

# Forest Heath District Council

(This report is a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

**Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance and Performance**

**CABINET**

**9 APRIL 2013**

**CAB13/082**

## **GUINEAS CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS** (Key Decision Reference: APR13/05)

### **1. Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)**

- 1.1 In order to overcome anti-social behaviour at the Guineas car park it is proposed to carry out some security improvements which will secure the facility outside of operational hours.
- 1.2 The top deck of the car park is underutilised and it is further proposed that this should be made long stay to attract greater use and introduce a better balance between short stay and long stay parking provision in Newmarket.
- 1.3 It is proposed to use Waitrose S106 funding to undertake the works and include some further enhancements including more efficient internal lighting and improved CCTV.
- 1.4 Securing the car park after operational hours will allow the Council to offer Premier Inn use of a section of the car park for their customers in exchange for an annual rent.

### **2. Recommendations**

#### **2.1 It is recommended that:-**

- 1. The content of this report be noted including the operational issues and the proposed improvement works to the Guineas car park;**
- 2. £150,000 of Waitrose S106 funding is allocated to improving the Guineas car park and introducing long stay car parking on the top deck. This will negate the need to use the previously allocated capital funding for these improvements;**
- 3. A further £21,000 is allocated from the Waitrose S106 funding to change the internal lights to LED type paying back in 1.6 years and saving £124,000 of revenue costs over 10 years;**
- 4. A further £25,000 is allocated from the Waitrose S106 funding to improve CCTV coverage in the car park; and**

5. **A further £15,000 is allocated from the Waitrose S106 funding to improve decoration and fully compliment the introduction of long stay parking on the top deck.**
6. **On approval of the above recommendations 1 – 5, that the Council’s revenue and capital budgets and the Council’s prudential indicators are updated accordingly.**

**Contact details**

Name  
Title

**Portfolio holder**

Councillor Stephen Edwards  
Cabinet Member for  
Resources, Governance and  
Performance

**Lead officer**

Mark Walsh  
Head of Waste Management and  
Property Services

Telephone

01638 660518

01284 757300

E-mail

[stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk)

[mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

**3. How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?**

**Economic Growth** – By improving the Guineas car park to make it an excellent facility in Newmarket that will support the local businesses and their customers. This will make the town a more attractive environment for visitors where a car park is often where a first impression of a town is gained.

**Efficient and Effective Council** – by reducing the revenue costs associated with having to deal with the consequences of anti-social behaviour. Also by deriving improved income streams through greater use of the top level of the car park and in providing secure, overnight parking places for the adjacent hotel.

**4. Key issues**

**4.1 Background**

4.1.1 On 7 June 2011 the Community Services Committee were presented with report COM11/328 which outlined on-going problems of anti-social behaviour at the Guineas multi-storey car park. There had been problems with anti-social behaviour at the car park for several years and the report, subsequently approved, outlined the plan to fund physical security enhancements allowing the car park to be secured out of hours.

4.1.2 At this time Members were also informed of the commencement of discussions with Premier Inn about the impact that the new hotel will have on parking availability and how this might be practically managed. Discussions included the potential for Premier Inn customers to have access to secure overnight parking in the car park outside of normal operating hours.

4.1.3 On 6 July 2011 Capital Programme Working Group approved a budget allocation of £150,000 for security enhancements to the Guineas car park on the basis that it would be an ‘invest to save’ measure in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour and the costs arising.

- 4.1.4 Following formation of West Suffolk Property Services in July last year steps were taken to progress the scheme with the following progress being made:
- A full measured survey of the car park was undertaken;
  - Discussions were held with the shopping centre owners, Helical Bar who are keen for the scheme to progress in order to enhance the shopping experience locally;
  - Discussions were held with Premier Inn to establish their on-going commitment to pay the Council an income to have access to a number of secure overnight parking spaces for their patrons; and
  - A detailed proposal produced with contractors and consultants to assist with developing a scheme that will deliver improved parking layouts, security and signage.
  - When this work was concluded it was confirmed that these improvement works could be carried out within the capital budget allocation of £150,000.
- 4.1.5 The car park has been inspected by our Building Surveyor and a 5 year maintenance plan has been formulated for the site. The inspection has not highlighted any serious defects but we have identified some minor maintenance issues with signage and general decoration. There are no immediate concerns as to the overall structural performance of the building. However, assumptions have been made for the future and the total revenue liability for the 5 years from 2013/14 is expected to be in the region of £70,000.
- 4.1.6 A full structural assessment of the building was undertaken by Pick Everard Structural Engineers and presented in August 2010. The findings stated "The structure of the car park was found to be in reasonably good condition with only minor defects noted".
- 4.1.7 It is a recommendation of the Institution of Civil and Structural Engineers that a "Life care plan" be formulated for any Multi-storey Car Park structure and our maintenance plan makes allowance for this to be undertaken in 2013/14. The 2010 structural assessment would form the basis of this plan.
- 4.1.8 Capital sums of £20,000 each for concrete protection, vehicle barrier installation and lighting improvements have been incorporated into the Capital works forward plan as the outcomes from the Life Care Plan may identify some issues that need addressing. It is worth noting that any concrete repair and barrier installation will protect the structure and extend its working life, whilst the lighting renewal will have a payback in terms of energy efficiency of 3 years.

## 4.2 **Current Car Park Operations**

- 4.2.1 The Guineas car park is currently a short stay facility primarily to offer shoppers parking for the adjoining Guineas Shopping Centre as well as other shops within the town centre. The site offers 400 spaces arranged over 5 levels and the current charges offer a maximum stay of 3 hours with no return within 12 hours. The operational (charging) hours are 08:00am to 16:00pm Monday to

Saturday with use of the site being free of charge outside these operational hours.

- 4.2.2 The busiest day is Saturday with an average of 1,420 paid transactions. The top deck (level 5) is open to the elements and offers 101 spaces (a quarter of all spaces available).
- 4.2.3 Currently permits are offered on level 5 to the Newmarket Retailers Association for all day parking but this has not seen a positive take-up and only 9 permits are in use with an average occupancy of around 5 or 6. Throughout the week level 5 is underutilised and occupancy levels tend to be below double figures including the permit holders. On Saturdays level 5 averages just 120 paid transactions over 8 hours, peaking at 11:00am with around 55 cars parked until 13:00pm after which occupancy decreases towards 16:00pm.
- 4.2.4 In December 2012 the Newmarket car parks were pre-assessed by ParkMark with a view to gaining their accreditation at all sites. Some of the more negative feedback of the overall parking portfolio was given in the appraisal of the Guineas car park and related to the perception of safety within the site and involved interviews of customers who use the facility.
- 4.2.5 The stairwells, which are the primary means for pedestrians to navigate the site, were found to be particularly unacceptable with evidence of urination, graffiti, vandalism and poor lighting. Elsewhere, the site was assessed as having a poor public perception with entry access and confusing navigation of the site also being significant factors contributing to customer dissatisfaction. Whilst the other car parks need some work, the Guineas is unlikely to gain accreditation in its current condition and without significant improvements.

### **4.3 Proposal for Long Stay Parking on Level 5**

- 4.3.1 Customer feedback to the parking team suggests that Level 5 be made available for long stay or all day parking, especially on Race Days when long stay parking demand is at its highest.
- 4.3.2 There are 278 long stay spaces available in Newmarket at All Saints Rd (162) Grosvenor Yard (76) and Church Lane (40). There are 655 short stay spaces available in Newmarket at The Guineas (400) Rous Rd (197) and Market Square (58) but this is reduced to 597 on Tuesdays and Saturdays when Market Square hosts the provisions market. Of the total number of spaces available, long stay offers 29.8% (and 31.8% on market days). As a comparison, Haverhill long stay offers 90.5% of overall spaces and in Bury St Edmunds long stay accounts for 50.7% of parking provision.
- 4.3.4 There are various forward plans which may see parking habits in Newmarket change significantly in the future – the potential creation of a town centre resident parking zone and the development of the Home of Horse Racing Visitor Centre. Both these influences are likely to increase the demand for long stay parking in the town rather than short stay demand.
- 4.3.5 Given the underutilisation of level 5 in the Guineas car park and the relative low availability of long stay parking in Newmarket, it is recommended that this

section of the car park is made long stay as part of any wider improvement works.

#### 4.4 **Waitrose S106 Funds**

4.4.1 Members have enquired about the potential use of the outstanding Waitrose S106 funds for car park improvements in Newmarket. This funding is specifically for the provision of long stay parking. The uncommitted balance of the Waitrose sec 106 monies is £295,808.23.

4.4.2 The relevant clause in the Waitrose sec 106 agreement states that:-

*5.1 The Council covenants with Waitrose that subject to any capital spending restrictions imposed upon it from time to time it will apply the car park subvention payment towards the cost of providing additional long stay public parking facilities in Newmarket.*

4.4.3 There is no payback clause on these funds and planning colleagues confirm that the proposal to use them on the Guineas car park and convert the top deck to long stay parking is a suitable potential use in their opinion.

#### 4.5 **Proposed Improvement Works**

4.5.1 The improvements proposed for the original £150,000 capital allocation include:-

- Surveying and consulting engineer;
- Raising arm barrier to control late night access to level 2;
- Sliding gates to control vehicle entry at level 2 and exit at level 3 and also to prevent out of hours pedestrian access;
- Roller shutters to prevent vehicle entry to level 1;
- Pedestrian entry points controlled by doors at all entry points with timed maglocks and access control for Premier Inn guests (if agreed);
- Infill fences to prevent access through openings;
- Vehicle re-routing and clearer pedestrian pathways (including moving barriers to improve vehicle manoeuvring);
- Improved signage; and
- Limited decorations.

4.5.2 Works to upgrade lighting have not been included in the original budget allocation but could be considered on an 'invest to save' basis. It is understood that the car park lights were replaced around 4 years ago. If these lights were to be replaced with LED lighting the capital cost to replace internal lights would be £21,000 but would payback in just 1.6 years and provide total running cost savings over 10 years of £124,000.

4.5.3 Improved CCTV was not included in the current scheme but improvements could be made for an estimated cost of £25,000.

4.5.4 Only a limited amount of decoration was been included in the original capital scheme. This could be more significantly improved and compliment the introduction of long stay parking to the top deck for an estimated cost of £15,000.

4.5.5 Design work has been carried out for the major car park improvement works and the drawings are attached in the following appendices:-

|                                    |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Ground floor plan (X183-C-100-GF)  | Appendix 1 |
| First floor plan (X183-C-101-FF)   | Appendix 2 |
| Top floor plan (X183-C-101-SF)     | Appendix 3 |
| Ramp adjustments (X183-C-103)      | Appendix 4 |
| Railing infill panels (X183-C-111) | Appendix 5 |

#### 4.5 **Premier Inn**

4.5.1 Since this project has been re-established, meetings have taken place with the management from Whitbread Leisure who are responsible for Newmarket Premier Inn. This dialogue has included a review of potential design proposals and options around operational management. These discussions have also included negotiations around the terms of any arrangement whereby the hotel patrons have exclusive use of a secure part of the Guineas car park after normal operating hours.

4.5.2 The position negotiated with Whitbread Leisure (Premier Inn) would secure income to the Council in excess of £220,000 over the next 10 years with a rent review at 5 years.

### 5. **Other options considered**

5.1 All options have been identified in section 4 of this report.

### 6. **Community impact**

6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 There is significant opportunity through the proposed improvements to reduce anti-social behaviour and make the facility more attractive and welcoming to users.

6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 Improvements to the Guineas car park will reduce the perception of potential crime, particularly for elderly and female users of the facility.

6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 The proposed lighting changes set-out in 4.5.2 will make a positive impact to the sustainability of the facility.

6.4 **Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 No other impacts have been identified.

**7. Consultation** *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 Discussions have been held with Whitbread Leisure (Premier Inn) and the operators of the Guineas Shopping Centre, Helical Bar.

**8. Financial and resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 The Council is currently incurring reactive costs to deal with the consequences of ant-social behaviour. Officers are also frequently inspecting the facility which has seen some deterioration.

8.2 The top deck (level 5) of the Guineas car park is currently underutilised and will create additional revenues through being made long stay.

**9. Risk/opportunity assessment** *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

| <b>Risk area</b>  | <b>Inherent level of risk</b><br>(before controls) | <b>Controls</b>                                       | <b>Residual risk</b><br>(after controls) |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | High/Medium/Low                                    |   | High/Medium/Low                          |
| Crime and anti-social behaviour in the Guineas car park (already occurring) | high   | Security enhancements through barriers, lights, CCTV. | Low                                      |
| Long stay parking may be underutilised                                      | Medium   | Publicity and improved signage on site                | Low                                      |
| Income from Premier Inn for use of the car park not realised                | Medium   | Heads of Terms already agreed with Whitbread Leisure  | Low                                      |

**10. Legal and policy implications**

10.1 There are no significant legal or policy implications.

**11. Ward(s) affected**

11.1 All Saints, Exning, Severals, St Marys

**12. Background papers**

12.1 None

**13. Documents attached**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Layout showing Premier Inn Parking and Ground Floor Alterations.

Appendix 2 – Proposed Site Layout showing First Floor Alterations

Appendix 3 – Proposed Site Layout showing Roof Level Alterations

Appendix 4 – Proposed Amendments to Existing Ramp

Appendix 5 – Proposed Elevations showing New Infill Panels