

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

Decision Made: 24 March 2010

RESIDENT PARKING SCHEME SURVEY

Issue for Decision

To consider the results of an extensive survey of each of the resident zone parking areas.

Decision Made

1. That the outcomes and conclusions within the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services be noted.
2. That a trial promotion of the StreetCar service to establish the long term viability of the scheme in reducing levels of vehicle ownership be agreed.

Reasons for Decision

Consultation with residents and businesses within the resident zones was carried out during January and February 2009 as part of the proposals to manage on street parking demand. This consultation identified a number of issues where further survey should be carried out to evaluate levels of available parking during the times of scheme operation and during the evening period.

On 24th February 2009 the proposals were presented to the Joint Transportation Board and further comments were considered. On 23rd April 2009 the matter was also discussed in detail at the Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee recommended that additional surveys should be carried out by year end to identify specific parking problems and to review suggestions to extend the scheme operational hours and limiting non-permit holder use.

The Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee also recommended that the cessation of north zone migration be monitored and reviewed during the first six months of operation.

As a result of these recommendations, extensive surveys have been carried out by Parking Services to identify;

- the number of properties within each zone
- the level of off street parking for residents
- the number of off street parking spaces
- the number of businesses within each zone
- total on street parking capacity
- the level of on street space per property across all zones
- the number of vehicles parking without permits
- average usage per zone
- the number of commercial vehicles per zone
- total number of vehicles per zone

Appendix A to the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services shows the data collated for each of the parking zones relating to the number of properties, parking availability and business use.

Appendix B to the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services represents the difference in usage, vehicles parking without permits and commercial vehicle parking across each zone for both day and evening periods.

In analysing this data, it was concluded that the level of available on street parking decreases during the evening period, as an increasing number of residential properties have more than one car per household. This problem is more acute within the north zone with capacity levels of over 90% overall. This figure will include a number of roads where capacity is at 100%, however, it is recognised that some residents park further from their home address to secure a parking space or utilise off street car parks in Well Road, Lucerne Street, Brewer Street, Union Street and Wheeler Street. This concession is also available for south zone residents during the evening period in the Councils Mote Road and Brunswick Street car parks.

This situation has been eased following the reduction of restricted times of single yellow lines throughout the north zones to 09:00hrs - 17:00hrs Monday to Friday only. It was observed that single yellow line parking during non operational times is a preference for some residents as this allows parking closer to their home despite having to move the vehicle before 09:00hrs the following day.

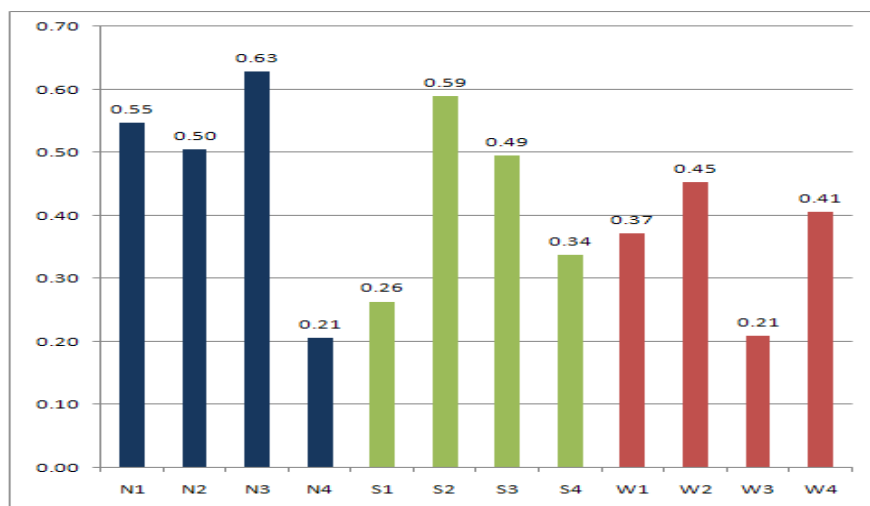
Levels of parking availability recorded during the day remain good at 36% across each of the parking zones as many residents are away from home during working hours. The remaining vehicles are being closely controlled through enforcement to maximise the space available for local residents.

The level of commercial vehicle parking across all zones is comparatively low at around 5.58%. This percentage increases slightly to 5.68% during the evening.

Commercial vehicle parking in the north zone shows a different trend reducing to 4.64% during the evening. The south and west zones show an increase in the evening of just over 1% from levels observed during the day. This will continue to be monitored to ensure that non regulated commercial vehicle parking remains at a reasonable level.

The data collected has enabled the average space per property to be calculated at 0.41. This can be used as a guide to identify areas where on-street parking can be limited. This is often due to the dwelling type, where terraced Victorian housing with reduced opportunity for off street parking, places additional demand on the on-street space available due to increased population density.

Data below shows this variance between 0.21 in West 3 and North 4 and 0.63 in North 3. This is consistent with previous surveys where reduced parking availability has been identified.



During the survey the number of vehicles parking without permits up to the maximum waiting period was recorded at 10.08%. This percentage was lower than anticipated. Vehicles parking without permits was also measured during the evening at 8.38%, 1.7% lower than levels recorded during the day.

The impact of this group is therefore significantly less than previously estimated and as a result it is not recommended to change the operational times of the residents parking scheme at present. Further monitoring will take place to ensure that parking availability continues to be closely managed.

Anecdotal evidence suggested that an increasing number of residents were concerned that casual parking within the resident zones is reducing the level parking availability for local residents. As a result of this concern, investigation was carried out to identify if introducing non resident parking charges would improve parking availability within the resident zones. However results from the survey confirm that parking spaces are available during the day in all zones and residents are not adversely affected. Therefore introducing non resident parking charges would not be viable at this time.

An alternative to increasing on street restrictions to manage demand is the StreetCar scheme. Improved levels of parking availability can be achieved if the reliance on car ownership by local residents is reduced. This scheme offers local residents a real alternative to car ownership whilst reducing the impact on the local area. StreetCar is a service

supported by Kent County Council that has cars parked in a network of dedicated spaces which enable members to use a car for as little as 30 minutes or as long as 6 months and drivers pay only for the period needed from £4.95 for one hour. For car bookings over 72 hours, the cost of fuel is included. For bookings shorter than 72 hours, 30 miles fuel is provided per calendar day, after which additional petrol is charged at 23p per mile. Insurance is also covered within the cost of the vehicle.

Cars can be reserved online or by phone, and can be collected and returned at any time day or night using smartcard technology. The fleet is made up of new cars and the cost of usage is based on how long the driver has the car and how far they drive. Further information relating to the scheme can be found at www.streetcar.co.uk. (See also Appendix C of the report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services)

The scheme is currently operating in Maidstone with two vehicles located in County Road; however this service is not currently marketed directly with Maidstone residents and therefore uptake within this group is minimal. It was therefore recommended to work with Kent County Council and StreetCar to promote the scheme more widely with a view to installing a further two dedicated StreetCar bays in a north zone once we are able to identify a direct influence on parking availability, levels of resident permit issue and increased use of StreetCar by local residents.

If successful, consideration can be given to extending the scheme into other densely populated areas within the south and west residents parking zones.

The cessation of north zone migration was reintroduced on 1st June 2009. During the first four weeks 46 advisory notices were issued to vehicles parked in a zone different to the one specified on their resident permit to ensure that drivers were made aware of the changes. During the first six months, 37 penalty charge notices were issued to vehicles parked longer than the permitted waiting time without displaying the correct zone permit.

Driver compliance has continued to improve with limited migration and disruption seen across north zones.

The number of permits issued to residents has also been under close review following the introduction of charges for all permits.

From 1st June 2009 to 25th January 2010 the parking database system identifies a total of 5099 resident permits issued. During the same period 2008 to 2009, 6339 permits were issued showing a reduction of 1240 permits since the introduction of the new arrangements. This represents a 19.5% decrease. A number of factors may have influenced this reduction such as the impact of the economic climate.

Driver compliance to the parking regulations has not significantly decreased since the 1st June 2009 and therefore it is likely that a number of residents have made alternative parking arrangements increasing the number of on-street parking spaces available to local residents and visitors.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

To introduce further restriction to non permit holders may not significantly influence parking demand, as data suggests that this category of drivers represent less than 11% of drivers. Further restrictions may also impede some local businesses.

Charging for non permit holders within resident zone areas may not significantly influence parking demand, as data suggests that residents are not adversely affected in many areas.

Background Papers

None

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: 31 March 2010
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