

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

PARKING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

**Held on Tuesday, 30 March 2010 at 3.15 pm in
Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mrs S.M. Matthews (Chairman)	Mr D.G. Mortimer
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr B. Rose
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mr K. Martin	

Also Present

Mr A.P. Joel

In Attendance

Mark Broughton	- Scrutiny Officer
Sheila Cresswell	- Committee Officer

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16/10 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17/10 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs P. Quadling.

18/10 FINAL REPORT - ATTLEBOROUGH (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Scrutiny Officer (SO) presented his report which incorporated issues raised at previous meetings. He drew Members' attention to:

- the two possible approaches to Recommendation 5 (concerning the proportion of long/short stay spaces to be available at each car park); and
- a letter received from a resident of Great Ellingham (addressed personally to a Member of the Group), raising concerns that any parking restrictions imposed in Attleborough should include appropriate facilities for disabled parking.

The SO added that disabled parking would be covered as an integral part of any Parking Orders, and that the aim was to regularise the regime across all three car parks in Attleborough. It was usual to exclude vehicles displaying valid disabled badges from any time limits. He also confirmed that any re-design of the Queen's Square car park would conform to current regulations on the provision for disabled parking.

A Member also pointed out that since the last meeting he had seen traffic wardens patrolling the streets of Attleborough. He assumed that they were being funded by the Town Council but

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was not sure about the details of any contract etc..

The Chairman reminded the Group that the primary concerns for Attleborough were to encourage a good turnover of parking in the town centre in order to aid access to shops and services. These views echoed those of the Town Council, whose priority was to facilitate turnover - not least as this would also help with traffic congestion.

The Group then went through the recommendations, with highlights of discussion listed below.

Recommendation 4

There was discussion about the proposed length of stay, with 2 hours being considered as possibly too short. Whilst many visitors would only need to pop briefly in and out of the centre, others might prefer to tie shopping in with specific town centre appointments etc. It was therefore agreed that a 3 hour limit would be more helpful. In the vast majority of cases, spaces would not actually be needed for that long, so effective turnover would still be achieved.

The SO confirmed that there would be signs placed in each car park to indicate the time frames and fines which would be levied.

Recommendation 5

There were arguments in favour of 5(a) (which proposed keeping Queen's Square and Horse Pit car parks entirely short-stay, with Edenside being designated specifically to cater for long-stay parking), since this reflected much of the survey work and general local feedback.

However, Members were conscious of the need to provide a realistic amount of long stay parking too, as a means of practical support for local businesses, many of whose employees travelled by car.

Some Members felt that, whatever was finally proposed, it would be sensible to have a review at the end of six months to see if it was working effectively. Whilst others believed that, once implemented, any proposals should be set in place and not open for further discussion, at least for the immediate future.

There was also some discussion about whether the recommendations for Attleborough should, in principle at least, be rolled out across the other towns. However it was acknowledged that Attleborough had very specific problems, so a 'one size fits all' approach would probably not be feasible across the District.

As highlighted in earlier meetings, the amount, scope and general uncertainty about future developments in each town would also play a role in terms of the potential impact on parking needs and requirements. It was hoped, for example, that as towns expanded, so local bus services would evolve in support of local

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communities. For current purposes, however, the Group's recommendations needed to focus on alleviating the short to medium-term problems of local residents and visitors.

Option 5(b) (whereby Edenside would have 50:50 long/short stay parking; the Horse Pit would be designated completely short stay; and Queen's Square should have a mix, with a third of slots available for long stay), was therefore seen as a more realistic solution, bearing in mind the overall needs and the amount and location of space physically available in Attleborough.

Recommendation 6

The SO explained that whilst the Council could contact J Sainsbury Ltd to request that they remind their staff about arranged parking facilities at the Connaught Hall, the Council was not in a position to follow this up with any enforcement. However, he hoped that the introduction of formal short-term parking in local car parks would help to naturally re-focus minds on this.

Recommendation 14

It was noted that there had been recent publicity about the possibility of further funding being made available for improved bus services along the A11 corridor.

Recommendation 15

The group acknowledged the tensions caused between the requirement for planners to comply with central government guidelines, particularly with regard to town centre developments, as opposed to a more realistic local approach which acknowledged the reality that many town dwellers owned cars. However a Member pointed out that PP3 had recently been amended to enable a slightly more practical approach to local planning.

RECOMMENDED: that the proposals in the Final report attached to the Agenda be taken forward to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission for consideration and support, as follows:

- Recommendations 1 – 3 Agreed, as written.
- Recommendation 4 Agreed, but with the short term limit changed from 2 to 3 hours.
- Recommendation 5 Agreed to accept recommendation **5(b)**, as written.
- Recommendations 6 - 17 Agreed, as written.

19/10 FURTHER WORK (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Chairman thanked and complimented the Scrutiny Officer and Members for their work thus far. Feedback received, both from other interested parties and members of the public who had attended meetings, had largely been appreciative in terms of the focus and amount of work which had been put into reviewing the parking facilities in Attleborough.

She then reminded Members that they had an ongoing remit to consider off-street parking in the other towns in the District.

It was felt that since there was a lot focus and uncertainty about Thetford at the moment, and that both Dereham and Swaffham had some measures of control currently in existence, it would therefore make sense for the Group to focus on Watton for the next phase of its discussions, before turning attention to Thetford later in the year.

20/10 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 7)

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 18 May at 10.00 a.m. in Dereham.

As the first meeting on Watton, this would be held in closed session.

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The meeting closed at 4.05 pm

CHAIRMAN