

**NOTE OF THE PARKING PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT FORUM  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2013 AT 8.00PM  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE**

**Attendees**

1. Those attending were:

Cllr Ian Reay, Chair  
Clive Birch, Resident representative  
David Carter, Resident representative  
Wendy Conian, Transition Town Berkhamsted  
Ivor Eisenstadt, Business representative  
Ian Stephenson, Resident representative

Gary Cox, Town Clerk

**Multi-Storey Car Park**

2. Cllr Reay set the background to the meeting, which was to try and determine a view on a possible multi-storey car park off Lower Kings Road. Those views would help the Town Council in considering its position at the next Transport and Environment Committee on 28 October and Full Council on 18 November, and to consider making representation at the DBC Cabinet meeting.
3. The Forum had previously discussed the work being undertaken by DBC to explore the possibility of a multi-storey car park off Lower Kings Road with Cllr Tiley, the DBC Portfolio Holder. Cllr Tiley had explained that a multi-storey car park would provide 200 additional spaces and may help alleviate a known parking problem in the town. The first step was for DBC to produce and consider a feasibility study on whether the proposed car park would be financially self-sufficient.
4. Forum members had also held an informal meeting with the consultants engaged by DBC on that financial viability study, to discuss, from local resident and business perspective, the benefits and potential risks of a car park at that location and to help inform their study.
5. Cllr Reay explained that the financial viability report had been completed and was scheduled to be considered by DBC Cabinet at their meeting on 26 November 2013, (although it may be that the report could be delayed in going to Cabinet.)
6. The Forum was disappointed that DBC and the consultants had not felt able to provide any details of the report, return to the Forum to discuss and test emerging findings, or to continue the positive engagement that had started with Cllr Tiley attending a Forum meeting.
7. The Forum noted that the Chamber of Commerce was also canvassing members for their views on a multi-storey car park and looked forward to a summary of those results.
8. The Forum recognised that next steps for work towards a multi-storey car park depended on Cabinet decision, which would likely be either to discontinue work as the project was not considered financially viable; or to proceed to the next stage, which Cllr Tiley had indicated would be to a design and procurement stage, at a further cost of £290,000 and which would involve substantial local consultation.
9. The Forum was unclear what the design and procurement stage would entail, on what aspects of work the £290,000 would be spent and how, what and when public consultation would take place should the Cabinet decision be to proceed. The Town Clerk would ask DBC for more detail on what a design and procurement stage would entail. **Action: Town Clerk**

10. The Forum agreed that the lack of information about: the evidence, such as data on changing parking supply and demand as a result of the multi-story car park; the financial and business assumptions made; and the recommendations in the feasibility study somewhat hindered a meaningful discussion. As a result, the Forum could only consider in general terms, whether Berkhamsted would want a multi-storey car park or not.
11. That lack of information and any further discussions on the report, meant the Forum could only agree in principle to a multi-story car park in Lower Kings Road, but wanted to stress to DBC that it should provide more information on proposals and consult with before any decision to proceed, or not is taken.
12. The Forum would encourage DBC to consult with the Town Council, residents and businesses as key stakeholders now, and before any decision to proceed, or not is considered. One advantage of this, as well as engaging with those directly affected by any decision, is to gauge the support (or not) and likely use and success of the car park by those who are most likely to pay to use it, and to determine how much they might be prepared to pay.
13. Accepting the lack of detail for detailed consideration, the Forum considered what the town might expect of the car park and identified a number of points.
14. The first set depended on the **proposed pricing strategy** for the car park, which was expected to form a key aspect of the financial feasibility study:
  - the proposed use of the car park should help address the imbalance that currently exists in the town between very long stay, long stay and short stay parking
  - the pricing could match that of the station car park, to avoid displacement parking from the station to multi-storey car park,
  - and from that some spaces should be used to provide dedicated and affordable spaces for business users, perhaps at reduced season ticket cost, to try to reduce parking in residential streets.
  - there might be some dedicated spaces for students, again to reduce parking in residential streets close to school campuses.
15. The second set of points were around minimising **environmental impact**.
  - the town would not want the car park to create substantial access and traffic problems in entering and leaving the car park
  - increased car parking should not increase pollution or reduce air quality, which is already at levels that are causing concern.
  - any proposed design should not be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area and comply with sustainable development criteria. It was recognised that design may not be part of the feasibility study, but there were already examples of sensitive and relatively low construction cost car parks in conservation areas.
  - the car park might provide a bus park for drop off and collection, to reduce congestion of buses parking in narrow streets in the Conservation Area.
  - will the multi-storey car park incentivise use of electric cars with cheaper parking rates and provide charging points.

16. There were some **wider issues that might be looked at again if the scope of the feasibility study could be extended** to look beyond a car park at the Lower Kings Road site.
- might more be done in connection with Waitrose, emphasising the commercial advantages, for more integrated car parking arrangements between Lower Kings Road and St Johns Well Lane and perhaps with improved access and exit arrangements than might be otherwise possible in just developing the Lower Kings Road site.
  - there are wider issues that might be addressed alongside a multi-storey car park when looking at the 25 years or more that car park would be operational. A more holistic and long term view of using the Lower Kings Road or perhaps another site, might more fully to improve the town, as identified in the recent B-Hive consultation, where an theatre, health centre, school, market square, park and housing were all identified as preferred alongside a multi-storey car park.
17. Cllr Reay thanked Forum members for their contributions which would be included in discussion at the Town Council's Transport and Environment Committee meeting at 7.30pm on Monday 28 October.