

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/010/2006 -07

Date of meeting: 5 June 2006



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning & Economic Development

Subject: Broadway Town Centre Enhancement – Garages in Vere Road

Officer contact for further information: J Gilbert (01992 – 56 4062).

Democratic Services Officer: G Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Loughton Broadway Focus Group be requested to comment upon the decision of Cabinet on 6 February 2006 to demolish the garages in Vere Road Loughton as part of the Broadway Town Centre Enhancement Proposals;**
- (2) That the views of the Focus Group be reported back to the next meeting of Cabinet; and**
- (3) That, in the meantime no further action be taken in respect of bringing garage leases / tenancies to an end.**

Report:

1. In February 2005 Cabinet resolved, as part of its consideration of the works making up the Broadway enhancement scheme, to demolish the garages in Vere Road. These garages are let to local people, tenants and business users through business leases or normal short term tenancies.
2. The report to Cabinet indicated that there may be some opposition to this proposal, especially since there were no plans to provide alternative garaging as part of the scheme and tenants remained concerned about parking arrangements. However, Cabinet considered that the advantages of demolishing the garages outweighed these local concerns and resolved accordingly.
3. Now that preliminary action to seek possession of the garages has commenced, a number of individuals and the Town Centre Partnership have expressed their concerns regarding this proposal and have requested that the matter be reconsidered. Some business users and tenants state that they have not been properly consulted in respect of this matter and that they would be seriously inconvenienced if the garages were to be demolished.
4. A plan of the TCE proposals is attached, with the Vere Road garages marked for ease of identification. The demolition of the garages was proposed in view of:
 - (i) the wish to provide a larger car parking area overall for the Broadway as a whole; and
 - (ii) without significant additional investment, leaving the garages in situ in their present condition could detract from the overall appearance of the final enhancement scheme.
5. The scheme could proceed if the garages were left in situ, albeit with the disadvantages set out in paragraph 4 above. However, it is important that the scheme carries with it the support of the local residents and business users. It is therefore suggested that the Focus Group be requested to look at this issue again, taking into account the recently stated concerns and the design proposals which include demolition of the garages.

6. In accordance with Section 100(A)(b) of the Local Government act 1972, together with paragraphs 6 and 25 of the Council's Procedure Rules, the Chairman has permitted on grounds of urgency consideration of this report to avoid any undue delay in proceeding with the scheme.

Statement in support of recommended action:

6. Given the very positive involvement of the Focus Group in the design of the scheme, it is appropriate to request them to reconsider this element of the scheme design and report those views to the Cabinet.

Options for action:

7. The options are to reaffirm the existing decision and demolish the garages, or to refer the matter back to the Focus Group for their reconsideration.

Consultation undertaken:

8. None

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Broadway TCE capital budget

Personnel: Nil

Land: Enhancement of the Broadway, and Vere Road car parks in particular

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Enhancement of Loughton Broadway

Relevant statutory powers: NR

Background papers: Previous reports to Cabinet

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Enhancement of the Broadway to provide improved environmental conditions through highway and footway improvements, changes to parking and the provision of enhanced lighting and CCTV etc.

Key Decision reference (if required): Will advise when key decisions have ref nos.