

EXECUTIVE MEETING: 2ND JULY 2009

AGENDA ITEM 13 -ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

With the agreement of the Leader, the following item of business will be considered as a matter of urgency under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 100B(4)(b) because of the need to instruct officers as to how to proceed in discussions with Morrisons in the light of existing parking issues affecting visitors to Reigate.

MORRISONS CAR PARK, REIGATE

When planning permission was granted for the store now occupied by Morrisons, in 1991, a legal agreement was drawn up by the Council to ensure that the car park is used for the benefit of the town centre. A clause stated that the car park should be made available for short term shoppers car parking and for public use at no charge outside the developer's trading hours.

While Morrisons have long operated an enforcement regime to ensure short term car parking, they recently introduced a new control regime which had the effect of imposing penalties on people parking in the car park for more than two hours, even overnight and weekends when the store is closed. This caused distress to the public, and officers wrote to Morrisons to remind them of their obligations under the agreement. Morrisons have now ceased to charge for parking outside trading hours and will refund people who have been wrongly charged.

However, the Council has received representations on behalf of local residents and traders that, additionally, parking should be free to the public after 6pm Monday to Saturday, and after 4pm on Sundays. This would be before current shop closing time Monday-Saturday. This would benefit those who come into the town for evening entertainment and other purposes and support the town's economy overall. It would also represent a return to what is believed to be the previous management arrangements whereby a two hour stay only was not enforced in the evening.

Such an extension of free parking would be outside the enforceable terms of the legal agreement, but it would be open to Morrisons to consider such a request. They might be expected to consider how it would impact on the availability of parking for those shopping in the store in the evening.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive support the request and officers are instructed to approach Morrisons with the request that parking should be available to the public, free of charge, after 6pm Monday-Saturday and after 4pm on Sundays.

Background Papers: Legal agreement attached to original planning application
Correspondence with Councillors, Residents and Morrisons
Supermarket