

Banner Farm Estate, Tunbridge Wells – Proposed Permit Parking Restrictions

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

Recommendation:

- That the Board endorses the proposal to introduce permit parking restrictions in the Banner Farm estate, Tunbridge Wells

INTRODUCTION

The Banner Farm estate in Tunbridge Wells is a 1950's development located to the south east of the town centre consisting of approximately 276 dwellings in 6 residential streets. Farmcombe Road acts as the spine road and it's junctions with Claremont Road and Forest Road are the only points of vehicular access to the estate.

The estate is sandwiched between two existing permit parking zones and most streets experience some form of nuisance parking. An earlier consultation exercise showed enough interest within the estate to warrant the development and advertising of a formal proposal for permit parking.

This report provides greater background information, explains what is proposed and details the results of a public consultation exercise.

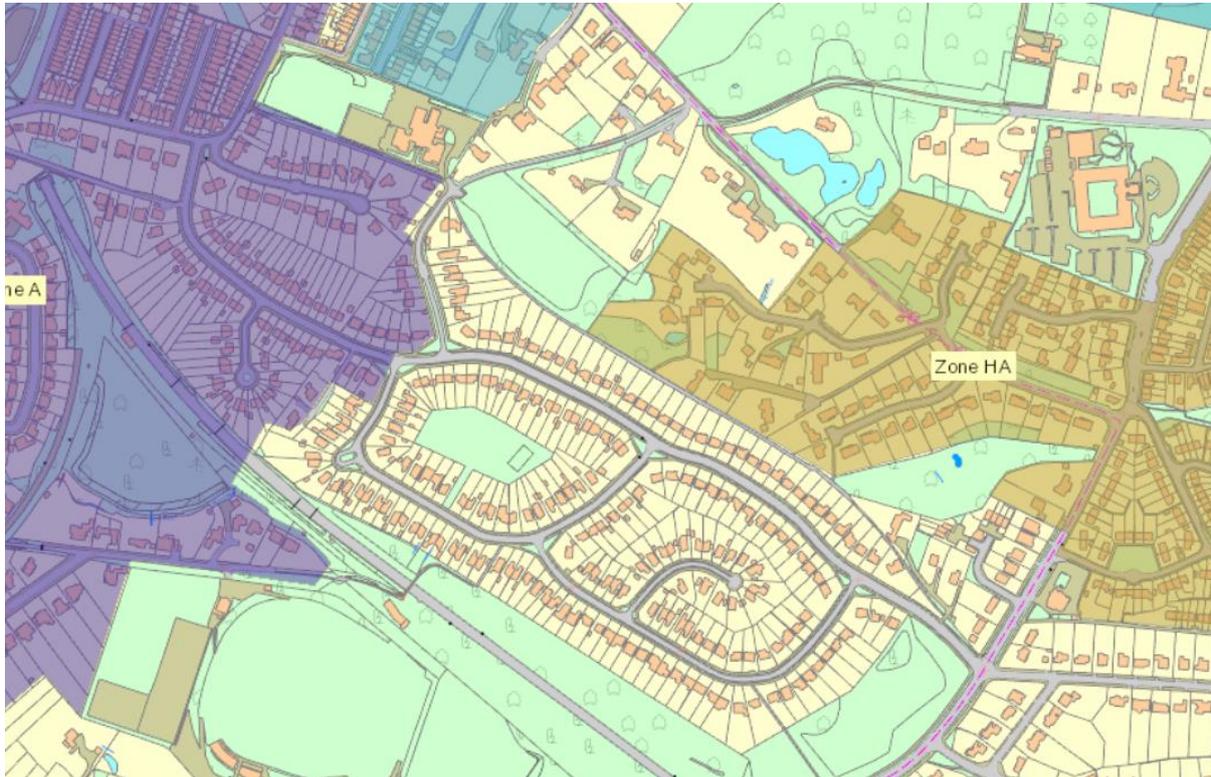
BACKGROUND

The Banner Farm estate consists of 6 residential streets – Farmcombe Road, Farmcombe Close, Banner Farm Road, Cavendish Drive, Delves Avenue and Sussex Close. With the exception of Farmcombe Road, all these streets have relatively narrow carriageways.

Approximately a third of the total length of Farmcombe Road and all of Farmcombe Close are currently subject to restricted parking, the north-western end of the estate being part of the Zone A permit parking area. Both these streets contain some permit

parking bays which, in total, can accommodate about 24 vehicles. At the Farmcombe Road end a section of the highway is subject to double yellow line waiting restrictions.

The estate, together with the current Zone A and HA Permit Parking Zone boundaries is shown below:-



In recent years there has been a growing trend for long-stay parking to take place on the unrestricted estate roads and this has led to problems with traffic movement through the estate and difficulties with access to driveways. These problems are compounded at times by the additional traffic and parking associated with the nearby Claremont Primary School.

An informal consultation exercise was undertaken during 2017 to determine whether there was sufficient interest in the idea of permit parking to justify expansion of the Zone A permit parking area. The area consulted covered quite a large part of the southern side of the town and included the unrestricted part of the Banner Farm estate.

The results of that survey were reported to the JTB on 16th October 2017 where it was noted that there was a demand for an expansion of Zone A to include additional streets to the east of the A267, Frant Road. A significant proportion of the positive responses at that time came from residents of roads on the Banner Farm estate.

The intention had been to progress the expansion of Zone A alongside other proposed changes. This has taken longer than anticipated but other reports on this agenda detail proposals for other parts of Zone A plus an expansion to the

Hawkenbury (Zone HA) permit parking zone. Each has now been subject to a formal consultation process.

THE ADVERTISED PROPOSAL

During January 2020 a formal consultation was undertaken which detailed proposals to introduce permit parking on all the currently unrestricted part of the Banner Farm estate. If implemented as advertised, that would result in on-street parking being restricted to permit holders between the hours of 10 to 11am and 2 to 3pm on Monday to Friday each week.

The existing permit parking restriction in Farmcombe Road (between its junctions with Claremont Road and Cavendish Drive) applies between 10 and 11am on Monday to Saturday, although a proposal to alter that to include a 2 to 3pm restriction has recently been advertised and is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

Neither period proposed for a restriction would adversely affect the primary school in normal circumstances because parking would be unrestricted at school drop-off and pick-up times.

Although not forming part of the consultation process, it is proposed to deal with the newly restricted area as a permit parking area with entry and terminal signs where the restrictions start and finish.

This method, used successfully elsewhere in the vicinity, requires no delineation of parking bays and relies solely on signing. Not only does it reduce costs but also allows parking to take place more flexibly – as would have been the case before long-stay parking became an issue.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

112 responses were received during the statutory three week formal consultation period (plus 3 just beyond the due date*) from 104 different addresses, 97 of the latter being within the Banner Farm estate. A road by road breakdown of these responses is shown in the table below:-

Road Name	No. of Responses	No. of Properties	Support Proposal	Object to Proposal	Comment or Question
Banner Farm Road	3	2	3	-	-
Cavendish Drive	28	27	27	-	1
Delves Avenue	26	22	22	3	1
Farmcombe Close	4	4	3	1	-
Farmcombe Road	44	40	37	5	2
Sussex Close	3	2	3	-	-
Other (i.e. outside estate)	7	7	1	5	1
Total	115	104	96	14	5

The above table includes the three late responses*

Objections were based around cost and the impact of fewer parked vehicles. In respect of cost some objected to the idea of having to pay for permits saying that, if needed, they should be given to residents free of charge.

Others were of the opinion that having fewer parked vehicles would increase traffic speeds. Comments were made about displaced parking and any knock-on impact elsewhere. The need for an afternoon restriction was also mentioned.

The Banner Farm Residents Association also provided a comment in favour, having been actively involved in promoting the idea in the lead up to the formal consultation.

PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION

When proposing new restrictions, one consideration is who will be affected and what the likely impact will be in terms of where any displaced vehicles will subsequently be parked.

In this instance, it is long-stay non-resident parkers who will be most affected by the proposed restriction. Local workers and outbound commuters will be displaced and either need to find an alternative parking place or other means of travel.

Since the Borough Council provides a large number of off-street parking spaces within the town centre and its periphery there are viable alternatives available. Most of the larger public car parks in the town have spare capacity at present. Furthermore, there remain streets within walking distance of local facilities where parking is currently unrestricted.

It is not unreasonable, therefore, to implement restrictions across the Banner Farm estate if they will provide environmental benefits with less traffic seeking a parking place, thereby improving the amenities of the area.

On that basis, and taking into account the comments that have been made, it is proposed to implement permit parking restrictions throughout the remainder of the Banner Farm estate.

On balance it is considered that these restrictions should take the form of a permit parking area rather than the more conventional arrangement where signs and road markings are provided to delineate bays for permitted vehicles.

A permit parking area requires no road markings and relies solely on entry signing and repeater signs throughout the restricted area. It is only suitable in certain circumstances but has been used to good effect in Teise Close and Camden Park within the Hawkenbury permit parking area.

Because no bays are marked, drivers can park wherever they wish, except of course on any yellow line restrictions. Where parking is likely to be less intense, this is an arrangement which works well. Delineated bays are more suitable where demand for parking is high even during restricted periods and parking needs to be more strictly controlled to prevent congestion or minimise any adverse impact on safety.

One issue which has arisen is that of the first section of Farmcombe Road from its junction with Claremont Road plus Farmcombe Close. These sections are already covered by a permit parking restriction being within the boundary of the current Zone A.

A separate report on this agenda details a consultation which, amongst other things, proposed the addition of an afternoon restriction within that part of Zone A currently only subject to a 10 to 11am permit holder only restriction. It was some residents of the two above mentioned roads who objected to a 2 to 3pm restriction.

Although the original intention had been to begin the new permit parking area at the Claremont Road junction, there may be some benefit in starting the new area to the west of the Cavendish Drive junction where the entry sign could be located to give a clear advance warning of the restrictions ahead.

CONCLUSION

A consultation in respect of proposed expansion of Permit Parking Zone A to include the remaining part of the Banner Farm estate has met with a largely positive response.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to endorse the making of a traffic regulation order, the effect of which is to introduce permit parking restrictions across the remainder of the Banner Farm residential estate.
