

Supplementary Committee Agenda



Town Centre and Car Parks Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel Tuesday, 28th November, 2006

Place: Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Committee Secretary: Z Folley - Research and Democratic Services
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6. DEVELOPMENT OF EFDC OWNED CAR PARKS (Pages 3 - 6)

To consider the attached summary report.

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Report to Car Parking Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 28 November 2006

Portfolio: Civil Engineering and Maintenance/Planning and Economic Development/Finance and Performance Management/Housing

Subject: Possible Development of Council Owned Car Parks

Officer contact for further information: Michael Shorten, Valuation and Estate Management Service (01992 564124)

Democratic Services Officer: Zoe Folley (01992 564532)

Recommendations:

- (1) That the Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel considers the report prepared by Bidwells, Planning and Development Consultants on the development potential of five Council-owned car parks; and**
- (2) The Panel recommends to the Cabinet that:**
 - (i) the Church Hill, Loughton car park be declared surplus to requirements, terms be negotiated for the release of the restrictive covenant and a Development Brief or outline planning consents be sought; and**
 - (ii) the Burton Road, Loughton, Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill and Cornmill Waltham Abbey car parks be retained as public car parks and alternative development schemes not be pursued; and**
 - (iii) the Panel considers the appropriateness of development on the Bakers Lane and Cottis Lane, Epping car parks having regard to the consultant's development appraisal.**
- (3) A budget allocation, to be determined, be sought for the recommended planning applications, site surveys and marketing expenses.**

Report

1. (Head of Legal, Administration and Estates). As part of the Loughton Broadway Regeneration Scheme, members of the Steering Group last year considered possible improvements and developments in the area. Following that work, the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holders for Housing, Planning and Economic Development and Civil Engineering met to consider whether there was any merit in determining the development potential of The Broadway (Burton Road), and other Council-owned car parks, accepting that any proposals must at least ensure the retention of existing car parking capacity. It was recognised that, as well as generating significant revenue income, the options for development included housing, commercial, leisure based or a mix of these uses.

2. The Portfolio Holders took the view that there were a number of car parking locations that might have development potential particularly those at The Broadway and Church Hill at Loughton and Cornmill at Waltham Abbey. Given the complex nature of any such development assessment they concluded that it was essential to engage private sector expertise in any such evaluation and that the Scrutiny Panel makes recommendations to the Cabinet on the future use, management and development of these car parks.

3. The Cabinet at its meeting on 10 April 2006 received a report on the appointment of a Consultant to investigate the development potential but retaining public car parking at five sites. At the same meeting, the Cabinet received a report from the Housing Scrutiny Panel on ways of increasing affordable housing within the District. The Cabinet resolved:
 - (1) That Bidwells, Planning and Development Consultants be appointed to provide a report on the development potential of the following five Council owned car park sites in accordance with the brief prepared by the Head of Environmental Services and the Valuation and Estate Management Service:
 - (a) Bakers Lane Long and Short Stay Car Parks, Epping;
 - (b) Church Hill, Loughton;
 - (c) Cornmill, Waltham Abbey;
 - (d) Burton Road, The Broadway, Loughton; and
 - (e) Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill;
 - (2) That, in order to cover the Consultant's fees, a supplementary DDF estimate in the sum of £5,000 be recommended to the Council for approval;
 - (3) That, as this project relates to economic development, the funding be taken specifically from the Local Authority Business Grown Incentive Scheme income; and
 - (4) A further report be presented to the Cabinet following consideration of the Consultant's development appraisal by the Town Centre Partnerships and Car Parking Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel.

The brief issued to Bidwells can be summarised as follows:

- (1) To investigate the development potential of each site based on an appropriate mix of uses, densities and access/parking arrangements. Options for development to include residential (incorporating affordable housing units), commercial, leisure based or a mix of these uses;
- (2) To assess the viability of alternative development schemes, including the incorporation of public car parking;
- (3) That, as part of the proposed feasibility studies on the development potential of the Council's car parks, potential developers be required to maximise the amount of affordable housing provided on the sites within any proposals that come forward;
- (4) To provide advice upon appropriate development agreements, planning applications and preparatory work for marketing; and
- (5) To estimate the land values for disposal purposes.

... Bidwells report is attached as Appendix .

4. The Panel will note from the Bidwells report that all of the car parks have some degree of development potential. The main conclusions of the report are as follows:

(1) Cottis Lane, Epping

Suitable for mixed use (retail and residential) or residential development incorporating a public car parking element.

(2) Bakers Lane, Epping

Suitable for residential development with a small element of public car parking re-provision.

(3) Church Hill, Loughton

Suitable for residential, a retail extension to the adjoining petrol filling station or employment related uses. The site is too small to retain an element of public car parking. Any development would be subject to the release of restrictive covenants affecting the site.

(4) Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill

A very small site suitable for residential development not practical to retain public car parking within any scheme.

(5) Burton Road, Loughton

On its own the site would be difficult to develop but could be part of a wider residential scheme involving adjoining land.

(6) Cornmill, Waltham Abbey

Suitable for a mixed residential development but constrained by a restrictive covenant prohibiting any alternative use, flood risk issues and Green Belt designation.

In summary, disposal and development of most of these sites could be considered (subject to the legal, physical and planning issues identified in the report) in order to release capital or revenue as well as improving the functionality of the town centres and providing affordable housing. There may also be an opportunity to provide a level of replacement public car parking on at least half of the sites.

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