

Motion to Full Council – 11 December 2012

Parking and Public Transport in Taunton

Motion proposed by Councillor Jefferson Horsley and seconded by Councillor Simon Coles

This Council fully supports the drive to ensure the long term viability of the Taunton Town Centre Shopping Area and to resist measures to encourage out of town shopping applications in accordance with the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan and the recently adopted Core Strategy.

The Council also notes that in the past three years it has closed Greenbrook Terrace, Castle Green, parts of Coal Orchard, Castle Street and Enfield Car Parks with the loss of 361 car parking spaces most completely or partially zoned for shopping in the town centre. In addition it has lost part of the Priory Bridge Road Car Park to office development with a further 264 spaces going.

In conjunction with Somerset County Council, it has provided two Park and Ride sites at Silk Mills to the West and at junction 25 of the M5 to the East.

This Council notes that traffic congestion in the town centre has increased significantly over the past few weeks and delays in movement are reducing footfall in the town centre. The lack of electronic signing about availability of car parking spaces for shoppers adds to the disquiet for the town centre retailers. The retailers are equally vociferous about the extra distance shoppers now have to walk to reach their destinations following the closures mentioned above damaging their businesses.

This council therefore urges Somerset County Council to:-

- (a) Open its Park and Ride on Sundays in the period up to Christmas 2013;
- (b) To permit bus pass users to travel free from the Park and Ride sites to compete with Exeter and similar venues around the region; and
- (c) Introduce as quickly as possible electronic signing of availability of parking spaces on the main arterial routes into Taunton.

Furthermore, to enhance the encouragement of shoppers to come to Taunton, it urges the Council to adopt immediately the discount equivalent to three hours free parking for those customers who spend up to £20 in selected stores in the town centre as already negotiated with Debenhams and to extend this system as widely as possible. It urges the Council to allocate an officer to devote time immediately to address these issues especially the introduction of the discount scheme for shoppers parking in the town centre.