010/11 allows for introducing Pay and Display (P&D) to the Twitchell car park. Currently this car park is free of charge with no restriction on duration of stay. Informal observations suggests that it is used by town centre employees and possibly rail commuters.

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The issues set out above fall into three broad categories although there are clear overlaps. Category 1 includes minor TCE improvements, category 2 includes existing issues and category 3 includes potential issues.
- 4.2 Of the category 1 issues, see paragraph 3.4 above, a swept path analysis was undertaken as part designing the junction of Sun Street and Church Street when pedestrianising the southern end of Church Street during the TCE. This analysis will be used when considering the option for relocating the loading bay further northwards along Church Street in conjunction with on street parking restrictions for this area. The design of the disabled parking bays will be investigated as part of this work and if found not to meet the required standard will be amended accordingly. Work is progressing on other areas in terms of lines and signs maintenance and their reinstatement through the district. The over-night lorry ban is included in this work and will be progressed this financial year.
- 4.3 At this stage it is not intended to identify any potential solutions for category 2 issues, i.e. those zones listed in paragraph 3.5 above, but the Council has, traditionally, dealt with non-residential parking issues in residential areas by implementing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ).
- 4.4 Whilst CPZs have successfully removed non-residents, relatively low permit take up means that this type of scheme is expensive to run. Until more survey and consultation work is undertaken and more information is available on residents' parking requirements, it is difficult to begin to identify solutions for the areas identified above. There is also the option to possibly include commuter parking permits in CPZs. The numbers would have to be carefully managed. This option could be investigated as part of the initial survey and consultation work as outlined in the indicative programme attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.5 It is unlikely that there will be sufficient resources to deliver parking management for category 3 issues, i.e. those zones listed in paragraph 3.6 above. In addition it has traditionally been difficult to secure support of residents for measures where there currently may not be a significant parking problem created by non-residents.
- 4.6 Members are asked to give particular consideration to those areas of Baldock that should be included in the parking review, bearing in mind the limitation on resources.
- 4.7 With regard to The Twitchell car park as it would be the first chargeable parking in Baldock and there are existing on-street parking issues in the vicinity. Careful consideration needs to be given to the impact charging may have.
- 4.8 With free up to 2 hours or longer on-street parking available in the town centre there would not appear to be a clear case for charging for up to 1 or 2 hours as per other car parks or a need for a *short stay* off street car park. The Twitchell does serve a long stay purpose at the moment and there may be demand for medium stay for part-time workers or those with longer appointments in the town centre. At this stage, therefore, it is suggested that charging for 'up to 3 hours' and 'all day' form the basis for the Twitchell tariff.

- 4.9 Introducing charging in the Twitchell car park will almost certainly displace parking but it is considered that this can be minimised by, firstly, ensuring the tariffs are reasonable, secondly, timing on-street parking controls to be implemented alongside car park charges and thirdly, there is some spare capacity at the south end of High Street for some displacement, albeit this may be under pressure from any on street parking controls that may be implemented in the vicinity of the Twitchell. Reference is also made to the 30 businesses parking spaces that have been secured to be provided at an agreed location on the Tesco site prior to works commencing as part of the planning conditions for the recent Tesco Store development.
- 4.10 At this stage the review does not intend to cover any significant changes to on street parking within the TCE area (i.e. reducing number of spaces and/or duration of stay, charging for on street parking or increasing the number of resident permit parking bays). Should these issues be considered then the role of the Twitchell car park would need to be reviewed.
- 4.11 There is also a need to consider the management of the community centre car park adjacent to the Twitchell. At this stage it is suggested that the Community Centre be for 'users only' and a permit system be introduced with the Community Centre responsible for managing the permits.
- 4.12 Appendix 1 sets out the programme outline for the review.. It is worth noting that timescales are tight and it is intended that the Area Committee is included in consultation during the process. Any proposals are not intended to be finalised until November.
- 4.13 There are effectively three stages of consultation – July for background information gathering and initial views on how to deal with any problems, September for scheme options and November/December for advertising Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). In all cases 3 weeks has been allowed. The July and September consultations could be shortened to 2 weeks but the November/December TRO process is dictated by regulations and must be 21 days minimum.
- 4.14 January 2011 has been identified as the time when objections to any TROs will be considered. It may be necessary to seek a re-arranged January Area Committee or a special meeting of the Area Committee to consider any objections as it is likely that the 10th January 2011 Committee date will be too early to allow officers to analyse objections and prepare a report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The terms of reference of the Area Committee state that the Area Committee may make a decision by resolution to allocate discretionary budgets within the terms determined by the Council (page 50 of the Council's current constitution).
- 5.2 There are no legal implications directly associated with this report. In the case of a Traffic Regulation Orders being prepared as part of the town-wide parking review in the future, the TROs must be drafted, considered and published in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) Regulations 1996 and other relevant legislation.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In line with the approved Parking Strategy and Action Plan £65K per annum revenue investment was agreed through the Corporate Business Planning process in February 2010 for parking reviews in Baldock and Knebworth. £50k was also agreed for maintenance of signs and lines.
- 6.2 In addition the capital programme agreed for 2010/11 allows £30k for implementing the Twitchell P&D. In light of the indicative programme this may not be implemented until towards the end of the financial year and could have an impact on the revenue budget.
- 6.3 With regard to risk there is significant reputational risk associated with not addressing the on-street parking issues surrounding the town centre and rail station and taking into consideration the displacement effects on surrounding streets. The implementation of TROs as part of the town-wide parking reviews are included on the Council's risk register and is updated annually.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The officer time involved in reviewing and undertaking the recommended actions outlined in Appendix 1 is identified as part of the Corporate Business Planning Process for Planning Services. Actions that involve TROs have also been included in other relevant Service plans, such as the Parking Service and Legal Service, given the requirement to bring in other officers across the council at various stages as various issues raised through the review process are addressed.
- 7.2 The Council recognises the changing nature of equality legislation and incorporates national legislation and regulations into its scheme and services as appropriate, as set out in the Council's Corporate Equality Strategy. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 marked a very significant innovation in the legal framework. It placed much of what was previously only advisory and voluntary on to a statutory footing. The Act extends the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 to cover all the activities of all public authorities. It makes important extensions to public authority duties. Equivalent statutory duties have been created for disability by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and for gender by the Equality Act 2006. These duties divide into a general duty and specific duties.
- 7.3 The contents of this report do not directly impact on equality, in that it is not making proposals that will have a direct impact on equality of access or outcomes for diverse groups.
- 7.4 All efforts will be made to meet the Council's equalities plan when working together with and informing the local community on the implementation of TROs in their area.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 Issues relating to on-street car parking within the town centre and on surrounding residential streets have been documented as part of the on-going consultation associated with the preparation of the Baldock Town Centre Strategy and the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Committee's views on parking issues in Baldock be reported to Officers.
- 9.2 That the Committee agree the scope for the review in line with those issues described as category 1 and 2, i.e. as listed under paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 of this report.
- 9.3 That the Committee endorse the indicative programme for the review as set out in Appendix 1.
- 9.4 That Officers report to the Baldock Area Committee on progress with the Parking Review for Baldock.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure the Parking Review for Baldock has an agreed scope and can be delivered within the planned programme and that the issues for consideration are recorded as early as possible.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 Category 3 parking review areas have been identified but are unlikely to be addressed due to limited resources at this stage.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1: Baldock Parking Review Programme

14. CONTACT OFFICERS

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15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 Baldock Town Centre Strategy

15.2 NHDC Parking Strategy and Action Plan

APPENDIX 1

INDICATIVE WORK PROGRAMME FOR BALDOCK PARKING REVIEW: JUNE 2010 TO MAY 2011

(Note the programme from December to May forms part of the Local Authority Traffic Order (Procedure) Regulations 1996 and is subject to change depending on the number and nature of objections received)

Timeline	Tasks
June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual survey parking usage of existing streets and Twitchell Car Park as listed under category 2
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inspection and analysis of category 1 issues
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse any feedback of existing information/correspondence from users.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal liaison with key representative e.g. Town Centre Manager, local police, Herts Highways on category 1 and 2 issues
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping/recording usage of streets.
June/July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of consultation documents. Issuing consultation documents (door to door posting)
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation for three weeks
End July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collation and analysis of survey results Mapping survey results
July/August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting scheme options for category 1 and 2 issues Minor survey work to 'fine tune' proposals Additional minor detailed consultation
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update report to Baldock & District Committee Preparation of final consultation material Issue final consultation
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation for three weeks

Timeline	Tasks
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse responses and finalise scheme
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Baldock & District Committee Commence draft TROs
November/December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise draft TROs Advertise TROs (21 days minimum)
December/January/February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider Objections
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifications/Signed & Sealed TROs Notice of Made Order (within 14 days of sealing)
February/March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 week High Court Challenge period on TRO process
May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement lines/signs