

Fairground Car Park

In an email on 20th August, Lisa reported that she, Pippa and the Mayor had had a call with the WBC portfolio holder and officers about the Fairground car park.

The difficulty had arisen because although the area has historically been divided into two roughly equal sections for long and short stay parkers, in practice there has been greater demand for long stay provision, and many commuters have been treating the short stay section as overflow space for long stay parking, leaving at times to insufficient short stay parking.

To overcome this problem, WBC have now erected signage reminding parkers that the short stay area is for a maximum of 4 hours, and that stay beyond that will incur a financial penalty. That has led to the desired drop off in long stay parkers using the short stay area but has created a new problem: local workers now have nowhere to park, as by the time they arrive, the long stay area is completely full, and if they use the short stay area to park all day, they become liable to pay the expected penalty. As the Surrey county councillor, I have had requests that the town council should issue parking permits for local workers that would enable them to use the short stay area.

The response from Waverley has been a proposal simply to remove the barrier and use the entire space for short term parking only and implement a permit system for local workers, at least for a trial period only. My view is that this is totally inappropriate, and also unnecessary, on several grounds.

Insufficient demand for short stay parking

When I first raised this, I noted that after erecting the notice limiting stay to just four hours, there were hardly any cars in the area. Today (Thursday 17th September), that was still the case. At 11:00 this morning, I counted a total of just 17 parked cars, not enough to fill that smaller space, and nowhere near enough to fill the entire Fairground site.

Will create severe problems for our local commuters.

We know that part of the reason why there was such pressure on parking provision in the first place, giving rise to the need to clamp down on commuter parking in the short stay section, is that a substantial portion of the commuters using the area were coming un from outside the town (some from as far as Chichester). However, even so the majority of the users are local residents, needing somewhere to park for their journey into work. Eliminating commuter parking entirely will create for them a major problem: if they can't park, how can they commute to their place of work?

We know from experience when proposals for the Fairground redevelopment first became public, that there was widespread concern (and strong objections from some), that this would reduce the availability of commuter parking. If we eliminate lng stay parking completely, I would expect even stronger objections.

The proposals amount to overkill.

I cannot see that the proposal to eliminate long stay parking is even necessary to resolve the problem we have – that local workers cannot find parking. All they have asked for is a permit scheme to enable them to park in what is otherwise designated as short stay. That is already part of the proposed plan, and in my view that is all that we need.

Cllr Terry Weldon.