

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**PARKING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

**Held on Tuesday, 12 January 2010 at 10.00 am in  
Anglia Room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

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

**In Attendance**

David Spencer	- Principal Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland)
Steve Udberg	- Head of Asset Management
Ian Vargeson	- Principal Member Services Officer
Elaine Wilkes	- Senior Committee Officer

**1/10 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

**2/10 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. P. Quadling and Mr. M. Broughton.

**3/10 URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**4/10 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

**5/10 EVALUATION OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED BY  
RECENT RESEARCH (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Mrs. Vera Dale, Mayor of Attleborough, representing Attleborough Town Council, was in attendance for this item.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer gave an overview of the longer term development plans and strategies for Attleborough, which effectively would double the size of the town over the next 16-17 years.

Attleborough was identified in the LDF Core Strategy for growth for 4,000 new homes, the broad location for this development being to the south of the town along the area of the London Road/B1077. A new link road to serve the development would be required to alleviate congestion in the town centre. A long lead-in would also be required for the new development to deal with infrastructure needs relating to water, energy and transport

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provisions. As a result, development would not be expected to be able to begin until 2014 or 2015 at the earliest.

Part of the rationale for locating new development to the south of the town was the area's proximity to the town centre, with provision to be made for improved links through Leys Lane and Station Road, the area being within walking distance to the town centre and close to the railway station for commuters.

The strategy for Attleborough included provision for jobs to serve the new homes, with 2000 new jobs being planned for the town, which it was hoped would reduce the overall need for people to travel.

Transport was a key issue for the town. At the recent Public Examination of the LDF Core Strategy, the Inspector had made it clear that further work on strategic transport planning was required, which would include the issue of car parking.

For the moment, therefore, the focus in Attleborough was on interim measures needed over the next four to five years before the new development plans began to take effect.

The Head of Asset Management explained that, as part of the overall car park review, his team was in the process of collecting the necessary information required on the five towns. The condition of the car parks in Attleborough and, in particular, the issue of maintenance and repair, was part of the larger picture on the car park needs of the district as a whole.

The Group then went on to look at the suggested options for Attleborough drawn from the UEA study presented at the last meeting as follows:

a) Redesign of current car parks

The UEA study suggested a redesigned layout of the Queen Street car park could increase parking spaces by 20% and would provide a cost effective solution, as well as being relatively easy to implement. A disadvantage would be the loss of some existing trees on the site. In this connection, it was noted that the trees were not protected by Tree Preservation Orders but they were in a Conservation Area and therefore formal Consent to Fell would be required if this option were to be pursued.

Mrs. Dale felt that a 20% increase in the spaces on this car park would be advantageous to the town.

b) Designation of Short Stay / Long Stay Car Parks

Members were supportive of the concept of designating car parks for short and long stay use as a means towards providing a better turn around of spaces for visitors and shoppers.

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The main issue under this option, however, was the cost and provision of enforcing time limits. A suggested solution was a jointly-funded and shared car park attendant to serve all the district's car parks on a rota basis. The parking attendant scheme in Swaffham was cited as a good example of such an arrangement.

c) Car Park Signage

Again, while this was felt to be a useful and desirable option, the cost of monitoring and maintenance was felt to be a constraint to adoption of such a solution.

However, the planned new development could offer some scope in the future to take this option forward through developer contributions under S106 or tariff policies to fund enhanced signage schemes.

d) Improve / Increase Public Transport

The Chairman queried that the map in the report indicated the public transport service route looked to the south of the town only.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that Norfolk County Council was the Local Transport Authority and that the map did not show the Wayland Flexibus service which served villages to the north of the town.

Under the new growth proposals for the town, the planning system would be looking to developers to make significant contributions towards the improvement of transport in the town.

Members felt that the Wayland Flexibus service needed to be publicised more as it was felt not enough people were aware of its availability, nor how the service worked.

It was proposed that the Norfolk County Council as the responsible body should be asked to promote the service more and that the results from the UEA survey be copied to the Norfolk County Council to support the request.

e) Walking Bus

Members did not feel this option offered a practical solution.

f) School Drop-off Point

So far as this option was concerned, the point was made that the Queens Square car park already acted as a drop-off point, as there was a footpath from the car park serving both the High School and First School.

The Junior School was less well situated with no natural

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opportunities to create a dropping-off point, as it was situated on a bend on a very busy main road.

The point was made that, even if drop-off bays were provided, they would be insufficient to cater to the number of users and peak-time congestion would still occur at school start and finish times.

A suggestion was made that the drop-off time at the Queen's Square car park might be reduced if, say, there were responsible adults on hand to walk children from the car park to the school. This might help to speed up the turn-around of parking spaces on the car park at peak times. It was proposed that the idea be raised with the Schools' Governors for their views on the viability and practicality of such a scheme.

One member put forward the view that the best and most permanent solution for all schools was to have a school bus system.

g) Healthy Ad Campaign

The Group had no comments to make on this option.

h) Town Centre Car Park Expansion

The car park at the British Rail station in Attleborough was a key site in need of improvement that was particularly important to the enhancement of parking provision in the town in the short-term. A response from British Rail about this site was still awaited.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that as well as the 4000 homes planned growth for the town, retail floorspace was also provided for. Attleborough had no existing large vacant or derelict sites or other development opportunities which could be utilized for car parking. In the short-term, therefore, the focus had to be on solutions to existing car park areas, particularly at the rail station. However, the future growth plans would give opportunities through the S106 tariff route to improve car parking provisions.

The cost of implementing any of the suggested solutions had not yet been covered and would need to be looked at alongside other issues.

The Attleborough Area Action Plan (AAP) had a 12 to 15 month lead in time for finalisation of plans, including costs. The planning application for such major growth for the area would be one of the biggest and lengthy processes undertaken by the Council and development would not start before 2014.

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Members acknowledged that there was limited scope for major improvement of car parking expansion ahead of development under the AAAP. In the interim, the Council had to focus where it could on what was manageable.

The possibility of shared use of car parking at Connaught Hall was raised but it was explained that this was a private car park which was already shared with the adjoining doctors' surgery and health centre, as well as spaces being rented to employees of Sainsbury's supermarket. There were very few spaces available on the car park when the surgery and health centre were in operation. This was a very busy car park with no further scope for expansion.

i) Car Sharing

Written representations were received from Mr. Ali Clabburn, who is a local employer, working as a professional in the area of sustainable travel and parking, and who is a member of the Taking Attleborough Forward Group.

Mr. Clabburn made the case for the issue of car sharing to be taken into account as part of the review, on the grounds that increasing car occupancy was one of the easiest and lowest cost ways to reduce the number of car trips. Mr. Clabburn suggested the review options should also include a personalised travel plan survey focusing on residents, visitors and businesses; door-to-door visitors to help find out about current travel patterns and suggest more sustainable alternatives; and promotion of car sharing to individuals and businesses. He suggested that signs on the four main routes into the town would also be a very cost effective tool. Reserved car park spaces for users with two or more people could also encourage greater use of car sharing. However, it was noted the latter option could require special control barriers.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that census information was already held covering some of the areas mentioned and this would be refreshed in the 2011 census.

So far as travel plans were concerned, there was an increased focus on these in the planning system, where developers were being required to provide travel plans and to put in measures to encourage alternative travel options.

Members did agree that further promotion of car sharing would be beneficial and Mrs. Dale undertook to raise this with the Town Council with a view to further liaison with Mr. Clabburn.

## Conclusions

In concluding its review on car parking in Attleborough, Members acknowledged that there was limited scope for major improvement or expansion of car parking provision ahead of development under the AAAP.

In the interim, the Council had to focus where it could on what was manageable.

To this end, Members agreed that their report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission should include the following recommendations:

- (1) That the Queen's Square car park should be realigned with the aim of increasing available spaces by 20%.
- (2) That the designation of car parks for short stay and long stay parking be pursued, subject to resolution of associated enforcement issues (including looking at options for a jointly-funded and managed car park attendant service).
- (3) That the opportunity for introducing enhanced signage to car parks be taken where possible through the future development plans.

In the meantime, the Task and Finish Group agreed that the following matters could usefully be pursued:

- To ask Norfolk County Council as the responsible authority to increase promotion of the Wayland Flexibus service serving the villages to the west and north of Attleborough, to raise public awareness of the service and how it works.
- To press British Rail for a response about improvements to its Attleborough station car park.
- To seek the views of the School Governors on the viability and practicality of the idea of a scheme for responsible adults to be on hand to walk children from the Queen's Square car park to the school, with a view to speeding up the turn-around of parking spaces on the car park at peak times and thereby reducing car park congestion.

The question of street parking remained to be considered.

The following options were not recommended to be taken forward as part of this review:

- Walking bus
- Healthy Ad campaign

## Action By

Mark  
Broughton

**Action By**

**6/10 PERMIT PARKING SCHEMES (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

The Principal Member Services Officer presented the report which gave members some background and context to the general use of parking permit schemes to enable a better understanding of this aspect of the review.

The report outlined the distinction between permits and season tickets and their jurisdiction. In Norfolk, jurisdiction for issuing permits lies solely with the County Council and the County works closely with any district that wished to introduce such permit schemes. It was noted that the only second tier council in Norfolk which operates an existing permit parking scheme is Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

The report gave details of the Great Yarmouth permit scheme and one other operated by East Hertfordshire District Council.

The report considered the issues that would need to be taken into account if the Council was to contemplate such a scheme for Attleborough.

As previously revealed by the review, Attleborough has very limited on street parking in the town centre. There were also some 180 residential properties located on streets in the central area, a significant proportion of which were flats with no or limited dedicated parking provision. Adjacent residential areas at Edenside Drive and New North Road were both narrow and highly congested streets.

There would be costs incurred in introducing any such scheme in respect of administration, signage, advertising, associated legal costs etc. and enforcement would be a further critical factor for any scheme.

Mrs. Dale confirmed that existing on street parking was problematical for the town as there was little enforcement carried out by the Police. The decriminalisation of on street parking would remove the responsibility from the Police altogether.

While the Town Council had not yet given any detailed consideration to this issue, Mrs. Dale agreed that enforcement was a key issue. Edenside Drive was the only residential area that experienced problems from on street parking.

One member stated that, in her experience, permit systems were not enforceable and she would not recommend them for that reason.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that the AAAP was unlikely to include the issue of on street parking at the present time but could do so if it was raised as an issue at a future date.

The Head of Asset Management concurred that overall enforcement was a critical issue. The review thus far indicated a

need to manage the existing provisions as efficiently as possible over the new few years pending the future planned expansion, which might then offer some more readily available solutions. He felt the main recommendations from the UEA study – redesign of current car parks, designation of short and long stay car parks and car park expansion – would be a key to solutions in other areas.

So far as enforcement was concerned, the issue of shared funding could be explored, although it was questionable as to how effective enforcement would be.

Mrs. Dale suggested that, if the Queens Street car park could be redesigned to create an additional 20% of spaces, a possible option on that site might also be to zone the car park for short and long stay parking via a barrier access point.

On the question of enforcement, the Chairman felt there was a need to know the details of the arrangement of the scheme at Swaffham to inform options for Attleborough or elsewhere.

The Head of Asset Management said this could be looked into and details reported back, although he explained that this was an area that did not solely fall within his function area.

The Principal Member Services Officer explained that the Swaffham scheme was an historical arrangement that came from a former Three Tier Working Agreement between the County, District and Town Councils, and in fact, Swaffham Town Council was the only town to take up a scheme under that Agreement.

In concluding its discussion on this area, members felt that the issue of permit parking should not be pursued at the present time but it was agreed that it would be helpful to have background information on the operation of the parking enforcement scheme at Swaffham.

**7/10 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

The date of the next meeting was fixed for Monday, 22 February 2010 at 10.00 a.m. at a venue to be confirmed.

**Action By**

Steve  
Udberg

Sheila  
Cresswell

The meeting closed at 11.35 am

CHAIRMAN