

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	PROPOSALS FOR PERMIT PARKING IN VERMONT CLOSE AND TALBOT CLOSE IN BASSETT		
DATE OF DECISION:	15 FEBRUARY 2010		
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF HIGHWAYS AND PARKING		
AUTHOR:	Name:	Graham Muir	Tel: 023 8083 2337
	E-mail:	graham.muir@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

N/A

SUMMARY

A Traffic Regulation Order was proposed on 31st July 2009 to introduce a permit parking scheme in Vermont Close and Talbot Close to address commuter parking. These proposals were revised to allow temporary parking permits to be issued to visitors to Red Lodge Community Pool (RLCP) for the planned period of construction work at Great Oaks School. An objection to these revised proposals was then received from a resident of The Firs, Talbot Close, together with a sustained objection from RLCP and an objection from the Chair of Southampton City Scout Council. Following a period of extended public consultation the matter is now being brought to Cabinet of the Council for a decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Cabinet consider and determine the objections to the design of the proposed parking scheme as advertised in Vermont Close/Talbot Close and the objection to the revised proposal to allow Special permits to be issued to visitors to RLCP for the duration of construction work at Great Oaks School.
- (ii) That the Cabinet defer any decision on any further consultation over the extent of limited waiting restrictions or the period of operation of the permit parking scheme (if approved) for a period of 3-6 months to establish whether a satisfactory long term arrangement can be made for parking provision for visitors to Red Lodge Community Pool off the highway.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To fulfil the Council's obligation to consult upon proposals and consider objections
2. To enable the permit parking scheme as designed and advertised to be introduced if the objections are not upheld. The officers' view is that this scheme design should be approved to restrict commuter parking in Vermont Close and Talbot Close to the benefit of residents. This should also be approved without further delay to avoid increased conflict over the limited on-street parking available in this vicinity.

3. To enable Special Permits to be issued in exceptional circumstances. The officer's view is that this is appropriate for RLCP during the period of construction work at Great Oaks School, as the remaining school car parking facilities are not available during school hours.
4. To allow more detailed consideration of a long term parking provision for RLCP visitors off the highway, before deciding whether further proposals to increase the level of short stay (e.g. 2 Hour parking) parking should be made.

CONSULTATION

5. Following requests from residents for permit parking restrictions the proposed design of the scheme arose from a number of surveys and correspondence with residents from March to June 2009.
6. The permit parking scheme was advertised in the Daily Echo and on street notices on 31st July 2009 with a 21 day public consultation period
7. The period for consultation was further extended until 12th December 2009 in correspondence to residents and objectors date 9th November 2009

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. The two sections of *permit parking only* with approved signing from the Department for Transport (DfT) cannot be amended to include a period of limited waiting. This is because the Traffic Signs Manual specifically states that this signing (without road markings) may only be used where parking is *solely for permit holders*.
9. Amending the entire scheme to 2 hour limited waiting except permit holders, was considered but rejected. This was previously put forward to residents (see Map at Appendix 2) and proved unacceptable on the basis of the amount of No Waiting at Any Time parking restrictions that would be required (as any parking places of this type would require road markings).
10. Extending the public consultation further to consider any alternative scheme design was considered and rejected at this stage. Given the level of commuter parking, it would appear to be in the interest of residents and RLCP for the scheme to be implemented now as currently proposed and to defer any further possible amendments until more detailed consideration of off-highway parking provision had been considered.

DETAIL

11. Vermont Close has been subject to an increasing level of commuter parking. It is causing considerable concern to residents as it can obstruct visibility and turning space at the junction with Talbot Close and Winchester Road, together with restricting parking for visitors to residents. In response the Traffic Management team conducted a number of surveys of residents over the design of a prospective permit parking scheme from March to June 2009.
12. The scheme that appeared to best reflect the views of residents was then formally proposed in July 2009 (see Map at Appendix 3). This scheme design included two sections of signing only permit holder parking in order to maximise the available area for resident parking. The signing for the scheme required DfT approval (received in October 2009).

13. In response to the Public Notice an objection was received from RLCP (see Appendix 1) over concerns in respect of the impact of the scheme on their visitors. Any decision on the objection was delayed until 5th October to allow the Traffic Management team and RLCP to better understand and quantify the problem. Following a meeting on site to consider how their concerns could be overcome RLCP then submitted a revised objection on 3rd October (see Appendix1).
14. The RLCP primary concerns over parking were
 - The loss of day time parking during the period of construction work at the Great Oaks School when the parking currently used by their visitors on the school site would be closed
 - Reassurance over the long term parking provision and arrangements for visitors following the construction work at Great Oaks School
 - That the provision of limited waiting (40m around 8 cars, subject to availability) within the scheme design was inadequate.
 - That the provision of visitor permits on a day by day basis (as a temporary measure during the construction period) would not meet their requirements for ease of use by customers.
15. In the absence of a resolution to matters off the highway and with limited scope for resolution on the highway, the Traffic Management team wrote to RLCP and the residents with revised proposals that would allow the issue of Special Permits to visitors to Red Lodge Community Pool for use within 75m of the pool (see Appendix 4) for the duration of the construction work.
16. An objection was received from Mr L Vincent (see Appendix 1). The resident objected on the grounds that non-resident vehicle owners would be extremely unlikely to admit liability to any damage caused to resident's vehicles or their property. The resident requested:
 - reassurance that the Council would accept all liability for any damage caused or for any issues arising from obstruction to emergency services
 - that any RLCP visitor vehicles parking outside of 75m parking area would be fined and removed immediately.
17. A continued objection was received from RLCP on the basis that the proposed 2 Hour parking bay was totally inadequate. In their view the proposed temporary allocation of Special Permits would be difficult to administer and would not address the situation in the post construction period (since at the time of writing the RLCP had not received any further advice or confirmation of a formal agreement for long term parking on the school site, as discussed with the School and the Project Manager. The RLCP requested:
 - The scheme design is amended to 2 Hour Limited Waiting or Permit parking where parking is allowed
 - The operational period for the scheme is amended to 8am to 4pm (instead of 8am – 6pm).
18. A further objection was received from Dr Veronica Radford, Chair of Southampton City Scout Council stating that the provision for short term parking for the Scout Group and RLCP was inadequate and requested:

- The Council be mindful that having been established for more than 30 years numerous generations of local children and adults have benefitted from and continue to take part in the swimming pool and Scout Group and to take seriously their responsibility towards these people by helping to protect and support these resources
- That the 2 Hour parking restriction be extended to the whole of Vermont Close.

19. **Officers Comments – Non resident parking issues and liability**

As the No Waiting at Any Time restrictions and 75m ruling would limit the area of non-resident parking there is no indication that there should be any particular risk of damage to resident vehicles or property. The Council would not however be able to accept liability for any incidents or damage arising in Vermont Close caused by non Council vehicles. Whilst our enforcement staff have been very effective in Bassett in securing compliance with parking restrictions, we are also unable to guarantee response times. Overall whilst appreciating the residents concern the RLCP provides an important service to the community and during school hours there is no alternative we have been able to identify to provide parking for their visitors other than in Vermont Close.

20. **Officers Comments – Scheme Design**

The plan at Appendix 2 shows an entire scheme design with 2 Hour Limited Waiting except Permit Parking which was not progressed. From a comparison with the proposed scheme at Appendix 3 the reduction in the amount of on-street parking is significant. This arises from the requirement for bays within standard resident parking schemes to have marked parking bays, where stricter parking standards within the Highway Code need to be applied. This design was not acceptable to residents as it could not meet their needs for on-street parking and could not therefore possibly accommodate a further substantive level of on-street parking for non-resident visitors.

21. The signing only permit parking scheme does not have such strict constraints on the areas of permitted parking, but require specific approval by the DfT which stipulates the parking places should be solely for use by permit holders.

22. Whilst there may be scope for amending a section of permit parking opposite the garages in Vermont Close (the northernmost parking area highlighted in Appendix 4) to allow 2 Hour or Visitor parking it is not recommended that is considered further at this stage since:

- The main issue appears to be parking provision off the highway and this needs to be further investigated to establish whether a long term arrangement can be made to provide this facility.
- Any amendment to the scheme restrictions would require further consultation and potentially approval by the DfT. This associated delay would not appear to be in the interest of any parties.
- At present the scheme is proposed to operate 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Though reduced hours of operation may benefit the communities concerned, as above this should await further consideration of the provision of parking off the highway.

23. Office Comments Overall

The scheme was designed to deter commuter parking in line with the Councils parking policy on promoting sustainable travel. It is also Council practice to support community services. The revised proposals to allow temporary Special permits for RLCP during the construction period would appear appropriate in these challenging circumstances.

24. As the provision of temporary Special Permits does involve an administrative overhead for the RLCP and an additional cost to the Council it is not recommended as a long term solution. Any alternative amendment to the overall scheme design should however await further consideration as to scope for providing for a long term parking arrangements off the highway. The Cabinet will however wish to make their considerations and decision on what is substantively a community issue.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

25. N/A

Revenue

26. The cost of the TRO, consultation, road signing and permit issue is estimated to cost £5,000, which can be met from the Environment and Transport portfolio.
27. An additional cost of £500 has been budgeted within the Environment and Transport portfolio for provision of Special Permits.

Property

28. N/A

Other (Children's Services and Learning)

29. Great Oaks School have offered to allow the Red Lodge Community Pool the facility for their customers to park in the school car park outside school hours (excepting if the school requires the car park for its own use eg an evening performance or parents' evening). The school has offered this facility on the condition that the pool grants them a discount on the swimming sessions the school purchases. The pool management have yet to respond to the school's offer

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

30. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 permits the introduction of the parking restrictions as set out in this report in accordance with a statutory consultation procedure set down in the Act and associated secondary legislation.

Other Legal Implications:

31. In preparing and determining the proposals set out in this report the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of Equalities legislation, the Human Rights Act 1988 and s.17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the duty to have regard to the need to remove or reduce crime and disorder in the area). It is considered that the proposals set out in this report are proportionate having regard to the wider needs of the area.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

32. The proposals in this report are consistent with the Local Transport Plan 2006-11 policy on promoting sustainable travel and the Strategic Parking Policy

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members’ Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices

1.	Letters/Emails from objectors with responses from Traffic Management
2.	Map showing a possible standard parking scheme in Vermont Close / Talbot Close with 2 Hour Limited Waiting except Permit Holders which was rejected on the grounds of the loss of on-street parking
3.	Map showing proposed parking scheme with two sections of signed only permit only parking and a standard 2 Hour Limited Waiting except Permit Holder parking bay.
4.	Map showing area where 75m limit would apply for holders of Special Permits

Documents In Members’ Rooms

1.	N/A
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Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	N/A
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Background documents available for inspection at:

FORWARD PLAN No:

KEY DECISION?

NO

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Bassett
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