

Agenda Item No:

Report To: Ashford Joint Transportation Board

Date: 9th March 2010

Report Title: Proposed Introduction of New and Amendment of Existing Parking Restrictions in Victoria Ward

Report Author: Jamie Watson/Graham Cox



Summary:

This report details the results of the recent statutory consultation process undertaken in Victoria Ward, Ashford. Parking management proposals have been developed in consultation with Ashford Borough Council to introduce and amend parking restrictions in order to protect local residents and other stakeholder's ability to park once the Victoria Way improvement scheme is introduced.

Key Decision: YES

Affected Wards: Victoria Ward

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

- 1) **The proposed parking management scheme be implemented.**
- 2) **That subject to review of both Traffic Regulation Orders, correction of any errors and agreement of the final documents with ABC Officers, that the KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, ASHFORD) (STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2010 and the THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, ASHFORD) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS) ORDER 2010 be made.**

Policy Overview:

Financial Implications: Scheme to be funded as part of the overall Victoria Way scheme Community Infrastructure Fund 2.

Other Material Implications: None

**Background
Papers:**

Victoria Way –Initial Phase, Design & Access Statement Apr 09, 'Victoria Way Major Highway Scheme – Initial Phase' report to 8th Dec '09 JTB, Copies of all responses to the formal public consultation (available in the Members Room only)

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an explanation of proposals to introduce and amend parking restrictions in Victoria Ward, Ashford as well as a detailed analysis of the responses received to the recent statutory consultation process.
2. These proposals form a part of the scheme to link and upgrade Leacon Road and Victoria Road, forming a new through road to be known as Victoria Way. The construction element of this scheme is due to be commence imminently and the proposals therefore need to be considered and introduced before works begin.
3. Large numbers of vehicles which park in this area currently are expected to displace into adjacent roads. With this in mind it has been necessary to take a set of proposals that address this issue to formal public consultation. The results of the public consultation are included in this report.

Issue to be decided

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

Background

5. On 18th August '09 planning permission was granted (planning ref. AS/09/460) for the Victoria Way - Initial phase, Ashford (Design & Access Statement April 09). This scheme will connect and upgrade Leacon Road and Victoria Road to form a new through way to be known as Victoria Way.
6. As a result of the reclassification of Victoria Road under the Victoria Way Major Highway Scheme, it will be necessary to prohibit parking along much of its length. This is liable to result in a significant volume of long stay rail commuters / town centre workers' vehicles being displaced into neighbouring residential roads. The proposals set out in this report have been designed to mitigate against this occurrence.
7. The displacement is anticipated not only on completion of the scheme but also during the construction phase when the access needs of construction

- vehicles will necessitate restrictions on the volume of parking taking place along Victoria Road. With commencement of engineering works programmed for April '10, it is necessary that parking management is implemented prior to this date in order to avoid undue inconvenience to local residents and other short stay stakeholders.
8. A scheme has been developed in consultation with Ashford Borough Council that would prioritise the needs of occupants of existing residential properties in Victoria Road and Victoria Crescent and short stay visitors (such as visitors to the school and local businesses) ahead of long stay parking for commuters and town centre workers.
 9. This scheme comprises of a small Controlled Parking Zone in Victoria Crescent & George Street and limited waiting only in other streets which, based on the outcome of surveys carried out were felt may also be affected by displaced parking.
 10. The proposed parking restrictions are based on other Controlled Parking Zone schemes within the Ashford Middle Zone which have proved themselves successful in addressing similar issues elsewhere within the town. The adoption of a similar scheme design has the added benefit of maintaining consistency of approach within the Borough and reducing any potential enforcement issues caused by misunderstanding of the restrictions by motorists.

Proposal

11. Once planning permission for the Victoria Way Improvement Scheme was granted there was a need, as set out in the planning application, to develop a robust parking management proposal to deal with the volume of vehicles that would be displaced from the existing Victoria Road.
12. Parking capacity and duration surveys were undertaken to help better understand the parking trends in the area to inform the design process. This helps to ensure that the scheme design is as robust and practical as possible.
13. The scheme has been developed and the Traffic Regulation Orders drafted to safeguard available parking for the use of residents (and their visitors) as well as short stay users such as visitors to local businesses and the school.
14. In Victoria Crescent and George Street it is proposed to introduce a Controlled Parking Zone that will limit parking between 8am – 10pm Mon-Sat inclusive to 2 hours maximum stay with no return to the zone for a further 4 hours. The residents of these streets and the properties numbered 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 & 40 Victoria Road will be able to apply for an

- exemption permit, as detailed in the Traffic Order, giving vehicles displaying a permit the ability to park for unlimited periods in any parking bay within the zone.
15. In addition, in areas where it is felt all day parking may transfer, such as the north-western end of Bowens Field, the north-eastern end of Jemmett Road, and (temporarily) Victoria Road, it is proposed to introduce 2 hour limited waiting bays with no return for a further 4 hours (operational between 8am – 6pm Mon-Sat inclusive).
 16. This will not only prevent all day parking from occurring but in turn will help to protect some short stay parking facility for local residents and their visitors and will also provide some short stay parking for town centre users, local businesses and for parents dropping off or collecting children from Victoria Road School.

Consultation and responses received

17. Statutory consultation began on the 17th January 2010 and lasted until the 8th February 2010. In addition to the advertising process carried out in accordance with Kent Highways Services policy and the legal requirements set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, all affected properties received detailed plans, an explanation letter and fact sheet concurrently.
18. There were 22 responses in total from just over 150 affected properties. These comprised 2 letters of support, 10 letters that were identical but with different correspondence addresses requesting the scheme extent is changed and 10 other assorted objections.
19. 2 responses pointed out minor discrepancies in the supplied plans, stating that they didn't detail all of the existing restrictions beyond the extent of the proposed scheme fully or that two stretches of restrictions totalling approx 10 metres in length were the incorrect colour on the key.
20. We don't consider this has affected the ability of the public to understand the proposed controls or to object if they felt necessary. As these plans are outline designs and go beyond the extent required by Kent Highway Services policy which requires a map with affected roads highlighted, it is considered that this has not undermined the overall consultation process, however it is intended to correct the plans and Traffic Regulation Order documents prior to making the order.
21. The 10 letters which were all duplicates from different residents in Chichester Close raise concerns over the possibility of all day parking displacement migrating into their street and request that the limited waiting scheme be extended into Chichester Close. They feel that the general public should not be entitled to park in their street at their expense.

22. The locations considered for limited waiting have been carefully selected (based on survey work) to provide sufficient control over vehicle displacement but with the minimum impact on residential properties. The locations chosen to locate limited waiting have very few properties fronting the parking controls.
23. It was therefore concluded that Chichester Close would not be affected significantly by displacement and any that did take place would have minimal effect on local residents. Most properties in Chichester Close have off-street parking facilities and given the presence of existing safety restrictions there would be no detriment to road safety or traffic flows. It would therefore prove more detrimental to local residents to introduce additional parking controls in Chichester Close at this stage. There is a need to monitor and review the operations of all new schemes and should the residents fears prove to be justified then there is scope to amend the scheme as part of the second phase of parking controls associated with Victoria Way, programmed to be introduced before construction is complete in around 12 months time.
24. There were 4 objections received regarding the proposed Controlled Parking Zone in Victoria Crescent. 2 of these were from the same person, 1 as a resident and 1 as the Chairman of the Victoria Residents and Recreation Action Group (VR & RAG).
25. In their objections several points are raised including, lack of informal consultation with the Action Group, concerns over process followed, the requirement to charge for permits, operational times of the scheme and general questioning of scheme design / requirement.
26. The parking scheme was progressed from design straight to formal consultation as it is desirable to have controls in place to protect local residents and stakeholders interests before construction work for the upgrading of Victoria Road commences (due to begin April 2010). However, extensive consultation and planning processes for the Victoria Way scheme have already taken place, which included an outline of the parking restrictions which would be required. To further highlight and aid the consultation, a design plan and explanation letter along with a frequently asked questions sheet was delivered to every property at the commencement of the formal consultation period on the draft Traffic Regulation Order. This has given plenty of opportunity for the local residents to comment and respond.
27. In addition, the statutory process included public notices placed on site using lamp columns and additional posts throughout the entire consultation period (manually inspected), as well as all documents placed on deposit at Ashford Borough Council's Civic Centre and at Kent County Council's Sessions House. An advertisement was also placed in the local press to draw attention to the scheme to a wider audience.

28. There is a requirement to charge a minimum fee for permits to allow for the administration of the scheme and to ensure suitable monitoring of the permit system by staff at Ashford Borough Council to mitigate any misuse.
29. The hours of operation for the scheme in Victoria Crescent and George Street (Monday- Saturday 8am-10pm) is based on those successfully employed in Controlled Parking Zones elsewhere in the town where similar parking problems apply. If operational hours were to be reduced, residents in possession of exemption permits would be disadvantaged. The 2 hour limited waiting allowance enables non-permit holders to park overnight from a point 2 hours prior to the end of the operational period to a point 2 hours after the commencement of the operational period the following day. As a result, in effective terms non-permit holders may park from 8pm to 10am without restriction. Reducing the operational hours further would potentially encourage evening parking by non-permit holders (e.g. households with multiple vehicles in excess of the permit allocation).
30. The need to offer facilities to all sectors of the community whilst protecting specific elements is why 'residents only' parking for Victoria Crescent as suggested by some of the objectors is not justifiable in this location as it would prove discriminatory against the local businesses who would require somewhere for their customers to park.
31. There has been 1 response from a resident of Jemmett Road, objecting on the grounds that they feel they will be disadvantaged as they have several vehicles and this scheme will not benefit them - especially in the evening.
32. The few properties that front the small section of Jemmett Road where limited waiting bays are proposed have rear off-street parking. Although there is uncontrolled parking currently in this location will under the proposals be controlled, the scheme will ensure that it is not filled up all day with long stay vehicles and that the residents can still park on-street for short durations if necessary.
33. The scheme will protect the area from displaced all day parked vehicles and allow for residents and stakeholders to have priority. It is also mentioned in the response that a previously suggested parking scheme was rejected by residents some years ago. This was proposed prior to the formulation of the Victoria Way scheme at a time when demand for on-street parking spaces was considerably lower.
34. The remaining responses including the objections and support letters are from Bowens Field residents. These representations recognise generally the need for a scheme but request minor alterations or extensions to the proposed controls.

35. Some of the objections stated that they do not need a scheme or feel that it will be detrimental to introduce more controls into a quiet residential area.
36. There is a need to monitor and review the operations of all new schemes and should the residents fears prove to be justified then there is scope to amend the scheme as part of the second phase of parking controls associated with Victoria Way, programmed to be introduced before construction is complete in around 12 months time.
37. Although some of the representations state that further controls will be detrimental to the area, it is necessary, particularly in Bowens Field, to introduce controls not only to deal with displaced vehicles but also to improve road safety. By switching the side of the road that vehicles park, visibility will be increased and safety improved. This is reflected in the letters of support received.

Conclusion

38. The responses received have not generally been outright objections to the scheme proposals, many of them requested minor alterations or extensions of the scheme to further control parking. There is a need to monitor and review the operations of all new schemes and should the residents fears prove to be justified then there is scope to amend the scheme as part of the second phase of parking controls associated with Victoria Way, programmed to be introduced before construction is complete in around 12 months time.
39. It is therefore recommended that in order to ensure that the residents and local stakeholders interests are prioritised and protected ahead of the main Victoria Way highway scheme construction that these proposals go ahead unaltered and that the objections be set aside at this stage. The legal documents will be checked and amended if required to ensure correctness and then the order will be Made. Alterations or additions to the scheme requested in the responses will be considered as part of the final stage of parking controls along the remaining length of the new Victoria Way later on in the construction period (within the next 12 months).
40. It is recognised that there is a need to address minor errors or omissions in the Traffic Regulation Order and accompanying plans prior to making the Order. As such Kent Highway Services commit to undertake a review of the Traffic Order and its plans and to correct all errors and omissions, in consultation with Ashford Borough Council Officers.

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