

PRESS STATEMENT – THETFORD MARKET PLACE

Thetford Town Councillors were briefed in a Full Meeting of the Town Council that their offer to Breckland Council to settle a long running dispute over ownership of the Town's Market Place had been rejected. The dispute centres around Breckland's assertion that the Market Place which belonged to the Borough of Thetford and may have transferred to Breckland under the Local Government Act 1972 when the District Council's were formed. However, as the Market Place had dual usage at that time (Market Place and Car Park) this would not have transferred unless a specific agreement was put in place. Paragraph 68-2a (C-70 Section iv) of the LGA states that transfer agreements should be reached "for the transfer or retention of any property, rights and liabilities, with or without conditions, and for the joint use of any property". No agreement was ever entered into.

Breckland Council Officers had previously presented a solution to Thetford Town Council that they felt would be acceptable in order to settle this dispute and this proposal involved a lease to Breckland that would allow them to continue to use it as a car park. Subsequently, and in order to avoid unnecessary legal expense by both parties, the Town Council had agreed to accept Breckland Council's proposals. However, in an unexpected turn of events, Breckland decided that they would no longer offer the solution that they had presented and instead would take the Town Council to tribunal to settle ownership. Town Councillors stated that it was a shame that a compromise could not be agreed upon as they had hoped to continue their recent excellent relationship with Breckland Council which has only just seen partnership working start to flourish.