

REPORT TITLE: VAULTEX PARK AND RIDE EXTENSION

24 JUNE 2020

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Councillor Martin Tod, Cabinet Member for Service Quality and Transformation

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WARD(S): ST. MICHAEL'S

PURPOSE

This report provides an update to Cabinet on the Vaultex Park & Ride (P&R) proposals and seeks approval of additional Capital funding required to deliver the surface car park, which adds 135 spaces to park and ride capacity for the city.

A planning application for the surface car park was submitted in March 2020 and has been approved. The additional spaces which will be provided initially as a surface car park will be in an excellent location to encourage walking into the City centre utilising improved links being provided through the Winchester Movement Strategy and the Sport and Leisure Park development.

This report provides an update on the delivery timescales, risks and costs of the project to date for both the surface car park and the longer term objective of a decked car park.

A Business Case was submitted to the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to request funding to deliver a decked P&R at Vaultex, as part of recommendations of the City of Winchester Movement Strategy. The LEP Board has agreed to provisionally enter into a legal agreement with the Council to deliver a decked Vaultex Park & Ride facility and allocate £5,647,676 for this project, in the form of a grant. This however is subject to sufficient additional funding being allocated to the LEP from Central Government. The LEP has requested that a funding agreement is drafted in preparedness for future funding allocations. A further report will be brought to Cabinet once more certainty over funding is provided to agree the next steps required in order to progress a decked car park.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Approve a supplementary capital estimate and expenditure of £230,000 for the surface car park.
2. That Cabinet approve the advertisement of the Parking Places Order, consider responses and make the Order for the management and enforcement required for the car park.
3. That the Vaultex car park will be run as part of the overall park and ride provision, ie users will pay to park and use the bus, but with encouragement of walking and cycling into the City for those who are able to do so.
4. Agrees that authority is delegated to the Head of Programme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Service Quality and Transformation to negotiate and agree parking arrangements within the car park for residents of 67 to 89 Bar End Road.
5. Agrees that authority is delegated to the Head of Programme to enter into and award the works contract for the surface car park.
6. Agrees that authority is delegated to the Strategic Director of Place to prepare and enter into the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding agreement pending award of Government funding for a grant from the LEP and to further progress that project, subject to funding and detailed approval.
7. Approve expenditure of £35,000 for signing and lining for the Coach Park at the appropriate time.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District

- a) Delivering additional Park & Ride (P&R) to the East of Winchester city centre is a direct recommendation and action of Winchester City Council's Climate Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP).
- b) Increased P&R will reduce traffic and pollution within the city centre and encourage more people to walk and cycle into the city centre. The Council Plan states that delivering the City of Winchester Movement Strategy (WMS) is crucial to tackle the Climate Emergency. The WMS recommends additional P&R to the east of Winchester, to reduce traffic on the road network, congestion, pollution and delays. Vaultex is a key development to achieve this.
- c) Improved connectivity and wayfinding is proposed as part of Winchester Sport & Leisure Park (WS&LP) development. The Winchester Movement Strategy has also identified the improvement of cycling and walking routes between the Railway station, City Centre and the Sport and Leisure Park at Bar End. This will be progressed jointly with the County Council. Vaultex users will benefit from these improvements and signage will highlight alternative methods to travel into city centre, such as on foot or by bicycle.

1.2 Vibrant Local Economy

Increased P&R enables commuters to park further out of the city centre and save money, while giving higher priority to shoppers and visitors to access and use our centres directly by car, public transport and through walking and cycling;

1.3 Living Well

Vaultex is within 1km of the city centre and passengers will be encouraged to use active travels methods, such as walking and cycling. Bicycle storage will be available at Vaultex to support this. Vaultex will also support the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park as it can provide additional parking spaces during high volumes of use, such as sporting competitions.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 An original capital budget of £2,091,000 was approved by the Strategic Asset Purchase (SAPs) Board in September 2017, for the purchase of the site, demolition of the existing building and construction of a surface car park on the Vaultex site to meet increasing demand for P&R and support proposals to reduce city centre traffic.

- 2.2 Following its purchase, the site was temporarily leased back to its original owners after they vacated, the building was then demolished in preparation for conversion to a car park. Following detailed design of the surface car park an updated and detailed cost estimate has been produced and it is estimated that up to an additional £230,000 is required to carry out the construction as detailed in the table below.

	£'000	£'000
Original capital budget (September 2017)		2,091
Purchase		(1,676)
Demolition		(115)
Remaining budget		300
<i>Revised estimate for construction of surface car park</i>		
Detailed design, planning fees, transport assessment	23	
Construction	497	
EV charging point	10	
	530	
Additional budget required		230

- 2.3 Excluding the cost of the site purchase, it is estimated that the surface car park will generate a surplus of circa £17,000 per annum after costs (assuming a return to normal usage from April 2021 post COVID-19). Further details are provided in the financial appraisal at Appendix 1.

2.4 **Coach Park**

- 2.5 A capital budget of £400,000, funded by the car parks property reserve was approved in February budget for the construction of a coach parking facility within the St Catherine's Park and Ride site. Following review and a piloting of a more cost effective alternative, it is now anticipated that the majority of this budget is no longer required. The alternative preferred coach park can be in the central roadway in the South Winchester Park and Ride site. This arrangement has already been utilised at Christmas last year which worked well.

- 2.6 This involves very little in terms of engineering changes, with the exception of up to £35,000 of expenditure for signing and lining. This will be implemented at an appropriate time in respect of changes in the city economy and demand for coach parking.

- 2.7 This represents an approximate overall saving of £365,000 against original budget which will be released back to the car parks property reserve.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council are required to obtain a Parking Places Order under section 32 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (the Act). An order under the Act enables the Council to provide off-street parking, access and egress, and to

maintain the parking area at the Vaultex site. For such an order to be valid it must be for the purpose of relieving traffic congestion of traffic.

- 3.2 The Act sets out a statutory process to be followed for a valid order to be made that includes public advertisement with an invitation to submit comments, and the consultation of statutory consultees, including the Highways Authority and police.
- 3.3 The GEN 4-2 Civil Engineering, Highways and Transportation Infrastructure Framework is being used to tender for the required contractor for the surface car park works. The terms and conditions of the framework, Council Procedure rules and Financial Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations will be adhered to throughout the tender and subsequent award of any contract.
- 3.4 The associated procurement route for the design and construction of the decked car park needs to be determined once more certainty on the funding is established.
- 3.5 The Council's legal team will assist with the drafting and provide advice in respect of the LEP funding agreement.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The project can be delivered from within existing resources. Enforcing parking controls at this new car park will be undertaken by the parking team but will require this to be considered alongside other new requirements and demands on enforcement.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The previous building on the Vaultex site has been demolished and the site cleared in preparation for development. The necessary maintenance of the car park will be managed by the Parking team and funded from the parking account.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 As part of the planning application process the statutory 21 days notice period was observed. Consultation with local residents in Bar End Road has been undertaken about parking issues.
- 6.2 A range of officers are engaged to inform the wider project and planning application, in particular the Natural Environment and Resources team, Parking, Estates, Legal and Finance. Hampshire Swifts and the Bat Conservation Trust UK were consulted and the design amended to ensure a Biodiversity Net Gain on the site, in line with advice from the Council's ecologist.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The existing ecology of the site and its location in relation to the River Itchen has been evaluated and steps have been taken within the surface car park design and planning application to ensure neither is negatively impacted.
- 7.2 The disposal of surface water, quality and pollution control has been considered. The car parking spaces will be porous and therefore this will comply with the water quality indices in the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) manual. The drainage documents and modelling has been accepted by the Planning Authority.
- 7.3 All of the existing trees and shrubbery on the site will remain; with additional green planting, including trees and grass being proposed. Bat and bird boxes have also been included in the proposals, to encourage and support more wildlife to occupy the site. The Council's ecology officer has advised that there will be a Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 7.4 The car park will support the WMS objectives of reducing traffic movements through and into the City centre and will support the CNAP, where the expansion of P&R capacity at Vaultex was detailed in the December 2019 Adopted Plan. The CNAP sets out that the initial 135 spaces provided by the surface car park contributes to the reduction of carbon emissions, followed by further reductions due to the increased spaces provided by a decked car park in the future.
- 7.5 It is anticipated that with 135 spaces and a 5km round trip to the city centre, 6 days a week x 50 weeks a year; at an average Co2e per car of 285g/km, will result in 57 tonnes of CO2 saved per year.
- 7.6 It is intended that the future decked car park will include Photovoltaic panels and electric vehicle charging points, to support the Council's carbon reduction targets. Consideration will also be given to cycle parking and charging.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty has been considered for this project. An appropriate amount of Disabled Only spaces have been provided within the surface car park detailed design, these are located close to the Parking Information signage, ticket machine and entrance/exit to the car park.
- 8.2 These spaces will have clear signage to discourage non-blue badge holders from parking there and where necessary, will be enforceable under the Parking Places Order.
- 8.3 Park and Ride buses are fully accessible.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None required.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Community Support Public opposition to increased car parking provision.</i>	Public opportunity to oppose on planning application. Continue to engage local residents near Vaultex site.	No objections received on planning application. Vaultex supports WCC's carbon neutral objectives, Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and Winchester Movement Strategy.
<i>Timescales COVID-19 restrictions on construction sites may slow down progress.</i>	Additional time built into the programme and project team rapidly progressing work.	Continuing to progress Vaultex P&R supports wider city centre return to work post COVID-19 restrictions.
<i>Project capacity Insufficient staff resources.</i>	WCC has assigned sufficient internal resource to the project.	
<i>Financial / VfM Additional budget required – surface car park</i>	Funded from borrowing, business case assessed and implications understood.	Generate revenue through P&R, supports wider city centre & District ambitions.
<i>Legal A challenge on the basis that the correct statutory procedure and consultation is not followed to secure the works contracts or the parking Order.</i>	The precise following of the statutory and standing order requirements will mitigate any risk of challenge.	Public consultation and correct following of procedure enhances the council reputation.

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 The Council purchased the Vaultex site to develop additional Park & Ride (P&R) capacity to the east of the city centre. The existing building on the site was demolished at the end of 2019 and the site cleared.
- 11.2 In December 2019 a detailed design was undertaken and a planning application for a 135 space surface car park submitted, which has now been approved.
- 11.3 This increase in P&R capacity helps to deliver the first priority of the WMS, which is to reduce city centre traffic. Initial modelling work completed as part of a P&R feasibility study; part of the WMS work, suggests that increasing overall P&R capacity in the periphery of Winchester could reduce city centre traffic by 10%.

- 11.4 On average the existing P&R sites are operating at near 100% capacity during weekdays and present a barrier to achieving the 10% reduction target. The increase of P&R spaces at the Vaultex site is therefore instrumental in achieving this target.
- 11.5 The WMS park and ride study shows that there is demand of between 1,500 spaces in a high growth scenario, and 1,200 spaces in a low growth scenario by 2030. The study highlighted several locations where P&R services could be expanded to accommodate anticipated future demand, where the Vaultex site was one of the key corridor locations to start providing additional P&R capacity. Additional sites are being considered to assist with the remaining demand.
- 11.6 The provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) on the site is being explored, using work from the Council's Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy and discussions with WCC's delivery partner JoJu. This work will confirm whether there is demand/need for EVCPs on Vaultex, both now and in the next few years. The necessary cabling to support EVCPs will be installed when the construction takes place this year, to ensure that an opportunity to install EVCPs will not be missed.
- 11.7 The project has been reviewed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued to progress. The planning application and procurement route has so far not been affected by the pandemic. The construction of the car park is dependent on multiple elements; adherence to the Government issued advice, Health & Safety of those involved, SSE; who are experiencing delays and the availability of materials.
- 11.8 The tenders for the work will be received by the end of Summer 2020 and it is anticipated there will be greater clarity around delivery challenges and opportunities after this. It is recognised that currently demand for car parking has been significantly reduced, but it is anticipated that demand will return to normal in the future and additional P&R capacity will still be required.
- 11.9 There are 12 properties fronting Bar End Road (67 – 89) which experience parking difficulties. They have for many years parked on forecourts in front of their properties but this has been stopped due to highway safety issues raised by the County Council. A temporary arrangement allowing them to park in Barfield P&R has been put in place. Discussions with residents regarding this matter are ongoing.
- 11.10 Cabinet is asked to agree that the Head of Programme, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Service Quality and Transformation, can negotiate and agree parking arrangements within the car park for residents of 67 to 89 Bar End Road, including the associated charges.

Background and project update – decked car park

- 11.11 Alongside the surface car park, emerging outputs from the WMS recommend that increased P&R capacity will be necessary to meet its aims in the future. Vaultex is an ideal location for this.
- 11.12 A Business Case to request £5.65M in funding from the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was submitted in March 2020 and provisionally approved on the 30th May 2020 subject to LEP funding being made available.
- 11.13 The bid includes funding for the design, planning and construction of a 300+ space P&R, 30 double Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) and a Photovoltaic Array (PV) and battery to support the electricity demand on site. The proposed EVCPs are expected to meet the 2028-2030 predicted demand for EVCPs and encourage P&R users to be early adopters of electric vehicles.
- 11.14 Proposed delivery of the decked P&R assumes LEP funding becomes available by May 2021 and delivery takes approximately 18 months, including procurement, design and construction.
- 11.15 The EM3 LEP do not currently have funding available, but having an approved Business Case and request for funding reduces delays and increases chances of receiving funding when/if it becomes available in the future.

Next steps and advice from the EM3 LEP

- 11.16 An estimated cost and programme to develop the decked car park proposals, from RIBA stages 0 – 3; where a full planning application would be submitted has been sought to inform this paper.
- 11.17 In order to carry out the necessary work to submit a full planning application for a decked car park, site investigations, a detailed design and preparation of supporting planning documents would be required.
- 11.18 The EM3 LEP Project Board have agreed to provisionally enter into the legal funding agreement with the Council to deliver the decked P&R, in the form of a £5.65m grant. This is subject to sufficient funding being allocated to the LEP from Central Government.
- 11.19 Drafting of the funding agreement with the LEP is being recommended, as this would put all parties in a good position to progress quickly if and when funding is allocated to the decked Vaultex project, but no further expenditure beyond requested in this report would be committed until funding becomes available from the LEP and is confirmed for the project. At this point a further report will be brought to Cabinet to consider the required steps to progress a decked car park on the site.

11.20 There is active dialogue with EM3 LEP as this project may benefit from funding released as part of government action to boost the economy following COVID-19.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 Another option considered and rejected was to delay delivery of the surface car park until 2021.

12.2 Forward funding the design of the decked car park, at an approximate cost of £150,000 was considered. This would be at risk initially pending receipt of LEP funding; this cost could then be reclaimed from the LEP allocation. Depending on when funding becomes available, this approach would accelerate the implementation time by about 6 – 9 months. This option was rejected in the light of the current adverse financial impacts of COVID–19 on council finances.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

None.

Other Background Documents:-

[Planning application submission for surface car park.](#)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – financial appraisal