

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/141/2005-06.
Date of meeting: 10 April 2006.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Civil Engineering & Maintenance.

Subject: Petition – Use of Market Square, Waltham Abbey for Parking.

Officer contact for further information: John Gilbert (01992 – 56 4062).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Decisions Required:

- (1) That the receipt of the petition regarding parking in the Market Square, Waltham Abbey be noted;**
- (2) That given the historic nature of the Town, either:**
 - (a) no further action be taken; or**
 - (b) as part of the already agreed review of parking in Waltham Abbey, a consultation exercise be undertaken in order to determine the level of local support for a change of use of the Market Square with a further report submitted to the Cabinet in due course; and**
- (3) That the first named petitioner be informed accordingly.**

Report:

1. A petition of around 500 signatures was received in late February in respect of the Market Square, Waltham Abbey. The petitioners are requesting:
“ to open the Waltham Abbey Market Square on non-market days as a free short stay car park.”
2. Other than on market days the Market Square is kept free of traffic. These changes were brought into being as part of the pedestrianisation of Sun Street thereby preventing vehicular access to the Market Square other than for deliveries to premises which had no rear access. There are a range of traffic regulation orders in place which prevent access to the square and limit waiting times for those vehicles which do have access.
3. Prior to the receipt of the petition approaches had been made by the Town Council to further restrict access to the Market Square due to the nuisance and danger caused by vehicles using the area improperly.
4. Given that the Town and the Market Square are of considerable historic interest and the apparent conflict between the request of the petitioners and the Town Council, it would seem prudent to gauge wider opinion before coming to a decision. It is suggested that views be sought from:
 - (a) the Town Council;
 - (b) the Town Centre Partnership;

- (c) District and County Planning;
 - (d) County Highways; and
 - (e) the local residents through the use of the press and the Council's website.
5. Since Cabinet has already agreed to bring forward capital expenditure from 2007/08 to 2006/07 to enable the review of parking in Waltham Abbey to be undertaken it is prudent to combine these processes and undertake the consultation on that basis.
6. It is further suggested that any consultation should include a reference to whether car parking should be free or pay and display and the nature of the controls.

Statement in support of recommended action:

7. It is important given the nature of the historic town centre that there is a genuine consensus for the change being sought. The Council's constitution requires that the first named petitioner be informed of the outcome of the petitioners request.

Other options for action:

8. The options are:
- (a) agree to the change without consultation;
 - (b) reject the change without consultation;
 - (c) undertake consultation and consider the request thereafter; or
 - (d) extend or restrict the nature of the consultation.

Consultation undertaken:

9. Consultation being recommended as part of considering the petitioners' request.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: No budget available.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: Use of the Market Square, Waltham Abbey.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A.

Relevant statutory powers: Depends upon the decision made.

Background papers: Petition.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): Will advise when key decisions have ref nos.