Minutes of Meeting

Title: University of Bristol
Stoke Bishop Campus: Parking on Elmlea & Rylestone Grove
Meeting Held at Badock Hall at 7.10pm on Thursday 10 September 2015

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Checked by: Roger Key
Reviewed by: Roger Key
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1. The meeting was attended by 14 people.

2. Matt McFeat (MM) of Key Transport Consultants (KTC) opened the meeting, apologising for the delayed start due to the previous meeting over running. MM explained that Simon Bray (SB), Director of Residential and Hospitality Services at University of Bristol was unable to attend the meeting. In SB’s absence MM repeated the information that SB had provided to the preceding meeting with residents of Shaplands regarding the commitments the University made at the June meeting.

- The University had contacted the Office of Fair Trade (OfT) to seek a view on the use of the language in the previous tenancy agreement regarding students not being allowed to park on the public highway within two miles of the Stoke Bishop Campus. The OfT confirmed that preventing students from parking on the local public roads was potentially unfair and that if challenged the University would probably be unable to defend this policy.

- The University had investigated suggestions that the Oxford and Cambridge Universities were able to bring sanctions against their students who brought a car to University and parked it on the Public Highway. There was no legal power established to underpin this policy. Also SB made it clear that the University has no way of identifying the owner of a vehicle and no power to sanction a driver for parking on the highway. However, if the University was made aware of inconsiderate or illegal parking on the neighbouring roads they would report this to the Police or Bristol City Council who do have powers to tackle nuisance parking.

- The University has introduced a new parking permit system for the Stoke Bishop Campus. Parking permits will be controlled by Residential and Hospitality Services team for the SB campus, but it is hoped that eventually this would be handled by the security department who control parking permits elsewhere in the University estate. Residents were advised at the previous meeting that the University was reviewing the charge for parking permits and SB advised that a charge would be reintroduced from September 2015. Student parking permits would cost £99 per year. In the past two years there has been no charge for parking permits in an attempt to encourage students to apply for a permit on campus and not park on the public highway. Based on KTC survey results and other observations it was decided that this measure had not been effective. Free parking permits were also considered to undermine the sustainable travel message being promoted by the University. The application process for student parking permits sets out a number of criteria against which an application will be judged, including whether the applicant is a blue badge holder, a primary carer, or requires a vehicle to undertake their course.

- The University have repeatedly informed students that they should not bring a car to University and that they do not need to bring a car to University due to the excellent travel options available to them. This message has been repeated on a variety of media including emails and text messages. The University spends around £800,000 each year providing student bus services to enable students to study without needing a car. The Students’ Union
has also introduced a cycle hire scheme, allowing students to rent a bike during their time at University.

3. Several of the residents voiced concern that there was no University representation at the meeting, suggesting that it showed a lack of interest and concern with parking issues affecting local residents. RK pointed out that the University was paying for KTC to be at the meeting and that the invitation letter made clear that we were there as the University’s representatives.

4. A number of residents were disappointed to hear that a charge was being reintroduced for on-campus parking permits, as they believe that this will lead to a significant increase in on-street parking demand from students, who will be even less likely to apply for a parking permit.

5. In response to the information regarding the wide range of communication taking place to discourage students from bringing their cars to University, one resident asked whether the car-free message was being promoted at the University open days, as this may affect someone’s decision to apply for a place at Bristol. It was suggested in the meeting that the car free nature of University accommodation was probably not discussed as the University was trying to attract as many students as possible.

6. One resident, from Stoke Park Road, wondered why students were allowed to bring cars to the University at all. The resident shared her experience of working within the medical department of the University, and suggested that in 1969 students never brought their cars to University.

7. The same resident questioned why the parents of students did not compel their children to follow the University’s instruction not to bring a car.

8. MM moved the meeting along, by reiterating that this process should be seen as separate to the reduction of on-street parking by students, and that KTC had been appointed to present some ideas about how the impact of on-street parking, whether by commuters or students, could be mitigated. MM explained that five options had been prepared, which sought to tackle the safety concerns raised in the previous meeting and address issues around inconsiderate, illegal and long stay parking on the residential streets.

9. MM presented option 1. Although the option was considered by KTC to address the safety issues around the junction of Parry’s Lane with Elmlea that had been raised by residents previously, those attending the meeting were not supportive of the proposal, as it would just displace the parking. MM highlighted that the point of the proposal was to displace the parking away from a point where parking was resulting in potential safety concerns but this was not accepted. There was concern from some that the parking restrictions did not extend up to the bend in Elmlea.

10. MM presented option 2. The option extends the parking restrictions up to and around the bend in Elmlea and also addressed the potential for the displaced parking to relocate to other areas where it may cause other safety issues. There was some support for the extended parking restrictions, and particularly for the introduction of parking restrictions around the junction of Rylestone Grove with Parry’s Lane. However, it was felt that this option still left the road open for parking by anyone, including students, and potentially commuters, following the introduction of the parking restrictions on The Downs.

11. MM presented option 3. The option attempted to resolve the safety concerns by eliminating two-way movements from the west end of Elmlea without reducing the space available for parking on the local roads. There was significant concern that this option would result in an increase in traffic along Rylestone Grove. It also did nothing to reduce the opportunity for students and commuters to park on street.
12. MM commented that if residents did not like option 3, they were unlikely to support option 4. The option proposed the introduction of a formal one-way system around Rylestone Grove and the west end of Elmlea. The residents were again concerned that the option did nothing to curtail the parking of student vehicles on the road outside their homes. MM explained that there was really very little that could be done to prevent the general public from parking on the public highway, and the University had made it clear that they had no power to identify or act against those students who choose to park on the neighbouring roads. The only real option to prevent non-residents from parking on-street would be to introduce a residents parking scheme.

13. The residents were not very supportive of the introduction of a residents parking scheme, and asked why limited hours waiting restrictions could not be introduced to tackle the problem.

14. MM presented option 5, a limited hours parking scheme for the local roads. The option received some support, and several residents could see how the proposals might tackle the issues of long-stay parking on the road.

15. One resident asked whether there was a need to introduce double yellow lines in the sections opposite where limited weighting was proposed. MM explained that the intention was to rationalise the parking, so that drivers knew where to expect parked cars rather than being presented with a changing pattern of parking day by day. This was aimed at improving the safety of the local roads.

16. One resident asked why the school was not represented at the meeting, suggesting that the whole purpose of stopping students from parking on the road was to improve the safety of children walking to the school. Another resident suggested that their email to the school regarding parking had gone unanswered and suggested that the school were not interested in parking issues.

17. The same resident then asked whether a scheme could be drawn up showing alternative waiting restrictions on either side of a road. It was suggested that on one side of a road there was a restriction preventing parking between 10am and 12 noon and on the other side of the road there was a parking restriction between 12 noon and 2pm. It was suggested that this would prevent commuters and students from parking on the street. MM pointed out that the survey results showed that there was very little long stay parking on the street and that the suggestion would do little to discourage overnight parking.

18. A show of hands was taken to identify support for a parking restriction for one hour a day. 11 attendees voted in favour and one abstained.

19. Some residents wondered whether the scheme needed to restrict parking seven days per week. MM suggested that a Monday to Friday only scheme would further diminish the impact that the scheme would have on student parking.

20. Residents then asked for an explanation of the process for the introduction of any parking scheme. Drawing on experience with Shaplands, RK explained that the first step was to agree a scheme with the wider community. Once agreement is reached the proposals could be put forward to BCC who may then start the process of formal consultation. Once the scheme had been formally consulted and advertised a Traffic Regulation Order could be made which would make the restrictions enforceable.

21. One resident questioned why there was not a Bristol City Council officer in attendance. RK suggested that without a consensus amongst local residents it was unlikely that the Council would take an interest in designing a scheme, which is why KTC have been appointed by the University.
22. Another resident asked about the time scales for implementing any parking scheme. RK recalled that the introduction of double yellow lines on Shaplands took around 15 months to be implemented. The resident asked why nothing could be done sooner, suggesting that the current process was a delaying tactic being employed by the University.

23. It was agreed, that subject to approval from the University, a 1 hour parking restriction scheme as suggested by the residents would be drawn up and circulated to all residents of Elmlea and Rylestone Grove so residents can gauge whether there was a consensus amongst residents.

24. A resident who lives on Elmlea near the school, asked if the waiting restrictions could be extended along Elmlea to The Dell as they were concerned about the knock on effect of introducing any parking restrictions.

25. The meeting concluded.