

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 3 JULY 2014

TITLE OF REPORT: SALE OF PART OF CROSSWAYS MANOR CAR PARK AND THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AT, READING ROAD, HOOK

Report of: Head of Technical Services and Environmental Maintenance

Cabinet member: Councillor Alan Oliver, Environment & Technical Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider offers and agree terms for the sale of part of Crossways Manor car park and the disused public conveniences at Reading Road, Hook.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That offer A for the purchase of part of the public car park site and the disused public conveniences as detailed at confidential Appendix C, is accepted.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Hart DC title is shown on the plan at Appendix A. The area of car park which is subject to the offers is shown on the relevant plans at confidential Appendix C,

3.2 In July 2013 the Council's Capital Board (CB) considered an offer to purchase part of Crossways Manor Car Park, Hook. The CB agreed that before the offer was considered further a feasibility study on the development opportunities for the site would be undertaken.

3.3 The Parish Council and local ward members were consulted as part of the feasibility study. The Parish Council's response to this initial consultation is attached at Appendix B.

3.4 The feasibility study concluded that the offer submitted was a fair offer, and that it was unlikely that sale of part of the car park would compromise a wider redevelopment of the car park site should this be proposed in future. It conceded that there would be local resistance to any loss of public car parking although Crossways Manor Car Park is currently under utilised.

3.5 In October 2013, having considered the feasibility study the CB agreed that sale of part of the car park should be recommended to Cabinet, subject to satisfactory arrangements being agreed to provide pedestrian access and signage to the retained car park. These arrangements have now been agreed.

3.6 Since the CB considered this matter, a further offer has been received for the site. Details and a comparison of the offers received are provided in confidential Appendix C.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 There are a total of 66 parking spaces available in Crossways Manor Car Park. The land sale recommended in this report will result in the loss of 12 spaces.

4.2 The public toilet building was closed in 2010 and has not been used since.

4.3 Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a new supermarket in Hook. Implementation of this permission will release £80k of funding which Hart have agreed will be used to fund free parking in Crossways Manor Car Park for up to five years.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Details of the income that will be generated by agreeing the recommendations of this report are provided in confidential Appendix C.

5.2 Valuation advice on the site is attached at confidential Appendix D.

5.3 Completion of the sale recommended in this report will require amendment of Harts Off Street Parking Places Order. A condition of the sale is that the purchaser will pay any additional costs associated with this, plus any associated legal and surveyor's fees.

6 ACTION

6.1 If the recommendations of this report are agreed, then the Council's legal service will be instructed to complete the sale of part of Crossways Manor car park and the public conveniences.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Plan of Car Park

Appendix B – Parish response to initial consultation

CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES

Appendix C – Summary and comparison of offers received

Appendix D – Valuation advice

Background Papers:

Hart District Parking Study February 2008

Feasibility Study - Hook Car Park Development Opportunities – September 2013

SITE PLAN



1:1,250

0 3 6 12 18 24 30
Metres



Hart District Council
Civic Offices
Harlington Way
Fleet, Hampshire
GU51 4AE

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Hook Parish Council response to the consultation on potential redevelopment opportunities for Crossways Manor Car Park, and the feasibility study conclusion with regard to the loss of the existing public car park - July 2013

As part of the feasibility study carried out in July 2013 the Parish Council were asked to respond to the following questions regarding the proposed redevelopment of all or part of Crossways Manor Car Park.

Would you please advise your views on:

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Q1) the ongoing requirement for all or part of the site for public car parking

Parish response- It is believed that with the 25% growth expected for Hook, in order to mitigate the retail challenges, all the car park would be required.

Q2) support for an alternative use on all or part of the site

Parish response - It depends on what is proposed. However, our current understanding is that a commercial operation (restaurant) is interested in securing parking for their customers. If parking was free of charge e.g. for 4 hours as is proposed in our Parking Survey Report, the commercial operator would not require exclusive parking, which would then not be available to the public when that business was closed. This would not make efficient use of an important community asset. Retaining maximum multi use of the car park will be a key objective.

Q3) any other points you would wish Hart DC to take into account in considering the future of the car park.

Parish response - In line with the objectives in our own Parking Survey, provision of free parking times will only be effective there will need to be changes to the enforcement regime for this and other parking areas.

In preparing this report the Parish Council were asked to confirm that they felt that their comments were still appropriate. The following additional comments were received in response:

The above comments still stand, but members added the following:

In the absence of information about the change of use of the land away from parking, the Parish Council would not support a sale because:

- Selling parking spaces in the centre of Hook is short sighted in view of the expected growth of Hook.
- A strategic aim of the Parish Council is to alleviate school parking problems by using crossways car park. It is expected that all the spaces will be required in future.
- This is the only sizeable car park in the centre of Hook and once spaces are lost they cannot be replaced,
- There is no evidence that selling public land for private or commercial use will be of benefit to Hook as a community.

Hart has been unwilling to sell the car park to Hook Parish Council, opting only for a lease using Sainsbury's S106 funds. The Parish Council has asked on a number of occasions for an estimate of the price in order to consider the option to purchase and retain it as parking space. No figure has ever been forthcoming.

However, the council may support an application if the proposed changes were to be of such demonstrable benefit to Hook that they would outweigh the need for the parking spaces [eg a redevelopment of the Acorn site as originally proposed, with a mix of residential and commercial - bringing café society to Hook] the Council may support a planning application with change of use.

With regard to the loss of the existing public car park the feasibility study concluded that:

It is clear from our correspondence with the Parish Council that there would be local resistance to the loss of the existing public car park. Indeed we understand there are also wider discussions about the future of the car park relating to a proposed supermarket planning application on the edge of Hook.

While there are no specific planning policies in either the existing adopted Local Plan or the emerging Core Strategy specifically safeguarding this public car park, the response from the Planning Department at Appendix 4 confirms that the Planning Authority would consider the loss of any car parking against the current saved policy URB 20 (retention and Provision of local services and community facilities). We note this Policy is proposed to be replaced by Policy CS14: Community Facilities in the draft Core Strategy. The response from the Planning Department confirms that the loss of any parking could be a specific ground for refusal; 'Unless the applicants can demonstrate a lack of need in relation to current and future demand then the loss or reduction in community facilities could result in a refusal on the principle of development'.

We have therefore concluded that if a case were made that any loss of public car parking would have an adverse impact on the Village and no mitigation measures were offered, then an application for change of use would not be supported.

The Council has already recognised that the car park is not used at full capacity and therefore an argument supporting the loss of the 11 or 12 spaces and the closed public convenience building at the southern end of the property might be easier to construct.

NB: Note that references to the draft Core Strategy are now out of date given its withdrawal in September 2013.