

3 Roads and Parking Strategies

3.1 Introduction and Overall Strategy

This chapter develops a number of specific highway measures that could complement sustainable transport measures in reducing congestion and delivering environmental improvements in the Borough. Parking strategy and traffic calming are also reviewed.

3.2 Wider Strategic Schemes and Strategies

3.2.1 A21 Castle Hill to Pembury Dualling

The section of A21 between the Tonbridge Bypass and Longfield Road is the last section of single carriageway between the M25 and Tunbridge Wells.

The intention of the Highways Agency is to:

- *Upgrade this section of the A21 to address the poor crash record and the severe congestion currently experienced throughout the day and particularly at peak times. The improvement will broadly follow the line of the existing A21 and will be to dual 2-lane carriageway standard with a grade-separated junction at Longfield Road at the southern end of the scheme.*
- *Provide a separate footpath/cycleway throughout the length of the scheme extended to a new footpath/cycleway bridge across the A21 at the northern end of the Pembury Bypass*

It is expected that construction will commence in September 2010, with anticipated completion of the £65 million scheme by 2011 (SEERA).

KCC/Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells should continue to support early delivery of this scheme by the Highways Agency.

3.2.2 A228 Colt's Hill Strategic Link – Dampiers Corner (B2017) to Pembury Northern Bypass

The section of A228 between the B2017 and the Pembury Northern Bypass is the last section of the A228 to be upgraded. Currently this section of road is generally less than 6 metres wide with known safety problems. The intention is that once complete the A228 will become the primary route between Mereworth (current junction with the A26) and the A21.

This £20 million scheme involves the provision of a new single carriageway road with climbing lanes to the east of Colt's Hill village. The Government has not rejected the bids made, but did not consider it an immediate priority for funding.

It is recommended that Mid Kent/ West Kent Divisional Offices should continue to support this scheme if there is any realistic chance of securing it.

Given the delays associated with this scheme, it may be worth considering localised lower cost improvements in the interim that would enable the strategic primary road function to be transferred from the A26 to the A228 south of Mereworth and deliver benefits to residents of Hadlow and Tonbridge.

3.2.3 Downgrading the A227

The County Council's strategy is to ultimately downgrade the A227 to a secondary B class road between the A2 and Tonbridge. The intention is that the A228 will serve the needs of strategic traffic between Northwest and Southwest Kent, with the former A227 fulfilling a local role.

Revised route signing strategies in conjunction with this proposal should result in a reduction of traffic entering Tonbridge along the A227 where it is more likely to use the High Street to access car parks or travel further afield. It could also help reduce traffic on connecting links between the A227 and A26 such as the Ridgeway used by motorists to access the A26.

3.3 Local Town Centre Schemes and Strategies

3.3.1 Hadlow Road, London Road Link, Tonbridge

This link road is expected to run from a revised junction at A227, B245 London Road to A26 Cannon Lane, Hadlow Road. The spreadsheet model will be used to determine the impact of roundabouts or traffic signals at either end of this proposed link road.

The model is also being used to assess the use of the road if Hadlow Road (South) /Bordyke is left open or closed at the junction of Hadlow Road and Cannon Lane.

A concern is that if Hadlow Road (South) remains open at this junction then some traffic headed for the town centre will continue to use Hadlow Road (South) and East Street/ Lyons Crescent as a short-cut.

Testing of this option in the Tonbridge Spreadsheet Model will enable the benefits of the scheme to be assessed and options for its junctions to be considered quantitatively in transportation terms in the context of the LDF in addition to the opportunities that the scheme opens up for environmental improvements in the High Street and along the Bordyke and Dry Hill Park Road/Yardley Park Road.

3.3.2 Lansdowne Road Link, Tonbridge

This short link road is anticipated to run from the Slade to Lansdowne Road relieving traffic from the narrow one-way streets around the Castle – namely Bank Street and Castle Street. This will increase usage of Lansdowne Road at its junction with the High Street, but on its own will reduce flows using the northern part of the High Street.

This scheme is likely to require some adjustment to the traffic signal timings to ensure that Lansdowne Road receives appropriate green time.

Testing of this option in the Tonbridge Spreadsheet Model should allow conclusions to be reached on the degree of transportation benefit there is to support the environmental improvements that such a scheme will make possible in Castle Street, Bank Street and the Slade.

3.3.3 Medway Wharf Road/ High Street junction, Tonbridge

The model is also being used to examine the impact of two options:

- *Closing Medway Wharf Road at its junction with the High Street.*
- *Making Medway Wharf one-way entry only (from the north) at the High Street junction.*

The aim of these schemes would be to deter use of the High Street for vehicles accessing the prime town centre car park sites, and instead encourage greater use of Vale Road, Cannon Lane and the London Road/Hadlow Road link road (when built).

Testing of this option in the Tonbridge Spreadsheet Model will enable an assessment to be made of how best to reconfigure traffic movements at this junction.

3.3.4 Town Centre Parking Strategies

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has reviewed on and off street parking provision in the town, taking the opportunity to transfer some parking stock from long stay to short stay operation. This policy should continue to be pursued in that commuters should be encouraged to use sustainable transport provision. This in turn will help to reduce the size of the AM and PM highway peaks. However there is a need to maintain short stay parking stock to ensure that the vitality of the town centre is encouraged.

3.3.5 Traffic Calming in northern Tonbridge

The provision of the Hadlow Road/London Road Link will help to remove significant volumes of traffic from residential roads such as Dry Hill Park Road, Yardley Park Road and The Ridgeway. To ensure that induced traffic does not swallow this released capacity it will be important to reduce the attractiveness of these routes to through traffic by subtle enhancement of the residential character of the streetscape.