

Purchase of the Denmark Street Car Park

I have received this update from Wokingham Borough Council:

There's great news for visitors to Wokingham town centre today as the council has just finalised a deal to re-open the former Eurocarparks section of the Denmark Street car park. Completion is due in the next couple of weeks.

WBC has exchanged contracts to purchase the car park and surrounding properties from the current owner who was seeking to redevelop them. This means the future of the site is now safe and the car park can be operated as a council pay and display public car park in the same way as the existing smaller car park alongside.

The 130 space car park has been closed to the public since the end of August 2019. A planning application to redevelop the area for residential use was refused in July 2019 for a number of reasons including permanent loss of town centre parking.

Cllr Stuart Munro, executive member for business and economic development said: "We've invested significantly in creating a future for Wokingham town centre over recent years and facilities, like the Denmark Street car park, are an incredibly important part of helping the town and its businesses thrive. Its closure has proven an issue for visitors to Wokingham over the last few months and we know this is something so many of our residents have asked us to address.

"The car park is ready to operate as a council car park using the existing ticket machines in the lower car park but more machines are being added after completion. Recognising the impact this closure has had on the town and the pressure it has placed on other car parks, we want to allow people to start parking again as soon as possible. Just buy a ticket from the existing machines in the adjacent car park, as directed on the local temporary signs."

The new car park will operate in exactly the same way as the current Denmark Street car park and tickets will be interchangeable across the combined car parks. The parking regime allows a maximum stay of four hours. Charges will apply Monday to Saturday between 8am to 6pm.

Cllr Munro continued: "We've bought these properties as part of the council's property investment portfolio which is proving a great success in securing the council a regular source of income that can be used to fund essential services across the borough. This purchase has the double benefit of also allowing us to secure and protect the future of this popular car park which has such wider importance for the town itself.

"Given the previous owners application to redevelop the site I'm sure some people will think we have bought this to submit a similar large scale scheme

ourselves and I'd like to reassure people this isn't the case. As a council we firmly recognise the importance of parking in the town centre and, whilst this demand remains so strong we have no plans to stop providing public parking in this location."