

BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2010

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

10

**TITLE OF REPORT: BALDOCK AREA PARKING REVIEW – APPROVAL OF
CONSULTATION ON PARKING MANAGEMENT OPTIONS**

REPORT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENTERPRISE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the findings of survey work undertaken to date and seeks the Committee's support for taking forward parking management options for consultation. Proposed consultation options and Zones referred to in this report are set out in Appendix A.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This Report contains a key recommendation that was first notified to the public on 1st June 2009 for the NHDC Car Parking Strategy Review.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its 14 June 2010 meeting the Committee supported the need for background survey work in several areas of Baldock (see zones in Appendix A). Survey work took place over the summer and consisted of observation surveys and questionnaires on parking demand to properties within zones.
- 3.2 The survey work has been analysed and options for parking management prepared with a view to consulting affected properties within zones. The Committee's support is sought to proceed with this consultation.

4. ISSUES

- 4.1 Taking each zone in turn, in Zone 1 (Church Street, Jackson Street, Football Close, Icknield Way, Farriers Close, Meetinghouse Lane, Pond Lane, Brewery Lane, Icknield Way East) there is a significant amount of non-residential long stay parking on street associated with commuters and town centre employees. It is not possible to be precise about numbers of commuters/employees parked in this area, but the figure could be as high as 50-60 cars.
- 4.2 The limited amount of off-street parking available to many residents results in competition for road space and, often, parking very close to junctions and dropped kerbs. Parking by residents in adjoining streets also occurs, making it hard to judge numbers of non-residents.

- 4.3 There are businesses (notably at the north end of Church Street) that almost certainly require short stay parking for customers and maybe longer stay parking for staff.
- 4.4 In order to improve the amenity of residents, it is recommended that the consultation offers a residents' permit parking scheme for this area. This could, potentially, permit short stay parking either throughout, or in certain streets only (i.e. Church Street where local business customers need to park or town centre visitors may also wish to visit).
- 4.5 In Zone 2 (Simpsons Drive, The Twitchell, Thurnall Close (including Twitchell and Community Centre car parks)) there is a significant amount of non-residential long stay parking both on and off street in this area. Again, it is not possible to be precise but this figure could be in the range 50 - 70 cars. The majority of this parking is likely to be associated with town centre employees.
- 4.6 In Simpsons Drive there is demand for short stay visitor and disabled parking bay space to serve Simpsons Court but there are no other significant residential parking demands on this street. In The Twitchell and Thurnall Close, it is clear that residents are competing for space with non-residents and this issue is a constant concern for them. One positive that emerges from this situation is probably a higher level of use of garages for parking than may be found elsewhere. Other short stay issues arise from school pick up and drop off parking which are very hard to prevent.
- 4.7 In all streets in this zone demand for on street parking is such that vehicles are parked around junctions and across dropped kerbs. This is a safety concern both for vehicle and pedestrian movement.
- 4.8 The Twitchell off street car park is usually full by 9am, again suggesting use by town centre employees and possibly some commuters. The Community Centre car park is also full around the same time for the same reasons.
- 4.9 In order to improve the amenity of residents it is recommended that the consultation offers a residents permit parking scheme in the Twitchell and Thurnall Close. In Simpsons Drive, it is suggested that the consultation offers short stay and disabled parking spaces in front of Simpsons Court.
- 4.10 It is clear that there is significant demand for long stay non-residential parking in this area and the consultation could reflect the need to try and accommodate some of this and reduce the volume of cars displacing to other areas. The proposed 'all day' Twitchell car park tariff of £1 is designed to permit all day parking at a reasonable charge which should retain some of the long stay parking.
- 4.11 There is also potential to accommodate some non-residential parking on the north side of Simpsons Drive. This could be via a permit scheme where a limited number of permits could be sold to town centre businesses (at an annual fee - possibly discounted against the all day parking charge in the Twitchell car park). The consultation reflects this proposal.
- 4.12 With regard to the Community Centre car park, liaison with the Community Centre manager suggests that a maximum stay of 4 hours (no charge) should be sufficient for this car park. The consultation suggests this although this proposal does not restrict use of the car park to Community Centre users only. A permit proposal has been discussed with the Community Centre but it was concluded that this would be too difficult to manage.

- 4.13 There is currently some un-restricted parking capacity in bays at the south end of the High Street. These could be left as they are or these bays could be restricted to 'motor cars only', preventing use by larger vehicles and the effect this has on parking capacity. It is recommended that officers look at this issue in more detail rather than include it in any consultation at this stage.
- 4.14 In Zone 3 (The Gardens) there is likely to be non-residential long-stay parking which is causing competition for space on street with residents. Equally there may also be some residential parking from properties on Hitchin Street. Either way, the amount of space available is limited, so it is recommended that a residents permit scheme is the basis for consultation.
- 4.15 Zones 1-3 are considered priorities. There will be displacement of vehicles from these areas if permit schemes are implemented. As such, the survey work in the summer also looked at two additional zones as priority 2.
- 4.16 In Zone 4 (Bygrave Road, Salisbury Road, Larkins Close, North Road) there is some evidence of existing non-residential long stay parking in certain locations (i.e. either end of Salisbury Road, Bygrave Road and western end of Larkins Close). By comparison with Zones 1-3 the existing competition for parking space isn't as extreme but this would almost certainly change if a permit scheme was implemented in Zone 1.
- 4.17 The consultation mainly reflects the impact of displacement on this area if Zone 1 became permit only. As such it offers either a 'commuter ban' or residents permit scheme as a way of addressing this potential issue.
- 4.18 Zone 5 (Grosvenor Road, Grosvenor Road West) does not currently have any significant parking problems. It has the potential to become a commuter parking area if Zones 1 and 4 remove non residential long stay parking. Its location may also make it attractive to town centre employee parking. Similar to Zone 4, the consultation offers a commuter ban or residents permit scheme. The commuter ban probably being most relevant as properties in both streets have significant amounts of off-street parking.
- 4.19 For Zones 1-4 any controls that remove non-residential long stay parking will result in cars displacing to other areas. Proposals for Zone 2 seek to minimise this displacement but there are no guarantees that people will pay to park in the Twitchell car park and/or buy business permits.
- 4.20 Other potential non-residential long stay parking capacity includes:
- 30 free spaces at Tesco secured via a planning obligation associated with a store extension
 - 30 chargeable spaces at Baldock Station via a planning obligation associated with a development of flats on land adjoining the station car park. First Capital Connect would operate this parking.
- 4.21 Other areas of Baldock that are vulnerable to displaced long stay non-residential parking are:
- Norton Road/West Avenue/The Sycamores area
 - Mansfield Road area
 - The Tene/Pinnocks Lane
 - Limekiln Lane/Convent Close

- Clothall Road
- Sale Drive/Stane Street area

- 4.22 There are currently insufficient resources to protect these areas should parking management in Zones 1-5 be implemented in 2010/11. Instead officers advise that these areas be kept under review and be considered for parking management measures if necessary at a point in the future. Part of the monitoring process should include levels of permit take up in any resident permit schemes. Where levels are low and/or on street capacity supports it, consideration should be given to selling permits to commuters/employees on a strictly limited basis. This may help reduce the impact of displacement as well as assist with the costs of managing permit schemes.
- 4.23 The Committee's attention is also drawn to the fact that, even for residents' permit schemes, there will almost certainly need to be some yellow line restrictions, at least at junctions. This is reflected in the consultation and will have the effect of reducing on street space for residents.
- 4.24 With regard to timescales, the Committee is requested to approve the consultation proposals set out in Appendix A with a view to it taking place in late November/early December 2010. The results of the consultation and detailed proposals would then be reported to the February 21st 2011 Area Committee with a recommendation to move towards commencing the formal Traffic Regulation Orders process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. Early consultation on options complies with the regulations on Traffic Regulation Orders.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Consultation work will be undertaken from existing staff resource and revenue funding allocated to the Baldock Parking Management work.
- 6.2 The Committee has previously queried whether proposals for Zones 1-5 can be implemented with available resources and budgets. There is insufficient revenue funding to implement all of the potential schemes, but with a combination of developer contributions and Growth Area Funding officers are confident that schemes for each zone can be delivered if consultation responses are favourable. It is not intended to use external consultants for design/consultation/TRO work so this keeps costs down.
- 6.3 The main risk associated with this report is that the consultation is not approved and the timescale for parking management in Baldock is moved back, pushing the programme further towards the next financial year.
- 6.4 The main risk associated with the consultation is lack of or fragmented support for options offered. Zones 4 and 5 (i.e. Priority 2) are considered to be highest risk in terms of lowest levels of local support.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Consultation preparation, issuing and analysis will be undertaken by existing staff resources.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND MEMBERS

- 8.2 At this stage no consultation has been undertaken with external organisations but it is intended to include key stakeholders (i.e. Town Centre Manager, Herts Highways, Emergency Services, Waste and Recycling contractors) within the process.
- 8.3 The Cabinet Member for Transport has been consulted throughout the process to date. Ward Members will be briefed in detail on the consultation and invited to respond to it.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Area Committee endorses the issuing of Parking Management options for consultation to Zones 1 to 5 as set out in Appendix A.
- 9.2 The Area Committee endorses the issuing of consultation material to properties within affected zones, as well as on request and online for people outside the affected area. Consultation information could also be made available in the Library.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 In order to progress the Baldock Parking Management project to move towards agreeing solutions for implementation in the current financial year.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 Several options for each zone are set out in Appendix A. No alternative option to consulting affected properties is

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Baldock Parking Management Consultation Options Summary

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14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 14.1 None