

Proposed Permit Parking Changes – Zones A/C

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Originating Authority	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Final Decision Taker	Kent County Council
Exemption	Non-exempt
Classification	For Recommendation

Recommendation:

- That, subject to consideration of any objections, the Board endorses the proposed alterations to restriction times within Zones A and C.

INTRODUCTION

A significant part of the recently adopted parking strategy dealt with operation of the town's permit parking zones. Various actions were proposed as part of the implementation programme. The first step in the process of reviewing and updating the permit parking arrangements was to promote a revised restriction within the existing town centre zones to improve parking for resident permit holders. A restriction has been advertised over the Christmas period for Zones A and C. This report explains the process and reasons behind the proposed changes. Details of any objections will be reported verbally at the meeting.

BACKGROUND - Development of a new Parking Strategy

During 2014/15 extensive work was undertaken on the development of a new parking strategy for the Borough. This involved extensive consultation with various groups including permit holders within the existing resident parking zones.

A significant amount of the feedback from the latter group emphasised the difficulty that may residents had in finding space to park in the road where they lived, particularly during the daytime when that space was shared with all other road users.

The adopted version of the parking strategy acknowledged this issue and proposed a variety of restrictions intended to address these concerns. Since the strategy was finally adopted in April 2016, further work has been done on the question of what restriction best suits the stated needs of residents, and the advertised traffic regulation order varies from those stated in the strategy principally by making them simpler and more readily understood.

THE PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS

Currently there are a variety of restrictions within the permit parking zones. These either provide permit holder only parking during specified hours or exempt permit holders from a stated time limit.

Although the current restrictions were appropriate at the time they were implemented, circumstances have changed in a number of ways. A higher proportion of residents own cars and many households have more than one vehicle. Increasing pressure on roadside parking space means that non-residents will spend more time circulating an area looking for a space. This has a negative environmental impact.

To address these issues it is proposed to eliminate all bar one section of time limited waiting within the permit parking zones. The exception is Castle Road across the Common where a different need exists. South Grove, a narrow cul-de-sac off the High Street, would also remain as resident only parking for purely practical reasons.

The new restrictions within Zones A and C would be Permit Holder Only parking on Monday to Saturday between 8am and noon and 3pm and 7 or 8pm depending on the location. On Sundays, the same areas would be Permit Holder Only parking between 11am and 3pm. This offers a significant benefit to permit holders over the existing arrangements, whilst still leaving unrestricted times for visitors.

THE PROCESS

At the time of writing this report, the proposals were being consulted upon. The consultation period ends on Friday 6th January and it is proposed to report the results of that consultation verbally at the meeting.

It is anticipated that some may object to the loss of parking for non-permit holders and also that some might prefer a total ban on non-resident parking, but the proposed restriction offers a reasonable compromise between the two which nevertheless favours permit holders more than the existing restriction.

The proposal also closely echoes the one already consulted upon as part of the parking strategy adoption process. In the circumstances, therefore, it is considered appropriate to pursue the restriction as detailed unless there are objections which fall outside those already addressed during consideration of the strategy. This matter has been brought before the Board now rather than the April one to avoid delaying implementation by at least three months.

CONCLUSION

Issues highlighted in the parking strategy consultation have been addressed through proposal of new restrictions for two of the town's permit parking zones.

Appendices to the Report

- None