

SEVENOAKS PARKING REVIEW

Cabinet - 15 October 2020

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Finance & Trading

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee - 13 October 2020

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report informs Members of the findings of the Sevenoaks Parking Review carried out between October 2019 and January 2020.

The review recommends that where parking issues have been identified, that reasonable and proportionate measures are taken to improve parking management arrangements.

The review recommends no further action at this stage in locations where feedback indicated that no significant parking issues exist.

The review acknowledges that some areas have more complex parking issues, which may need further investigation.

The review proposes measures to help support low paid local workers and to improve the benefit that existing zones provided to residents.

This reports support the Key Aim of: Providing value for money, and supporting and developing local economies.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

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Recommendation to Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee:

That comments on the recommendations (a) to (e) are passed to Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet: the views of the Advisory Committee be considered and it be agreed that

- (a) the ratio of resident/non-resident permits be adjusted to help ensure that parking availability is maximised throughout the day.
- (b) the period of no return in all parking bays in zone A be increased from 1 hour to 4 hours.
- (c) “no return” to all roads in zone A, until the 4-hour no return period has passed.

- (d) rationalising boundaries/eligibility to maximise convenience and accessibility for residents are reviewed.
- (e) non-resident on-street parking permits to low paid workers at a reduced rate, where spare capacity exists, be offered.

Reason for recommendations:

The recommendations aim to address the concerns of residents by improving management of the public highway, in line with current legislation, the Highway Code and the policies of Kent County Council, the Highway Authority in Kent

Introduction

- 1 Over recent years, Sevenoaks town had become an increasing popularity busy regional shopping and business centre. However, the provision of parking within the town had not kept pace and the pressure on car parks and on street parking had increased significantly.
- 2 In response to the acute shortage of parking and in support of the local community and economy, between 2017 and 2019 Sevenoaks District Council developed two new multi decked car parks on existing car park sites that it operated in the town. The first, Bradbourne, serving in the main commuters at Sevenoaks Station. The second Sevenoaks Town serving in the main businesses and workers in the town. The development of these car parks increased parking capacity in the town by around 900 spaces.
- 3 There was an undertaking from Sevenoaks District Council that, following the opening of the new car parks and once parking patterns had settled down, a review of on street parking in Sevenoaks would be carried out.
- 4 The review sought to identify and recommend measures to tackle parking problems in existing parking zones and in areas outside of parking zones identified through the dialogue with local representatives.
- 5 In common with the on street parking management arrangements across Kent, Sevenoaks District Council implements and operates resident parking zones as the agent of Kent County Council, the Highway Authority in Kent.
- 6 Resident parking zones give a degree of protection to residents against conflicting demands for kerbside space. However, parking zones are not intended to offer residents exclusive parking rights over other road users.
- 7 This report informs Members of the outcomes of the questionnaire surveys and provides recommendations based on these outcomes.

Introduction

- 8 The review had three planned elements,

- Consultations with local representatives, including local Ward and County Councillors, to define the scope of the survey in non-zoned areas.
 - Two concurrent questionnaire surveys; one in existing parking zones and one in areas without zones where parking issues were identified.
 - Beat surveys to help identify kerbside capacity and parking patterns.
- 9 The first two elements of the review were completed before the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. It was not possible to undertake beat surveys because of the effect Covid-19 had on parking patterns, reducing parking demand from shoppers, workers and other visitors and increasing parking by residents on lockdown or shielding.
- 10 The objectives of the parking review had two threads:
- Adequacy of parking management in existing parking zones.
 - The need of parking management in roads close to Sevenoaks town, outside of existing zones.

Meetings with Local Representatives

- 11 These meetings sought to identify locations outside of existing managed parking zones where parking issues had been raised so that these areas could be included in the questionnaire “satisfaction” survey exercise.
- 12 Residents and businesses within existing parking zones were included in the questionnaire “satisfaction” survey as a matter of course.

Questionnaire Survey

- 13 The questionnaire “satisfaction” survey took place between 25 November 2019 and 17 January 2020, with paper questionnaires sent to 1,888 addresses within the existing parking zones and 3,693 addresses in the areas of concern outside of existing parking zones identified through the meetings with local representatives.
- 14 Recipients of the paper surveys had the option to complete and return the survey by post or to complete the survey online through the Council website.
- 15 In addition to questionnaires by post, public notices were put up locally, inviting the wider community to complete the questionnaire surveys online.

Responses relating to Existing Parking Zones

- 16 224 questionnaire responses were received relating to existing parking zones, equating to a response rate of around 12%.

- 17 Appendix 1A summarises the questionnaire responses relating to locations within permit parking zones.
- 18 Of the 224 responses, 113 were generally satisfied with the parking arrangements and 111 were generally dissatisfied with the parking arrangements.
- 19 Following analysis of responses by (road) location, two locations returned dissatisfaction levels above 35%, Argyle Road, which gave 14 negative responses from 38 addresses = 37% and Gordon Road, with 17 negative responses from 35 addresses = 49%.
- 20 The main areas of dissatisfaction were a shortage of parking for residents because of non-resident parking, abuse of the limited wait restriction and no return period and pollution from drivers looking for parking spaces or leaving their engines running.
- 21 Responses included requests for resident parking only, changes to the limited wait period, pay and display parking and electric vehicle charging points.

Responses from Addresses Outside Parking Zones

- 22 466 questionnaire responses were received relating to areas outside the existing permit zones, equating to a response rate of around 13%.
- 23 Appendix 2A summarises the questionnaire responses relating to locations outside existing permit parking zones.
- 24 Of the 466 responses, around 165 (35%) were generally satisfied with the parking arrangements and 301 (65%) were generally dissatisfied with the parking arrangements.
- 25 Following analysis of responses by road location, parts 2 of road locations returned dissatisfaction levels above 35%, Weald Road, which gave 14 negative responses from 36 addresses (38%) and Garth Road, with 4 negative responses from 5 addresses (80%).
- 26 The main areas of dissatisfaction were speeding and traffic volumes, commuter parking and the absence of a footway causing road safety issues.
- 27 The responses from Weald Road requested the introduction of yellow line restrictions, which remains within the remit of KCC.
- 28 The responses from Garth Road related to high town centre parking charges and school-related parking in Solefields Road.

Conclusions Relating to Existing Parking Zones

- 29 In Zone A, analysis of feedback indicated dissatisfaction generally ranging from a lack of parking capacity for residents, the availability of non-resident

permits and the abuse of current parking controls by vehicles contravening the limited wait period, either by overstaying or re-parking in a zone.

- 30 The issue of idling engines is under separate consideration by the Council, outside of this review.
- 31 Parking management close to busy town centres need to balance and accommodate demands for kerbside space, from residents, businesses, visitors and shoppers. As previously mentioned parking zones are intended to offer a degree of protection to residents parking against conflicting demands, but do not give exclusive rights to residents to park.
- 32 In addition to resident parking permits, non-resident (business) permits are available, (historically on a first come basis). These support workers and local businesses and help to ensure that kerbside space is maximised, for example at times of low demand when many residents had left for work by car.
- 33 To improve the availability of spaces, the review recommends adjusting the ratio of resident/non-resident permits to help ensure that parking availability is maximised throughout the day.
- 34 To help tackle vehicles that stay longer than the 2-hour maximum stay rule in Zone A, the review recommends increasing the period of no return in all parking bays in the zone from 1 hour to 4 hours.
- 35 To help tackle vehicles that simply move to another road in Zone A after the 2-hour maximum stay period, the review recommends a “no return” to all roads in the zone, until the 4-hour no return period has passed.

Conclusions Relating to Locations Outside of Parking Zones

- 36 In the meetings with local representatives, locations in and outside of current parking schemes were identified as having parking issues. However, analysis of the feedback responses in these locations did not indicate significant issues around their current parking arrangements.
- 37 Dissatisfaction in these locations related more to highways issues, for example volumes of traffic and vehicle speeds, which fall outside the remit of the review.
- 38 The review proposes officers engage with colleagues at Kent County Council asking them to consider and take appropriate action over the concerns raised in these locations.

Other Initiatives

- 39 Many parking zones adjoin each other and, in some instances, the most appropriate parking for an address is in the adjacent zone. The review recommends reviewing and rationalising boundaries/eligibility to maximise convenience and accessibility for residents.

- 40 Sevenoaks town relies on low paid full and part-time workers, many of whom commute by car to the town for work. The review recommends offering non-resident on-street parking permits to low paid workers at a reduced rate, where spare capacity exists, to help support these workers and the local economy.

Key Implications

Financial

Any changes made to parking restrictions would necessitate an amendment to Kent County Council's On-Street Parking Consolidation Order, costing in the region of £2,500.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Changes to parking restrictions would necessitate an amendment to Kent County Council's On-Street Parking Consolidation Order, which includes a statutory consultation process.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Environmental Impact

Good parking management promotes alternative sustainable travel, discourages vehicle ownership in town centres and reduces vehicle movements.

Community Impact and Outcomes

Parking zones help to protect resident parking while supporting local economies and the wider community.

Value for Money

Relevant parking controls help promote responsible parking and enable efficient management of kerbside space through effective enforcement patrols.

Appendices

Appendix 1A and Appendix 2A

Background Papers

None

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