

Monday 14th June 2010

Berkhamsted Town Council Press Release and response to Residents

The Town Council has considered the views of residents who have emailed their concerns over London Midland's proposal to erect a demountable 2nd storey on the car park at Berkhamsted Station. It has supported the proposal on the condition that prices are reviewed to make them more reasonable and easier to pay.

Over the last two years Councillors have been working with the County and Borough Authorities to develop a Transport Plan to meet the needs of Berkhamsted in the future. Extra spaces at the station have been an integral part of that plan. At the same time they have considered the long term need to resolve the critical lack of parking in the town particularly in streets close to the station, where commuter parking causes inconvenience and misery on a daily basis. As a result of a detailed survey into residential parking, the Council is now in a position to consult residents again on a parking scheme which will go some way to resolve the problem of commuter parking and not simply move it elsewhere. More spaces at the station are needed to make this work and London Midland's proposal is timely and comes at no cost to the town.

At the Council's request, London Midland employed a consultant to investigate reorganising the car park to provide extra spaces, but only eleven extra spaces could be made available due the DfT requirement to comply with current DDA requirements. Alternative locations for a car park have been investigated, but there is no space. The Council does not accept that there will be an impact on Castle views and is confident that London Midland's proposals regarding screening, lighting and CCTV coverage will help alleviate any problems of privacy, light pollution and security.

The Council believes in, and supports greener travel and to this end encourages the use of public transport. There is a continuing need to park vehicles in order to use the train station and this provision should include car bays, bus bays and cycle racks. During the life of the franchise Councillors will continue to work with London Midland to encourage them to look at more environmentally friendly ways of travelling to the station, but parking availability must be capable of meeting peak demand in the future, and not just now. Train customers must be reasonably sure of always finding a space, which is a key element of the Government Environmental Policy. It is understood that if people do not feel confident they can park before boarding their train, they will choose to do the whole journey by car.

The Council appreciates the concerns of the many who have corresponded, particularly those living close to the station, but it must be emphasised that strong support for the extra capacity has been received. On balance, therefore, the Council has concluded that this extra provision of spaces, combined with acceptable parking schemes being developed, will go some way to resolving the immediate and the anticipated long term parking needs of the town. The Council is committed, as well, to continue pressing for price reductions, easier payment methods and the continuation to allow free parking for charitable events at weekends.

Berkhamsted Town Council