

Agenda Item No: 7
Report To: Joint Transportation Board
Date: 8th Dec 2009
Report Title: Proposed Alterations to the Waiting Restrictions in East Hill, Tenterden area
Report Author: Ray Wilkinson



Summary: This report details the results of the recent consultation in respect to the implementation of safety restrictions in East Hill, Tenterden and additional minor amendments to restrictions in neighbouring roads.

Key Decision: YES

Affected Wards: Tenterden South & Tenterden North

Recommendations: **Subject to the views of the Board I proposed that:-**

- 1. The amendments to the waiting restrictions be implemented as proposed with the exception of the removal of an existing 9 metre length of double yellow line on the south-western side of Beacon Oak Road to the north-west of the Greenhedges access.**
- 2. Subsequent to the removal of the reference to the above mentioned 9 metre section of double yellow line in Beacon Oak Road, that the Kent County Council (Various Roads, Borough of Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Amendment 14) Order 2007 be made.**
- 3. The Board recommend to the Executive that the implementation of the scheme be funded through the Transport Initiatives Reserves (on-street parking surplus account)**

Policy Overview:

Financial Implications: Implementation will be funded through the Transport Initiatives Reserves (on-street parking surplus account)

Other Material Implications: None

**Background
Papers:**

Tenterden & St Michaels Parking Review report to & minutes of JTB on 12th December 2006, Tenterden & St Michaels Parking Review report to & minutes of JTB on 5th June 2007, Tenterden & St Michaels Parking Review report to & minutes of JTB on 11th December 2007, Tenterden & St Michaels Parking Review report to & minutes of JTB on 3rd March 2009.

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an explanation of proposals for the implementation of safety restrictions in East Hill, Tenterden as formally requested by the police with the submission of a 1412A form on 1st September 2009 and other minor amendments to parking restrictions in neighbouring roads.
2. The proposals were discussed with the Ward Members concerned and the decision reached, due to the urgency of the issue, to take a set of proposals directly to formal public consultation, the results and full analysis of which are also presented within this report.

Issue to be Decided

3. As set out in the recommendations of this report, the Board is asked to approve the making of the Traffic Regulation Order and implementation of the scheme.

Background

4. In April-May 2007 a formal public consultation was held on a set of proposals representing the culmination of the Tenterden & St Michaels Parking Review. These proposals consisted of a 2 hour limited waiting scheme with optional residents permits in residential roads around the town centre and safety restrictions elsewhere. Following objections based on refutation of the evidence for the accommodation of the displaced commuter vehicles within existing town centre car parks (primarily from Tenterden & District Chamber of Trade and Tenterden Town Council) the Joint Transportation Board recommended at their meeting of 11th December 2007 that the scheme be postponed until such time as an additional town centre car park be made available. In the meantime however a number of parking problem 'hotspots' were identified as locations in need of more urgent action and it was therefore proposed that an interim scheme be formulated to address these issues.
5. This interim scheme was finalised during a series of meetings with Tenterden Town Council, Tenterden & District Chamber of Trade, Tenterden & District Residents Association, Tenterden Improved and ABC Ward Members before being taken to formal consultation Dec '08 – Jan '09. Following approval at the JTB meeting of 3rd March 2009 the scheme was implemented in July 2009.
6. Subsequent to the implementation of the Interim Scheme, parking problems in the affected areas were monitored. East Hill was identified as a concern as vehicles displaced by the implementation of safety restrictions in surrounding roads (particularly Golden Square and Hales Close) began to park in East Hill. Due to Members' desire to keep restrictions under the Interim Scheme to a

minimum, only locations with established parking problems were targeted. The full scheme took a holistic approach, attempting to identify potential future problem areas and address these, as well as current problems, under a single scheme. However the Interim Scheme addressed only serious existing issues in order to avoid the use of potentially unnecessary restrictions.

7. Parking problems in East Hill were initially observed by Officers, supported by complaints received from residents. The primary parking issue was that of vehicles parking too close to East Hill's junction with Oaks Road and therefore impairing sight lines around the junction. Officers acted by introducing parking cones to guide motorists over where was to suitable to park. The cones however were largely ignored and Officers therefore requested the aid of the police in enforcing the cones. The police responded that they were unable to do so due to the difficulty in evidencing the order in which vehicles arrived (i.e. where a number of vehicles collectively cause an obstruction, it is necessary to identify the last parked vehicle – i.e. the one that created the obstruction). The police did however issue a 1412A form in recognition of the dangerousness of the current parking situation and during a subsequent site meeting reiterated their concerns over parking in East Hill and also recommended the extension of the junction protection in Beacon Oak Road around its junction with East Hill.
8. It should also be noted that prior to consultation the results of a questionnaire survey were submitted to Officers by 2 local residents who had undertaken the survey just after the introduction of the Interim Parking Scheme in July 2009 under the heading of the Tenterden Parking Action Group. The questionnaire was circulated to 75 households within the area and 46 responses were received. A number of issues were raised within the survey results (for details see background papers), however the primary concern was that of the loss of kerbside parking.

The Proposals

9. The proposals formulated to deal with the parking problem in East Hill consist of double yellow lines around it's junctions with both Oaks Road and Beacon Oak Road/Appledore Road, a double yellow line restriction on the northern side for its entire length (the road is of insufficient width to safely accommodate parking on both sides) and 2 sections of double yellow line on the southern side to create passing places. In addition junction protection was also proposed in Beacon Oak Road/Appledore Road, introducing new protection to the south-east of the junction with East Hill and extending the existing protection to the north-west.
10. Further to the safety proposals in East Hill and around it's junction with Beacon Oak Road/Appledore Road, a number of minor amendments to existing restrictions have been included in the package at the request of the Ward Members. These consist of tweaks to the restrictions implemented in July 2009 with a view to maximising available on-street parking availability.

Consultation

11. A formal public consultation on the proposals was held between 15th October '09 and 5th November '09. A letter and plan detailing the proposals, where to obtain further information, and how to make a representation was sent to 358 properties within the affected area. In addition the statutory notice was printed in the local paper and copies erected at the locations at which the changes were proposed. Deposit documents were placed at Tenterden Gateway, the Civic Centre, Invicta House and were made available in electronic format on the Council's website.
12. A total of 19 representations were received, of which 16 were objections. Of the remaining 3 representations, 2 were letters of support and one was a request for restrictions in neighbouring Danemore.
13. 10 of the 16 objections received relate specifically to the proposed removal of a section of double yellow line in Beacon Oak Road adjacent to the access of Greenhedges. It should however also be noted that one of the representations of support received during the consultation also related to this proposal. This change was proposed at the request of the Ward Member in response to concerns from Beacon Oak Residents over the loss of on-street parking. The restriction was originally introduced in July 2009 as part of the Interim Scheme. During the formulation of the Interim Scheme, Officers recommended that the access be treated as a junction due to the large volume of garages & curtilage parking facilities served by the access. At the formulation of the current proposals however the Ward Member requested that this treatment be revoked in order to free additional kerb space for on-street parking.
14. Another comment made within a number of the representations received (5 of the 16 objections) was that the parking problem in East Hill was a direct result of an excess of restrictions being implemented under the Interim Scheme in July. As mentioned in the background, the Interim Scheme was made up of only a handful of roads/locations within Tenterden & St Michaels which were considered to require relatively urgent address (i.e. could not be left until the implementation of the full scheme when an additional town centre car park became available). Within these locations the proposals were formulated with a view to using a minimum of restrictions to effectively address the parking issues. While in the original full scheme, restrictions were proposed in East Hill in order to regulate anticipated parking, in the Interim Scheme, only established problems were dealt with. It was to be hoped at the time of implementation that those vehicles which were displaced into East Hill would choose to exercise proper judgement when identifying a parking spot. This however has not proved to be the case with a substantial proportion of drivers, thereby necessitating the addition of further restrictions in East Hill.
15. The only other comment which was received from 2 or more respondents and which would fall within the remit of Ashford Borough Council concerned the requested introduction of a residents parking scheme. Although the introduction of a 'residents only' scheme on the public highway would not be justifiable (it would not only entirely exclude the majority but would also result in a high proportion of the bays remaining empty for much of the day), '2 hour limited waiting bays (Mon-Sat, 8am-10pm) with optional residents permits' formed a part of the proposed full scheme taken to consultation in 2007. This restriction would discourage commuter parking while allowing short stay

visitors to utilise the bays throughout the day. Residents would have the option to purchase an exemption permit entitling them to park without time restriction

Conclusion

16. The response to the proposals has been relatively low (19 representations) considering 358 households were informed directly by mail. However of those received, the majority (10 representations) object to the removal of the length of restriction in Beacon Oak Road protecting the Greenhedges access on safety grounds. These comments support the previous decision (Minute 191 refers) for the implementation of this length of restriction earlier this year. Officers therefore recommend that this section of line is retained.
17. With the exception of the above mentioned issue, all other objections made are dealt with in the attached appendix and it is the view of Officers that these objections should be set aside.

Portfolio Holder's Views

18. The Portfolio Holder has confirmed that he supports the recommendations in this report.

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Appendix 1

Comments Received During the Formal Consultation Period

Comments on Proposals at Specific Locations	No. of representations	Representation Ref.s	Response
<p>The extension of the junction protection on the south-western side of Beacon Oak Road to the north-west of the junction of Greenhedges in July 2009 significantly improved sight lines and safety at the junction. Without this length of restriction vehicles (including large vans) regularly parked immediately adjacent to the access blocking line of sight to the north-west until the vehicle reached the middle of the road.</p>	10	<p>Am14/02 Am14/05 Am14/03 Am14/08 Am14/10 Am14/11 Am14/12 Am14/13 Am14/16 Am14/17</p>	<p>The section of line concerned was originally introduced as part of the interim safety scheme in July 2009. At this time the decision was taken, in deference to the number of garages located in/off-street parking accessed from Greenhedges to treat the access as a junction and provide it with the standard 10 metre junction protection. At the request of the Ward Member however this section was reviewed with a view to instead treating it as an access only in order to increase the available kerb side parking on Beacon Oak Road.</p>
<p>Feel safety would be improved with the introduction of a no loading restriction on the south-western side of Beacon Oak Road between a point 10 metres north-west of the Greenhedges access extending in a south-easterly direction to a point 15 metres south-east of the junction with Golden Square.</p>	1	Am14/02	<p>It is unclear how the introduction of a no loading restriction would be of benefit at this location. The section of highway concerned is currently subject to a 'no waiting at any time' (double yellow line) restriction. Therefore the only change to be achieved by the introduction of such a restriction would be to prevent vehicles waiting while actively loading/unloading and blue badge holders parking for up to 3 hours. It should however be noted that both these exemptions to the double yellow line restriction are subject to a 'where doing so does not cause a danger or obstruction to other road</p>

			users' stipulation.
The current double yellow line restriction on the south-western side of Beacon Oak Road extending south-east from its junction with Golden Square is too long and its introduction lost at least 3 parking spaces. Visibility has never been an issue here. The line should not have been carried around the corner for more than 1 metre – this only to prevent cars parking on the corner diagonally. As a result of the current restriction vehicles turn into Golden Square much faster than previously	1	Am14/14	<p>Firstly, this section of line does not form any part of the current proposals. The line was introduced in July 2009 as part of the Interim Scheme following public consultation held between 23rd December '08 – 23rd January '09.</p> <p>However, the double yellow line currently extends for a distance of 15 metres in line with common custom and practice in respect to junction protection on a major road. It should also be noted that the Highway Code states that parking should not take place within 10 metres of a junction (this represents a general minimum applicable to all road classes).</p>
Do not consider the proposal to reduce the lengths of line in Golden Square at its junction with Oaks Road to be safe.	1	Am14/09	The section of line proposed for reduction is intended to provide protection around the vehicular access of 3A Golden Square, it is not within 10 metres of the junction and does not constitute junction protection.
Do not consider it safe to allow parking opposite the vehicular access of The Limes, East Hill	1	Am14/09	Due to the road width at this location, parking opposite the vehicle access will not obstruct use of the access.
The gain of one or two parking spaces by the reduction in the length of double yellow line in Beacon Oak Road to the north-west of Greenhedges access is greatly outweighed by the need to maintain	1	Am14/03	This access, due to the large number of garages served by it, was treated as a junction within the Interim Scheme. However, at the request of the Ward Member it was redefined as an access for the purposes of sight line protection within this scheme in order to increase on-street parking availability in Beacon Oak Road.

the sightlines around the access for safety.			
Support the reduction in the length of restriction on the south-western side of Beacon Oak Road to the north-west of the Greenhedges access – this will improve the parking situation for residents.	1	Am14/19	No comment
Parking controls should be also extended into Danemore along the full extent of one side of the carriageway in order to ensure vehicle access for emergency services and pedestrian access along the footway (which is currently regularly obstructed by parked vehicles)	1	Am14/04	The introduction of restrictions in Danemore was proposed as part of the full 2007 scheme was the parking issues in this location were not considered by Members to be of sufficient urgency for inclusion in the interim scheme.
There is no need to take away spaces on Beacon Oak Road adjacent to the north-western kerb line of East Hill	1	Am14/15	The lengthening of the junction protection at this location has been proposed at the specific request of the police.
Support proposals for East Hill, current parking situation is dangerous & causes traffic congestion – a particular issue concerns buses using East Hill to park up.	1	Am14/07	No comment

General Comments on Proposals	No. of representations	Representation Ref.s	Response
<p>The problems to be addressed by the current proposals are the direct result of excessive restrictions introduced in July 2009. Current proposals are also excessive and will simply result in more problems. For a scheme to work there must be sufficient parking provision for residents.</p>	5	Am14/01 Am14/06 Am14/09 Am14/14 Am14/15	<p>The interim scheme introduced in July was finalised over a course of meetings with Tenterden Town Council, Tenterden Improved, Tenterden & District Chamber of Trade & Tenterden & District Residents Association as well as Ward Members before being taken to public consultation. The aim of the scheme was to deal only with the most urgent parking issues using the minimum of restrictions (prior to the provision of an additional town centre car park at which time a full comprehensive scheme would be pursued).</p> <p>The restrictions implemented in the area in July provide protection only in those locations where the highway code stipulates parking should not take place. Unfortunately the volume of cars competing for parking over a relatively small amount of roadway results in motorists failing to use their judgement and therefore parking in unsuitable locations.</p> <p>It must be borne in mind that the primary function of the highway is the facilitation of the movement of traffic and pedestrians. There is no innate right to park on the highway, it is simply the case that parking is by custom permitted in those locations where it does not interfere with the highway's primary function.</p> <p>Current parking practices in East Hill are dangerous and have been recognised as a cause for concern by Officers. In addition the police have issued a 1412A notice, formally notifying the authority that parking in this location is a danger.</p>
<p>The introduction of a one way system would make parking restrictions unnecessary, solving</p>	3	Am14/01 Am14/06 Am14/09	<p>The introduction of a one way system would come under the remit of Kent Highway Services rather than Ashford Borough Council. However it is difficult to see how introducing a one way system would</p>

the parking congestion/dangerous parking issue while enabling residents and their visitors to easily find on-street parking spaces.			increase the length of safe kerbside parking as the width of the roads concerned is insufficient to allow parking on both sides even with single file traffic and junction protection would also have to be retained.
If restrictions are to be implemented, a residents parking scheme should be introduced to protect the limited amount of parking for residents	2	Am14/09 Am14/14	The introduction of a 2 hour limited waiting scheme with optional residents permits was proposed as part of a consultation held in 2007. This (full) scheme was however put on hold following receipt of objections, primarily relating to concerns over the displacement of town centre commuters. Members decided to halt the scheme until such time as an additional town centre car park became available.
The scheme implemented in July and the current proposals are likely to have a detrimental affect on local house prices	1	Am14/15	Highway safety must be the first priority when considering the implementation of restrictions.
The restrictions implemented in July have acted to speed up traffic making it more dangerous	1	Am14/14	Any suggestion that traffic speeds have been increased is purely anecdotal. However, it may be expected that the rate of traffic flow would increase as the cause of congestion is removed. Traffic speed must be assessed, not in terms of absolute speed, but in terms of whether the traffic speed is appropriate to the conditions. Traffic flows impeded by inappropriately parked vehicles are inherently more dangerous because although drivers may drive more slowly, they are forced to concentrate on negotiating the parked cars and are therefore distracted from other potential hazards such as pedestrians crossing. Conversely where the driver's line of sight is not impeded by parked vehicles, they may safely travel at greater speeds because they are able to recognise hazards from a greater distance. In addition the parked vehicles serve to reduce the visibility of any pedestrians stepping off the footway.
Trades people and delivery vehicles	1	Am14/14	Vehicles either actively loading or unloading are exempt from the

struggle to find parking following the restrictions implemented in July and are therefore now often reluctant to take work in the area			double yellow line, thereby enabling delivery staff and tradespeople to park close to the property concerned when necessary.
The schemes (both implemented in July & proposed) are purely a revenue raising exercise on the part of Ashford Borough Council	1	Am14/14	The interim scheme implemented in July was the result of safety concerns in a handful of locations initially highlighted by the Joint Transportation Board and subsequently finalised and agreed with Tenterden Town Council, Tenterden & District Chamber of Trade, Tenterden & District Residents Association, Tenterden Improved and Borough Council Ward Members. The currently proposed scheme was formulated following formal notification from the police (form1412A) of their concerns over the safety of parking practices in East Hill.
All the restrictions in East Hill/Golden Square area should only apply between 7am – 6pm. Outside of these hours there is little traffic so emergency service vehicles would not be impeded by kerbside parking.	1	Am14/14	It is necessary to maintain free flow of traffic, particularly for emergency vehicles 24/7. It remains unsafe to park on a junction, bend or where the road is of insufficient width at any time of day. It should also be noted that the need for full time restrictions around junctions is specifically referred to in the consultation response received by the police.
The road markings should be implemented in 'conservation area yellow'	1	Am14/09	The process of making up primrose yellow (i.e. conservation area yellow) paint requires a full batch to be made up in the kettle after which a standard yellow batch cannot be made up without first fully cleaning out the kettle. As a result it is not always practical to install primrose yellow lines as part of a larger works schedule (particularly if only a small quantity of primrose lines are required). However where practical primrose lines will be employed.
Disappointed that the new proposals do not free up more	1	Am14/18	Unfortunately only a limited length of kerb space is suitable for parking. When the interim scheme (implemented in July 2009) was

parking in Beacon Oak Road/Golden Square/Oaks Road			formulated it was with a view to implementing the minimum of restrictions possible to address the safety issues present – for this reason there is very little which can debateably be trimmed from the current restrictions.
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Comments not Relating Directly to Proposals	No. of representations	Representation Ref.s	Response
Vehicles frequently exceed the speed limit along Beacon Oak Road	2	Am14/05 Am14/19	These comments have been passed on to the police as the Authority responsible for the enforcement of speed limits.
Suggest slowing or calming the traffic on Beacon Oak Road to 20mph	1	Am14/19	Any such traffic calming scheme would come within the remit of Kent Highway Services. However Beacon Oak Road represents a major throughway without any police crash data to suggest that speed is a safety issue in this location. Furthermore the introduction of calming measures would further reduce the amount of on-street parking available.
Speed reduction measures should be implemented in Golden Square	1	Am14/18	Such physical works fall outside the remit of Ashford Borough Council but the comments have been passed to Kent Highway Services for consideration. It should be noted however that the implementation of build-outs/chicanes would further limit the availability of on-street parking.
Hope to see the introduction of a new town centre car park soon	1	Am14/07	The provision of an additional 200 space town centre car park is being taken forward as part of the Tenterden & Rural Sites Development Plan.