

TEDDINGTON SOCIETY AGM – 2004/5 ROADS & TRANSPORT Report.

1. Introduction

There have been two major developments over the last year which were outside the control of the R&T Group. One, the Council employing many contract engineers rather than maintaining the previous full time transport engineers that we have worked so successfully with over the last few years. This has led to a number of problems arising from a lack of continuity, exacerbated by the long standing failure to establish a standardised systematic approach to consultation and planning for all transport issues. Two, the failure to involve residents in the early stages of preparation of the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) documentation, exacerbated yet again, by excessive secrecy and complete disregard of the Residents' recommendations made in the Teddington Study Parking Report (see www.teddingtonsociety.org.uk for full details of Report).

2. Community parking spaces and CPZs – Council policy change required

At present, every inch of kerb space is automatically included in a CPZ, irrespective of whether it is outside a house or shop, or is "community" parking space in a section of road with no houses or shops, for example, by a flank wall, railway line, or park. The effect of this anomaly, is that residents end up with far more spaces than they need, and significant vehicle displacement to adjacent roads which previously did not have parking problems becomes inevitable. If the Council's CPZ design parameters were to be changed to automatically exclude all such "community" parking spaces, and strictly limit any CPZ boundary to house and shop frontages, vehicle displacement in all CPZs across the Borough would be minimised. The possibility of small, tightly defined essential CPZs becoming acceptable to neighbouring areas, could then become a reality, the inexorable spread of CPZs would be halted, and fragile local shopping centres would be protected.

3. Teddington Controlled Parking Zone "consultation" – round one.

Residents who had worked so hard to make the Teddington Town Centre Study such a success were promised that they would be fully consulted about any documentation to be used for the Teddington consultation on Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs). In the event, not a single resident was consulted about the CPZ document that was used for February 2004 "consultation". A crowded Walpole Crescent with its Ford garage (hardly a typical Teddington Road), was featured on the front cover, and much of the rest of the very bulky document seemed to be geared to encouraging residents to believe that a CPZ would be good for Teddington. Not only that, the CPZ consultation was timed to coincide with the Teddington residents' and businesses' campaign to save the North Lane overflow car park, possibly to exploit residents' concerns about loss of parking and maximise the pro-CPZ vote. In the event, only 465 (11.1%) out of the 4184 households consulted, voted for a CPZ.

The Teddington Study Residents' Parking sub-Committee had found very little support for CPZs in Teddington, estimated at about 6% overall. The Council allowed both paper and electronic voting in the first round, so double counting cannot be ruled out, but 11.1% seems a reasonable figure for the area selected for consultation, as it included the "hotspots" either side of the station and around Somerset Gardens, and excluded all roads towards the river. Out of the 71 roads consulted in Teddington, only two roads, Victoria Road (51.6%) and Walpole Crescent (61.5%), exceeded 50% support for a CPZ.

The initial findings of the CPZ consultation exercise were reported to the 26th May 2004 Transport Consultative Group (TCG) meeting. As a result of representations from some Victoria Road residents, Cabinet member Cllr Mark Kreling approved limited re-consultation on CPZs. Only Adelaide Road, Albert Road, Blackmores Grove, Bridgeman Road, Cedar Road, Christchurch Avenue, Coleshill Road (part), Somerset Gardens, St Mary's Avenue, Victoria Road, and Walpole Crescent met the 50% of 30% of households in favour rule

required for further consultation. The TCG Agenda, summaries of returns, and Minutes, are on the Council website and on <www.Teddington-online.co.uk>.

3. Teddington CPZ consultation – round 2 – misleading information may make consultation invalid.

A very serious problem has arisen from the inclusion of incorrect information in the parking questionnaire about how the percentage criteria work. It says that 50% of questionnaires have to be returned, and 33% of households consulted must be in favour of a CPZ to progress proposals. This is not the case, at least 33% of households must be in favour of a CPZ, **and** that 33% must exceed 50% of the total number of completed questionnaires returned. Under these criteria, it is quite possible for votes from as few as 33% of households to trigger off the CPZ implementation procedure – the Society would prefer a more democratic 50% plus of households in favour. Residents have certainly been misled into believing that non-return of a questionnaire is equivalent to a NO vote – it most definitely is not. We await details of the returns before deciding the next course of action.

The residents from Victoria Road who gave evidence in favour of a two hour CPZ at the 26th May TCG meeting have also sought support from residents of surrounding roads with little success. Whilst there was some sympathy, understandably, no-one was willing to put up with the cost, unsightly signage, and inconvenience of a CPZ. I have subsequently met with these residents to seek a possible solution to their parking problems. They made it quite clear that they were only seeking parking outside their houses, and did not want, or need, any of the “community” parking spaces around the station. Examination of the whole area and parking patterns, indicates that an early morning two-hour CPZ, which excludes all “community” parking spaces, could be introduced with minimal displacement. A situation acceptable to the Teddington Society, and almost certainly to neighbours in nearby roads.

In giving evidence at the Transport Consultative Group (TCG) meeting on 26th May, the Parking Officer said that “if Victoria Road [by the station], and Coleshill Road [by the hospital] were to become CPZs, the whole of central Teddington would have to become a CPZ”. Being an experienced engineer, he knew, of course, that inclusion in CPZs of the 80 or so “community” parking spaces around the station, and the 45 or so in Coleshill Road would create displacement to surrounding roads, and a demand for a string of extra CPZs to be introduced. The displacement effect is out of all proportion to the relatively small number of parking spaces initially involved. The Teddington Society is totally opposed to the inclusion of any community parking spaces in any residents only parking zone. The Society’s major concern is to protect our fragile shopping centres from loss of business due to the disappearance of the extra shoppers’ parking necessary during periods of high demand on the very limited parking spaces on and around Broad Street and the High Street.

Finally, we did ask Officers to carry out a series of actions prior to the second round consultation, with a view to reducing, or completely solving, some of Teddington’s parking problems. Unfortunately, none of these have been carried out, and residents who are not Teddington Society members will not be aware that some simple, low cost solutions, are in the pipeline, and may have voted for a CPZ when one will not be needed.

4. Doubling rail services to Richmond and beyond

The R&T Group has been writing to all and sundry to seek support for its proposal that the Silverlink Shuttle between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction should start at Kingston, stopping at Hampton Wick, Teddington, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, and fast from Richmond to Clapham Junction. New stations at Chelsea Harbour and Shepherds Bush are already planned, West Brompton and Olympia already exist, and the possibility of a terminus at Paddington or Euston should not be ruled out. Watch Tidings for more news.

Brian Holder 5th April 2005