

Agenda Item No: 7
Report To: Joint Transportation Board
Date: Tuesday 19th February 2013
Report Title: Pluckley Station Highway Safety Scheme Extension
Report Author: Ray Wilkinson



Summary: In December 2012 a report was submitted to the Board detailing the results of a consultation on the Pluckley Station Highway Safety Scheme. The Board subsequently approved the scheme and requested that an additional length of restriction be consulted upon in the vicinity of Pluckley Station.

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: Weald Central Ward

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

Consider the representations received and approve the scheme for implementation.

Financial Implications: Funded from Crash Remedial budget

Background Papers: 'Prioritised List of Requested Parking Controls for Investigation and Possible Implementation' report to JTB 13th March 2012, JTB minutes 13th March 2012
'Amendment 22 (Smarden Primary School, Pittlesden, Tenterden & Pluckley Station) Highway Safety Schemes' report to JTB 13th December 2012, JTB minutes 13th December 2012

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Report Title: Pluckley Station Highway Safety Scheme Extension

Purpose of the Report

1. In December 2012 a report was submitted to the Board detailing the results of a consultation on the Pluckley Station Highway Safety Scheme. The Board subsequently approved the scheme and requested that an additional length of restriction be consulted upon in the vicinity of Pluckley Station.
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. During the consultation on the Pluckley Station Highway Safety Scheme conducted in October – November 2012, a number of representations were received requesting the addition of a restriction to protect the corner at the junction of The Grove and Station Approach. The representations stated that although hatched markings were present these had become faded over time and that vehicles were regularly parked on both the hatched markings and the verge behind, obstructing sight lines around the junction.
5. In response to these representations the Board requested that officers formulate and consult on an extension to the original scheme providing 'no waiting at any time' restrictions around the corner concerned.

The Scheme

6. This safety scheme extension consists simply of a length of 'no waiting at any time' restriction to protect the corner at the junction of The Grove and Station Approach.

The Consultation

7. 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.

8. In addition all residents in the vicinity of the scheme, a total of 23 properties, received a letter explaining the proposals and where to obtain further information along with a copy of the plan.

The Results

9. A total of three representations were received in response to the consultation, full details of which can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.
10. Two of the responses stated their support for measures to address parking on the corner of The Grove and Station Approach. One of these representations however referred to remarking of the hatched area and the erection of a 'no parking' sign on the verge behind. This would appear to be the result of some confusion over what the proposals consisted of. Such measures would not be enforceable and therefore would be unlikely to present a credible deterrent given the high demand for parking in the area.
11. The third representation received appeared to be a response to both the original consultation and the consultation on the safety scheme extension. The respondent expressed support for addressing the commuter parking issues but also stated that they were concerned by the impact on their own ability to park because their household had two vehicles but did not possess an off-street parking facility.
12. The respondent went on to explain that their preferred parking place was directly outside their home but that they were often unable to park here on their return home due to the presence of commuter vehicles. In addition their visitors often took advantage of the corner of The Grove and Station Approach to park which would not be possible should the proposed corner protection be introduced. They therefore requested that 'residents only' bays be installed.
13. 'Residents only' bays however do not represent an efficient use of parking resource on the public highway. They are likely to remain empty while residents are away from home regardless of the demand from other road users. It is therefore not custom and practice to introduce such an onerous restriction. Furthermore such a parking management scheme (as opposed to the agreed safety scheme) would considerably reduce the amount of on-street parking because it would be necessary to define all kerbside space as either suitable or unsuitable for parking and would therefore necessitate 'no waiting at any time' restrictions across driveways. Additionally the benefit to one household must be weighed against the imposition of such onerous restrictions on both adjacent properties and other road users including commuters and pub patrons.

Conclusion

14. Although only 3 representations from a total of 23 properties consulted were received during this consultation, the majority supported the introduction of restrictions to address parking on the corner of The Grove and Station Approach. This is supported by the 3 representations received during the

previous consultation specifically requesting that such restrictions be added to the scheme.

Portfolio Holder's Views

15. This report is additional to the December 2012 report when a safety scheme was approved around the entrance to Pluckley Station. The aim of this extension is to protect the entrance of Station Approach from The Grove and I recommend it to the JTB.

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File location - U:\Engineer's Files\

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PROJECT		SAFETY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME 2012/13			
DRAWING TITLE		PROHIBITION OF WAITING RESTRICTIONS, THE GROVE, PLUCKLEY			
DRAWN	AUTOCAD FILE	DATE	SCALE	DRG.No.	REV.
RJW	FILE No.	21/12/12	1/1000	SIS 2/12	-

Ref.	Representation	Officers Comments
Am25/Pluc/01	<p>We write further to your recent letter concerning the proposals for an official hatched (no waiting area) where “The Grove” exits onto Station Approach area. As we pointed out in our previous letter we would like to support the proposal that the “yellow hatched” area marked on the attached plan is renewed and that a sign is put up warning that parking is not permitted.</p> <p>A number of local residents (including ourselves) have complained to the local police on several occasions about the practice as it is impossible to see cars coming from the station to the left as the parked cars completely obstruct the view. This means that we are forced to drive right out in front of the Dering Arms, in order to try to see if our way is clear. This takes us into the path of drivers coming into Station Approach from Station Road, and they are frequently travelling at high speeds because they are late for their train. Despite the lines the police have informed us that they are unable to enforce the apparent “no parking” restriction as there is no sign point out that parking is prohibited. We are therefore fully in favour of any proposal to renew the yellow hatched area (and provide a no parking sign) as this would make it much safer for all residents of The Grove to exit into Station Approach.</p> <p>As far as we are aware the yellow markings were painted around 10 years ago to prevent commuters parking there and blocking the visibility from vehicles exiting The Grove alongside The Dering Arms. This worked well for some years and deterred people from parking there but the lines have faded and there are now regularly 2 to 3 cars parked there all day (3 today – see attached photograph). Although our lane is only a rough track, there are 12 households living along it, many of which own at least 2 cars so that the traffic coming and going from The Grove is quite substantial at times. We do feel that we should be able to drive out of The Grove safely, without struggling to establish if the exit is clear. Presumably these lines were painted for a reason, and given that the station is considerably busier than it was 10 years ago, it would seem to us sensible to replace them and reinforce their function with increasingly</p>	<p>There appears to be some confusion over what the proposals consist of. Although there was a request for remarking of the hatched markings and the introduction of a ‘No Parking’ sign during the previous consultation held on the Pluckley Station Safety Scheme, such measures would not be enforceable. The only way in which ABC’s Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) would be able to enforce against parking on the corner and adjacent verge would be with the provision of ‘no waiting’ restrictions as proposed.</p> <p>There also appears to have been some confusion in respect to the information obtained from the Police. The Police have powers to enforce against ‘unnecessary obstruction’ regardless of the presence or absence of road markings / signage but obviously have other competing priorities and therefore do not tend to get involved unless there is an immediate safety concern. Any hatched markings or signage would be entirely advisory. The proposed introduction of ‘no waiting at any time’ restrictions would again make no difference to Police powers of enforcement but would allow ABC’s CEOs to enforce against any</p>

	thoughtless commuters.	contraventions to the restriction.
Am25/Pluc/02	<p>We note your recent correspondence regarding parking in the Pluckley Station area, and would like to thank you for the hard work which has already gone into preparing the suggested schemes. As residents of the area, the problems which are caused by insufficient station parking and inconsiderate commuters is a source of constant annoyance, and therefore we agree with your plans in principle.</p> <p>However we are concerned that the proposals are going to have a detrimental effect on our situation and I shall lay out my concerns accordingly.</p> <p>We live at ***** and are the only residents of the immediate area without any private off-road parking or garage facilities. We own one car and a van used for work. Our house has a small pathway to the front door, at the end of which is a space large enough for two vehicles to park on the public road.</p> <p>As I'm sure you are aware, commuters will seemingly go to any lengths to avoid paying for the station car park, and therefore any public road is in high demand. During the day when we are out or our cars are absent, these two spaces fill up extremely quickly and in fact there are often cars waiting for us to leave the house so that they can take the space. This means that we are often forced to park 200-300 yards away from our house. As you can imagine this proves extremely frustrating, particularly if my wife needs to unload shopping, or if we are awaiting any deliveries. Sometimes cars park so close in front of the footpath to our house that it makes getting in and out extremely difficult.</p> <p>This is a daily source of frustration and upset, as these activities are not just confined to midweek. We have also regularly experienced cars being parked directly in front of our house and pathway overnight, for long weekends, and even one or two weeks at a time when they use the station to get a train to Gatwick for their holidays! This forces us to have to try to find alternative parking a long way from our house for extended periods of time.</p> <p>Our concern with your proposals is that it does not seem to provide alternative, reliable parking for us as residents, and even seems to penalise us for not having any private parking. The yellow lines that you are planning to put in place will force the 40+ cars that use public car parking on the roads to try and find</p>	<p>The representation appears to refer in the most part to the previously consulted on Pluckley Station Safety Scheme which was approved for implementation at 13th December 2013. This scheme (and the subsequent scheme extension to which this report relates) is a safety scheme intended to discourage parking in unsafe locations for the benefit of all road users. There are no proposals (and there have been no other requests) for the implementation of a parking management scheme (i.e. a scheme designed to balance the needs of different user groups).</p> <p>'Residents Only' bays represent a poor use of available on-street parking space because they may only be used by specific individuals and are liable to remain empty despite high demand for parking when not required by those individuals. While the primary function of the highway network is the facilitation of movement along its length, it is recognised that on-street parking is a valuable public resource. As such it is important that those locations suitable for parking are managed for the optimal benefit of all parties. Schemes consisting of limited waiting bays with optional residents' exemption permits are implemented in some locations. These areas however are</p>

	<p>alternative spaces, and this will increase the demand for the few spaces available in our road. This means it is highly unlikely that during the week we would be able to park anywhere near our own home and will mean that we will either be forced to stay at home, or to have to stay out all day until commuters start to clear out between 6-8pm. Our already challenging and difficult situation will be turned into one of total misery.</p> <p>The plans to introduce corner protection at the site stated on your plans will further mean that any guests to our home will have nowhere to park at any time of the week.</p> <p>It seems unfair that we will be adversely affected by this scheme that is supposed to be protecting the residents from the obtrusive and often dangerous parking of those using the station.</p> <p>Whilst we are both in agreement that something needs to be done about the situation as a whole, we strongly feel that provision of adequate parking must be included in these plans for residents of the area, perhaps by way of some "Residents Only" parking bays?</p> <p>We feel that it would be sensible for someone from your department to perhaps come and see our predicament for themselves, at a peak time, and we would strongly welcome any comments or suggestions that may help bring some relief to the problem.</p> <p>We thank you very much for your time and consideration in this matter, and look forward to receiving your response in due course.</p>	<p>subject to strong competition for on-street parking between residents and other user groups where the majority of residents do not have access to off-street parking. In these circumstances the scheme provides residents with an improved chance of finding a parking space near their home (although this is not guaranteed) by increasing the rate of turn over during the hours of restriction (usually 8am-10pm). All motorists however may utilise the bays during the restricted period for up to 2 hours ensuring both that spaces do not simply remain empty regardless of demand and also that visitors, tradespeople etc. may park on-street without the need to see a visitors exemption permit. Such a scheme would not be suitable in the vicinity of Pluckley Station however because there is very little demand from residents (the vast majority of whom have off-street parking) and the area would be too small to support such a scheme which relies on a sufficient number of bays / users to ensure a regular turnover.</p>
Am25/Pluc/03	<p>I am in full support of yellow lines around this area which stops visibility for traffic from The Grove. Yesterday there were three cars parked on this small hatched area opposite my driveway, ***** making it very difficult for me to reverse out of my drive. At present this area is like living inside a car park and it's a very unsafe place to live with cars parked anywhere and everywhere.</p> <p>I look forward to living in a place worthy of being named a conservation area.</p>	<p>As referred to in the representation, the proposed restrictions will discourage parking on the hatched area and verge behind.</p>