

Agenda Item No: 4
Report To: Joint Transportation Board
Date: Tuesday 19th February 2013
Report Title: Aldington Primary School Highway Safety Scheme
Report Author: Ray Wilkinson



Summary: Following concerns expressed by the County Member, a Highway Safety Scheme was proposed in the vicinity of Aldington Primary School to tackle the dangerous and obstructive parking practices taking place at the beginning and end of the school day.

This report lays out the results of the formal statutory consultation conducted on the proposals between 3rd & 25th January 2013 for the consideration of the Board.

Key Decision: YES

Affected Wards: Saxon Shore Ward

Recommendations: **The Board be asked to:-**

Consider the representations received and approve the scheme for implementation.

Financial Implications: Funded from KCC Highway Member Fund

Background Papers: 'Prioritised List of Requested Parking Controls for Investigation and Possible Implementation' report to JTB 13th March 2013, JTB minutes 13th March 2013

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Purpose of the Report

1. Following concerns expressed by the County Member, a Highway Safety Scheme was proposed in the vicinity of Aldington Primary School to tackle the dangerous and obstructive parking practices taking place at the beginning and end of the school day.
2. This report lays out the results of the formal statutory consultation conducted on the proposals between 3rd & 25th January 2013 for the consideration of the Board.

Issue to be Decided

3. The Board is asked to consider the representations received and decide on whether to approve the scheme for implementation, request the consultation be recommenced on an amended scheme or decline the scheme.

Background

4. Parking congestion at the beginning and end of the school day is a growing problem in the vicinity of schools throughout the Borough.
5. Although Aldington Primary School has arrangements in place allowing parents to utilise the village hall car park at the beginning and end of the school day, many parents still choose to park on-street in Roman Road adjacent to the school. This parking has created an issue for pupils and parents crossing the road outside the school by obstructing sight lines around the crossing point. In addition the school vehicular accesses and the shared vehicular access serving 1-12 Goldwell Houses opposite often experience obstruction issues due to inconsiderate parking.
6. In order to address these issues and to improve accessibility a Member Highway Funded Scheme was proposed.
 - The introduction of dropped kerbs serving the crossing point improving access for those with limited mobility, pushchairs / prams etc.
 - The introduction of a hard surfaced footway traversing the verge on the northern side of the crossing point, again to improve accessibility.
 - The introduction of advisory white access markings to protect the Aldington Primary School vehicular accesses, the shared access serving 1-12 Goldwell Houses and the northern kerb line of the crossing point.
 - The revision of the existing 'school keep clear' marking on the southern side of the carriageway outside the school to bring it in line with legislative requirements and make it enforceable, thereby protecting sight lines for those using the crossing point.

The Scheme

7. The safety scheme dealt with by this report consists solely of the revision of the 'school keep clear' marking referred to above. This is the only element of the overall scheme requiring a traffic order and therefore subject to a statutory public consultation.

The Consultation

8. The formal statutory consultation took place between Thursday 3rd & Friday 25th January 2013. A notice of intention was published in the local newspapers and copies of the notice were displayed on site. Full details of the scheme were placed on deposit at Ashford Gateway Plus and Sessions House, Maidstone and were made available in electronic format on ABC's website.
9. In addition all residents in the vicinity of the scheme, a total of 38 properties, received a letter explaining the proposals and where to obtain further information along with a copy of the plan.

The Results

10. A single representation was received in response to the consultation (this can be read in full in Appendix 2). The representation acknowledged that the introduction of a safety scheme represented a positive step but went on to request a number of additional changes to Roman Road.
11. The majority of these restrictions fall outside the remit of this consultation (i.e. do not relate to the proposed restriction) and include the hard paving of the verge on the northern side of the carriageway and the introduction of additional footway lighting. These requests have been passed on to the KCC Highway Member Fund team and Aldington Parish Council for consideration.
12. The representation also requested the introduction of 'residents only' parking. Such restrictions however would represent a poor use of the parking resource and such bays would be liable to remain empty for much of the day regardless of demand from other user groups. In addition all residents in the vicinity of Aldington Primary School have vehicular access to their rear gardens and therefore the opportunity to create an off-street parking facility if necessary (many of these properties already have such a facility in situ)..

Conclusion

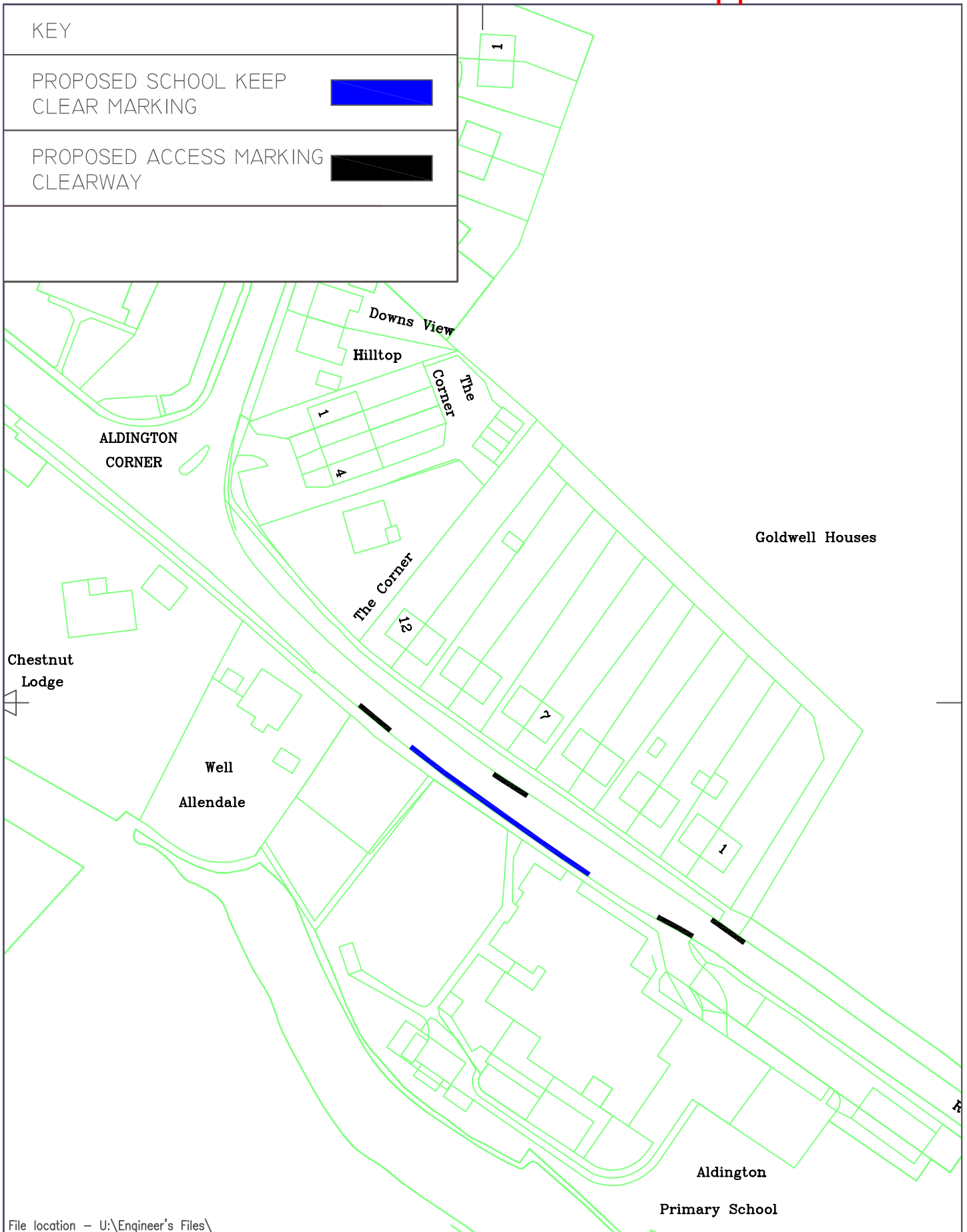
13. The proposed introduction of the enforceable 'school keep clear' marking will serve to improve sight lines around the newly improved crossing point facility. The points raised in the representation received do not constitute an objection to the scheme, simply requesting additional facilities / restrictions to the proposed scheme.

Portfolio Holder's Views

14. The primary purpose of parking schemes around schools must be to protect the children attending that school. This is a simple safety scheme for the school plus protection for the accesses to the school and for the residents of 1-12 Goldwell Houses. It is generally approved by the neighbours and I recommend it to the JTB.

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ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL
 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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PROJECT	MEMBER HIGHWAY FUND 2012/13				
DRAWING TITLE	PROPOSED SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR MARKING AND ACCESS MARKINGS, ROMAN ROAD, ALDINGTON				
DRAWN	AUTOCAD FILE	DATE	SCALE	DRG.No.	REV.
RJW	FILE No.	15/10/12	1/1000	MHF 3/12	-

Representations Received

Ref.	Representation	Officer's comments
Am25/Ald/01	<p>Whilst it is positive that the dangerous parking situation is recognised, I would like the following two points to be considered.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking permits to be issued to local residents in the vicinity of the primary school and this area to become permit parking only This would encourage safe parking in the village hall, something that has always been recommended by the school. 2. The dangerous grass verge is addressed; the verge is steep in places and very slippery due to wet mud where cars parking at the school mount the verge when parking. It is impossible at times for the elderly or infirm to exit a vehicle and safely access the path especially as only part of the verge has street lighting. It is disappointing that only one safety aspect has been considered at this stage. Additional footways additional dropped kerbs should be added. 	<p>The primary function of the highway network is the facilitation of movement along its length. It is however recognised that on-street parking represents a valuable resource. The highway is a public resource, maintained at public expense. Therefore it is important to ensure that those locations suitable for parking are optimally managed to the benefit of all.</p> <p>A 'residents only' scheme provides a poor use of this resource, parking spaces are liable to remain empty (particularly during the working day) when resident demand is low despite high general demand for parking in the area. Furthermore those properties in the vicinity of Aldington Primary School all have access to private off-street parking facilities. In addition to this, such a scheme is likely to pose an inconvenience to residents' visitors and trades people working in the area.</p> <p>In relation to the verge, as discussed in the report a hard paved footway link has been constructed as part of the scheme at the designated crossing point to negate the need for pedestrians crossing the road to walk across the verge itself. The wholesale conversion of the verge to a hard paved surface however falls outside the remit of this consultation (which deals only with the introduction of parking and waiting restrictions) as does the introduction of additional footway lighting (presumably only an issue outside of the school day). This request has been forwarded to KCC H&T Member Highway Fund team for consideration however such works would constitute a very considerable expense and may prove difficult to justify.</p>