

CAPITAL PROJECT - CHURCHFIELDS MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Whittaker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Environmental Services
Ward(s) Affected	Sanders Park Ward
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report enables Members to consider the improvement works necessary to prevent further vandalism to the Council owned Churchfields multi-storey car park, together with details of the release of funding from balances for the Works, needed to reinstate the affected areas of the car park back to an acceptable condition.

The report has been provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Board, following its request when considering items on the Cabinet Work Programme, in order for it to pre-scrutinise the report and either endorse, comment or make recommendations on the project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Board are asked to note the details of the report and, if appropriate, make any recommendations or comments which will be passed on to Cabinet for its consideration.

For information, the following recommendations will be included within the report to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 2nd December 2015:

- a) That Cabinet resolve to agree the Improvement Works.
- b) That Cabinet recommend to Council, the approval of including the Works within the 2015/16 Capital Programme of £80.5k and to approve the funding to be released from balances

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 As set out within the main body of the report, the car park has been subjected to numerous acts of vandalism. This has resulted in the appearance of certain parts of the car park starting to deteriorate. It is important to maintain the car park in a

good state of repair in order to encourage use and maximise the potential income to the Council.

- 3.2 The current annual income for the Churchfields multi-storey car park is £87.8k. The income has shown a decrease which Officers believe may be linked to the problems identified in 3.1.
- 3.3 The cost of the proposed works to improve the car park and take steps to prevent further vandalism will be £80.5k as set out in 3.15. It is proposed that this sum be drawn down from balances.
- 3.4 The car park need not be closed completely during the Works, but relevant sections will have to be cordoned off, as necessary. As the numbers of available spaces will be reduced during this time, it is likely that there will be a marginal reduction in income.
- 3.5 The legislation governing Capital finance is set out within the Local Government Act 2003. The detail is provided in the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. This legislation introduced the new Prudential Capital Finance System which commenced on 1 April 2004.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 The Council owns the multi-story car park and has responsibilities to visitors to the car park under the rules governing occupier's liability. In relation to issues of anti-social behaviour occurring at the car park, Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requires Bromsgrove District Council to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and substance misuse, and also (as of 1 April 2010) reduce re-offending in its area.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.7 Whilst the report identifies a number of Health and Safety issues that require addressing these do not significantly impact on the continued use of the car park.
- 3.8 This car park has been subject to multiple incidents of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour and this was first brought to the attention of the Community Safety Team and the members of Safer Bromsgrove Tasking Group in December 2014. Since then, a number of interventions have been attempted to prevent the on-going crime and disorder issues and to divert young people from gathering at, and misusing the site. In Jan and Feb 2015, the Police used their Section 34 Dispersal Powers under the new Crime, ASB and Policing Act 2014. This power allowed Police Officers to remove persons from the specified area of Bromsgrove Town Centre for a period of up to 48 hours. The power is identified as a short term solution to resolve problems in areas where there is, or is likely to be, ASB, and it is recommended as an initial response whilst longer term solutions to crime and ASB problems can be considered.

- 3.9 Following the implementation of the second Dispersal Order, a number of individual young people gathering at the site were identified. Those young people shown as being involved in ASB were spoken to by the Police and issued with Level Two ASB letters, and subjected to Good Behaviour Agreements. The parents of young people identified as BDHT tenants were also spoken to by Tenancy Support Officers, and diversionary activities were offered to these young people via a local youth club. The area is also regularly subject to increased patrols by Local Policing Officers. Despite these actions to deter the perpetrators and potential perpetrators of disorder, incidents continue to be reported at the site on a regular basis.
- 3.10 In June 2015, at the request of the Community Safety Manager, the Crime Prevention Design Advisor for West Mercia Police produced a Report into Security at Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park. The recommendations within the report were supported and endorsed by the Community Safety Team and Local Policing Officers. It is felt that the greatest opportunity to reduce crime and ASB at this site is to improve the physical security of the structure, repairing and strengthening the legitimate access points and reducing opportunities for unauthorised access at the identified climbing points. These areas provide multiple access and escape routes for potential offenders and make it virtually impossible for attending Police Officers to detain and question anyone reported to be on-site when the car park is closed.
- 3.11 Unfortunately, the accessibility of the site and its reputation as a place ideal for uninterrupted gatherings has led to increased criminal and ASB activity, which more recently has taken place during periods when the car park is open.
- 3.12 The Report into Security as stated in 3.10 highlights the following concerns, together with stating the required action, which necessitates adequate finance to be made available:
- i) In order to prevent unauthorised people getting into the car park when it is closed, any potential access point needs to be removed. It has been identified that youths are gaining access to the second floor from the footpath that runs parallel to the car park; (It is also evident that access is gained via the rear of the building adjacent to Church Street/Crabtree Lane)
- Action: Install fencing to the same specification as that on the ground floor, along the side of level two, which will remove any opportunity for access into the car park from this location.***
- ii) The condition of the stairwells gives the impression that the car park is not cared for, this encourages further misuse. Information is that misuse damage etc. is reported but it takes a very long time for any action to be taken;

Action 1: All of the walls to the stairwells need repainting with a bright reflective paint, preferably one that graffiti can be easily removed from. In addition the floors need cleaning so that they are also brighter.

Action 2: All doors giving access to the stairwells should be repaired and repainted (repairs are not in fact practicable as all doors do not meet the required current specification, therefore they will have to be replaced).

3.13 Other concerns and recommendations highlighted within the Report, relating to operational procedures will be acted upon.

3.14 In addition to the Works identified within 3.12 i) and ii), it is also proposed to undertake improvement works to the lighting, upgrade the fire alarm and replace the sliding front door mechanism at the same time, thereby combining the works into one period to avoid extended inconvenience to the general public. In addition, the redecoration to the stair wells will not be spoilt by latter works.

3.15 Details and costings of proposed works are as follows:

	Cost (£k)
<i>i) Installation of fencing/railings to the same specification as that on the ground floor, along the side of level two</i>	10.0
<i>ii) Repaint stairwells and clean floors</i>	7.5
<i>iii) Replace all doors to achieve LPS1175 SR2 (this standard refers to the Loss Prevention Certification Board, which is a Technical Approvals issuing body, offering approvals of products under the Building Regulations, Construction Products Directive and other European legislation)</i>	42.0
<i>iv) Improvement works to upgrade lighting</i>	3.5
<i>v) Upgrading works to Fire Alarm</i>	3.0
<i>vi) Replacement of sliding front door mechanism</i>	3.5
<i>vii) Additional works that may be identified</i>	10.0
<i>viii) Temporary signing, notification and barriers to accommodate above works</i>	1.0

Total Cost - £80.5k

- 3.16 The benefits of providing these improvements at this time are that the risk of continued vandalism and anti-social behaviour should be greatly reduced, and with the associated internal visual appearance of the facility being given a face lift, with the aim of increasing usage.

Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.17 The car park was accredited under the Safer Parking Scheme and was last assessed in October 2014. Whilst the car park was awarded a certificate for one year, it was noted that the parking areas were generally well presented and well laid out. However, other aspects as highlighted for improvements within this report would be detrimental to further positive assessments. At this time it was decided to withdraw the car park from the scheme until the remedial works are completed.
- 3.18 Whilst certain improvement works are being undertaken, sections of the car park will have to be isolated for safety reasons. Co-ordination of the separate trades will ensure inconvenience to users is kept to a minimum.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 We had over 91,000 customers use the multi-storey last year and over 700 customers registered with Shopmobility who use our facility.
- 4.2 The car park has been identified as the designated parking area for staff at Parkside. It is worth noting that an increase in the use of the car park may provide additional surveillance and less opportunity for uninterrupted gatherings.
- 4.3 Implementing the recommendations in the Report into Security will reduce opportunities for unauthorised access, would greatly improve safety and reduce risk to all legitimate users of the car park, including Council staff. Securing the structure as far as reasonably practicable would also help to preserve any planned cleansing and cosmetic improvements at the site, and long term will help to reduce any on-going repairs and asset maintenance costs.
- 4.4 If vandalism is not curtailed, and continues to escalate, there is a possibility that the fabric of the actual structure will be subjected to damage. This could lead to even more expensive remedial works.

5. APPENDICES

Report into Security at Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park by the Crime Prevention Design Advisor for West Mercia Police.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Safe Parking Scheme accreditation - October 2014.

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