



# Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

## **PARKING STRATEGY**

2016 – 2026

Including Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rural Areas



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## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Very few subjects attracts as much passion and attention as car parking – on the part of residents, businesses and the media. In a rural borough like Tunbridge Wells, many of us rely on our cars to live our lives and the vibrant towns and cities within the Borough rely on accessible parking to allow people to visit, shop, eat, drink, dwell and enjoy themselves.

From the outset it is important to note that we are not going to be able to please everyone. We have to manage the fact that our roads and car parks are used by residents, businesses and visitors and the need to balance people's desire to park conveniently with the need to keep traffic moving. This Parking Strategy will look at car parking alongside other initiatives to tackle congestion.

It takes account of a range of views received on car parking provision in the town – both off-street and on-street – and what we are proposing to do in response to those views outlined in an Implementation Programme at Appendix B.

### **Residents' Permit Zones**

The overwhelming majority of responses related to residents parking. Car ownership in the Borough is high compared with the rest of the country; in some areas, there are 50 per cent more permit holders than spaces. This is both frustrating for residents and adds to congestion as residents and visitors circulate trying to find a space. We will look to address this by prioritising on-street parking for residents and encouraging shoppers into the town's off-street car parks. This is also supported by the responses to the recent Borough-wide survey of over 1,000 people. We will also look at expanding existing zones and introducing additional zones to meet demand.

### **Congestion**

Congestion also featured heavily in the consultation responses. The Council has a responsibility to manage parking restrictions which have been put in place to keep traffic moving and to keep the roads safe. No-one likes getting a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) but we cannot issue a PCN unless someone has contravened a restriction. All too often traffic backs up because of prohibited or inconsiderate parking on often narrow roads. We will continue to monitor and enforce existing restrictions and consider possible additional ones, such as footway parking (which elicited the fourth highest number of responses), as necessary in both Royal Tunbridge Wells and the towns and villages within the wider Borough where appropriate.

This is one of <sup>1</sup>three strategies that support improved traffic flow by infrastructure changes and the promotion of more sustainable transport methods.

### **Car Parks**

The strategy also sets out a range of proposals to improve, enhance and expand car parking provision (including a move away from pay and display towards systems that allow people to pay for the length of time they actually stay which has been widely welcomed).

### **Conclusion**

Tunbridge Wells is a thriving and growing town. Whilst the root causes of congestion are addressed in the Transport Strategy, this Parking Strategy looks at the role that parking can play in addressing congestion and supporting the vitality of the town. We will need to remain flexible to meet future

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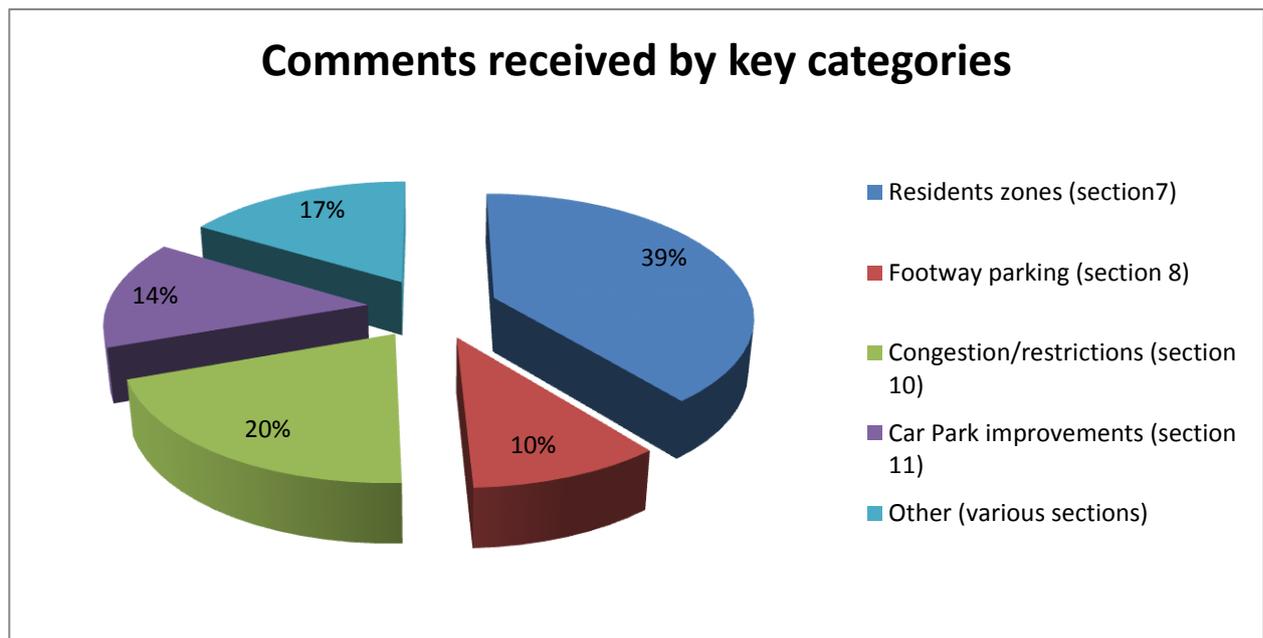
<sup>1</sup> Source: Borough Transport Strategy and draft Cycling Strategy

changes and challenges and individual components of the Strategy will be subject to further consultation as appropriate.

### 3 INTRODUCTION

A draft Parking Strategy was produced and submitted for public consultation in February 2015 which was developed with the knowledge of parking related issues that needed a more holistic and longer term approach to resolve. Feedback from the public consultation has been taken into account and helped shape this final Parking Strategy 2016-2026.

All comments received have been assembled over four key categories, with the balance making up a variety of issues. A majority of all comments came from people living within the Residents Permit Zones (RPZs) followed closely by comments on congestion:



The Parking Strategy aims to identify parking related issues in the borough, looking at where we are now and outlining the areas of change required to help improve safety, traffic flow and improved parking provision for residents, businesses and visitors.

Four key objectives have been developed to achieve the identified changes, delivered over 22 Actions shown in blue boxes, all amalgamated in an Implementation Programme at appendix B.

## 4 OBJECTIVES OF THE PARKING STRATEGY

Many roads within the Borough have parking related problems. This Parking Strategy is designed to help shape, manage and deliver sustainable solutions. We have consulted with the public and received a wide ranging number of comments and suggestions that the following four key objectives encompass:

### FOUR KEY OBJECTIVES

<b>OB1</b>	To ensure that the quantity and type of on-street parking provision and kerbside space is managed to help meet current and future demands of residents, businesses and visitors.
<b>OB2</b>	To keep under review the effectiveness of restrictions within the Borough, identifying those roads without restrictions where parking causes concern and work with KCC where safety and congestion could be an issue.
<b>OB3</b>	To ensure that car parks are maintained to a high standard, that there is adequate space to meet public demand, aid traffic circulation, and to provide sufficient revenue for future investment to support communities businesses and visitors.
<b>OB4</b>	To invest in navigational, payment and other digital technology now and in the future to improve efficiency and customer service, issuing regular progress reports and establishing policy as necessary.

### 4.1 Objectives Explained

This section provides clarification on key objectives, as requested in public feedback from the Draft Parking Strategy.

**OB1** – The demand for on-street parking is very high in some town centre areas, particularly in the Residential Parking Zones (RPZs). There is little opportunity to create more spaces within these zones but there are opportunities to amend how this space is managed to give an improved parking experience for the residents. This objective will propose:

- Amendments to current RPZs
- Extended RPZs
- New RPZs
- A review of on-street and car park space to support stakeholders needs

**OB2** – This objective addresses three key areas:

- Areas close to the town centre with no restriction on parking can result in excessive circulation of traffic, with increased risk of conflict and poor traffic flow. Local residents are often adversely affected.
- Priority roads identified as causing major congestion, and reviewing the effectiveness of current restrictions and their enforcement.
- Footway parking – review areas of concern and propose solutions.

**OB3** – This will outline how parking charges are reviewed to reflect a balance between the demand for both on and off-street car parking space and the income needed to sustain quality and sufficient parking provision now and in the future.

**OB4** - This objective addresses the following areas:

- How we can help improve traffic flow by improving directional signage leading into and around the town.
- Continual review of new digital technology designed to support the parking industry that could benefit other objectives of this Parking Strategy.
- Continual improvement of the website that will also enable more self-serve and improved customer interface.
- Introduction of parking related policies to help residents and businesses understand how we make decisions and how they can challenge parking restrictions.
- How we will monitor the progress of the Parking Strategy and publish regular reports.

## 4.2 How Will We Monitor Our Progress?

The actions identified in our Implementation Programme (Appendix B) have evolved mainly from public feedback. This programme outlines actions to address the four key objectives (OB1-OB4) with a timetable for completion and source of funding. Annual Progress Reports on how we are doing will be published on our website along with Stage Plan reports that will also highlight any necessary changes.

We recognise that we will have to be flexible with our Implementation Programme to deal with inevitable changing circumstances throughout the term of this Parking Strategy. For example, public objection to or lack of support for proposed restrictions can impact on the programme, as can alterations to legislation, funding, political direction, the economy, policy and the introduction of new developments within the borough.

There are in the order of 2,500 new homes planned to be built within Royal Tunbridge Wells, 170 in Southborough, 515 in Paddock Wood, 259 in Cranbrook, 128 in Hawkhurst and 57 in rural areas within the lifecycle of this Parking Strategy. Therefore it is feasible to assume that more parking spaces will be needed, some of which will undoubtedly be met by the developers, but with car and van ownership in Tunbridge Wells already being higher than the rest of the South East, and with each household reported as having more than one vehicle, there is a possibility that there will be a shortfall of off-street parking provision made for new home owners.<sup>2</sup>

Conversely, as people find alternative and more sustainable methods of transport, that the Transport Strategy and Draft Cycle Strategy will help address, this may change the net position.

Parking Services will continue to work with Planning and other Council services on emerging developments so parking needs can be considered and any amendments required to facilitate change can then be reflected in our Implementation Programme and would be outlined in our Progress Reports.

## 4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

It is important to outline the joint roles and responsibilities for on-street parking restriction and enforcement.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Borough Transport Strategy adopted 2015

KCC is the local highway authority for Kent and is responsible for the management and maintenance of all adopted roads in the county, except motorways and trunk roads. They are required to consider issues relating to highway safety and congestion. This includes deciding where and what parking restrictions are necessary.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), by agreement with the highway authority, is responsible for permit parking schemes and disabled, loading and taxi bays. Although such needs are identified by TWBC at the local level any change to any part of the highway still has to be considered and approved by KCC as the highway authority before new traffic orders can be made and implemented. TWBC will continue to work closely with KCC to help achieve change needed for the benefit of our communities as outlined in this document.

TWBC also has delegated responsibility from KCC for civil parking enforcement under the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA 2004). This enables TWBC to enforce parking restrictions. Below is a summary of key restrictions and their purpose:

- Yellow lines (to support safety and minimise congestion)
- Disabled bays (to support valid blue badge holders)
- Taxi bays (to support a public service)
- Loading bays (to support local trade)
- Bus stops (to support a public service)
- Bus lanes (to support a public service)
- Residents' permit bays (to support permit holders and relieve congestion)
- Time limited free parking bays (to support local traders/residents)
- Loading restrictions (to support local traders and relieve congestion)
- Footway parking (to support the safety of pedestrians and infrastructure)
- Police bays (to support a public service)
- School zig-zags (to support the safety of children)
- Pedestrian crossings (to support pedestrian safety)

## 5 INTRODUCTION TO PARKING IN URBAN TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Royal Tunbridge Wells is located in West Kent approximately 40 miles south of London, on the border with East Sussex.

The urban area (including Rusthall and Hawkenbury) is home to approximately 54,000 inhabitants.

The town has been attracting visitors for 400 years with its many distinguishing features which include The Pantiles and the extensive Commons and parks. These are complimented by a variety of shops and eateries.<sup>3</sup>The town centre has seven loosely defined areas, each with its own characteristics, parking and traffic management issues. These are briefly summarised in the following sections.

### 5.1 Business Quarter

Centrally located and sitting to west of the Mount Pleasant quarter, the business quarter includes a range of small and medium sized key local employers in the finance, legal and insurance sectors. It is also home to the Civic Centre, comprising the Town Hall, Museum, Police Station and Assembly Hall Theatre. Parking in this area is mainly controlled by yellow lines with the nearest parking facilities being the Crescent Road multi-storey car park with 1,085 spaces and Torrington multi-storey offering 243 public spaces. These car parks offer long and short stay parking to local workers, commuters and shoppers.

### 5.2 Mount Ephraim

Located to the north-west of the town centre, this area is a mix of uses, and provides businesses and key employment on the edge of the main town centre and includes a number of smaller specialist shops. There are no car parks in the immediate vicinity but it has some limited free parking on-street that is shared with residents in the Residents' Permit Zone C. Towards the edge, there are several unrestricted streets in residential areas. With the town centre and main line rail station to London being just a 10-15 minute walk away, many commuters and local workers tend to park in these roads

### 5.3 Camden Road



<sup>3</sup> See more detail in the Urban Design Framework

Camden Road is located to the north east of the town centre and consists of many smaller, often independent, traders. It adjoins and provides pedestrian access to the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre. Parking restrictions apply to a substantial part of the road, but two surface level car parks towards the northern end providing over 100 spaces. The nearby Royal Victoria Place shopping centre multi-storey car park offering 1,230 spaces.

There are many residential properties surrounding this area where kerbside parking is in great demand and mainly managed by two Residents Permit Zones B and G.

## 5.4 Pedestrian Precinct and Royal Victoria Place



This area forms the nucleus of the town centre's northern retail area. It is largely pedestrianised and provides the town with the bulk of its national retail outlets. Many of the town's banks and building societies are also based in this area.

Grosvenor Road to the north and Calverley Road to the east form an extension of this sector and both carry the bulk of traffic entering the area. These roads are subject to extensive daytime parking restrictions to facilitate traffic flow.

The north-south route through this area, comprising parts of Mount Pleasant Road and Grosvenor Road is subject to a daytime ban on all but bus traffic and has been designed on shared space principles.

Public car parking is provided within the Royal Victoria Place (1,230 spaces) with Meadow Road providing a further 450 spaces. There are relatively few residential properties in this quarter.

## 5.5 Mount Pleasant



Mount Pleasant Road is centrally located within Royal Tunbridge Wells. It forms the spine of the town and contains many of the retail premises, joining to the High Street in the south and the pedestrianised areas to the north. It provides a combination of specialist and 'high street' style shops with a varied selection of eateries. Tunbridge Wells Central Railway Station is in this area along with the main taxi ranks and bus stops. This is a key transport node for the town. Mount Pleasant Road, south of its junction with the A264, provides a number of free on-street, time limited waiting bays. The wide carriageway means that on-street parking does not compromise traffic flow.

Residents' Permit Zone C borders the area and the main multi-storey car park is to the rear of the Great Hall offering some 205 public spaces, with the Crescent road car park offering 1,085 spaces and two smaller 'weekend/evening only' public car parks providing a further 100 spaces.

## 5.6 The High Street



The High Street and village area is located towards the southern end of the town centre. This quarter provides small independent boutiques, higher end retail outlets and restaurants, with many properties still retaining their original Victorian frontages. The High Street has free on-street parking for one hour which is in high demand and requires a greater level of enforcement to ensure compliance.

There is much circulating and through traffic in this area and it becomes congested at peak periods. RPZ A adjoins this area but allegedly which suffers overspill of visitors' vehicles, even though there are adequate car park facilities nearby providing 262 public spaces in the Torrington (Morrisons) multi-storey car park and the smaller Little Mount Sion surface car park.

## 5.7 The Pantiles



The Pantiles is located to the south of Royal Tunbridge Wells and is one of the town's main visitor attractions. It is predominantly a retail area providing a range of specialist shops, bars and restaurants on a colonnaded walkway within a traffic free space.

The area has parking served by <sup>4</sup>Union House car park (114 spaces) and <sup>5</sup>Linden Park Road (54 spaces to the south-east of the zone, Little Mount Sion in the centre (18 spaces) with Torrington and Great Hall car parks on the northern borders offering a further 440 public spaces. The privately owned Fairground car park provides further spaces in this area.

Resident's Permit Zone A abuts the Pantiles where many streets experience a high level of demand for parking space both from residents and visitors.

## 5.8 Summary

Royal Tunbridge Wells has a busy town centre with a range of retail outlets, tourist attractions, office based employment and a mainline railway station.

Unlike many major town centres, Royal Tunbridge Wells has maintained some free short stay on-street parking to support local trade.

Although well served by over 3,500 town centre off-street parking spaces, many motorists still take advantage of the excessive unrestricted space within residential zones. This can give rise to excessive circulation of traffic with the consequent negative environmental impact and frequently causes conflict with residents.

Extra off-street parking space will be vital for the anticipated growth of the town over the next 10 years and new car park sites are currently being explored. See section 11.

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<sup>4</sup> Due for development in 2016/17 when parking spaces will be reduced during the development

<sup>5</sup> Potentially up for development 2017

## 6 ON-STREET PARKING INTRODUCTION

Within the borough of Tunbridge Wells there are many roads with a variety of parking restrictions, including those within the seven Residents' Permit Zones along with a substantial amount of free time limited parking spaces.

To help reduce congestion, improve safety and maintain a turnover of on-street parking space civil parking enforcement is a necessary front line service that also helps support the economy. Within Royal Tunbridge Wells area there are 170 streets and 13 car parks, enforced daily by the on-foot CEOs.

14 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) patrol and enforce all restricted areas under the Traffic Management Act 2004 legislation. They are deployed over seven days a week from 7am to 7pm and sometimes operate overnight. 80% of parking enforcement is provided by on-foot CEOs covering most of the urban area. Mobile patrols cover the balance and the remainder of the borough.

Within this area around 30 streets remain either wholly or partly unrestricted. Many of these experience high levels of parking which can impede traffic flow, with many residents finding it difficult to park close to their homes or have unimpeded access to their driveways.

Whilst ongoing reviews of on-street controls are undertaken by TWBC Parking Services and Kent County Council, a variety of factors will affect parking behaviour, meaning that there will always be a need to adapt to changing circumstances.

The consultation on the draft parking strategy raised various concerns surrounding parking or lack of restrictions, some of those being:

- Insufficient on-street restrictions in permit areas
- Excessive parking on the footway
- Parking on double yellow lines
- Excessive parking on unrestricted residential streets

This Parking Strategy identifies key actions as a positive, balanced and realistic response to that feedback.

### 6.1 Introduction to parking restrictions

This section informs the reader about the different types of parking restrictions used in the borough which may help clarify those areas where legislation dictates methods of enforcement.

#### **Double Yellow Lines**

A 24 hour restriction, 365 days a year. These are implemented for traffic management purposes. For example where parking could cause either a danger to other road users or congestion. There are exemptions for those observed loading and unloading large, heavy goods and for vehicles displaying a valid Blue Badge. People are also allowed a few moments to drop off or pick up someone, but not wait.

Because double yellow lines apply at all times no signage is necessary.

#### **Single Yellow Lines**

Implemented for the same reasons as double yellow lines except they are timed to suit parking problems on specific days or times of day. For this reason signs must be displayed giving details of the restriction.

The same exemptions also apply.

## **Loading Restrictions**

Loading restrictions prohibit stopping or parking during specified times shown by signage. The kerb will also show yellow markings. There are no exemptions.

## **Permit Bays**

These are provided within zoned areas and consist of white line bay markings with signs giving details of the restriction in force. Some bays are restricted to residents only whereas some are shared use allowing those without permits to park either for a specified period or during unrestricted hours.

## **Disabled Bays**

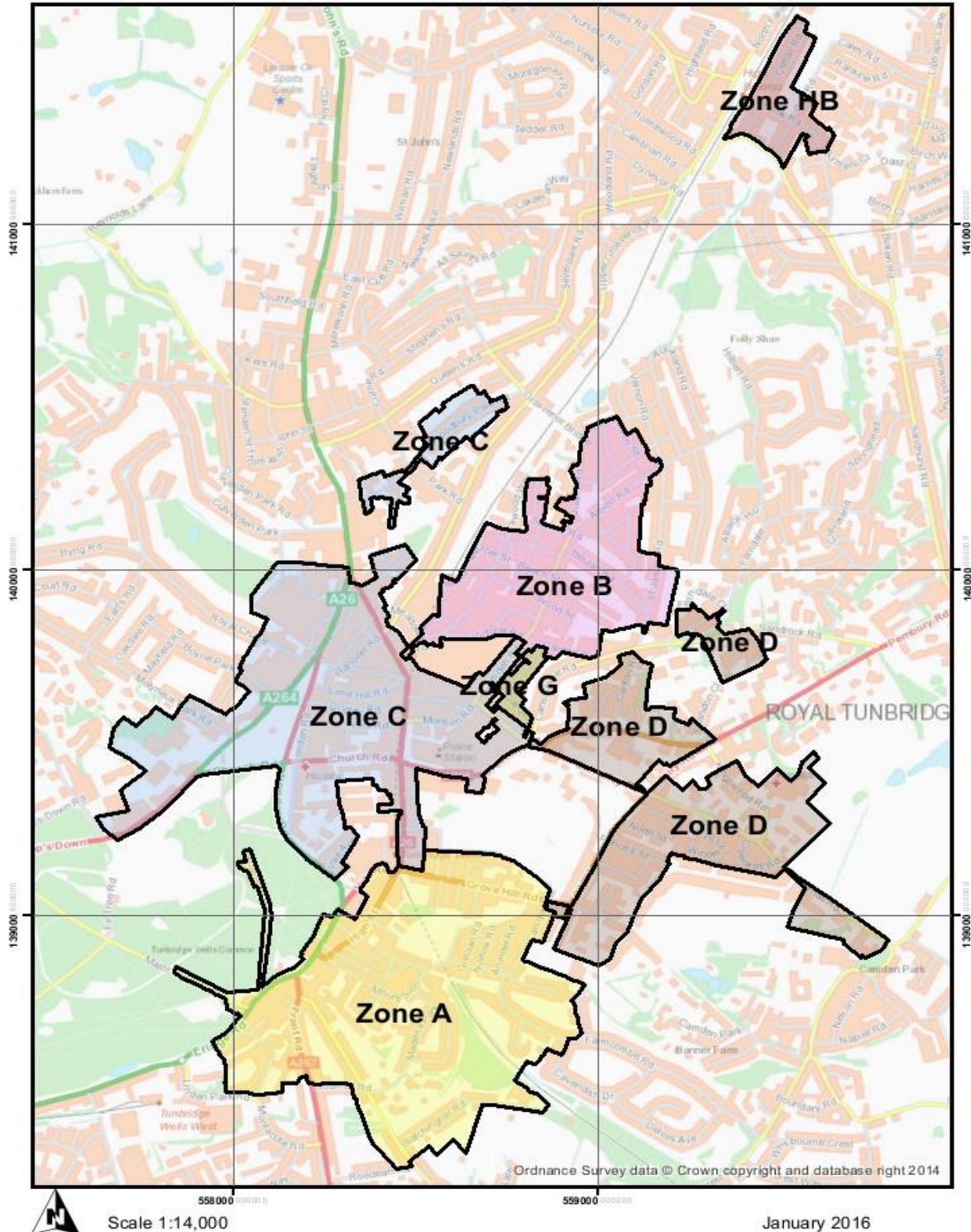
Areas painted out and signed for the use of valid Blue Badge Holders only. There are no exemptions.

## **Taxi Ranks/Bays**

Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are licensed by the Borough Council. Only the former are able to ply for hire on the streets and, to enable this, we provide a number of bays for their exclusive use, indicated by road markings and signage. There are no exemptions.

## 7 RESIDENTS' PERMIT ZONES

Residents' Permit Zones (RPZs) were first introduced in Tunbridge Wells during the late 1970s to address a specific concern in Calverley Street. Although there were fewer vehicles on the road at that time, there was already a high demand for on-street parking space in the town centre. We now have five town centre zones and one in High Brooms, with a sixth zone in Paddock Wood.



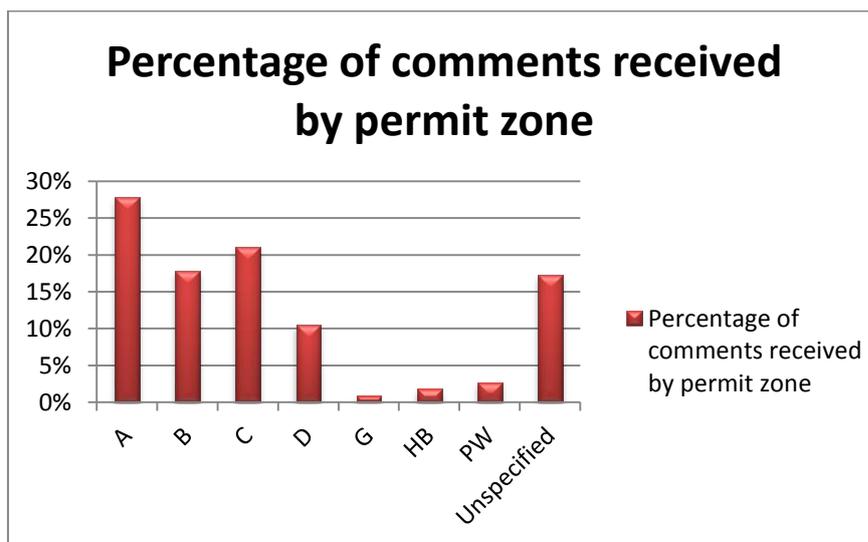
The Transport Strategy adopted by Tunbridge Wells in August 2015 highlights that car and van ownership in the borough is high in comparison to the rest of England. Between 2001 and 2011 the total number of cars and vans owned by households increased from 56,229 to 64,474, a 14.7% increase. It further states that these figures contrast with a 10.5% increase in household growth during the same period, indicating that car ownership has increased faster than household growth.

Not only has this added to the congestion on our roads, it has also brought higher demands for parking space, particularly in residential areas. This is a trend that is predicted will continue as a new prosperous borough emerges with the Core Strategy proposing to build nearly 4,000 more dwellings between 2016 and 2026; more than 70% of them being in Royal Tunbridge Wells where additional permit zones may be needed.

Properties will also continue to be converted into multiple residences which will add to the issues currently being experienced in these residential areas.

There are initiatives within the Transport Strategy to encourage more sustainable measures of transport in the future and with the expansion of the car club this may also help contain the effects of car ownership in urban areas, reducing the demand for kerbside space. See section 15.1 Car Club.

The percentage of comments received from residents living within a Residents Permit Zone is shown in the following chart, with 26 more comments from residents who live close to a zone and would like inclusion.



This shows that residents, and in particular permit holders in RPZ A, B, C, and D are calling for change to improve their quality of life. Those without access to any off-street parking find it increasingly difficult to park near their homes, often finding themselves having to continuously circle the area to find somewhere to park, contributing to poor traffic flow.

Whilst the consultation didn't support any change for RPZ HB, substantial customer feedback has been received subsequently and therefore it will be featured as an action within this Parking Strategy. RPZ G will also be featured as work has already started to help improve parking this zone.

The many different restrictions types currently in each zone cause confusion for members of the public and needless traffic circulation. This Parking Strategy proposes consistency of restrictions within each zone and improved control of shared space to help permit holders and other users.

Four of the common concerns of consultees living in or near RPZs' are prioritised below:

1. The amount of time permit holders have to share space with others who park for free.
2. The restrictions end too early therefore difficult to find space upon return from work.
3. For those zones only restricted Monday to Saturday problems parking on Sundays.
4. Unrestricted streets contained within the RPZs geographic borders or on the outskirts suffer from all day parking.

RPZ G, containing just two streets, is already a 24/7 restricted permit holder zone. Residents from this zone expressed different needs are addressed separately in the following sections.

The seventh zone is in Paddock Wood (PW), is another zone where no major concerns were received from the consultation. However, since the consultation there have been comments from some residents living in areas without restriction suggesting that parking is causing problems for them who may prefer inclusion to a zone. A review is included within this Parking Strategy.

The profile of parking in urban zones A to G, High Brooms and Paddock wood is detailed in Table 1 that will help illustrate some reasons for the many concerns raised by resident permit holders:

Table 1 – RPZ Profile

	A	B	C	D	G	HB	PW	TOT
No of Households eligible to purchase a permit	1,600	1,540	1,390	900	81	240	560	6,311
Number of permit holders	1,101	712	756	488	44	27	113	3,241
No. of streets with restricted spaces	27	24	17	17	2	3	10	100
Total number of streets within the RPZ's geographic boundaries	51	36	34	27	2	3	11	164
No. of shared permit parking spaces	687	551	498	414	*29	51	221	2,451
Ratio of permit holders to permit holder spaces	160%	129%	152%	118%	151%	53%	51%	132%
No. of free public parking spaces within the RPZ	73	15	71	19	9	0	14	201
Number of residents with two permits	189	127	105	84	N/A	4	18	527
No of visitors permits bought per annum (sold in books of 10)	12,990	8,440	7,500	5,390	N/A	190	340	34,850

\*Excepting G zone

The table shows about half of the households eligible for a permit do not have one. Not everyone living within an RPZ will need to purchase a permit for a variety of reasons, for example:

- They do not have a vehicle

- They already have adequate off-street parking
- They live in a street without restrictions
- They are short term rental tenants
- They only need to park outside the times of restriction
- They park in unrestricted streets outside the boundaries of the zone
- They don't believe permits are good value as there is insufficient controlled space when they most need it

Public feedback has also identified a possible need to extend the boundaries of RPZs A, B, C and HB to include adjacent roads or to create new residents permit zones or other appropriate restrictions to control parking.

It is recognised that as many residents will be using their cars to get to work during a weekday demand on space will be less, whilst it increases substantially early evening and on weekends. Early morning demand seems to be high also particularly when parents return from the school run to find all spaces occupied by non permit holders.

In summary, not only do the residents living within the RPZs have to continually circulate the area to find a space close to where they live, circulation from others also trying to find a free parking space contributes to poor traffic flow and congestion problems.

The Action Plans that follow address the imbalance of shared space by clearly stating when a zone will be closed for non-permit holders. This will help reduce needless traffic circulation looking for an on street space when they do not exist for non permit holders. It will give resident permit holders a better chance of quickly finding a parking place close to their homes at times when most needed.

## 7.1 Residents' Permit Zone A

This Zone is situated to the south of the town encompassing both the High Street and the pedestrianised area known as The Pantiles; both being well visited during day and evening. Parking in the area is supported by three car parks within its boundaries providing 152 spaces:

- Little Mount Sion - 18 spaces
- Union House - 114 spaces
- Warwick Road - 20 spaces (reserved for residents only)

In addition to these, Torrington car park abuts the north of the Zone providing a further 243 public parking spaces and Linden Park Road abuts the south providing a further 54 spaces. In total A Zone is supported by 449 car park spaces with a minimum stay of one hour offering also disabled parking spaces.

The High Street and lots of nearby roads also offer many free parking spaces most of which are limited to a maximum of one hour stay between 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday. However, some allow up to two, three and four hour stays which would be best converted to one hour leaving more visitors benefiting from on-street parking space to better support local trade, encouraging car park use for longer periods. Action one addresses this:

## **ACTION 1 - RPZ A – Alignment of Public Parking Space**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

- ✓ Survey all streets to identify those with public parking spaces.
- ✓ Prepare an appropriate draft Traffic Regulation Order to align those public parking spaces to one hour limited stay, no return within two or shared residential permit holder priority space where demand from residents is high.

### **Timescale**

Consult with stakeholders on the draft TRO: 2016

Implementation to commence: 2016/17 (to coincide with Action Plan 2 for RPZ A)

Of the 51 roads within the boundaries of RPZ A, 27 roads have permit holder restrictions containing nearly 700 permit parking spaces. These residential permit spaces are shared with:

- Non-permit holders who are allowed to park either for a specified period or during certain hours free of charge, with no restrictions on Sundays or between 6pm and 8am on other days.
- Users of residents' visitor permits.

Residents in some streets also find it difficult to park near their homes during major events, in particular during the annual ice rink event in Calverley Grounds and we will look to make temporary restrictions for such large events where we believe such problems may occur.

As can be seen from the 'Table 1 - RPZ Profile', the demand for kerbside parking from permit holders is greater than the spaces available. Whilst these spaces will not be occupied at all times by permit holders, the amount of time they are shared will be reduced to alleviate the problems permit holders have in finding adequate space.

Action two below details the changes:

## **ACTION 2 - Amendment to RPZ A**

**Current Restriction times: Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm with various types of shared use bays.**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

- ✓ **Monday to Friday** extend the end of day restrictions by one hour from 6pm to 7pm.
- ✓ **Monday to Friday** amend the restrictions to provide for permit holder only parking between 9am and 11am and from 4pm to 7pm, with one hour no return parking for non-permit holders between 11am and 4pm.
- ✓ **Saturday to Sunday** introduce permit holder only parking restrictions from 11am to 3pm.
- ✓ **Sunday** add single yellow line restrictions in the RPZ to match Monday to Saturday times.

- ✓ \*Review the possibility of incorporating additional streets within and adjacent to the zone thus creating more residential permits spaces and gives more residents the ability to obtain a permit to park closer to their home.
- ✓ Allow temporary additional restrictions as necessary for special events at Calverley Grounds where visitor parking impacts on some residential streets.
- ✓ Consulting with KCC as the Highway Authority, prepare a draft Traffic Regulation Order for this Action.
- ✓ **Timescale**

Consult with stakeholders on the draft TRO: in 2016

Present objections to Joint Transportation Board for comment: 2017

Present to Cabinet 2016/17

Implementation: 2017

(\*Additional streets for inclusion to the zone may need a separate consultation and therefore any changes may need to be implemented separately during 2017/18)

## 7.2 Residents' Permit Zone B

RPZ B is located north east of the town centre, with the busy Camden Road running through the middle of this Zone. It extends from the town centre into predominantly residential areas where off-street parking is not readily available. This produces a high demand for kerbside parking, particularly during the evenings and at weekends.

The zone has restrictions that operate from 8am to 6pm, seven days a week with approximately 550 shared use permit parking spaces.

Many of the roads only offer permit parking on one side due to their narrow width, with either single yellow line or no restrictions on the opposite side. This means that cars often park on both sides partially on the footway to allow adequate space for vehicles to pass. Some roads are restricted to one-way traffic to minimise conflict.

We will be working with KCC to determine whether further one-way traffic restrictions would benefit traffic movement and highway safety, albeit not necessarily creating more parking spaces.

The area is well supported by car parks:

- Camden Road – 65 total spaces
- Beech Street – 38 total spaces
- Royal Victoria Place – 1,230 total spaces
- Meadow Road – 450 total spaces

The Crescent Road car park offering 1,085 spaces also adjoin this RPZ.

In addition to this there are a number of kerbside spaces along and adjacent to Camden Road offering free public parking for a limited period of time, as well as over 550 shared use spaces.

Beyond the northern and eastern boundaries of Zone B several unrestricted residential streets are also well used by shoppers, local workers and commuters and include:-

- Rochdale Road
- Vernon Road
- Auckland Road
- Dorking Road
- King George V Hill
- Stanhope Road
- St.James' Park
- Avon Road (extension)
- St. James' Road (extension)

### **ACTION 3 - Amendment to RPZ B**

**Current Restrictions times: Mon to Sun 8am to 6pm, single yellow lines Mon to Sat 8am to 6pm, and numerous types of shared use bays with various lengths of stay for non-permit holders.**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

- ✓ **Monday to Friday** extend the end of day restrictions by one hour from 6pm to 7pm.
- ✓ **Monday to Friday** amend the restrictions to provide for permit holder only parking between 9am and 11am and from 4pm to 7pm, with one hour no return parking for non-permit holders between 11am and 4pm.
- ✓ **Saturday to Sunday** reduce the period of shared use by creating permit holder only parking between 11am and 3pm.
- ✓ **Sunday** extend single yellow lines to match Monday to Saturday restriction times.
- ✓ \*Extend zone to incorporate additional streets or if demand is great enough creating a separate permit zone may provide a better solution.
- ✓ In consultation with KCC prepare a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) ready for consultation

#### **Timescale**

Consult with stakeholders on the draft TRO: 2017

Present objections to Joint Transportation Board for comment: 2017

Present proposal to Cabinet: 2017

Implementation: 2017/18

(\*Expansion of the zone may need separate consultation and any necessary changes be implemented at a later time in 2018).

### 7.3 Residents' Permit Zone C

To the west and north of the town centre this zone has several roads adjacent to the Five Ways where many properties are multi-occupancy with narrow frontages. For most of the day the permit holders' spaces are shared with other members of the public and competition for kerbside space is high.

The geographic zone contains 34 streets, 17 of which contain approximately 500 permit parking spaces.

There are additionally:

- Approximately 70 free on-street parking spaces ranging from one to four hour stay periods.
- Over 2,600 public car park spaces provided by: Crescent Road, Meadow Road, and RVP car parks in the centre of the zone and Torrington to the south.

Permit holders are asking for less or none of the on-street space be shared to give them a better chance of parking close to their homes.

The circulation of traffic around this created by people looking for parking space causes traffic flow problems and congestion back to the London Road. Action 4 suggests restrictions to alleviate some of this pressure whilst still allowing some non-permit holder parking.

#### **ACTION 4 - Amendment to RPZ C**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

**Current Restrictions times: Monday to Sat 8am to 6pm with (\*some streets having permit holder only parking between 6pm and 8pm Monday to Friday), and numerous types of shared use parking throughout the hours of restriction at all other times.**

- ✓ **Monday to Friday** reduce the amount of shared space time by creating permit holder only parking from 9am to 11am and 4pm to 7pm, \*retaining those streets already restricted to permit holders only until 8pm. One hour limited waiting for non-permit holders between 11am and 4pm.
- ✓ **Saturday to Sunday** amend restrictions to permit holder only parking between 11am and 3pm
- ✓ **Sunday** single yellow line restriction across the RPZ aligned to existing Monday to Saturday restriction.
- ✓ \*\*Extend the zone to incorporate additional streets.
- ✓ In consultation with KCC prepare the draft Traffic Regulation Order for consultation.

#### **Timescale**

Consult with stakeholders on proposed TRO(s): 2016/17

Present objections to the Joint Transportation Board for comment : 2016/17

Present proposal to Cabinet: 2017

Implementation: 2017

(\*\*Additional streets may need separate consultation and any necessary changes to be implemented in 2018).

*\*Lime Hill Road/York road/Dudley Road/Inner London Road/Mount Ephraim Road*

## 7.4 Residents' Permit Zone D

To the east of the town, the geographic zone contains 27 streets, 17 of which contain approximately 414 permit holder parking spaces

There are additionally:

- Approximately 19 free on-street parking spaces ranging from one to four hour stay periods.
- 1,085 off-street spaces provided by Crescent Road multi storey car park situated just outside the zone boundary.

Permit holders are asking for less or none of the on-street spaces to be shared to give them a better chance of parking close to their homes at times when most needed.

Action number 5 outlines restrictions to alleviate some of this pressure whilst still allowing some non-resident parking, and reducing traffic circulation during four hours of the day.

### **ACTION 5 - Amendment to RPZ D**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

**Current Restrictions times: Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm**

- ✓ Monday to Saturday restrict to permit holder only parking between 9 and 11am and 4pm and 6pm with one & two hour parking time limited parking between 11am and 4pm.
- ✓ In consultation with KCC prepare draft Traffic Regulation Order for consultation

#### **Timescale**

Consult with stakeholders: 2018

Present objections to Joint Transportation Board if necessary for comment: 2018

Present to Cabinet: 2018

Implementation: 2018 to 2019

## 7.5 Residents' Permit Zone G

This zone is both the oldest and smallest, being located in the town centre and running largely parallel to Camden Road. It was originally introduced to discourage shoppers from circulating in narrow residential streets and the restriction continues to serve that purpose.

Two streets form this RPZ comprising approximately 29 spaces with a high number of permit holders, making parking difficult, particularly during evenings. No visitor permits are to park in this zone due to its size. Recent informal consultation with residents has resulted in action six.

### **ACTION 6 - Amendment to RPZ G**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

**Current Restrictions times: Restricted 24/7 for resident parking and only one vehicle per household is allowed a permit and no visitor permits available.**

- ✓ Increase space capacity by moving parking bays to the opposite side of Calverley Street near the junction with Grover Street.
- ✓ Introduce a resident priority section of parking between Calverley Road and Garden Street
- ✓ Consider re-aligning zones to move Carlton Road from Zone D to Zone G
- ✓ Introduce visitor permits for use on car parks only
- ✓ Explore alternative solutions to the current dispensation permit for parking of works vehicles.
- ✓ In consultation with KCC prepare the draft Traffic Regulation Order for consultation.

#### **Timescale**

Consult with stakeholders on draft TRO: 2016

Consult with stakeholders on actions outside the TRO: 2016/17

Implementation: 2016/17

## 7.6 Residents' Permit Zone HB

The most recently introduced resident priority parking zone that was created in 2012 to address concerns over conflict between rail commuters and local residents in the area immediately adjacent High Brooms railway station. Just three streets were selected for inclusion to this zone, driven by public demand at that time. Only 11% of households within these streets have subscribed to the scheme, but the restrictions have eliminated commuter parking.

Other areas of High Brooms are seeing commuter parking increase even though there are usually spaces available at High Brooms station provided by Network Rail. The existing zone could be extended to incorporate more streets or a new zone created and this will be explored as part of action 7.

## **ACTION 7 - Review RPZ HB and possible extension**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

**Current Restrictions times: Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm**

- ✓ Review effectiveness of the current RPZ
- ✓ Consider expanding the zone to include streets on the western side of the railway to establish improved methods of deterring commuter parking.
- ✓ Informal consultation with stakeholders
- ✓ In consultation with KCC prepare draft Traffic Regulation Order for consultation

### **Timeframe**

Consultation on draft TRO with stakeholders: 2016/17

Present objections to the Joint Transportation Board for comment : 2016/2017

Present to Cabinet: 2017

Implementation: 2017 to 2019

## **7.7 New Residents' Permit Zones**

As parking habits change and problems encroach into different areas, consideration will need to be given to the possibility of creating new Residents Parking Zones.

A possible new zone was identified to the north of the town centre, straddling the southern end of St Johns Road. This was nominally labelled RPZ J and surveys of residents' views were undertaken in 2008 and 2013. On both occasions, the majority did not favour such a scheme.

Some residents of that area remain concerned about the lack of available on-street parking space for them, particularly in Park Road and Woodbury Park Road. It is likely that this will be addressed in Stage 2 of this Parking Strategy providing there is sufficient support for a scheme.

Other areas where similar issues have arisen include that part of St James area previously mentioned in this document as a possible extension to RPZ B; the Molyneux Park Road area and the Clarendon Way.

The introduction of new permit zones is driven by public support for such an arrangement and we do not impose this type of restriction unless there is a significant level of interest and it meets other key criteria for a Residents Zone such as congestion, possibly caused by poor circulation of traffic. Our new Permit Parking Policy being prepared and discussed in Section 7.8 will give guidance on our approach and considerations given to installing new RPZs.

## 7.8 Permit Parking Policy

On-street parking has been managed in the borough through use of time limited waiting restrictions since the 1960's with the first RPZ being introduced in the late 1970's

In 2012 a Permit Parking Policy was formulated to provide a framework for the introduction and operation of on-street permit parking within the Tunbridge Wells borough. This will be reviewed as part of the Parking Strategy to ensure it better meets current needs and is flexible enough to handle the constantly changing needs of the town.

From the ratio of residents to resident permit holders in each RPZ it would suggest that there are already a number of residents who don't have vehicles (Section 7, Table 1 – RPZ profile). Conversely, secondary permits represent around 20% of all residential parking spaces across the RPZs.

Parking Services will be working with other departments to help promote more sustainable methods of transportation; some actions having already been identified within the recently adopted Transport Strategy and the draft Cycling Strategy and we are working to expand the Car Club where there is evidence to support that each car club vehicle takes four vehicles off the road. See Section 15.1.

In the past year Parking Services has been working with the Council's sustainability team to provide two car club spaces that supports businesses and residents in the town centre RPZs, with five more spaces already identified for more car club vehicles in residential areas, one being in High Brooms. Some of these vehicles are likely to be electric hybrids that will also help reduce harmful emissions.

The PPP review will address issues such as multiple car ownership and the possibility of differential charging to help address the shortage of kerbside parking space permit parking zones along with other measures.

It will also provide a new framework for the implementation of new and expanded RPZs that will best suit residents and improve traffic circulation whilst taking into account the level of public parking space to support businesses and visitors.

See Action number 8:

### **ACTION 8 – Permit Parking Policy review**

#### **(Meets objective OB4)**

Factors to be considered:

- ✓ Restrict the number of permits to each house-hold.
- ✓ Restrict the sale of permits to exclude those with off street parking.
- ✓ Restrict the number of permits sold to non-residents.
- ✓ Capping the maximum amount of permits sold within each scheme to reduce the over-subscription.
- ✓ Restricting the amount of time permit parking spaces have shared use.
- ✓ Extending the hours of restrictions.
- ✓ Restrict the amount of visitor permits sold per household.
- ✓ Apply a higher permit charge for a second vehicle to reflect limited availability of space.
- ✓ Price permits based on carbon emissions of the vehicle to discourage large and high emission vehicles
- ✓ Restrict permits to cars and small commercial vehicles without any form of trailers or caravans

and that only take up one space.

- ✓ For multiple occupancy properties consider restriction on number of permits.
- ✓ No permits for new developments where on-site parking is already provided.
- ✓ Review controls on criteria for eligibility for a permit and the introduction of regular spot checks.
- ✓ Review possibility of concessions for resident permit holders where on-street space is scarce.

### **Timescale**

2016/17

Prepare a revised draft Policy 2016

Adoption: 2016/17

The Permit Parking Policy will give clear guidance to the reader and aim to deliver an improved service for all permit holders by primarily providing immediate and longer term parking solutions for all those living in existing and future RPZs.

## 8 FOOTWAY PARKING

Outside London, there is no legislation in place to prevent parking on footways. A very small number of local authorities have sought to prevent footway parking through the introduction of byelaws, but these have proved to be ineffective.

Footway parking is a problem in many parts of the borough and feedback from the draft parking strategy asks that this be addressed. Royal Tunbridge Wells is known for its red brick pavements that communities value and are extremely proud of; they are part of the heritage. Through constant footway parking many of the red bricks have been very badly damaged leaving KCC with a huge financial burden to rectify.

However, irrespective of its surface type, all footway parking causes serious and costly damage to infrastructure, and presents a real danger to pedestrians, particularly those with mobility problems who very often have to walk in the line of traffic to pass by.

In September 2013 an experimental restriction was introduced to enforce five streets where footway parking was causing a problem. Since then parking compliance has increased considerably with the order now being made permanent. A review of many other such areas is included in our action plan to:

- Improve pedestrian safety
- Prevent damage to infrastructure and preserve our heritage

Until April 2015 footway parking was enforced using CCTV where images were captured, owner details obtained and a penalty sent to the driver in the post. Then legislation changed and now it is covered by on-foot civil enforcement officers who place a penalty charge notice on the vehicle.

At the national level, successive governments have made a number of attempts to introduce legislation banning footway parking but, to date, these have not passed into law. A recent attempt to introduce restrictions on pavement parking via a Private Members Bill resulted in it being withdrawn following its second reading in the House of Commons. It is not known at the time of writing whether this matter will be pursued again during the life of the present government.

We will continue working with KCC to identify streets where footway parking is causing unnecessary problems and where a restriction can reasonably be imposed with the ability to enforce in the absence of CCTV technology.

### **ACTION 9 – Footway Parking Review**

#### **(Meets objective OB2)**

- ✓ Identify major footway parking issues in Royal Tunbridge Wells
- ✓ Find solutions to meet all stakeholders needs
- ✓ Decide enforcement feasibility
- ✓ Prioritise work for implementation

NOTE: Some footway parking is contained within the RPZs and as such may be dealt with as part of their reviews.

#### **Timetable**

\*2016/17/18/19 - likely to be assessed in stages:

Prepare draft Traffic Regulation Orders for Consultation.

Present objections to JTB for comment.

Implement restrictions.

*\*Subject to KCC availability*

## 9 VEHICLE ACCESS MARKINGS

Until late 2014 KCC provided the residents of all Kent districts with the option to purchase vehicle access markings to help keep their driveways clear of parked vehicles.

Since then a substantial number of requests from residents has been received for TWBC to continue to provide this service. A considerable amount of work to enable this service to continue for our residents has been undertaken since then and 2016 will see its introduction.

### **ACTION 10 – Vehicle Access Markings**

**(Meets objective OB3)**

#### **Timetable**

2016:

Finalise terms and conditions

Finalise on-line application and payment facilities

Publicise the Service

Implement current applications

## 10 CONGESTION, RESTRICTION, ENFORCEMENT

The draft Parking Strategy identified roads where the introduction of restrictions or changes to existing restrictions might improve traffic flow. These are shown in the following table, phase one. Public feedback requested that other roads be added to this list citing a variety of perceived problems and desired outcomes. These are shown in phases two and three in the following table.

Phase one	Phase two	Phase three
Calverley Road	St James' Road	Molyneux Park Road
Camden Road	Queens Road	York Road
Ferndale	Sandrock	Yew Tree Road
Major York's Road	Grove Hill Road	Lime Hill Road
Monson Road	Queens Road	Sandhurst Road
Mount Ephraim	Culverden Park Road	Quarry road
A26 St Johns Road	Woodbury Park Road	Langton Road
A26 (in parts) London Road	Garden Road	High Street
A267 (in parts) Frant Road	Prospect Road	Pembury Road
A264 (in parts)	Dudley Road (This will be dealt with in RPZ C review)	Kibbles Lane
	Reynolds Lane	
	Commercial Road (This will be discussed in the section on Paddock Wood)	

Many more streets also will be reviewed where congestion causes traffic flow problems to see if parking restriction and enforcement can relieve. The consultation also asked that bus routes in particular be reviewed to maintain safe, efficient and convenient public transport that helps journey times and thus discourage car travel. Bus operators will be contacted when this action starts.

**Camden Road** – parking on the very busy Camden Road has caused many traffic flow problems. Parking Services and KCC have been working together to find an alternative road layout and restrictions to prevent any parking at key pinch points. This will be prioritised for 2016 within Phase one as shown in Action number 11 below.

## **ACTION 11 - Area Surveys – Traffic Flow**

### **(Meets objective OB2)**

- ✓ Will survey the areas in line with comments received from the draft parking strategy consultation.
- ✓ \*Will consult with KCC where yellow line restriction is involved or on areas necessary to control congestion and safety, including bus routes.
- ✓ Will consult with bus operators to identify areas that affect their journey times.
- ✓ Will identify solutions and consult with relevant stakeholders.
- ✓ Will prioritise Camden Road for 2016/17.

### **Timescale**

Phase 1 – consult and implement change during 2016/17 (including Camden Rd and key bus routes)

Phase 2 – consult and implement change during first half of 2017/18. (including key bus routes)

Phase 3 – consult and implement change during second half of 2019.

*\*Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has no direct control over decisions or timescales on removing or installing yellow line restrictions.*

## **10.1 CCTV Enforcement**

CCTV parking enforcement in Tunbridge Wells has assisted with combatting footway parking and it helps us reduce congestion from around schools and bus stops making these areas safer for children and other road users.

Enforcement is carried out by safety car fitted with a camera which captures images of vehicles parked in contravention of the regulations. It is driven by a qualified enforcement officer and as it drives past a potential contravention, the camera is activated and a picture taken without the need for the car to stop. The images are then reviewed by an authorised officer. If it is confirmed that a contravention has occurred a Penalty Charge Notice is produced and sent to the vehicle owner.

At the time of writing, the safety car now only enforces School Keep Clear markings and Bus Stop Clearways.



School run parking is a continual issue within the borough. CCTV enforcement by the safety car has been successful in improving compliance outside the 17 schools for which Traffic Regulation Orders were introduced in 2012. Whether or not this has caused any parking issues in streets near schools has yet to be established but we will review such parking provision around schools within the Parking Strategy with the safety of the children being prioritised.

The Transport Strategy also looks at more economical, healthy and environmentally friendly ways of doing school runs to help reduce the demand on parking space around schools.

We will also be working with and supporting where possible our Community Safety Unit and KCC to determine whether more schools could benefit from enforceable restrictions and in joint initiatives surrounding road safety methods and education for children and their parents.

Legislation changed in 2015 that prevented the further use of this method of enforcement for footway parking so this is now carried out using more traditional methods of enforcement. This decision is being further debated in the House of Commons and we are hopeful that the legislation will be amended so we can resume footway enforcement using CCTV in the near future.

## 10.2 Unrestricted Streets

Long-term parking on unrestricted streets can cause congestion, highway safety issues and inconvenience for residents and congestion. Where safety is compromised or congestion caused, the highway authority (KCC) will be asked to implement appropriate restrictions. This Strategy will also seek to reduce the amount of traffic circling roads seeking a parking place, particularly in residential areas.

Parking restrictions can be a positive catalyst to changing behaviour by encouraging a shift away from cars to using more sustainable methods of transport. However, the car is also sometimes a person's only realistic method of travel to and from work and a balanced approach needs to be taken when considering new restrictions. Surveys of all such streets will commence in Stage Two of this Parking Strategy.

### **ACTION 12 – Unrestricted Street Review**

#### **(Meets objective OB2)**

- ✓ Will prepare a programme to review unrestricted streets prioritising those within and around the town centre where the demand on kerbside space is high including Southborough
- ✓ \*Will continue to respond to public requests for reviews of such areas and in liaison with KCC.

- ✓ Will identify solutions in agreement with KCC and prepare draft Traffic Regulation Orders.

### **Timescale**

Prepare a review programme for the commencement of each Stage.

Implement the programme carrying out subsequent consultations: Stage 1-3

Prepare draft TROs for formal consultation: To support stage plans

Present to JTB and Cabinet and Cabinet appropriately: to support stage plans

*\*Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has no direct control over decisions or timescales on removing or installing yellow line restrictions.*

## **10.3 Blue Badge Enforcement**

### **Introduction**

Most of our car parks have many disabled bays for valid blue badge holders, along with several on-street locations within the town and in residential areas. Additional to this all blue badge holders get free parking all day on our car parks irrespective of whether they park within a disabled bay or not. However, we believe that there has been abuse of the blue badge scheme that was designed for people who most need it. So we asked KCC for the powers to enforce those we believe are using them fraudulently. In December 2015 a blue badge enforcement audit and training day was delivered by KCC's audit team to senior parking officers in Tunbridge Wells.

### **Audit results**

Throughout the day 43 drivers were spoken to with the vast majority, 30, using the blue badge correctly. Those who were using the badge correctly welcomed the check.

Eight people were spoken to for displaying another person's badge when the badge holder was not present or displaying another person's badge to collect them at a later point; this resulted in a number of badges being confiscated. Two badge holders were asked to move on from parking on yellow lines as they were displaying their badge for the benefit of another. One forged badge and five expired badges were also taken out of circulation and three Penalty Charge Notices were issued to people displaying an expired badge.

Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health Graham Gibbens' said: "The exercise was as much about awareness as it was enforcement".

As well as talking to people using the badge incorrectly, a number of expired badges were removed from circulation where the legitimate badge holder had kept hold of them following the issuing of a new badge.

The response from the public was very welcoming regarding the approach by both KCC and our own parking enforcement officers in checking people's entitlement to blue badges.

### **Consequences**

Using someone else's blue badge or allowing another person to use it can result in a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction. The forging or counterfeiting a blue badge attracts a fine of up to £5,000, or if

convicted under the Fraud Act, is likely to attract a community order or custodial sentence of up to a year. The refusal to allow an authorised officer to inspect a badge is also an offence and attracts a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction. Last year, Kent County Council issued 24,590 blue badges, while 809 applications were refused.

### Summary

Now that TWBC has been given the authority to enforce, some initial training and full access to the blue badge database by KCC, a full training programme for all civil enforcement officers is being developed to ensure we can clamp down on anyone trying to cheat the system borough-wide. We were very pleased with KCCs intervention that now enables us to more effectively combat blue badge misuse.

## 10.4 Parking Policy

The public has a right to challenge existing and new parking restrictions. They also have the right to request new restrictions.

A Parking Policy will be developed that gives the public information on what they can challenge and give guidance on how they can invoke their rights. TWBC will be working with KCC to create a county-wide document if possible to help Kent deliver a consistent policy to its residents and businesses.

### **ACTION 13 – Implement a Parking Policy**

**(Meets objective OB4)**

- ✓ Will prepare a draft Policy for consideration and approval by KCC
- ✓ Publish and adopt

#### **Timescale**

Prepare draft: 2016/17

\*Publish and adopt new policy 2016/17 (Subject to KCC approval and consistent for all districts)

*\*KCC are responsible for all restrictions on the highway and therefore must be consulted before adopting such a policy. Therefore the timescale anticipated may be subject to change.*

# 11 CAR PARKS

## 11.1 Introduction

TWBC is in the fortunate and unique position of owning and/or managing 26 car parks across the borough offering nearly 4,500 spaces, 14 now having the Park Mark Award. Unlike many other councils in the UK, whose car parks are often owned and managed by private companies with high and complex tariff rates TWBC is able to maintain realistic and competitive tariffs. This also means that car park income stays in the borough and can be used to improve facilities. These car parks have a mixture of tariffs to encourage long or short periods of stay, some offering free parking in out of town communities and some with various payment options.

The town also has a few private car parks with Southborough Town Council offering around 40 spaces at their Pennington car park and there is a railway owned car park at High Brooms.

## 11.2 Borough owned/operated car parks

Borough owned and/or operated car parks are listed below:

	Car Park	Number of parking spaces					Other information		
		General parking	Blue Badge	Parent & child	Motor cycle	Total spaces	B/badge %	Park Mark	Season Tickets
1	Beech St.	38				38	0.0%	Y	Y
2	Brenchley	9	1			10	10.0%		
3	Camden Rd	62	3			65	4.6%	Y	Y
4	Cranbrook (Regal - High St)	292	19	8		319	6.0%		
5	Cranbrook (Tanyard)	85	4		y	89	4.5%		
6	Crescent Rd (*MSCP)	1,061	24		y	1,085	2.2%	Y	Y
7	Goudhurst	23	1			24	4.2%		
8	Great Hall (*MSCP)	199	6		y	205	2.9%	Y	Y
9	Hawkhurst (North Grove)	34				34	0.0%		
10	High Brooms Rd, S/Borough (residents only)	10				10	0.0%	Y	
11	John St	64				64	0.0%		Y
12	Linden Park Rd	52	2			54	3.7%	Y	Y
13	Little Mount Sion	18			y	18	0.0%	Y	
14	Meadow Rd (*MSCP)	440	10			450	2.2%	Y	Y
15	Mt.Pleasant Ave (w/e only)	60				60	0.0%		
16	P/Wood (Commercial Rd East)	42	3			45	6.7%	Y	
17	P/Wood (Commercial Rd West)	77	2			79	2.5%	Y	Y
18	RVP (*MSCP)	1,180	36	14	y	1,230	2.9%	Y	
19	Stone St North (res only)	13				13	0.0%		
20	Stone St South (res only)	13				13	0.0%		
21	Torrington (*MSCP)	235	8		y	243	3.3%	y	
22	Town Hall Yard (w/e only)	100	3			103	2.9%	Y	
23	Union House (*MSCP)	114				114	0.0%		Y

	Car Park	Number of parking spaces					Other information		
		General parking	Blue Badge	Parent & child	Motor cycle	Total spaces	B/badge %	Park Mark	Season Tickets
24	Warwick Rd (res only)	20				20	0.0%		
25	Yew Tree Rd (S/borough)	64	2			66	3.0%	Y	Y
26	Coach Park	10				10	0.0%		
	<b>Total spaces</b>	<b>4,315</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>4,461</b>			
<b>Summary:</b>									
	<b>Totals Urban spaces</b>	<b>3,679</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>3,786</b>			
	<b>Totals Southborough</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>76</b>			
	<b>Totals Rural</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>599</b>			

\*MSCP – multi storey car park

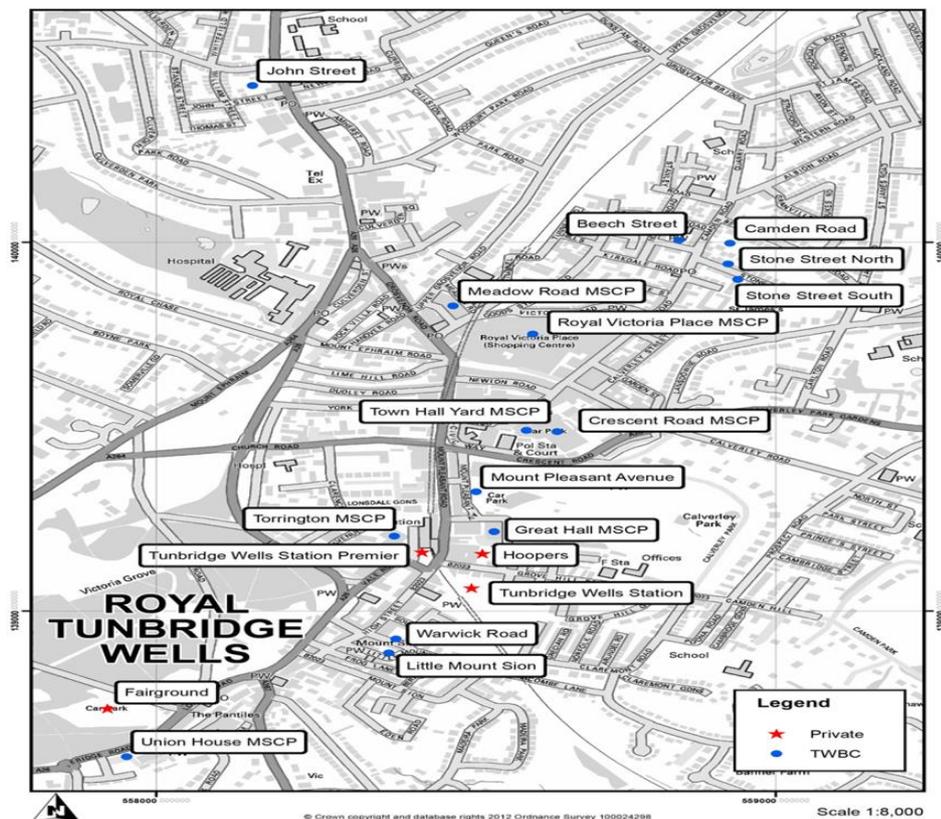
### 11.3 Car parks provided by private operators

Approximately 300 more spaces are provided by privately operated car parks within the urban area that also offer short and long stay parking with tariffs to match. Most provide payment by the traditional pay and display method using cash. The four main privately operated car parks are:

- The Fairground
- Hoopers
- Tunbridge Wells Station Main
- Tunbridge Wells Station Premier

### 11.4 Location and access

This section shows a map of the locations of each car park and the walking distance from town centre car parks to key attractors.



Walking distance from car park to key attractions

Tunbridge Wells is most fortunate in having car parks conveniently located for the town's key attractions. The table below gives an indication of the walking times involved:

<b>DESTINATION</b>	<b>CAR PARK</b>	<b>WALKING TIME (at 5km/hour)</b>
<b>The Pantiles</b>	Union House	2 minutes
	Little Mount Sion	4 minutes
	Linden Park Road	2 minutes
<b>Spa Valley Railway</b>	Union House	4 minutes
	Linden Park Road	6 minutes
<b>Nevill Ground</b>	Union House	16 minutes
	Linden Park Road	15 minutes
<b>High Street</b>	Little Mount Sion	1 minute
	Torrington	2 minutes
	Great Hall	3 minutes
<b>T W Commons</b>	Torrington	2 minutes
	Great Hall	5 minutes
	Crescent Road	9 minutes
	Mount Pleasant Avenue	6 minutes
	Union House	3 minutes
	Linden Park Road	3 minutes
<b>Railway Station</b>	Great Hall	2 minutes
	Crescent Road	6 minutes
	Torrington	1 minute
	Town Hall Yard	6 minutes
	Mount Pleasant Avenue	2 minutes
<b>Trinity Arts Centre</b>	Crescent Road	4 minutes
	Mount Pleasant Avenue	4 minutes
	Town Hall Yard	4 minutes
	Great Hall	5 minutes
<b>Assembly Hall Theatre</b>	Crescent Road	2 minutes
	Town Hall Yard	1minute
	Mount Pleasant Avenue	3 minutes
	Great Hall	4 minutes
<b>Calverley Grounds</b>	Great Hall	1 minute
	Mount Pleasant Avenue	1 minute
	Crescent Road	5 minutes
	Town Hall Yard	4 minutes
<b>Royal Victoria Place shopping centre</b>	RVP	1 minute
	Meadow Road	1 minute
	Crescent Road	4 minutes

DESTINATION	CAR PARK	WALKING TIME (at 5km/hour)
<b>Camden Road</b>	RVP	2 minutes
	Camden Road	1 minute
	Beech Street	1 minute
	Meadow Road	5 minutes
	Crescent Road	3 minutes
<b>Library, Museum, Adult Education Centre, Town Hall</b>	RVP	2 minutes
	Meadow Road	3 minutes
	Crescent Road	2 minutes

Many major towns have nearby retail developments offering free parking with Tunbridge Wells having a retail presence in the Longfield Road area with convenient access to the A21 trunk road. Further afield, the major retail park at Bluewater offers a substantial volume of free parking. The concept of free parking can, however, be misleading since high rental value can lead to premium prices. Combined with additional travelling costs if starting from the Tunbridge Wells area, it can often be far more economical and convenient to shop locally.

### 11.5 Park Mark® Quality Award

Park Mark® is a nationally recognised award to car parks that have been vetted by the Police and British Parking Association and which have measures in place to create a safer environment for users and their vehicles. The aim of the Park Mark® award is to recognise and publicise to users, that their defined measure of excellence has been achieved. In order to obtain the award a parking facility must achieve an effective combination of active management procedures and commensurate preventative security measures.

The Award demonstrates that these facilities provide police accredited parking that assesses four key areas:

- Quality management
- Effective surveillance
- Appropriate lighting
- Clean environment

The Borough Council operates 14 car parks that already have the Park Mark® standard:

Urban car parks:

- 1) Crescent Road
- 2) Torrington (Morrisons)
- 3) Town Hall Yard
- 4) Camden Road
- 5) Beech Street
- 6) Royal Victoria Place
- 7) Meadow Road
- 8) Little Mount Sion
- 9) Great Hall
- 10) High Brooms
- 11) Yew Tree Road
- 12) Linden Park Road

The latter four were prepared ready for assessment and awarded in 2014/15.

Paddock Wood:

13) Commercial Road (east)

14) Commercial Road (west)

Regular reviews are carried out by qualified assessors to ensure we continue to meet the standards required and give visitors the confidence that these car parks meet their strict quality criteria. More detailed information on this accreditation can be found at: [www.britishparkingassociation.co.uk](http://www.britishparkingassociation.co.uk).

To ensure we improve the quality of our parking stock additional car parks will be prepared for qualification for the Park Mark Award Standard during the term of this strategy. Two more have been identified for the Award in the future after their development is complete:

- The John Street car park
- The Union House car park

#### **ACTION 14 - Park Mark Awards**

**(Meets objective OB3)**

- ✓ Prepare John Street car park for assessment and award
- ✓ Prepare Union House car park for assessment and award

#### **Timescale**

John Street - 2016/17

Union House – when development is completed

## 11.6 Car Parks Subject to Redevelopment

**Union House car park** – this car park currently offering 114 public spaces, has been identified in the Local Plan document as an area for development due to start during 2016. When the development is complete it is intended that an equivalent amount of public parking space will be provided. During the development public parking will be reduced.

**Linden Park Road car park** – this car park offering 53 public spaces may be up for development in the first stage of this Parking Strategy.

**John Street car park** - Until this car park was partially closed in August 2015 it provided parking for around 90 vehicles, with season tickets available for regular users together with daily tariffs managed by pay and display and pay by phone systems. During development only 35 spaces were left available. To ensure this car park supported local trade it became a short stay facility with a maximum stay of two hours supported by pay and display only, offering free parking for the first 30 minutes. This has supported school runs and local business.

When the development is completed a new car park will offer around 64 spaces. It is intended to reserve two of these spaces for electric vehicles and two for blue badge holders operated with a replacement tariff and management system.

## 11.7 Car Park Appraisal

The emerging Development Plan Document for Tunbridge Wells borough indicates two particular issues with the existing parking space

1. The existing distribution of car parks makes it difficult to access them when travelling into the town from the west; and
2. There are more car parks located in the north of the town than the south.

Each of these issues contribute to the existing congestion within the town centre as vehicles travelling from the west or south need to travel across the town to access a large number of the car parks. Parking Services will be working with KCC to improve road side signage to intercept vehicles on the radial approaches to avoid them hunting for space where it is limited.

A replacement Variable Message System is already under review that will ultimately link space availability to our website along with integration to various parking apps and possibly in-car satnav systems. Such technology gives us opportunities to manage and control congestion in different ways.

The Transport Strategy will also continue to address congestion for traffic entering and exiting Royal Tunbridge Wells.

### **ACTION 15 - Variable Message Signage**

**(Meets objective OB2 and OB4)**

- ✓ Work with KCC to identify system for procurement
- ✓ Configure of the system
- ✓ Install the necessary hardware

#### **Timescale**

Implementation: 2016/17

Note: integration to council website, apps and other devices will be a work in progress as technology evolves throughout the term of this Parking Strategy.

There are many key factors influencing people's decisions about parking, which will differ from person to person and the reason for their trip. For instance, a key influence for outward commuters might be proximity to existing public transport facilities where access time is critical. Commuters are also likely to be concerned more about the cost of parking, which is why many choose to purchase one of our annual season tickets and park safely on our car parks. Others choose to park on narrow unrestricted or residential roads that presents problems for residents and many safety issues. See section 10.2.

Visitors who come to shop or to enjoy the leisure facilities may be more interested in security, easy payment choices, and access and not always concerned so much about the cost to park.

Our long and short stay car parks try to cater for these two categories, with season tickets substantially reducing parking costs for regular users. Season ticket allocation on car parks is, and will continue to be, reviewed annually, to ensure the spaces are balanced to suit short and long stay needs.

Differential tariffs by time of day are also a possibility that will be considered at the next tariff review in 2017 to help improve the management of space and highway traffic circulation.

### 11.8 Additional car park space

To ensure we can provide enough car park space and in the right locations to cater for anticipated growth, the council is currently reviewing potential sites for development.

## 12 CAR PARK PAYMENT OPTIONS

The Council uses three methods of payments on its car parks:

- Pay and Display – You predict the time you want to stay and pay by cash when you park.
- Pay by Phone - A digital payment method where you register on line and pay for each session via your mobile phone, again predicting the time you want to stay when you park
- Post Payment – A method where you check into the car park upon arrival and pay when you check out by credit or debit card.

### 12.1 Pay and Display

Pay and display was the very first payment system used on Council car parks and indeed is the most commonly used method across the UK.

**Advantages:** Familiar system – everybody knows how to use it as it has been around for many years.

**Disadvantages:** Doesn't give change, customer has to predict the time needed when they arrive, so they either pay for too much time or not enough and then risk getting a penalty charge notice. The machines are very finely calibrated to detect counterfeit coins and therefore very temperamental in many ways including their sensitivity to weather changes, causing regular breakdowns and an inconvenience to the customer. They are subject to vandalism and theft and have a high maintenance cost and cash handling fees.

The Council has in more recent years taken full advantage of new technological payment systems discussed below.

### 12.2 PaybyPhone

PaybyPhone is the brand name of the organisation contracted to the Council to provide a digital method of payment for parking by phone.

The customer registers their vehicle registration number and a credit/debit card on a secure website. Thereafter each time they park they use their mobile phone to start a parking session, either by automated voice, text or via the mobile web or app, which is the most popular method currently representing 70%.

**Advantages:** No need to have the right change, you can pay for your parking from the comfort of your car using your mobile phone. If you find you need more parking than you paid for you can easily extend the time and avoid getting a penalty charge notice, you can get a text reminder when your parking session is due to expire if you prefer (this is a 10p chargeable extra made by the PaybyPhone). You can add more than one vehicle to your account, you register just once and can then pay in any car park in the UK that has the Pay by Phone facility, there is a help line provided by Pay by Phone where you can talk to an operator within normal office hours if you have a problem.

**Disadvantages:** You need a mobile phone, PaybyPhone charge a 20p fee for using the service and additional 'optional' charges. Poor mobile network. Can take several minutes to register for the first time from a car park – far simpler to register beforehand.

Since differential charging and user service charges were absorbed by the Council in April 2014 for Pay by Phone customers we have seen a much steeper incremental channel shift from cash payments to phone payments than previously. This method now represents an average of 32% of all car park payments, with around 2,500 new Pay by Phone users each month and over 7,000 users taking advantage of the facility to extend their stay.

Below is a table that shows the percentage of total revenue taken using phone payments:

<b>% PbP of all revenue = 2015/16 (April-October)</b>	
Crescent Road	34%
Great Hall	31%
Meadow Road	18%
Torrington	50%
RVP	21%
Camden Road	23%
Linden Park Road	23%
John Street	15%
Union House	36%
Yew Tree Road	16%
Paddock Wood	17%
Beech Street	31%
Little Mount Sion	51%
Town Hall Yard	19%
Mount Pleasant	26%
Coach Park (no cash option)	100%
<b>Average</b>	<b>32%</b>

The RVP car park represents 40% of all car park revenue, but the above reveals a much lower channel shift to phone payments than other key multi-storeys. This is due to the car park having no mobile network coverage on the first three floors. The Council has been working to find a solution to help more customers take advantage of this flexible system by installing Wi-Fi in those black spot areas:

#### **ACTION16 - Install Wi-Fi on RVP**

##### **(Meets objective OB3)**

- ✓ Procure an external provider
- ✓ Obtain all relevant approvals.
- ✓ Finalise contracts
- ✓ Installation.

##### **Timescale**

Implementation of the system first half of financial year 2016/17

The Meadow Road car park also has a slow up take of phone payments but also has a much lower<sup>6</sup> occupancy level. The low uptake in the Town Hall Yard car park is due to its part-time nature.

### 12.3 Post Payment

Customers have been asking for some time for a pay on exit type system as another option to the other existing payment methods. That resulted in a petition to Full Council.

A check in/check out system known as Post Payment was purchased for the Great Hall car park in July 2015. Its popularity with the public has resulted in a channel shift of 30% from payments by cash.

A key benefit of this system is that it charges for the amount of time used in accordance with the tariffs. Customers already using this are staying longer; they no more have to rush back to their vehicle when their pay and display time has expired.

This Parking Strategy proposes installation of the Post Payment system in more Tunbridge Wells car parks, with an immediate plan for Royal Victoria Place car park that was approved by Cabinet in February 2016.

#### **ACTION 17 - Post Payment on RVP**

**(Meets objective OB3)**

- ✓ Liaise with all stakeholders and obtain relevant approvals
- ✓ Prepare implementation plan and install the system

#### **Timescale**

Implementation: first half of financial year 2016/17 (Capital and reserve already approved)

### 12.4 Season Tickets

Additional to the car park payment systems a range of permits are also available in several car parks for part and full time workers and businesses. Some have discounted residential rates and businesses can obtain discounts for bulk purchases. Monthly direct debit facilities are available to spread the cost which is the most common method of payment used.

2016 will see the introduction of new web-based direct debit application facility for annual season ticket holders. Unlike the present system that requires the customer to renew their season ticket each year, this new method will mean a continuous one without the customer having to renew.

### 12.5 Car park transactions

Over 2,000,000 car park transactions are made each year across the borough's car parks with over 1,000 season ticket holders taking advantage of the discounted parking offered for regular users.

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A for occupancy data

## 12.6 Car Park Improvement Programme

The borough's car parks are very busy and some are in need of major improvements to make them more appealing to our customers and create a safer environment.

### Car Park Security

Vandalism and anti-social behaviour in some car parks, particularly during the evenings, is of great concern to the council and brings with it customer complaints and high costs to rectify. Whilst there is some evening security in our car parks, it fails to provide the type necessary to help keep our car parks clean and safe for our customers.

A 12 week trial of a different method of security took place in 2015. The service was provided by a Security Industry Approved (SIA) organisation who delivered manual guarding on evenings looking after three town centre car parks that suffered the most abuse from vandalism and anti-social behaviour. During that time and a few weeks beyond the trial, acts of vandalism and poor behaviour fell along with customer complaints and remedial costs.

This two man service was provided in the Crescent Road, Great Hall and Torrington car parks staggered over different nights and times providing unpredictable routines to deter the regular abusers.

Since then procurement has been carried out and a permanent guarding contract will start during in 2016 for Great Hall, Torrington and the Crescent Road car parks.

### Car Park Refurbishments

2015 saw the Great Hall car park having a makeover with the stairwell areas and car park decks painted with a new additional post payment system installed. Crescent Road also had its stairwells painted.

2016 will be the start of some more major improvements, starting with Crescent Road in early 2016 with the first procurement already carried out and contract awarded outlined in action 18.

#### **ACTION 18 – Car Park Refurbishment**

##### **(Meets objective OB3)**

- ✓ Refurbish steps and landing floors on all stairwells making them safe from trip hazards, improving appearance and easier to clean.
- ✓ Procure LED to improve visibility whilst delivering safety efficiencies.
- ✓ Procurement for decking refurbishment, providing new bay markings, pedestrian walkways and improved exit signage.

##### **Timescale**

Refurbishment of landing floors: Commence February 2016

Procure LED lighting – 2016/17 (Capital already approved)

Procure decking refurbishment – 2017/18 (Capital investment to be approved)

The RVP car park will also see the new Post Payment system installed in 2016.

## 12.7 Car Park Occupancy

Parking transaction data for our car parks is collated from the different payment hardware systems each month. This allows us to see the number of vehicles using the car parks and the duration of their stay.

Whilst occupancy level only averaged 71% for the year 2014/15 across our town centre car parks, certain days and times of day do peak and on occasions approach 90% occupancy. To avoid excessive queuing and searching for space the optimum level of use is generally considered to be 85%. Tariff reviews will seek to address such peaks and troughs. See section 13.

An average occupancy report by month for 2014/15 is included as **Appendix A** with some relevant notes on occupancy calculations.

This Parking Strategy has not factored in space impact of potential external changes, such as the Council's drive to encourage more sustainable methods of transport or the space requirement to support new developments. However, once the Strategy has been adopted, as confirmed information is made available, parking space requirements will be reviewed and the Implementation Programme updated.

Additional car park sites are already being explored by the council – See also section 11.8.

## 13 PARKING TARIFF REVIEWS

Car park tariffs and all permit types will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure revenue keeps pace with costs and that we have adequate capital to support future investment. We will look closely at the local economy, the demand for parking space and also at neighbouring or similar towns offering a comparable shopping experience to ensure we offer a competitive service for the car park users of Tunbridge Wells.

The next review will be made in 2017. This will also explore the possibility of differential charging to help even out the occupancy peaks and troughs to better meet existing and potential future parking needs, including the increased on-street restrictions proposed in this Parking Strategy.

On-street parking charging will also be considered when carrying out future reviews. Charging on-street can reduce traffic circulation considerably and will help improve both congestion and air quality.

In April 2014 a decision was made to increase each tariff band by 20p. It was also agreed that certain concessions were made for those who used the Pay by Phone system:

- Pay by phone customers would pay 20p less per tariff band than those paying by cash – this was to reflect the very low costs to the Council to manage this digital payment method compared with the pay and display method.
- The Council would absorb the PaybyPhone service charge normally debited to the user by PaybyPhone for each new transaction<sup>7</sup>. This was to encourage more people to try this method to see the benefits of using this digital system.

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<sup>7</sup> This was a discretionary concession and subject to withdrawal in the future

## 14 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Technology supporting the parking industry moves at a fast pace. Through industry trade press and exhibitions, we are kept well informed about emerging technology to enable its assessment of potential for use in supporting parking operations in Tunbridge Wells. This Parking Strategy has already discussed some technology being embraced to help deliver more efficient services for the customer:

- New Variable Message Signage – providing enhanced navigation.
- New innovative car park payment system – first in the UK allowing pay when you leave.
- Electronic web based direct debit applications – reducing renewal time for season ticket customers.
- Web based application and payment facilities for vehicle access markings – speedier and more efficient customer service.
- Web site constantly changing to stay in step with customers search and demands – helping customers to navigate for the services required more speedily.

There is currently a lot of discussion in the media and the parking industry around driverless cars. The government and parking and transport industries are currently exploring the benefits that such technology might bring. This may become a reality in the latter years of this Parking Strategy even though the benefits are not clearly known at this time in terms of its affordability, practicality and its contribution to reducing emissions and congestion. This is just one example where technology may influence real change in the future.

Two other technology based interventions will be introduced in this parking strategy:

- Self serve appeals – enabling the customer to get a speedier response
- Self serve permits – allowing residents to control their own and their visitor permits

### 14.1 Self-serve virtual permits

2014 saw the move from annually issued paper based permits to perpetual ones. 2016 will see the introduction of self serve virtual permits to replace the existing system that will allow the customer to go on line to create and change their permits. This would mean no more displaying a permit in the vehicle and no more need to go to the Gateway to buy scratch cards for visitors – permit holders would just input their visitors registration number and select the length of their stay and the transaction is complete.

#### **ACTION 19 – Self serve virtual permit system**

**(Meets objective OB4)**

- ✓ Procurement of a suitable system
- ✓ Communicate with permit holders
- ✓ Prepare new procedures and documentation
- ✓ Install and deliver the system

#### **Timescale**

Implementation: 2016/17

## 14.2 Self-serve appeals

Nobody likes to receive a Penalty Charge Notice, but when they do, if they either don't understand why they have received it, want to pay or appeal, then this new self-serve appeal system will mean that recipients can go onto the website, insert their ticket information, and immediate guidance will be given with a list of next step options to choose from that will direct them to the right place without the need to look elsewhere. This offers a faster and more streamlined customer service.

### **ACTION 20 – Self serve parking appeals**

**(Meets objective OB4)**

- ✓ Procurement of a suitable system
- ✓ Configure and make available on line for speedy access.

#### **Timescale**

Procurement and Implementation: 2016

# 15 GREEN PARKING

## 15.1 Car Club

Previous sections of this Parking Strategy have highlighted the huge competition for kerb side space in the borough and the potential additional demand for car park space in the future. A reduction of car ownership would begin to address such demands.

Car clubs make an important contribution in reducing car ownership and congestion. Over the past five years, there has been sustained growth in car club membership to over 22,500 members using almost 700 vehicles in England and Wales outside of London.

National statistics show that for each car club vehicle, four cars have been removed from the road as a result of car club members who have sold a car - that's almost 2,700 vehicles removed from the streets of England and Wales outside of London. They also show that just under a third of car club members would have bought a private car if they had not joined a car club, representing a deferred purchase of approximately 6,360 cars. More survey information can be found at the following link: <http://www.carplus.org.uk/tools-and-resources/annual-survey-of-car-clubs/>

In Tunbridge Wells, Parking Services work with Sustainability Services to secure appropriately located places to park car club cars. The Tunbridge Wells car club started out as a pilot scheme in September 2014 with two cars located in the town centre area. These proved very popular with their use rapidly increasing and making the service self financing by September 2015 with 90 drivers registered by November 2015. Based on national statistics the five cars currently in use should result in 20 cars removed in the town area reducing pressure on parking.

An additional three cars were added in December 2015 with the opportunity to incorporate a further two cars in the 2016/17, and a further car club car to be provided by a development on St John's Road.

With the reduction of cars this scheme also contributes to the borough's Air Quality Action Plan.

## 15.2 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

The Council will support improvements to vehicle technology and emission reduction and will actively pursue possible options in the future.

For example electric charging points offering free use of electricity are already provided in the Great Hall and Crescent Road car parks.

Their usage will be carefully monitored and demand assessed before considering further installations.

## 15.3 Bicycle Parking

Secure bicycle parking is available on street and in many of our car parks. The draft Cycling Strategy will look at encouraging greater use of this method of transport and Parking Services will provide appropriate bicycle parking space within the towns' car parks based on demand.

## 15.4 Improved Directional Signage

KCC provide all on-street directional signage to our car parks together with space availability signs. Parking Services is working with KCC to improve these facilities. Information plays an important part in helping to minimise the harmful effects of traffic circulation in seeking a place to park. See also section 11.7, action15.

Other potential digital interventions appropriate for our town will also be explored to help visitors' get to their destination quickly.

### 15.5 Waterless Car Valeting

TWBC introduced a valeting service for customers in the Royal Victoria Place car park during 2013. This offers car washing without the use of water. This has been very successful and a further dry car valeting service commenced in September 2014 in the Crescent Road car park. Other such opportunities will be sought during the life of this Parking Strategy.

### 15.6 Reduction of free parking on-street

The many free parking bays and space on unrestricted streets in the town can result in people circling an area seeking somewhere to park which is undesirable on environmental and traffic management grounds. This Parking Strategy will remove the incentive to look for free on-street parking space by implementing further restrictions outlined in this Parking Strategy and summarised below:

- Introduce more residential permit zones based on demand(2016-2020)
- Reduce the amount of shared space on existing permit zones (2016-2020)
- Identify and introduce restrictions and on-street parking charges in uncontrolled areas (2018-2020)

## 16 PARKING SPACE FOR THE FUTURE

An urban study of parking space needs was carried out by consultants in 2010/11 that predicted there would be a need for about an additional 300 parking spaces in the south of the town in the future.

Whilst no public feedback has been received of a potential shortage of space it is recognised that extra spaces in the south of the town could possibly better support residents and businesses in that area. Therefore, use of this model using current data may assist in predicting future parking requirements and this will be explored in 2016.

Opportunities for more car parks are currently being explored and if and when considered necessary will be incorporated within the Implementation Programme.

As the economy continues to improve and with more anticipated future developments in Royal Tunbridge Wells parking demand is likely to increase. Flexibility is a key component of this Parking Strategy to help meet the challenges of change. It will allow us to reprioritise work based on emerging and future developments where neither timescales nor space requirement is known at the time of producing this document.

The urban car parks provide nearly 3,800 public parking spaces. An average of 1,100 spaces is taken up by season ticket holders, with a further 100+ planned for 2016 to meet the rising demand for long term parking. This will leave approximately 2,500 spaces for visitor parking. For most of the year, these car parks have an average occupancy of 71%, with some at peak times reaching 85%. Many reach full or near full capacity on the key shopping days such as Black Friday, pre-Christmas period, during Sales and any special events. **See Appendix A** for occupancy data.

Most of the town centre car parks have spaces available off-peak and this will be taken into account when reviewing tariffs to encourage people to park on car parks instead of on-street. In particular more favourable tariffs at off-peak times will help those vehicles displaced from actions outlined within this Parking strategy in introducing additional and improved on-street parking controls.

Flexibility is a key component of this Parking Strategy. It enables us to reprioritise work based on emerging and future developments where neither timescales nor space requirement is known at the time of producing this document.

The future of the shared space public realm project could also mean changes to traffic routes, parking provision and enforcement. Parking Services are currently reviewing improved enforcement of the Fiveways to reduce unauthorised use and will continue to support all such projects in the future.

The Council's Parking, Planning, Economic Development and Sustainability Services will work together to ensure the impact of decisions is fully assessed using data modelling if possible. This will enable adjustments to the Parking Strategy where necessary to ensure it support the Council's strategic goals.

# 17 TOWN COUNCILS

## 17.1 Southborough

Southborough lies immediately to the north of Tunbridge Wells and approximately 3 miles south of Tonbridge. The bulk of the town straddles the A26, London Road. Much of High Brooms also falls within Southborough. The town has an overall population of approximately 12,000.

A high proportion of the town's retail premises are situated along the A26 with other commercial uses being predominantly based on the High Brooms Industrial Estate which is accessed from North Farm Road. High Brooms railway station, which lies immediately outside the ward boundary, is also on North Farm Road and provides mainline services to London and the coast at Hastings.

Three publicly accessible car parks are situated in this area with Yew Tree Road one being the largest, owned and managed by the borough council, providing 64 spaces. The present charging structure allows free parking for the first two hours. Season tickets are also available, at special rates for residents and local workers.

The car park at Pennington Grounds is owned and managed by the Town Council. No charge is made and it therefore attracts all day parkers leaving little space for turnover to support local needs.

The third car park is situated in High Brooms Road with 10 spaces managed by TWBC for use by season ticket holders, with only local residents currently being eligible.

Smaller private car parks, including one at High Brooms Station provide rail customer parking.

Known parking issues in Southborough include:-

- Short term parking along A26, London Road resulting in congestion – this will continue to be monitored to ensure appropriate enforcement. This is addressed in Section 11.
- Parking on footways on A26, London Road – footway parking will be reviewed and appropriate actions taken to rectify. This is addressed in Section 8.
- Many residential properties in side streets do not have off-street parking facilities. This can result in difficulties for those living in the areas concerned both during the day and evening. We will seek ways to maximise parking for those concerned. This will be addressed in Section 7.6
- Conflict between residential and commuter parking in High Brooms, particularly near to the station. This is addressed in section 7.6.
- Some traffic flow problems may be attributable to on-street parking. This will be addressed jointly with KCC - see section 11.
- Parent parking near St Matthew's High Brooms Primary School raises safety concerns – We will address this with KCC when identifying more schools across the borough for CCTV enforcement.

## **ACTION 21 – Southborough Review**

**(Meets objective OB1 and OB2)**

- ✓ Assess demand for permit parking
- ✓ Review parking space provision
- ✓ Review restriction interventions in conjunction with KCC

### **Timescale**

Reviews: 2017-2018

Implementation: tba

Note: See High Brooms permit parking in Action Number 7.

## **17.2 Paddock Wood**

The town of Paddock Wood is situated approximately six miles to the north-east of Tunbridge Wells and has a population of just over 8,000. A mainline railway station, which has its own 480 space car park, attracts a significant number of vehicles to the town centre. Local employment is, in broad terms, split between retail premises and professional services to the south of the railway and the relatively large industrial estate to the north of the line at Transfesa.

The borough council operate two public car parks in the town, one either side of Commercial Road, with the same charging structure in both. This allows an initial free period to help support local trade. Season tickets are also available in the western car park.

Tariffs and car wash facilities are two areas that will be reviewed in 2016.

Waitrose operate a supermarket in the town for which there is a car park but, other than these facilities, parking largely takes place on street. Because the through route along Maidstone Road by-passes the town centre, parking is less of a problem in terms of creating congestion. Commercial Road does suffer from traffic flow issues at times although this is generally caused by short-term parking in contravention of existing restrictions.

Whilst regular enforcement takes place in the area, Commercial Road continues to see unauthorised parking even though there is some free parking on two adjacent car parks. TWBC will continue to work with KCC to find remedies to address parking behaviour on-street.

To address problems arising out of commuter parking on nearby residential streets, a RPZ was introduced covering the following streets:

- Bowles Place
- Church Road
- Commercial Road
- Kent Close
- Maidstone Road
- Mount Pleasant

- Nursery Road
- Old Kent Road
- St. Andrews Place
- St. Andrews Road
- Station Road

Certain restrictions have also been tailored to prevent daytime parking in unsuitable locations near the station.

**ACTION NO. 22 – Paddock Wood RPZ**

**(Meets objective OB1)**

- ✓ Review the provision of permit holder parking.
- ✓ Consider possibilities of its extension into other streets in liaison with KCC

**Timescale**

Implementation: Possibly phased between 2017 and 2019 (dependent on KCC)

There are also some known parking issues in Paddock Wood that we are currently working to address and include:-

**High level of non-compliance with restrictions in Commercial Road causes congestion.**

We will consider altering restrictions to provide additional dedicated disabled bays, the introduction of footway parking restrictions to enable more effective enforcement and more frequent patrols.

**Parking on Maidstone Road north of the railway bridge causing congestion.**

In conjunction with KCC we will monitor the situation to establish if additional restrictions are required.

**Potentially large residential developments over the coming years are likely to place significant pressures on parking within the town centre and the peripheral residential streets.**

Parking Services will comment on relevant planning applications where parking in the town or residential areas is potentially adversely affected, making recommendations accordingly.

## 18 PARISH COUNCILS AND RURAL AREAS

Outside Royal Tunbridge Wells, the borough is a predominantly rural area with nearly 20 hamlets and villages plus the towns of Cranbrook, Southborough and Paddock Wood. Parking is an issue in several of these settlements, although only a few are currently subject to restrictions and/or have off-street parking facilities. Surface car parks:

- Brenchley 10 spaces (one disabled)
- Northgrove, Hawkhurst 34 spaces
- Goudhurst 24 spaces (one disabled)
- Regal, Cranbrook 319 spaces (19 disabled)
- Jockey Lane, Cranbrook 44 spaces (one disabled)
- Tanyard, Cranbrook 89 spaces (4 disabled+Mother & Child)

### 18.1 Cranbrook

Cranbrook is situated towards the eastern end of the borough. It is a popular tourist destination with a retail area centred on the High Street and Stone Street. Three public car parks are available at Tanyard (89 spaces), Jockey Lane (44 spaces) and The Regal (319 spaces). The latter also serves the towns Co-Op Supermarket and has bus and coach facilities.

The Parish Council is responsible for all car parks which offer free parking and parking enforcement is provided by TWBC on the Tanyard and the Regal car parks.

The town has extensive waiting restrictions throughout its centre, largely necessitated by narrow streets. Time limited on-street parking is available in the High Street. The busy nature of central Cranbrook means that congestion does occur from time to time. There are high levels of on-street parking on the Frythe Way estate, including an element of footway parking which is partly controlled by concrete verges.

All on-street restrictions are being reviewed at the time of preparing this document and proposals will be submitted to the Joint Transportation Board in 2016.

### 18.2 Hawkhurst

In terms of size, Hawkhurst is the next largest settlement. Intersected by the A229 and A268, a high volume of traffic passes through the village and parking controls are in place to minimise congestion. Fortunately, the stretch of road adjoining the parade of shops in Rye Road is relatively wide and allows some on-street parking to take place without impacting on overall traffic flow.

One public car park is provided by TWBC in North Grove Road which has 34 spaces and very little turnover. It is proposed in Stage one of this parking strategy that this car park will mainly serve local residents or workers controlled by a permit system with a few spaces maintained for short stay shoppers.

The village has two small supermarkets, each with its own off-street parking facilities. Residential parking on the A229, Cranbrook Road has long been a source of concern because of its impact on through traffic but presence of signals at the main road intersection is the primary cause of delays of which KCC are aware.

### 18.3 Other Parish Councils

TWBC also operates public car parks in Goudhurst (24 spaces but currently proposed for transfer to the Parish Council) and Brenchley (10 spaces). Parish Councils operate public car parking facilities in Bidborough and Lamberhurst.

On-street parking will continue to be monitored by the borough and KCC and controlled as and when necessary within the limitations of enforcement capabilities.

Parking Services and KCC will monitor all significant development in rural settlements to ensure that any which may generate parking problems will have mitigation measures in place wherever possible.

## 19 ENFORCEMENT OUTSIDE URBAN TWBC

Currently, outside Royal Tunbridge Wells, enforceable restrictions are in place in Brenchley, Five Oak Green, Frittenden, Horsmonden, Paddock Wood, Pembury, Sandhurst, Sissinghurst, Southborough and Speldhurst.

Where a Traffic Regulation Order has been made, School Keep Clear markings are enforced by TWBC using its CCTV equipped safety car. Known parking issues in the remainder of the borough include:-

- Parking on footways, especially in Goudhurst and Sissinghurst.
- Parking associated with schools in Speldhurst, Pembury, Lamberhurst, Colliers Green and Curtisden Green.
- Parking on A229, Cranbrook Road, and Hawkhurst causing delays to through traffic.
- Parking near crossroads in the centre of Horsmonden has been a cause of some highway safety concerns

Key points in respect of parking outside Tunbridge Wells urban area include:

- An equitable amount of enforcement is provided by TWBC and the availability of staff resource is a major consideration when new restrictions are suggested away from existing patrol areas.
- The knock-on effects of new restrictions will be considered carefully to avoid simply moving a problem from one street to another.
- Parking Services will be made aware of potential development sites to offer advice over parking issues which may arise.
- Resident parking schemes will be monitored to ensure efficient operation.
- Parking charges will take into account local circumstances.

Parking provision and enforcement in all areas outside urban Tunbridge Wells will be reviewed throughout the term of this Strategy. Parking Services will work with Parish and Town Council's where possible to help resolve parking issues.

## 20 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARKING STRATEGY

This Parking Strategy's four key objectives and the actions identified have been based primarily on public feedback from the draft Parking Strategy consultation in 2015. Combined with other feedback from members of the public, the observations of the Parking Services team and their expertise in parking management, engineering and legislation knowledge, has led to identifying these four key objectives from which a series of actions evolved, outlined in an Implementation Programme at **Appendix B**.

### 20.1 Implementation Timetable

It is planned to deliver the four key objectives across three Implementation Stages:

- Stage one: 2016 to 2018
- Stage two: 2019 to 2022
- Stage three: 2023 to 2026

### 20.2 Stage Reports

Leading up to the start of each Stage a Project Plan will be prepared to ensure that:

- Any new emerging actions to deal with unknown situations e.g. change in legislation, political steer, technology and any other interventions will be recorded and Stage Plans adjusted accordingly.
- Reprioritisation of actions if necessary to meet the challenges of change.
- A project plan is prepared highlighting resource needed to ensure the next stage meets its specified timeframe.

### 20.3 Annual Reports

An Annual Plan will be produced and published on our website at the beginning of each financial year summarising progress and any necessary changes to the Implementation Programme.

The Implementation Programme at Appendix B will also include the source of funding to support the proposals made within this Parking Strategy.

## 21 FINANCIAL RESOURCE AND EQUALITY IMPACT

### 21.1 Finance

Parking Services owns and/or operates 26 car parks throughout the borough, 12 of which are free and located outside Royal Tunbridge Wells. The car parks where fees and enforcement revenue is received provides for the maintenance and management of all car park facilities as well as future investment.

On-street parking enforcement is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the TMA 2004 legislation. This states that on-street enforcement services should aim to pay for themselves, and that any surplus made must only be reinvested in related services. As Tunbridge Wells Borough Council enforce on behalf of KCC the decision on how any surplus can be spent is made jointly.

The budget and capital reserves for 2016/17 covers all costs associated with the actions identified, including staff resource.

As first stage projects progress and more actions commence over the term of this Parking Strategy, any additional funding identified will be subject to agreement in the appropriate budget year.

Source of funding is shown against each action in the Implementation Programme at Appendix B.

### 21.2 Equality Impact

Each action has been assessed and there is no apparent equality impact on end users.

## 22 CONCLUSIONS

Parking Services has identified four key objectives derived from comments made by various stakeholders. Many actions have been outlined in this Parking Strategy to address the objectives, culminating in an Implementation Programme. Annual and Stage reviews will provide updates against the programme.

Many of the actions proposed will require public consultation and appropriate approvals, and change to the Implementation Programme is therefore inevitable. New developments, technology, legislation, the economy are four other key areas that can impact on the Implementation Programme and will be highlighted in regular progress reports.

This structured approach prioritises actions to deliver improved services for residents, businesses and visitors, whilst maintaining a flexible implementation programme to deal with the challenges of change.

## 23 APPENDIX A – OCCUPANCY SUMMARY 2014/15

Occupancy Summary - 2014/15													
Car Park	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Avg. per car park
Crescent Road	75%	77%	81%	81%	77%	81%	91%	101%	112%	89%	98%	91%	<b>88%</b>
Great Hall	66%	63%	58%	59%	68%	71%	74%	82%	85%	74%	69%	71%	<b>70%</b>
Meadow Road	29%	30%	29%	31%	32%	32%	33%	38%	47%	35%	36%	33%	<b>34%</b>
RVP	54%	56%	51%	54%	57%	56%	62%	67%	71%	60%	60%	60%	<b>59%</b>
Torrington	77%	70%	70%	73%	61%	75%	82%	87%	87%	85%	91%	92%	<b>79%</b>
Linden Park Road	57%	63%	60%	63%	67%	62%	57%	61%	56%	41%	53%	58%	<b>58%</b>
Union House	43%	46%	43%	44%	46%	43%	45%	46%	54%	47%	50%	52%	<b>47%</b>
Beech Street	49%	49%	50%	48%	52%	53%	55%	56%	55%	54%	55%	50%	<b>52%</b>
Camden Road	106%	105%	109%	118%	106%	118%	128%	129%	144%	127%	125%	122%	<b>120%</b>
Little Mount Sion	97%	100%	101%	95%	100%	93%	102%	102%	102%	107%	107%	109%	<b>101%</b>
<b>Avg. per month</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>71%</b>

**Notes:** The average occupancy rate is calculated on pay and display and phone transactions by hour from 8am to 8pm daily. It does not account for the highs and lows throughout a day, nor does it take account of the numbers of vehicles already parked before 8am or after 6pm.

Most of these key car parks supporting the town centre have peaked to a fairly high level by 11.30am and begin to slowly decrease after 3pm.

Weekend occupancy in the main is lower than week-days which is also reflected in these averages. Where more than 100% occupancy is shown this is attributable to two factors:

## 24 APPENDIX B IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

\*More detailed information can be found by moving to the Parking Strategy's section number.

Action No	Action Title	*Brief description of key Actions	Objectives met	Section No. of Parking Strategy	Timescales Stage 1 2016-2018	**Timescales Stage 2 2019-2022	**Timescales Stage 3 2023-2026	Funded from
1	RPZ 'A' – Alignment of Public Parking space	Align all the time limited public parking within residential zone to a maximum of one hour.	OB1	7.1	2016/17			To be included in budget years
2	Amendment to RPZ A	Extend the hours of restrictions and reduce the level of sharing residents' spaces with the public, assessing also the possibility of a zone expansion.	OB1 and OB2	7.1	2016/17			To be included in budget year
3	Amendment to RPZ B	Extend the hours of restrictions and reduce the level of sharing residents' spaces with the public, assessing also the possibility of a zone expansion.	OB1 and OB2	7.2	2017/18			To be included budget year
4	Amendment to RPZ C	Extend the hours of restrictions and reduce the level of sharing residents' spaces with the public, assessing also the possibility of a zone expansion.	OB1 and OB2	7.3	2016/17/18			To be included in budget years
5	Amendment to RPZ D	Extend restriction times and reduce level of shared parking.	OB1 and OB2	7.4	2017/19	2017/2019		To be included in appropriate budget years
6	Amendment to RPZ G	Realign the zone to provide more residents parking spaces and introduce visitor permits.	OB1	7.5	2016/17			To be included in budget year
7	Review RPZ HB and possible extension	Review and possible expansion of zone with variation of restrictions to combat the high level of commuter parking in residential roads.	OB1 and OB2	7.6 17.1	2016/17 2017/18	2018/19		Part included n 2016/17 budget. Following years to be included in appropriate budgets
8	Residents' Parking Policy Review	Revise the policy to help improve parking for residential permit holders by considering alternative	OB4	7.8	2016/17			Cost neutral

Action No	Action Title	*Brief description of key Actions	Objectives met	Section No. of Parking Strategy	Timescales Stage 1 2016-2018	**Timescales Stage 2 2019-2022	**Timescales Stage 3 2023-2026	Funded from
		options.						
9	Footway Parking Review	In liaison with KCC commence a review of footway parking to establish a suitable restriction and effective enforcement methods.	OB2	8.0 17.1	2016/17	2018/2019		To be included in appropriate budget years
10	Vehicle Access Markings	To offer vehicle access markings to protect access to the driveways of residents and businesses.	OB2	9.0	2016			Self financing as this is a chargeable service
11	Area surveys – Traffic Flow	Surveys of streets identified by the public as causing traffic flow problems. Information from the surveys could lead to alternative or new restrictions being implemented.	OB2	10.0 17.1	2016/17 2017/18	2018/19		Carried out by in-house team – extra staff member already budgeted.
12	Unrestricted street review	Prepare a phased programme to review parking on unrestricted streets that cause safety or congestion issues or problems for residential parking, in the town and Southborough.	OB2	10.2 17.1 17.2	Phased between 2017/21	Phased between 2017/21		Carried out by in-house team – extra staff member already budgeted.
13	Implement a Parking Policy	In liaison with KCC prepare a Parking Policy including guidelines for members of the public use.	OB4	10.3	2016/17			Costs absorbed within staff budget.
14	Park Mark Award	Preparation two more car parks for assessment and award.	OB3	11.5	2016/17 (John St)		2019/20 (Union Hse)	Stage 1 included in 2016/17 budget. Budget for subsequent years will be required.
15	Variable Message Sign system	Working with KCC to install a replacement variable message sign system for key car parks – Crescent, RVP, Meadow, Torrington	OB2 and OB3	11.7	2016/17			Funded by KCC

Action No	Action Title	*Brief description of key Actions	Objectives met	Section No. of Parking Strategy	Timescales Stage 1 2016-2018	**Timescales Stage 2 2019-2022	**Timescales Stage 3 2023-2026	Funded from
16	Install Wi-fi on RVP	Procure and install wi-fi on parts of RVP to enable mobile coverage to support phone payments.	OB3	12.2	2016			Included in 2016/17 budget
17	Post Payment on RVP	Implementation of the post payment (check-in/check-out) system on RVP. (It's purchase was approved by Cabinet in February 2016)	OB3 and OB4	12.3	2016/17			Capital approved in 2015
18	Car park refurbishment	Car park improvement plan for Crescent Road car park including LED lighting	OB3	12.6	2017/18	2018/2019		Some capital approved from Invest to Save fund, some from the Car Park Improvement reserve that is funded by car parking revenue
19	Virtual permits	Procurement and implementation of a replacement self-serve virtual permit system.	OB4	14.6	2016/17			Cost neutral
20	Self-serve appeal system	Procurement and Installation of a self-serve parking appeal system as an extension to current parking correspondence system.	OB4	14.2	2016/17			Supplier providing this new service as a complimentary extension to an existing correspondence system.
21	Southborough	Review of traffic flow and residential areas identifying with KCC interventions for improvements.	OB1 and OB2	17.1	2017/2018			To be confirmed, but possibly part funded by sale of permits or accounted for in appropriate budget year.
22	Paddock Wood - RPZ	Review provision of resident parking including possible extension into unrestricted streets. (see also action 12).	OB1 and OB2	17.2	2017/2019	2017/2019		To be accounted for in appropriate budget year - possibility of S106 funding and some costs offset by sale of permits

\*More detailed information can be found by moving to the Parking Strategy's section number.

Stages two and three allow space to insert future projects to support inevitable change, unknown at the point of preparing this Implementation Programme.

Funding for most projects will be allocated from parking revenue or surplus and accounted for within the appropriate budget year.