

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Decision Made: 9 November 2023

#### Consideration of works to amalgamate and extend Medway Street Car Park

##### Issue for Decision

To consider the proposal to extend and carry out refurbishment and improvement works to Medway street car park, Maidstone.

##### Decision Made

That

1. The funding works to amalgamate and extend the car park at an estimated total budget of £177,500, be approved; and
2. An additional £20,000 (if external funding in whole or part is not available) for provision of a secure green bike store, be agreed.

##### Reasons for Decision

The Borough Council own both the public pay and display car park, located at Medway Street and the adjacent car park (currently not within the car parking order). Although adjacent, there are significant differences in the site levels.

There are significant level differences between the sites. To amalgamate the sites a vehicular ramp would need to be constructed. The extension area currently has a surface that is below the standard expected and required to be used as a public car park, both areas would require resurfacing and relining as part of the proposed works. To comply and make the car park an attractive offer to park, a low-level lighting scheme would need to be installed. In addition to these works, it would be prudent to carry out some repairs and improvements to the site boundaries, install additional pay and display metres and new signage. Should this proposal proceed, on safety grounds the existing access onto the High Street would require "stopping up" and a bollard or barrier installed.

The required works can be broken down into stages. The first area of work concerns topography site surveys, drainage surveys, lighting survey, drawings, investigation, detailed design work and proposed layout. **The cost of stage 1 is quoted as £14,500.**

Assuming the initial site surveys show that the amalgamation of the sites is indeed possible, quotes have been received for the full works, which include - creation of a ramp, boundary repair and renewal, resurface, reline, installation of lighting, installation of additional pay and display machines, installation of bike racks (secure) new signage, stopping up of access to High Street. **The cost of**

**stage 2 is quoted as £160,000**; this is on the assumption that the preceding survey works do not result in additional works being required to the site. An example of this would be upgrades or repairs to drainage systems that run beneath the site, or relocation of services.

To further the Council's carbon neutral agenda, there is an opportunity to provide a green roof bike store. It is hoped that this work could be funded from external grants or operators, however if the Council were to fully fund this element an **additional £20,000** should be allowed for.

The final stage of works is to bring the car park in its entirety to be within the car parking order, which is a legal requirement for the Council to be able to treat and use as a public car park. **The cost of stage 3 is estimated to be £3,000.**

There are some existing rights for third parties to park and enjoy access over the site, however it is felt that these existing rights can be accommodated within the proposals and will not frustrate the project.

A further consideration to cost will be the annual costs for the required additional pay and display machines (software licences, annual maintenance, electricity and back-office work) **Estimated at £3,000 pa.**

The current pay and display car park provides 60 spaces, the extension land currently provides 23 spaces. There will be some loss of spaces to accommodate the installation of the ramp and the proposed bike store.

Therefore, subject to detailed design, it is believed that this project will on completion provide a minimum of 73 spaces in total.

It is important that Medway Street (new) car park remains a short stay car park (maximum stay 4 hours). This increases bay turnover and efficiency and therefore income. It is believed that if extended Medway Street car park will continue to enjoy a good rate of occupancy, if the current Medway Street occupancy rates are matched, an additional income of £3,790 per bay per annum can be expected, (13 x £3,970 is £49,270. This is an annual return of 28% on our capital outlay of £177.5K, so is comfortably in excess of the Council's minimum required rate of return of 5%. Please note that, during the construction phase, the carpark in its entirety will not be available. This will result in a loss of income during the estimated construction phase (3 months). However, it is felt that regular users will be displaced into another Council operated car park, and so the actual financial loss to the council will be kept at a minimum. The new car park will attract an additional cost in respect of business rates, £8,000 pa.

However, the unknown factor to consider is where will the additional users come from? There is currently adequate number of car parking spaces within the centre town location to satisfy demand, with no new shops or entertainment to create an additional demand for spaces outside of seasonal variations. There is a chance that the new car park may attract some customers from The Fremlin complex, which would increase new income, however it is proven that drivers always park as close to their destination as possible, and so new custom from the Fremlin complex cannot be relied upon to create additional income. If additional custom is achieved to the new extended car park, it should be considered that the new custom is more likely to come from drivers being displaced from one of our other town centre car parks, and therefore are moving income A to income B and not

generating significant new money and making a difference to our income stream.

Local Ward Members have also been consulted on the proposal. The matter was considered by the Planning Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 8 November 2023 with the following recommendation made:

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET MEMBER:** That

1. The funding works to amalgamate and extend the car park at an estimated total budget of £177, 500 be agreed; and
2. An additional £20,000 for provision of green bike store and electric car sharing scheme points (if not externally funded in whole or part), be agreed.

**Alternatives considered and why rejected**

1. To carry out minor improvement works to the additional land – surface and boundaries – estimated cost £40,000. To hopefully attract through marketing, a private tenant to utilise the site for their own parking need. The site has previously been let on agreement to local businesses for staff parking, however the tenant bought the agreement to an end as they no longer required the facility.
2. That the proposed project is not taken forward, and secure the site against unauthorised use and activity, for reconsideration when there is a clear demand for additional town centre car parking.

These options were rejected in order to carry out the required works to the car park and increase the number of car parking spaces available in the town centre. The electric car sharing scheme was rejected at this time as there was currently no evidence of the demand for the scheme, but this would not prejudice the scheme being introduced in the future.

**Background Papers**

None.

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor Paul Cooper, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm on Thursday 16 November 2023.**