

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL JOINT PANEL – 20 JUNE 2007

REPORT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE STAFF SIDE

9(C) STAFF PARKING ARRANGEMENTS IN BISHOP'S STORTFORD

WARD(S) AFFECTED: None

RECOMMENDATION - that (A) free car parking for all staff in Bishop's Stortford be permitted in the town centre car parks; and

(B) consideration be given to re-designating The Causeway car park long stay

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To enable staff in Bishop's Stortford to enjoy parity with staff in all other Council offices with regard to parking in close proximity of their place of work.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 To improve the health and sustainability of the organisation.

3.0 Background

3.1 In February 2005 staff who work in Bishop's Stortford were no longer able to park free in the multi-storey car park in Bishop's Stortford town centre, due to the redevelopment of Jackson Square. They were required to park at Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre, a fifteen minute walk from the town centre, or alternatively pay £3.20 per day in one of the long-stay car parks, if they arrived early enough to obtain a space.

3.2 The new multi-storey car park is now fully operational with 750 spaces, slightly more parking spaces than previously provided. A recent report in the local press, based on information supplied by the Council, stated that contrary to public perception, the car parks were under used and spaces regularly available.

4.0 Report

- 4.1 Staff have now been parking at Grange Paddocks for over two years. Although a pleasant walk in the summer months, most staff would prefer to park in the town centre. It is particularly inconvenient and unpleasant when the weather is bad, when people have heavy loads to carry or are in a particular hurry.
- 4.2 All staff do not have the option of paying to park in the town centre, since there are not enough long-stay parking spaces in the town, many of which are used by commuters where it is considerably cheaper than the station car park. The long-stay car parks are generally full by 9:00 AM. This impacts particularly on women who have to drop off children at school and who cannot arrive at work any earlier. There are also many staff who simply cannot afford to pay the £3.20 per day to park.
- 4.3 Parking at such a distance from the Council offices is not cost effective for the Council. If there are meetings to attend in Hertford, it is costing Council an additional half hours pay for every employee to pick up and drop the car off, a considerable sum over the course of a year.
- 4.4 The Council must recognise that long-stay parking within the town is inadequate and affects many other employees. The solution offered two years ago was Park and Ride but this has proved to be unsuccessful and plans to open further Park and Rides now appear to have been abandoned.
- 4.5 We would all like to encourage green travel and become less reliant on cars but in a rural area like East Herts, cars are unfortunately a necessity for many people and there will always be a need for more car parks, long and short-stay. It appears that at least for the time being short-stay car parks are meeting the needs of the public. It would make sense therefore to re-designate at least one other car park long -stay to provide employees in the town with adequate parking facilities. Employers within the town, many of whom purchase smart cards for their employees, should welcome this move since their employees cannot currently be guaranteed a space.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 None

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 None

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Providing free parking for employees should not result in reduced revenue for the Council since there is currently a surplus of parking spaces.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 None

Background Papers

None

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