

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD – 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2011

PARKING, SAFETY AND CONGESTION ISSUES NEAR KNOCKHOLT STATION, HALSTEAD

Report of the: Community and Planning Services Director

Status: For decision

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**Executive Summary:** This report requests that Members re-consider the introduction of parking restrictions and measures to effectively manage commuter parking near Knockholt Station, Halstead, in light of the worsening traffic situation.

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**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

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**Recommendation:** It be RESOLVED that

- The Joint Transportation Board reconsider the parking issues in this area and review its decision to not implement the proposals previously consulted upon by the District Council and to re-consider and set aside the objections received during that consultation.
  - Should the Board set aside the objections previously received, that the Traffic Regulation Order 2009 Amendment 10 (as per Joint transportation Board Item 9 of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010) be implemented.
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**History**

1. The issues of on-street commuter parking near Knockholt station in Halstead was raised with the District Council in 2008. This relates to the introduction of charges in rural train station car parks by the train operating company, Southeastern.
2. There has been a notable displacement to on-street parking, and the station has become more popular due to the easy availability of free parking .
3. The long-stay parking was also leading to incidents of vehicle crime, most notably theft of number plates and theft from vehicles.
4. The District Council drew up proposals to address the problems and carried out formal consultation on the proposals at the end of 2009.

**Item No. 7**

5. The results of the consultations were placed before the Joint Transportation Board at the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010 . The proposals included yellow line restrictions along one side of the road and pay & display parking bays on the other to prevent the parking from occurring on both sides of the road and to effectively manage the parking so displacement would be kept to a minimum.
6. The pay & display element of the proposals would also help with vehicle security as the area would be patrolled by our enforcement officers.
7. The formal consultation produced 71 responses, from residents and non-residents alike, with 8 commenting in support, 56 commenting against (with some commenting in favour of some elements and against others) and 13 whose comments were either unclear or related to other issues.
8. The majority of responses that objected to the proposals were objections on economic grounds, from people who were not immediate residents of the area.
9. At the JTB meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010, it was decided (by majority vote) that the proposals set out in that meeting's Agenda Item 9 should not be introduced in their entirety, but that safety related restrictions around the junctions be implemented by Kent Highway Services. The report and supporting documents for that item are set out in Appendix A and are available in the Members Room and via CMIS.
10. To date (at the time of preparing this report) the safety related double yellow line restrictions that were approved have not been introduced.

**Current Situation**

11. The parking issues at Knockholt station have worsened considerably in the last year, with parking now occurring on both sides of the road, reducing the remaining carriageway space significantly over a considerable length.
12. There have been a number of incidents reported to the District Council, though it is not clear whether any on these incidents have been injury accidents, and if so, it may be too early for these to appear in crash statistics.
13. The District Council has continued to receive comments both in writing and by telephone about the parking, about safety issues and problems of obstruction along the road. Some of the correspondence received is attached in Appendix C.
14. Incidents have also been reported to the police as there has been an escalation of reports of vehicle crime associated with the parked vehicles, involving theft from vehicles and theft of number plates. (an email from Chief Inspector Futers is attached as Appendix D).
15. The area represents the only significant crime hot spot in the Sevenoaks District, and is associated with the long-stay parking and the little or no passing pedestrian surveillance.

16. All communications have been forwarded to Kent Highways Services for consideration.

**Recommendation**

17. Although the problems being experienced relate to road safety issues and to the maintenance of the carriageway for traffic, and as such would fall to Kent Highways Services to investigate and consider, in view of the circumstances it would seem appropriate that the District Council's previous proposals be brought to the Board for reconsideration.
18. It is recommended that Members consider the worsened parking situation in this area and review the decision not to implement the proposals previously consulted upon by the District Council, and to re-consider whether to set aside the objections received during that consultation and proceed with the proposals as originally proposed.

**Key Implications - Financial**

19. The estimated costs introducing the proposals (should that be the wish of the Board) have not changed greatly from the figures indicated in the previous report, though a small up-lift in the costs is likely due to inflation, fuel cost rises and the current financial situation.
20. The costs of introducing the scheme originally proposed were to be met from the District Council's on-street parking account and offset by the income received from the introduction of pay and display parking.

**Key Implications - Community impact and outcomes**

21. The proposals should reduce incidents of obstruction and improve safety for users of the Highway.
22. Vehicle security should be improved due to enforcement officers patrolling the area coupled with a reduction in the number of vehicles parked.

**Key Implications - Legal, Human Rights, etc.**

23. 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.

**Key Implications - Risk Assessment Statement**

24. The proposals should have no increased level of risk beyond that for managing on-street parking.

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**Sources of Information:** Minutes of Sevenoaks Joint transportation Board Meeting on 16th March 2010 (Item 9)

Appendix A-Report & A-A to A-E Previous Item 9 report to March 2010 JTB and supporting papers (Available in Members Room and electronically via CMIS)

Appendix B – Photographs illustrating increased parking

Appendix C – Correspondence requesting intervention

Appendix D – Correspondence from Kent Police

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**Contact Officer(s):** Andy Bracey Ext.7323

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**KRISTEN PATERSON  
COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES DIRECTOR**

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