

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: 11 JANUARY 2022
title: CAR PARKING REPORT
submitted by: JOHN HEAP - DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on current car parking issues.
- 1.2 To update Members on electric charging.
- 1.3 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
 - Corporate Priorities – To ensure the best use of Council resources.

2 BACKGROUND

Proposed New Car Park

- 2.1 A Parking Study was carried out by officers in 2017. The report was submitted for information to the Car Park Working Group outlining the position with capacity on short stay car parks in Clitheroe Town Centre. The report indicated that usage was close to capacity at peak times on most car parks in the town centre. This issue was subsequently discussed at a number of the car park working group meeting discussing possible options.
- 2.2 Committee have been kept informed via minutes of the Car Park Working Group (November 2019 and August 2021) and an Information Paper at Community Committee (August 2021)
- 2.2 As it was a site that was already in the Council's ownership, a capital bid of £1.23 million 2020/21 was approved for a new deck to be placed at the Chester Avenue car park. A feasibility study was carried out and whilst the extra deck would have provided more parking, there were several issues that ruled it out.

These were:

- the car park is a long stay car park, and the requirement was really for short stay, shopping purposes.
 - The car park is in a built-up area, and it is expected that there could be a number of planning objections as a result of nuisance
 - The entrance to the car park is along Chester Avenue and not ideal for the increase in traffic due to the extra deck – it is expected that LCC would object on highway grounds.
- 2.3 A second site is now being considered and a feasibility report on this site is being prepared. It is an area of grassland near the town centre which is not normally used as it is located beyond a row of mature trees and is very often boggy due to the standing water at that location.

- 2.4 Contact with the site owners has been difficult, during the Covid lockdown, and quite non-committal for a long time. However, they have asked a Surveying Company AJH Associates of Clitheroe to act on their behalf in the matter. I have been in touch, and they reported that “in principle the owner has no particular attachment to the land in question and it is not used.”
- 2.5 Contact has been made with Lancashire County Council, the Highway Authority, to ask what they would accept as an entrance to the site. They originally stated that they would prefer the creation of a 4th arm to the mini roundabout on the A671 Waterloo Road and a need for signals with pedestrian facilities. This would, in their opinion, provide a more secure and long-term network benefit.
- 2.6 However, the staff at LCC has now changed and their preferred solution now is a priority junction to the south of the roundabout with a right turn lane provision. LCC originally said that there were several housing sites that might be able to contribute to part fund the works. These sites include, Standen, Waddow and Highmoor.
- 2.7 Negotiations with LCC are ongoing but the stance seems to be changing regarding the possible funding being available for some of the necessary changes to the existing road network.
- 2.8 Internal discussions have taken place with colleagues in Planning about the new car park site. The response is that the proposed car park is within the conservation area and there are several constraints (conservation areas, loss of trees, impact on openness, visual impact) which could impact the amount of land which could be developed.
- 2.9 The car park could accommodate approximately 150 cars. Clearly, the capacity would be affected by the design issues arising from the site’s location being in a conservation area, but this is still a significant size for a car park.

Electric Charging Points

- 2.10 As Members are aware the Council have installed 14 electric charging points in the Council’s car parks. 4 in Railway View and 10 in Chester Avenue.
- 2.11 A decision made by Members at a previous Committee meeting that for the time being, the spaces could be used by non-charging cars if the drivers paid for the parking. The annual parking order was written in accordance with this decision.
- 2.12 The present take up of the charging facilities, particularly in Railway View car park, is increasing, but overall, the spaces are not being well used.
- 2.13 Officers are in the process of investigating the introduction of charging points at both the Council offices and the Depot. The points at the office would be under a scheme intended to encourage employers to install charging facilities for their staff. (Part funded by way of a government grant.)
- 2.14 A capital bid has been submitted for the introduction of the electric points at the depot to allow for the introduction of electric/hybrid vehicles and plant into the Council fleet. Unfortunately, the costs are likely to be substantial as the power supply to the depot will have to be increased substantially to operate the charging points. However, until the infrastructure is provided, we cannot proceed with changing the Council’s fleet.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – There is provision already in the capital programme for the construction of additional facilities. However, this budget was limited to a site that no longer appears viable. Before a new scheme can reasonably be costed some expenditure will be required on a District Valuer for the land in question; a transport planner to satisfy the requirements of Lancashire County Council and the necessary surveys to carry out the design of the car park.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None arising as a direct result of this report
- Political – There is political support for the delivery of additional car parking to meet the need in Clitheroe.
- Reputation – Enhance the reputation of the Council by providing the infrastructure for shoppers in Clitheroe town centre.
- Equality & Diversity – None arising as a direct result of this report

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Consider whether you wish officers to continue to investigate how additional parking can be delivered for Clitheroe, and if so, whether to ask Policy and Finance Committee to retain provision in the capital programme for new parking facilities (although not on the Chester Avenue site)

5.2 Support the staff in pursuing the introduction of more charging points in the council car parks.

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