

Lancaster City Council | Report Cover Sheet

Meeting	Cabinet	Date	18 January 2022
Title	Eden North: Car Parking - Agreement in Principle		
Report of	Chief Executive		
Purpose of Report			
To support progression of the Eden North planning application and business / funding case, the council needs to confirm it supports a jointly agreed strategic approach to the handling of car-borne visitors to the proposed attraction. The report seeks approval to parameters which will assist the project in satisfying the demands of the Local Planning Authority and Government funding approval processes, with specific regard to the role of council car parking assets in Eden North's sustainable travel and transport proposals.			
Key Decision (Y/N)	Y	Date of Notice	13 Dec 2021
		Exempt (Y/N)	N

Report Summary

The report sets out the process by which the city council and Eden North will progress firm contractual agreements concerning the car parking sites/locations required and the associated operational matters, with proposed implementation anticipated prior to Eden North opening to the public. The form proposed is an Agreement in Principle, the signing of which will satisfy the Local Planning Authority of the viability of Eden North's Transport Strategy, a material consideration in the current planning application. A route to securing planning approval will also support Eden North's business case to Government.

Recommendations of Councillors

- (1) The terms of the Agreement in Principle outlining the proposed role in Eden North's Transport / Parking Strategy of city council car parking assets in Morecambe is endorsed.
- (2) A further report on the detailed operational and financial mechanisms of the proposed operations is considered by Cabinet prior to formal contractual agreement.

Relationship to Policy Framework

Eden Project North provides an opportunity to deliver considerable social and economic benefits for Morecambe and the wider area, contributing to the following priorities:

- A Sustainable District
- An Inclusive and Prosperous Economy
- Healthy and Happy Communities

Conclusion of Impact Assessment(s) where applicable

Climate	Wellbeing & Social Value
Digital	Health & Safety
Equality	Community Safety

Climate: While there are no climate change implications arising directly from the decision, the Agreement in Principle feeds into Eden North's sustainable travel and transport proposals. The appropriateness of these proposals in terms of their contribution towards mitigating climate change will be tested through Eden North's planning application by the Local Planning Authority.

Equality - While the detail of car parking sites and operational methodology are not part of this report, the provision of and location of publicly accessible/disabled provision will be a key consideration in considering the detailed arrangements between the city council and Eden North.

There are no other relevant impacts on aspects of Well Being, Digital, Community Safety, however a successful Eden North initiative will contribute positively towards these issues.

Details of Consultation

Eden North has conducted substantial consultation activity at a variety of scales among communities to elicit views regarding Eden North. The decision will feed into consideration of the Eden North planning application currently under review by the Local Planning authority. The planning application is subject to open consultation and scrutiny as part of the formal approval process.

Legal Implications

The Heads of Terms considered in this report do not represent a formal contract with Eden North. The report outlines a strategy and process towards enabling a legally enforceable agreement to be developed between the parties.

At this stage therefore it is purely an Agreement in Principle providing sufficient safeguards for the council in terms of the matters outlined, and sufficient certainty for Eden North in progressing their planning application and negotiations with central Government regarding business case matters. Further Cabinet decisions may be required to finalise a contract dependent on the financial and community implications of the detailed proposed operations.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications in approving this Agreement in Principle. However, operational methodology for the car parks has yet to be determined and any future implications will be subject to a further report to Cabinet.

It should be noted that given the proposal is currently considering the offer of c.400 spaces out of the 1,800 council owned space in Morecambe, then not all car parks need be turned over to Eden North for exclusive use. Current thinking is that they will be made available as "shared use" between Eden North visitors and the public, managed under a dynamic allocation system which would ensure a space is available for pre-paid Eden visitors.

This will be a complex area of operation/negotiation and the final likely impact on the council's net income in comparison with the current public use profile of Morecambe's public car parking spaces will need to be assessed. However, the officer assumption is that due to increased volumes, the final revenue position will be at least neutral or positive impact on the Council's net financial position. A final contract will include an agreed charging schedule including pricing reviews to mitigate any financial risk.

Other Resource or Risk Implications

This must be framed in terms of the downside risk of Eden North failing to progress efficiently through the statutory planning process and potentially failing to secure planning approval under the current application process. An Agreement in Principle will support the certainty of the travel and transport arrangement currently under consideration. A successful award of planning permission will also support consideration of Eden North's financial case presented to Government where certainty of planning approval is a critical consideration.

Section 151 Officer's Comments

Like most local authorities, the Council is facing on significant on-going financial pressures, which have been further exacerbated by impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although recent Government proposals may lessen this pressure to some degree, the Council can expect reductions in both our income and on our levels of reserves.

The Eden Project North represents an opportunity to deliver considerable social and economic benefits for Morecambe and the wider area across several the Council's priorities. Associated growth within areas such as business rates and other income streams will assist the Council in becoming financial sustainable.

Monitoring Officer's Comments

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add

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Links to Background Papers

1.0 Introduction

Members will be aware that The Eden Project North (EPN) planning application (21/01113/FUL) was validated on 2nd September 2021. This seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and proposed construction of the major mixed leisure development proposal including use classes E, F1 and F2, outdoor arena (for live music performances), public realm, landscaping works, cycle parking, detached shelter and energy pods, and associated infrastructure and engineering operations.

As part of this application, a Transport Assessment (TA) and an Interim Travel Plan (ITP) were submitted within the Environmental Statement (Volume 3, Appendix 11.1 and 11.2). The nature of the Parking Strategy proposed in the planning application is being scrutinised by city council officers in its role as Local Planning Authority (LPA) in detail. As Morecambe's main publicly accessible car parking assets are stated in the published planning application as being required to play a critical role in visitor management, it is necessary for the city council in its role as property asset holder to provide certainty to the LPA officers that the approach set out is agreeable.

A formal declaration, by way of an Agreement in Principle, will allow the LPA to complete its review of car parking matters as a material consideration and progress the planning application to recommendation / decision in the New Year. Progression of the Eden North proposal through to planning approval is also a critical matter to support the funding business case to Government.

2.0 Background

The proposed Eden North Parking Strategy set out in Chapter 8 of the planning application Transport Assessment and Transport Assessment Addendum 2 (refer to links in Background Papers links). In association a draft high level Dynamic Parking Strategy provides an initial starting point for discussions to be completed between Eden and the Council.

A key principle of the Eden Transport Strategy is to encourage people to arrive by non-car modes, particularly for their last mile element of the journey. Notwithstanding this, there is also a practical reality that initially many visitors will still seek to travel by car, particularly as external bodies such as the rail industry will take time to be able to provide more frequent services between Lancaster and Morecambe to respond to increased travel demand created by the facility.

The focus of the Eden Parking Strategy to intercept a significant proportion of vehicles using the county council operated M6 Junction 34 Caton Road Park and Ride, where there is current parking capacity. However, an element of parking in Morecambe town centre is also required not only for some Eden specific visitors but also to actively encourage visitors to spend time in Morecambe before and/or after their visit to the proposed attraction.

3.0 Proposal

The city council owns and operates around 1,800 surface Pay and Display parking spaces across Morecambe town centre at different locations (on-street parking is not included in this figure as it is widely permitted free of charge). Within 500m of the Eden North site there are 2,168 surface parking spaces distributed across both city council and private car parks on a 1,056/1,112 private/council split.

It is estimated that the maximum number of private vehicles travelling to the proposed development on a peak day would be 850 vehicles to be accommodated between Morecambe town centre and the Park & Ride. Due to rotation and differing arrival/departure times the maximum parking space demand is likely to fall below that figure. Assuming a car park rotation based on the manually adjusted arrivals and departures profile for a peak day, and using the predicted modal share the total number of visitor parking spaces required is between 532 and 586 depending on the underlying assumptions used. Details of the work can be found in the planning application Transport Assessment.

It is therefore proposed that, under the terms of the Agreement in Principle (Appendix 1) and subject to further negotiation and contract, that the city council initially agrees to provide up to 400 spaces at any one time across a range of its Morecambe sites, but within 650m of Eden North. This represents the maximum number of spaces identified on a peak day and assumes no rotation for the entire day to be available for Eden visitors and staff.

A time controlled and advance booking system will allow Eden North to know in advance a series of visitor details (origin, party size, vehicle details). This information will allow predictability, manage, and influence the parking demand within Morecambe Town Centre and the M6 Junction 34 Caton Road Park and Ride. The system will allow allocation of parking spaces at a specific location and not all the final identified car parks/spaces in Morecambe Town Centre may be required by the proposed development throughout the year.

In summary it is anticipated that ordinary day-to-day parking demand can be accommodated alongside Eden North visitor demand. The broad Car Parking Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the city council (Parking, Economic Growth and Regeneration and Planning

teams) and Lancashire County Council (Infrastructure, Parking and Public Transport teams) and is recognised as a work in progress where further engagement and clarification is required prior to formal contractual agreements being made, which will occur post-planning submission and decision. This work will focus on a charging regime, to include charging reviews at periods to be agreed between the Parties (refer to financial Implications), and further work on management and operational matters.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

<p>Option 1: The terms of the Agreement in Principle outlining the proposed role in Eden North’s Transport / Parking Strategy of city council car parking assets in Morecambe is endorsed.</p>
<p>Advantages: Provides a degree of formal support towards a jointly agreed strategic approach to the handling of car-borne visitors to the proposed Eden North attraction.</p> <p>Approval of the parameters will assist the project in satisfying the demands of the Local Planning Authority and Government funding approval processes, with specific regard to the role of council car parking assets in Eden North's sustainable travel and transport proposals.</p>
<p>Disadvantages: No disadvantages identified.</p>
<p>Risks: The practical operational mechanisms will be a complex area and the final likely impact on the council’s net income in comparison with the current public use profile of Morecambe’s public car parking spaces will need to be assessed. However, officers are confident that the dynamic booking arrangements can be progressed and formally agreed, and day-to-day parking demand for Morecambe Town Centre can be managed alongside Eden North visitor demands.</p>
<p>Option 2: The terms of the Agreement in Principle outlining the proposed role in Eden North’s Transport / Parking Strategy of city council car parking assets in Morecambe are not agreed.</p>
<p>Advantages: No advantages identified.</p>
<p>Disadvantages: This will not support nor satisfy the demands of the Local Planning Authority and Government business case approval processes</p>
<p>Risks: This must be framed in terms of the downside risk of Eden North failing to progress efficiently through the statutory planning process and potentially failing to secure planning approval under the current application process.</p>

4. Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

4.1 The officer preferred option is Option 1.