

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 24 October 2013

14

Title: Debden Road Saffron Walden car parks

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Barker

Key decision: No

Summary

1. This report has been prepared to seek a decision on the future of two small pieces of land used for car parking in Debden Road, Saffron Walden.
2. The report sets out a number of potential options with a recommended course of action.

Recommendations

3. That the two car parking areas on Debden Road Saffron Walden be formalised and parking permits be sold to local residents and businesses in accordance with the standard off-street charges.

Financial Implications

4. The limited day to day running costs of the car parks are paid for out of the general car park budget. There is currently no income to cover these costs. Depending on chosen course of action there is the possibility to increase income of £4,500 suggested in recommendation. NEPP would cover the administration as part of its current work.

Background Papers

5. None

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Questionnaires were sent to local residents and businesses in Debden Road, London Road and High Street
Community Safety	Not affected
Equalities	Not affected
Finance	Depending on chosen course of action. Possibility to increase income of £4,500 suggested in recommendation. NEPP would cover the administration as part of its current work.
Health and Safety	Not affected.

Human Rights/Legal Implications	Not affected.
Sustainability	Not affected.
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden Audley
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

Situation

7. The Council owns two small pieces of land at the northern end (town centre) of Debden Road Saffron Walden measuring 348 and 93 sq. m. The balance sheet value is £15,000.
8. The Asset Management Plan for 2012/13 includes a key priority of 'Car parking on Council Land, Debden Road, Saffron Walden – regularise existing informal use'.
9. The car parks are noted in the Asset Management Plan as being held for 'residents car parking'.
10. The two areas of land seem to be used for informal resident and business parking.
11. New signage was erected by the Council during 2012/13 to make clear that the use of the car parks is at the drivers own risk.
12. No income is generated from the car parks.
13. The Asset Management Plan requires an assessment of the car parks and sets out the principle that 'opportunities to generate additional income from existing assetsneed to be pursued'.

Questionnaire

14. The Council distributed a paper questionnaire to the surrounding properties and businesses on Debden Road, London Road and High Street. In addition a copy was placed on every car windscreen in the car parks.

A total of 25 questionnaires/letters were received in response.

	Yes	No
Do you use the land for parking your car?	23	3
Do you have any other off street parking available?	5	20
Interested in paid resident/business parking?	18	7
Market house/flats?	2	24
Affordable houses/flats?	2	24

Other suggestions:

Leave as it is/parking (20), sell to neighbours for gardens/parking (2)

Options

15. There seem to be three options for the future of the car parks:

- To investigate disposal of land
- To formalise the car parking arrangements and sell residents/business permits
- To do nothing

Disposal of land

16. The land is held for the purpose of residents parking and any sale or disposal would have a significant impact on residents parking in this area. The majority of properties do not have off street parking and rely on either these car parks or street parking in the vicinity. Disposal of the sites would therefore have an impact on people's ability to park locally.

17. Disposal of the land for residential use or as additions to residential gardens would be expected to create a significant receipt to the Council. The foregoing of this receipt should be carefully considered.

Formalise car parking arrangements and sell residents permits

18. The smaller car park provides 6 spaces arranged in an orderly fashion. The larger car park (nearer the town) is a more irregular shape and provides about 14/16 spaces which includes double parking. From the questionnaires it appears that people know who the car owners are and there is an informal arrangement which ensures that the car park operation 'works'.

19. Formalising the car park would involve the provision of marked bays in the two car parks. For the smaller car park this would still result in the provision of 6 spaces. For the larger car park it would result in the provision of about 9 spaces, a reduction in the current situation. This is due to the fact that it would not be possible to sell car park permits for spaces which were not available without moving other cars.

20. The Council currently sells parking permits for other car parks in the town (e.g. Swan Meadow). These cost £300. Residents on-street parking permits in the town (e.g. Castle Street) cost £70 for the first permit and £100 for the second permit. As these are off street spaces a rate of £300 would be charged. This would therefore be expected to raise an income of £1800 for the small area and about £2700 for the larger parcel.

21. Due to the irregular shape of the land the Council should also investigate further the sale of small pieces of unusable or difficult areas of the car park to local residents for additions to gardens etc.

22. Any displaced driver who did not want to participate in the scheme or for whom there was insufficient space could park either in public car parks (e.g. Swan Meadow) the Council office car park on evenings and weekends or elsewhere on the street.

Do nothing

23. The final option is to leave the sites in their current condition and not do anything. This would be contrary to the adopted Asset Management Plan and would continue with the underutilisation of this asset. This is not recommended.

Conclusion

24. The report updates Cabinet on the current situation and carries out a review following the requirement as set out and approved in the Asset Management Plan.

Risk Analysis

25.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Reduction in the number of spaces available for parking compared to the current informal use gives rise to objections	3 Space constraints	2 Issue potentially affects limited number of residents	Objections need to be viewed in the context of efficient use of assets and income generation.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.