

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD – 16TH MARCH 2009

2009 TRAFFIC ORDER AMENDMENT 10

PARKING RESTRICTIONS NEAR KNOCKHOLT STATION, HALSTEAD

Report of the: Community and Planning Services Director

Status: For decision

Executive Summary: This report requests that Members approve the introduction of a traffic regulation order to;

1. improve safety at junctions close to Knockholt station in Halstead
2. to remove the problem of the obstruction of the cycle lanes
3. to prevent the obstruction of bus stop facilities.
4. to allow effective management of commuter parking by the introduction of parking controls

This report supports the Key Aim of safer communities and the effective and efficient use of resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Williamson

Head of Service Head of Environmental and Operational Services – Mr. Richard Wilson

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED that either;

- (a) The comments and objections to the changes in the on-street parking Traffic Regulation Order 2009 Amendment 10 be noted and the officer recommendations set out within this report be implemented in it's entirety, or
- (b) that a selection of the following be introduced, noting the financial implications as detailed in the report and the change in Authority responsible for the implementation of the proposals
 - 1 The safety related measures around junctions
 - 2 The parking displacement deterrent measures
 - 3 The bus-stop clearway proposals

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- 4 The introduction of charges to provide effective commuter parking management
 - 5 The changes to the tariffs and associated details to update the Traffic Order to include definitions of 'pay by phone' systems.
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History

- 1 London Road in Halstead used to be one of the main routes from the south east in to London, but was downgraded following the construction of the M25 and the motorway spur road.
- 2 As a major road it was very wide and has good forward visibility, and at one time had been converted to three traffic lanes. Following the downgrading, speeding was perceived to be an issue and the Highway Authority introduced a lining scheme to create a visual appearance of a narrower road – this consisted of central hatching and (though cyclist numbers were low) was an opportunity to install advisory cycle lanes in either direction.
- 3 Patronage of Knockholt railway station has increased over time as changes in ticket fare stage and the introduction of parking restrictions at other locations along the rail line could have displaced parking to rural stations with easy road access.
- 4 The station has its own off-street car park with limited spaces, though part of which has been converted to a waste transfer station on a long-term lease.
- 5 Approximately two years ago the train operating company introduced charges within its rural station car parks. This has caused parking displacement at rural stations to nearby on-street areas.
- 6 There are regular reports of commuters travelling considerable distances to park at Knockholt (assisted by the proximity and easy access to the motorway) and incidents of commuters driving away from stations closer to London to park for free and commute back in to London.

Background

- 7 The District Council has had regular calls about parking near Knockholt station.
- 8 Knockholt station itself falls within the London Borough of Bromley, rather than within the boundaries of Sevenoaks district, but the roads immediately outside the station are within the Sevenoaks district. A plan indicating the boundary forms Appendix C.
- 9 The problems all relate to commuter parking for the station and fall in to three distinct issues; parking close to junctions being dangerous as visibility is obscured, parking in the existing on-street advisory cycle lanes and parking in the bus-stop lay-by opposite the station causing problems for the bus operators.

Item No. 9

- 10 It is regular that weekday station parking can reach between 130 and 150 cars parked on-street.
- 11 The District Council has no powers to enforce or prevent parking within advisory cycle lanes as this would rest with the Police, who could consider applying the offence of 'obstruction' though this is generally viewed to be a problematic prosecution as cyclists can divert to the normal running traffic lanes.
- 12 The District Council has no powers to enforce or prevent parking around junctions unless a traffic regulation order is in place. There are no such orders for this area.
- 13 The District Council cannot prevent parking at a bus stop unless a 'bus stop clearway' is introduced at each location.

Proposal

- 14 The District Council has consulted with the Highway Authority and is promoting a traffic regulation order to introduce new parking restrictions in the area to address the parking issues.
- 15 In December 2009 we carried out informal consultation on proposals that retained on-street parking spaces for 150 vehicles, but received adverse comments from residents about parking opposite residential properties, so the scheme was revised with parking provision being reduced for the formal consultation and now makes provision for approximately 105 vehicles.
- 16 It is envisaged that the introduction of on-street charges will reduce commuter numbers as some of those choosing to use Knockholt station on economic grounds will be less likely to park there.
- 17 The proposals are;
 - 17.0 to introduce 'no waiting at any time' restrictions around the junctions to protect the visibility splay
 - 17.1 to introduce 'no waiting at any time' restrictions along the length of Wheatsheaf Hill where there have already been occurrences of obstructive parking on the bends
 - 17.2 to introduce single yellow line restrictions to deter displacement parking outside and opposite residential properties, to cover the 11am-noon period, Monday to Friday (this has been shown to be an effective deterrent to commuter parking in other locations.
 - 17.3 to create 'bus stop clearways' at the bus stop areas outside the station and in the lay-by opposite (and to move the displaced bus stop back to the lay-by)
 - 17.4 to formalise parking places on the north side of the road by introducing parking bays subject to on-street parking charges, at a £3 tariff, similar to on-street commuter parking in Swanley.

Item No. 9

- 17.5 That the existing cycle facility on the northern side of the road (provided primarily as a visual narrowing of the road) would be removed in the areas where parking bays are marked (the parking bay markings and the parked cars would provide the same visual effect).
- 18 Detailed plans of the proposal at A1 size are available for inspection in the Member's Room
- 19 To enable effective enforcement the District Council would need to patrol the area on a regular basis, where there has been no patrolling before. Whilst the proposals have been developed to fit in with other patrolling routes, there will be additional costs to the District Council in enforcing the restrictions in the area.
- 20 The introduction of pay parking is intended to cover the installation, operation and enforcement of the proposals.
- 21 To minimise the amount of street furniture required the District Council intends to adopt a combined 'pay and display' and 'pay by phone' system. This will entail the use of some pay and display machines on-street, but a reduced number compared to a 'pay & display' only scheme.
- 22 The introduction of a 'pay by phone' scheme would be a new system within the District, but has been successfully introduced in other Districts and Boroughs in Kent and nationwide. It's introduction may be extended to cover other parking areas across the District if seen to be well received.
- 23 An overview of the proposals is shown in Appendix E and the draft traffic regulation order forms Appendix D.
- 24 The responsibility for introducing safety-related issues rests with the Highway Authority, Kent Highway Services, but any scheme needs to be able to be enforced by the District Council's enforcement officers.
- 25 If the proposals were to be introduced in part, without the introduction of on-street charges, the scheme would be addressing purely safety-related issues and it should fall to the Highway Authority to progress rather than the District Council.

Formal Consultation

- 26 The District Council carried out formal consultation on the revised proposals in February and March.
- 27 The formal consultation produced numerous comments from residents and non-residents alike, with 8 commenting in support, 56 commenting against and 13 whose comments were either unclear or related to other issues.
- 28 Summaries of the consultation responses against the proposal are included in Appendix A, with the full texts of the responses attached as Appendix B.

Item No. 9

- 29 Though there were more comments against the proposal, the majority of these were from members of the public who currently park near the station and did not want parking charges to be introduced.
- 30 There were comments from residents of roads nearby that expressed concerns over displacement parking that may affect them, but should this prove to be the case the District Council would look to extend the deterrent restrictions to those areas to alleviate this, following a review of the effectiveness of the changes.
- 31 A large majority of the responses (from residents and commuters alike) commented that the safety related elements of the proposals were welcomed.

Recommendations

- 32 The Portfolio Holder for the Built Environment, Cllr Williamson has considered the responses and has recommended that the Joint Transport Board set aside the comments and objections and introduce the restrictions as advertised.
- 33 If the safety related measures alone are introduced then there may be displacement parking to nearby roads, and so the safety related restrictions should not be introduced without the single yellow line deterrent measures also being provided in neighbouring roads.
- 34 The proposals for the introduction of bus-stop clearways does not require a traffic regulation order, but any orders introduced to the area should take account of them. To maintain easy access for buses the bus-stop clearways should be introduced.
- 35 The estimated costs of introducing all of the proposals is £25,000, which reflects the extensive changes to road markings over approximately 2.2km of road, the required signing, the purchase and installation of 4 Pay & Display machines and some necessary kerbing works.
- 36 Should the pay & display element of the proposals not be introduced, the safety related signing and lining works would be approximately £10,000 to £12,000. Unfortunately the District Council would not be able to fund the introduction of a purely safety related scheme if there was no method of cost recovery for the installation or enforcement.
- 37 If the any of the elements of the scheme were to be introduced without the means of cost recovery, the costs would need to be met by the Highway Authority.

Key Implications - Financial

- 38 The cost of implementing the whole scheme is estimated at £25,000 and will be met from the on-street parking account, provided that the pay & display element of the scheme is approved.

Item No. 9

- 39 Whilst no set figure has been included for the income from the introduction of the proposals, it is envisaged that the scheme should recover its installation and running and enforcement costs.

Community impact and outcomes

- 40 The District Council will be able to provide a safer environment around junctions and reduce the occurrence of commuter parking near residential properties.
- 41 The loss of parts of the cycle facility ties in with a move away from the provision of on-road advisory cycle lanes in favour of the provision of off-road cycle routes.

Legal, Human Rights, etc.

- 42 The procedures appropriate to the promotion, advertisement and introduction of a traffic regulation order (as set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 have been followed and exceeded.
- 43 There are no human rights issues or implications.

Risk Assessment Statement

- 44 By not introducing the measures proposed around the Knockholt station area of Halstead the current parking problems around the junctions, in the cycle lanes and in the bus stop lay-by will continue.

Sources of Information: Existing on and off-street parking traffic regulation orders held by the Parking and Amenity team

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