

**TO: BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP
29 JANUARY 2014**

**PARKING FOR THE DISABLED – BRACKNELL TOWN CENTRE
Director of Environment, Culture and Communities**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Concerns were raised at the last meeting of the Access Group as to the arrangements for parking for disabled people in the town centre during the period of redevelopment. This paper seeks to appraise the Group of the current position and what's likely to change over the next few years.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 It is understood that concerns had already been raised with the developers and via the media about the loss of parking spaces in the former service yard – 'Yard C'. This land was owned and managed by the Bracknell Regeneration Partnership and it has been cleared as part of the demolition works. The loss of the spaces was inevitable and there is no land in that area either in their or the Council's ownership that could be used even as an interim alternative. The situation will get worse in the near future with the loss of the on-street car parking bays by the Red Lion. There will also be changes to those by the Police Station and three of the six spaces have to go when the Police loop and connecting path is altered. There is no alternative; these spaces have to go to allow for the necessary changes to the road network as part of the redevelopment. The impact will be felt to all those who used the 30 minutes free on-street parking and disabled bays in those areas.
- 2.2 To try to help mitigate against such impact, Shopmobility was relocated by the Partnership to a new unit in Princess Square. Twelve additional bays have been created on the fourth floor of the High Street Car Park (level with the bridge access point to Princess Square) and signage changed accordingly. Safe provision has been made for "drop-off" on The Ring (by the lifts in the High Street Car Park) up to Princess Square. Princess Square car park also makes provision for the disabled.
- 2.3 In addition to the spaces and those available in the Charles Square Multi Storey Car Park, two disabled bays can be accessed in Easthampstead House Car Park after 4:00pm on weekdays, and at weekends. Slightly out of town the surface Council car park in Albert Road has 8 dedicated bays.
- 2.4 On-street parking in and around the town has to be reduced as a direct result of the regeneration. Consideration is being given as to whether or not what remains can be altered to allow for more disabled bays. It's not as simple as it sounds as little of what remains would provide safe parking for a disabled person as they are either on fast roads (Market Street) or on a slight incline.
- 2.5 The nature of the entry controls in and out of the 2 Bracknell Forest Council and 1 privately owned multi storeys can cause access problems. This has long been recognised and arrangements have been put in place in the past to help individual problems. Clearly specific needs and solutions have to be worked out on a case by case basis. If anyone has a specific problem officers are happy to see how we can help in respect of the access needs to the Bracknell Forest Council car parks. If there are problems accessing Princess Square these must be taken up with the

centre's management. They have also indicated a willingness to try to find solutions. Such problems are common to all barrier controlled car parks.

- 2.6 Access into and around the multi storey car parks is potentially problematic. The car parks are to be re-surveyed. The options for new entrance doors on the High Street ground floor near the drop off point on The Ring are being looked into. For the majority of car park users the disabled user bays are on level access with the pedestrian access into Princess Square. However it should be noted that the lifts are only in use during the normal operating hours. Out of hours or in the event of lift failure, depending on what floor a person is on, access has to be via the car ramps.
- 2.7 Looking forward, the planning application for reserved matters for Charles Square shows proposals for improved access for disabled people parking in the Charles Square multi storey car park. These changes will help improve accessibility for disabled shoppers during this interim phase. Once complete the regeneration is expected to bring further wholesale improvements in access for the disabled community along with a further increase in parking provision in and around the town for disabled shoppers.

3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Arrangements are in place to consider the access needs to the multi storey car parks on a case by case basis. The decision to remove on street parking is a consequence of the planning decision. The arrangements seek to help mitigate against the impact that arises.

4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None

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