

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 2: 19 JULY 2007**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMERCIAL SERVICES PAUL CLAUSSEN  
AND ASSET MANAGER RAY JOHNSON**

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**BRECKLAND COUNCIL CAR PARKS REVIEW**

**Summary:**

This report is to provide background and set the scene for panel 2 involvement.

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This work is progression of the policies and improvement/action plan that resulted from the Best Value Service Review and adopted by full Council. (Minute No 124/01 refers).

That approval covered all the overarching principles that were to be applied across the service in terms of why and what type of parking Breckland will provide, that short and long term parking orders would be introduced and a regular enforcement regime would be established to maintain compliance with car parking orders.

- 1.2 Following the "Town conferences"; "Car park forums" were held in Dereham and Thetford. This consultation included representatives of all major Town organisations and agencies with related interests. In Dereham, the initial forum led to a further workshop to develop ideas for practical projects. In Thetford, the initial forum recognised wider strategic studies were in hand that needed completing before major decisions on the car parks themselves should be taken, but a sub-group developed some proposals for tourism related enhancements.

- 1.3 This consultation has confirmed that the overarching principles established by the Best Value Service Review are still valid and that these Towns would welcome practical progress on implementation of these policies. I.e., overall condition of car parks require improving, safety measures should be enhanced, short stay time limits should be applied in car parks supporting town retail areas and enforcement will be required to ensure these conditions are observed.

**2. COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 2.1 The matters raised in this report fall within the following Council priorities:
- A safe and healthy environment
  - A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities

### **3. 2006 and RECENT PROGRESS**

- 3.1 The development of tourism related proposals at Thetford enabled us to take advantage of some last minute European funding and we achieved improvement schemes at White Hart Street and Castle Street at only a 50% cost to us. We will progress further feasibility works during 2007 to be able to link in with "Moving Thetford Forward".
- 3.2 Workshops, forums and updates have taken place with Dereham for ongoing development of proposals. These meetings established that traffic routes, congestion, bus and pedestrian safety in the market place, are still key issues for the Town that would benefit from a consensus view on a plan for the future that would inform all partners' works planning. The Town Council has been enthused by these discussions and are working towards a "Dereham Vision" to set out local direction on issues such as pedestrianisation, use of the market place, traffic, improving the town environment and trading conditions.
- 3.3 Cowper Road Car Park was recognised as a vitally located site that should be enforced as short stay. We took the opportunity to revamp this site at short notice to join-up with Norfolk County Council tarmac works at advantageous rates. In effect, Cowper Road became our pilot to introduce and update our standards to meet nationally recognised criteria for disabled parking, improved pedestrian access measures and a new lighting standard.
- 3.4 The Dereham Forum is still involved with developing detailed proposals for a revamp of Cherry Tree car park where they strongly support the introduction of long stay parking at the rear of the car park only, there appeared to be no call for any other long stay provision in the Town.
- 3.5 Although designs are still being progressed across the district, there is currently insufficient budget approved to carry out any further major car park works.

### **4. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES AGREED BY DEREHAM AND THETFORD**

- 4.1 Short Stay and Long Stay parking arrangements to be introduced
- 4.2 Short Stay period to be 3 hours maximum as previously identified by Breckland as the optimum use for shoppers that restricts abuse by long stayers "bay hopping". This is in accordance with the work carried out to establish the current Dencora arrangement that operates in the Dereham High Street Development. It should be noted that Swaffham currently has a 2 hour maximum applying throughout the Town centre.
- 4.3 Short Stay/Long stay regime will only be successful if enforcement is also applied.
- 4.4 Signage needs to be improved, directional as well as onsite, for the benefit of visitors and car park users.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

- 5.1 The detailed design proposals for some sites has brought to light new issues that require members guidance before physical arrangements can be confirmed. Examples include residents parking, "Park Mark" accreditation and displacement of Coach and/or HGV use.

### **6. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 6.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Members be involved in examining these new issues and developing any appropriate new recommendations for service policies.

**Also see Appendix A – next agenda ideas**