



Statement to “Planning & Transport Cabinet Advisory Board” - Monday 21.08.2017

re: Extension of Crescent Road Multi-Storey Car Park, Royal Tunbridge Wells

The RTW Town Forum argue - there is no need for this extension to Crescent Road Car Park and its consideration as part of TWBC’s overall plans (at Calverley Ground) for the proposed theatre, civic office, underground car park and redevelopment of the Town Hall site redevelopment is entirely premature.

1. The Council’s perceived need for more town centre parking is entirely self-inflicted by its own plans to demolish and build on the Great Hall and Mount Pleasant Avenue car parks. The final plans have not even been approved by the Council itself.
2. Furthermore, the Council’s own review of car park occupancy across the town shows that there is plenty of capacity in the other car parks to accommodate the 96 spaces to be created at Crescent Road. The Council argues that it is need to maintain parking income which is hard to believe when so many car park spaces are empty now and have given no income towards Council services for many years.
3. If there was to be any development of car parks in the town centre, this is not the place. There is already imbalance of off street parking between the south of the town and the centre and north which this car park extension will exacerbate. Another 96 vehicles entering and leaving Crescent Road CP onto the A264 at Crescent Road and thence to Carrs Corner and the Pembury Road in one direction, and to Church Road and London Road junctions in the other, will be an unwelcome addition to the town’s reputation for congestion.
4. The Council has already approved strategies for more active travel facilities for walking and cycling within the town. If these approved strategies received a fraction of the investment planned for Crescent Road car park it would radically reduce the need to more parking in future.
5. We are told in the documents for this meeting that the provision of 26 cycle stands will ‘support the Council’s healthy Borough priority’. If it is a priority, then why provide more parking for polluting vehicles that support unhealthy lifestyles. Furthermore, how exactly are the cyclists expected access these cycle stand as the existing passageway is a footpath only, and the roadway is a busy car park exit. It will be hazardous for both cyclists and pedestrians. This passageway deserves to be enhanced not diminished further. It is a vital link for pedestrians and could be for cyclists too, and a gateway to healthier lifestyles which is supposedly a ‘priority’ for the Council.

Formed in 2005, the Town Forum is a partnership between Residents' Representatives and ward Councillors in the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, the unparished area of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Town Forum Management Group

Adrian Berendt (Chair); Alex Green (Deputy Chair); Alastair Tod (Deputy Chair); David Wakefield (Finance); Jane Fenwick (Transport); Linda Lewis (Culture, Leisure & Tourism); Mark Booker (Strategic Planning); Michael Holman (Water in the Wells)

6. This is not a wise project on a number of fronts. The decision is premature not only for the overall plans for the theatre and new civic offices, but also for the future development of the Town Hall site. On the other hand it is also too late. Personal transport is moving on fast and not only will residents be walking and cycling more, but will also be using more public transport or dial up vehicles to deliver them to the town centre. Vehicles will be powered differently and accessed in wholly different ways which will not involve private ownership.

Looking ahead 30-40 years when the loan for this extension is finally paid off, the ratepayers will wonder why significant investment in parking for polluting personal vehicles was made at this time instead of a transformational investment in enabling people to move cleanly, quietly and healthily around their town.

I urge you to vote for option 1 and reject option 4.

FINALLY,

Why is on the submitted map (red line outlines the size of the crescent car park) the “Townhall Yard – car parking” not included as part of TWBC’s land ownership?

Jane Fenwick
Town Forum Transport Working Group

APPENDICES: >>> WEB-links to TWBC

<http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings/documents/b50010823/Crescent%20Road%20Car%20Park%20Proposed%20Extension%2021st-Aug-2017%2018.30%20Planning%20Transportation%20Cabinet%20Ad.pdf?T=9>

(24 pages & Crescent Car Park SITE drawing)

<http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s33805/Item%207%20-%20Crescent%20Road%20Car%20Park%20Extension.pdf>

(7 pages)

Option 1 –

Do nothing – This would mean that no new spaces would be delivered in this location in the town centre which could impact on its long term viability. This is not a recommended option for the future of the town. The need for parking will become more intense as the new developments proposed over the next few years commence and the ‘do nothing’ options would prevent the creation of new spaces to alleviate the pressure.

Option 4 – AGREED by COUNCILLORS of this TWBC Committee

Extend Crescent Road car park to create 96 new spaces,
26 new cycling racks and space allocated for electric bikes for future allocation.