

CABINET

West End Local Centre Parking Cabinet 4th October 2011

Report of Head of Regeneration and Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to consider the need for additional parking provision in the West End to serve the local centre's retail businesses and the potential re-use of the former Parliament Street play area for car parking.

Key Decision

Non-Key Decision

Referral from Cabinet
Member

X

Date Included in Forward Plan

[Click here and type date included in Forward Plan]

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR JANICE HANSON

- (1) That Option 3 the provision of a Low Cost Temporary Parking Area is approved to enable demand for a permanent car parking facility to be demonstrated.
- (2) That an appropriate form of control is determined.
- (3) That the temporary period for the car park be for 12 months.
- (4) That the £22K unspent Empty Shops Funding be allocated to meet the cost of providing the temporary car park and the revenue budget be updated accordingly.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The West End local centre predominantly consists of small retail units centred on Regent Road and Yorkshire Street, as well as on Albert Road and Claremont Road. The on-street parking that serves the retail businesses and residents is subject to control through a residents parking scheme that allows time limited parking for 1 and 2 hours.

During and following the improvements to Yorkshire Street in 2008 there was growing pressure to provide off-street car parking. However, the highly built up nature of the West End limits opportunities to create off street parking without the costly acquisition and demolition of existing buildings. The most suitable location for provision of an off street car park is the open space / former play area on Parliament Street. This area was created by clearing

housing and workshops during the Area Renewal Programme in the mid-nineties.

The updated publication of Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) that assessed the provision and access to open space critically now takes account of the significant improvements made to both Regent Park and West End Gardens that serve the locality well for both children's play and general recreation. Under this assessment the Parliament Street play area is not necessarily required. Parliament Street play area was in quite poor condition and had suffered considerable and persistent vandalism and as the equipment had come to the end of its serviceable life it was removed in 2010 following a review of play areas. Pictured below is a representation of the existing layout of the open space between Parliament and East Street.



Existing Parliament Street site arrangement / Children's play area - Source: Taylor Young, 2010

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 Parking Demand

Obviously local traders are very supportive of additional car parking that is well signed and close to the shops. Furthermore, the traders themselves also require parking as the residents' parking scheme and 1 and 2 hour restrictions can make running a business, especially as a sole trader, difficult.

The changes to Yorkshire Street have improved the public realm and pedestrian's ease of crossing the street. The areas dedicated to crossing points, tree planting and seating and the traffic calming chicanes were provided at the expense of parking spaces. This, in the opinion of the traders, has been detrimental to trade as it is their belief that the ease of parking is a major factor in customer's shopping there.

In September 2009 the council undertook a number plate parking survey to

measure parking space occupancy, vacancy levels and turnover. Listed on the following page is a table showing the headline results. Please note that the second figure in brackets shows data only for the Saturday average to distinguish the greater levels of retail activity that occur on Saturdays.

Data Set	Principal Retail Streets	Side Streets	All Streets Combined
Parking Capacity	30	94	124
Average Number of Occupied Spaces	22 (23)	44 (55)	66 (78)
Average Number of Vacant Spaces	9 (6)	50 (40)	58 (47)
Average % Occupancy of Spaces	73% (78%)	47% (58%)	53% (63%)
Greatest % Occupancy of Spaces	87% (87%)	52% (60%)	60% (64%)
Lowest % Occupancy of Spaces	57% (70%)	37% (57%)	40% (60%)

Principal Retail Streets = Regent Road and Yorkshire Street

Side Streets = East Street, Devonshire Road, Parliament Street and West Street.

The Principal Retail streets of Yorkshire Street and Regent Road experience the highest levels of parking space occupancy. On the Principal Retail streets at peak occupancy of 87% there were 4 free parking spaces. Saturdays exhibit a higher level of parking occupancy as this is both a popular shopping day and also when the residential streets have more parked cars as the majority of residents are not at work.

Even at peak times the Side Streets offer considerable numbers of vacant spaces. On the Side Streets the fewest parking spaces available during the survey were 39.

The table below shows the percentage occupancy of the car parking spaces on the individual streets and again the Saturday averages are shown in brackets.

Data Set	Yorkshire Street	Regent Road	West Street	Parliament Street	East Street	Devonshire Road
Parking Capacity	19	11	11	43	32	8
Average % Occupancy of Spaces	63% (79%)	78% (80%)	41% (38%)	41% (56%)	59% (64%)	50% (63%)
Greatest % Occupancy of Spaces	95% (89%)	100% (91%)	73% (45%)	43% (55%)	78% (75%)	88% (63%)
Lowest % Occupancy of Spaces	37% (58%)	55% (64%)	9% (57%)	25% (50%)	44% (69%)	25% (63%)

Regent Road experiences the only 100% occupancy rate. This reflects the fact that this is the main route through the retail area and that parking is always in demand.

Peak occupancy on Yorkshire Street of 95% was recorded at midday on Thursday 17th September when there was only one free parking space. Interestingly the lowest level of occupancy of 37% occurs just one hour later on the same day when there were 12 free spaces. The peak occupancy on West Street of 73% occurred at the same time and date as that of Yorkshire Street and this suggests that this street is the obvious alternative for shoppers parking when Yorkshire Street is at its busiest.

On average Parliament Street has a considerable number of vacant spaces and even at peak occupancy on Saturday 10th October there were 19 vacant spaces.

The data for East Street is slightly skewed due to the semi-permanent nature of the parking bays opposite Regent Garage and the informal parking behind More Music that is nearly always fully occupied. The top of East Street nearest to Regent Road has a bay of 20 spaces controlled by a 2 hour parking no return restriction and at the maximum recorded occupancy of 78% there were 7 vacant spaces.

Both the Principal Retail streets (Regent Road and Yorkshire Street) exhibit strong demand for parking, but there is always available on street parking on the Side Streets. However, the signage on these streets is believed by traders to be a little misleading, that it discourages shoppers to use the on street parking as they think it is for residents only.

On street signage has to meet the Department of Transport Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 and the prescribed signs can sometimes be unhelpful or the wording of them unclear. It is suggested that County are approached to see if the signs can be amended within the regulations to emphasise the limited waiting aspect and to see whether further additional highway signage to direct drivers to the streets with capacity would be possible.

At the request of local traders and the West End Partnership signage was installed in 2010 to direct shoppers to the available on street parking and also the Yorkshire Street shops.

Local trader's response to the results of the parking survey were mixed and they felt that part of the problem was that the council had driven customers away when the street was closed to enable the improvement works, hence the parking space availability on Parliament and East Street. Local traders find the parking restrictions hinder operation of their business and a desire has been expressed for provision of parking for traders.

The aim to bring Centenary House, the former Co-Op Department Store, on Regent Road back into productive economic use adds future demand for parking in the locality. The development of a car park on Parliament Street could also serve regeneration of Centenary House. However, the end use is not yet defined for Centenary House and firm proposals are 12 months away. Therefore the likely future parking requirement or any potential financial

contribution is not yet known.

2.2 LCC Parking Strategy

In 2003 Cabinet resolved to consider parking priorities strategically in order to establish a clear parking hierarchy as follows:

- Residents
- Visitors, shoppers and local business needs
- Commuters

Since the hierarchy was established, it became clear that shoppers and local businesses are crucial to the local economy and their status is now viewed as approaching equal first within the hierarchy with commuters being the last priority.

The Parking Strategy recognises that where Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) exists this strengthens the policy issues for these areas. The West End Masterplan was adopted by Cabinet as an SPG in February 2005. The West End Masterplan contains a public realm and movement strategy to support the wider housing and regeneration interventions that stated: *“The strategy includes for the construction of two car parks, primarily to serve the retail/commercial area, and the provision of some visitor car parking at the Battery... The car parks serving the retail/commercial areas should be provided to cater for short-stay car parking only during the working day, though any associated charging regime should be carefully structured in an attempt to reduce the level of parking in adjacent residential areas. Appropriate directional signing to the car parks will also be required.”* Moreover, the provision of car parking improvements was considered vital to foster investment to revitalise the local centre’s retail offer.

The location of the second car park in the West End was envisaged by the Masterplan to be on the Regent Road frontage of Central Park, but this project proposal has been formally removed from the Masterplan due to funding constraints. However, the Parliament Street play area is located within the bounds of where Central Park was proposed and is one of the few clearance areas within the densely developed West End. Furthermore Parliament Street’s proximity to two of the local centre’s main retail streets; Regent Road and Yorkshire Street underlines the potential to support the retail businesses.

The Parking Strategy details further relevant aims:

- Parking Provision for Residents
- Aim 2 To make provision for residents to park in central areas
- Aim 3 To control the supply and demand for parking in residential areas adjacent to the centres of Lancaster and Morecambe
- Aim 4 To balance the needs of businesses, visitors and shoppers by providing short stay parking spaces in central areas and longer stay parking spaces in peripheral car parks

The West End residents parking scheme was introduced in 1997 and covers a relatively small area including Parliament Street, East Street and parts of

Devonshire Road and West Street. The on street parking arrangements are limited waiting spaces of 1 or 2 hours with an exemption for resident permit holders. This allows residents living within the zone who have purchased a residents' permit to use the spaces 24/7. This is the only parking scheme in the district that has this type of parking throughout the zone and this was designed to give priority to residents whilst allowing visitors and shoppers to also use the spaces.

The needs of visitors and shoppers are provided in the form of on street short stay limited waiting bays. Long stay parking spaces are provided in the form of unrestricted parking on most of Marine Road West, Clarendon Road (south side) and Alexandra Road. Off-street parking is provided at the Battery Breakwater car park but this is very much on the edge of the area to conveniently serve the retail businesses. There is currently no off street parking permit that traders can use unless the Morecambe General Permit that is valid on the Battery Breakwater car park is included.

2.3 Parliament Street Play Area

Following a report to Cabinet reviewing play provision in April 2010 the play equipment was removed as can be seen in the photo below. As a result the space now only provides informal recreation and amenity. The two small open spaces between Alexander Road and West Street only a short distance away already offer informal recreation space.



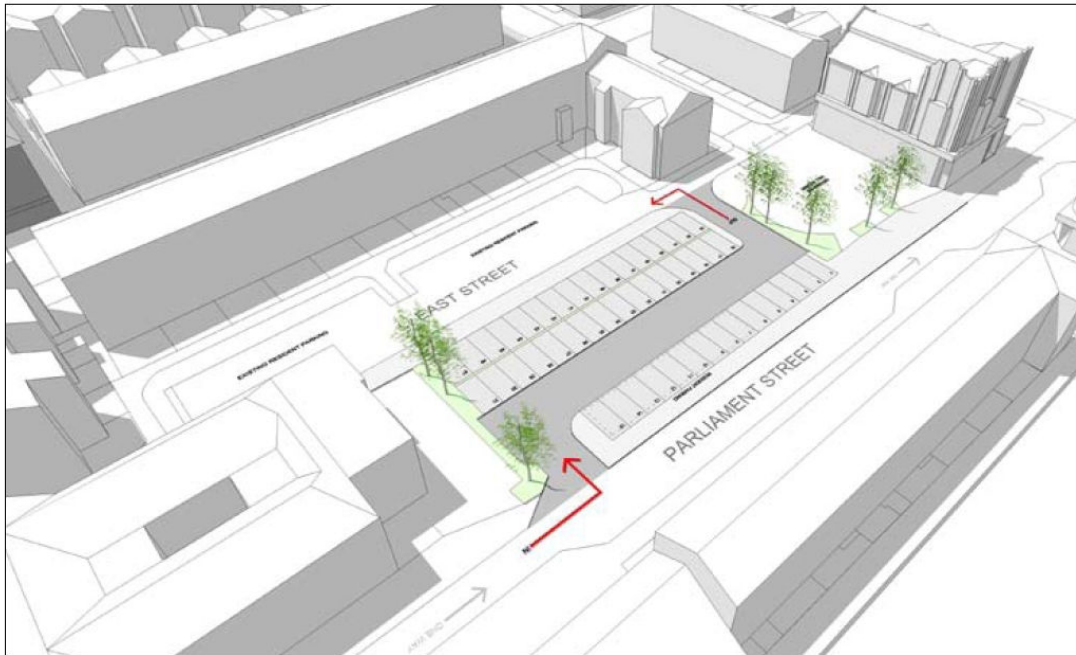
2.4 Do Nothing (Option 1)

The Do Nothing option would leave the former play area and open space

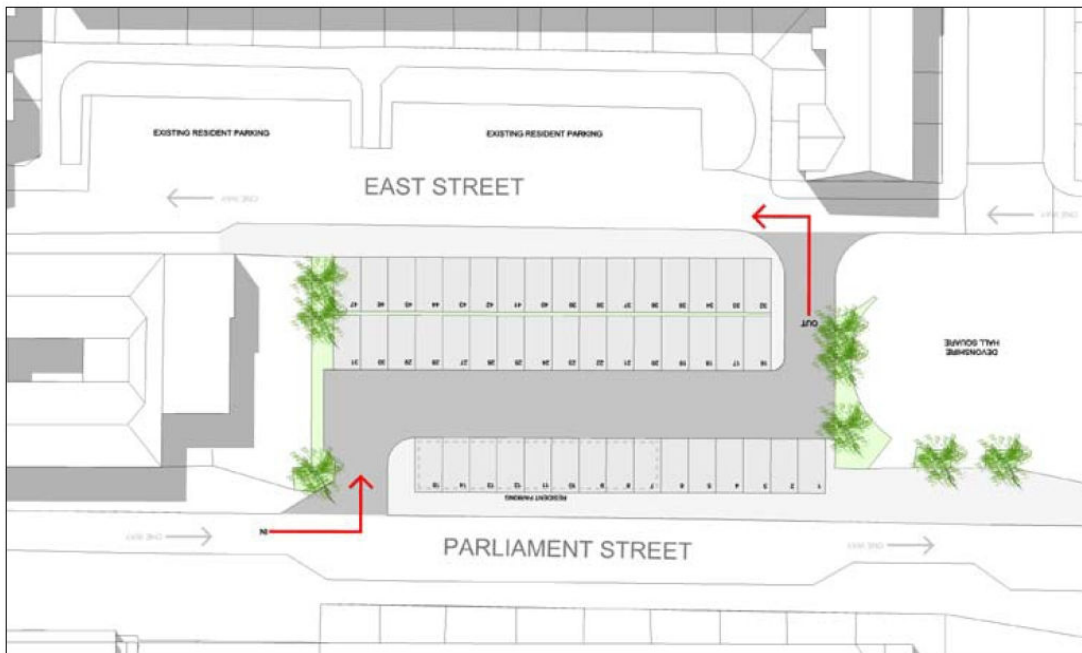
unchanged and make no new car parking provision.

2.5 Formal Car Park (Option 2)

A number of initial design options have been drawn up offering different solutions with their own advantages and disadvantages. The most recent was designed as part of the feasibility study for the re-use of Centenary House (the former Co-Op Department store on Regent Road) by Taylor Young.



Proposed Parliament Street site arrangement / car park - Source: Taylor Young, 2010



Proposed Parliament Street site arrangement / car park - Source: Taylor Young, 2010

The Taylor Young design appears to offer the best solution in terms of

providing the greatest number of additional parking spaces. This design would incorporate 9 existing bays and provide an additional 38 car parking spaces. Of the 47 spaces 31 would be accessed directly from the street and the remaining 16 would be true off street parking spaces.

The sketch of the car park indicates the loss of approximately 14 trees and these would need to be replaced as per the council policy three for every one removed. Given the value offered to the area's amenity by the trees it would be beneficial to draw up a final design that seeks to retain as many trees as possible.

2.6 Cost of Formal Car Park

Utilising recent tendered costs for the construction of small car parks the estimated capital cost to provide a facility such as the Taylor Young sketch scheme is in the order of £60K.

The creation of a formal car park would require an amendment to the Off Street Parking Places Order if parking charges and enforcement were required. The estimated cost of an Amendment Order is £5K. Amendment Orders are normally only made when a number of substantive changes are required.

The parking spaces on the southern side of Parliament Street facing the former play area are included in an on-street traffic regulation order and any proposed variation in the use of these spaces would need to be discussed with the County Council.

Due to the small size of the car park its operation would need to be subsidised, i.e. the revenue raised would be insufficient to cover costs of daily emptying the meter and servicing. The level of subsidy is difficult to estimate at this stage and would be dependant on the level of fees and charges and the income generated. One of the risks of introducing a charging regime is that drivers would seek to use free parking in the vicinity. Operating costs would include enforcement, cash collection, NNDR and repair and maintenance etc. The level of subsidy could be in the region of £10K per annum for council car parks to manage it.

The area already requires maintenance and inspection as an open space and the change to a car park would be comparable from a grounds maintenance perspective.

The cost estimate assumes that the final design can work around all or as many of the existing trees as possible. For each tree that can't be retained three replacements will need to be planted and these would most probably be off-site.

The total capital costs of providing a formal car park is £60K with revenue costs of £5K in the year of construction and ongoing revenue costs of £10K per annum.

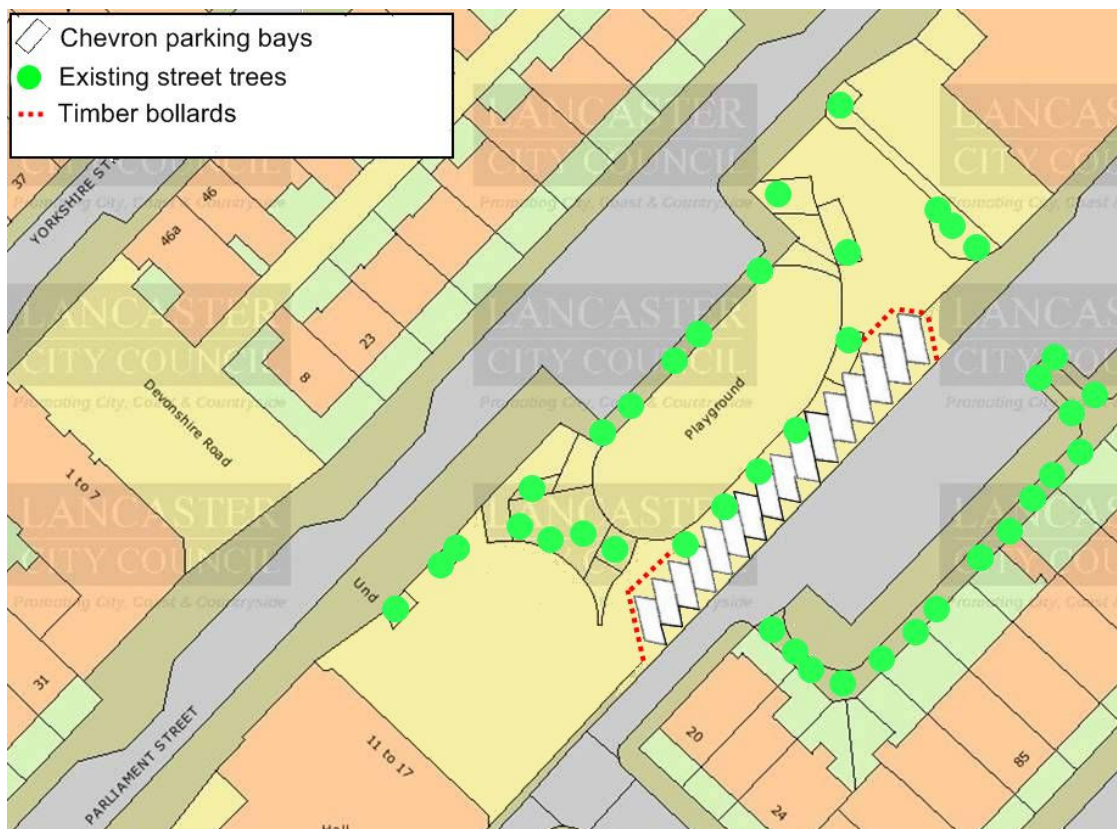
2.7 Option for a Very Low Cost Temporary Parking Area (Option3)

The creation of a temporary car parking area for 12 months offers additional

parking in the area and will enable demand and need for parking to be assessed. The very low cost option provides the least parking spaces and makes the fewest alterations to the site. Through the removal of bollards along the edge of the carriageway on East Street this option would open up the adjacent hard-surfaced area up to the existing wall around the former play area. The parking spaces would need to be marked out and vehicles controlled through the installation of bollards. Pictured below is a simple sketch of the Very Low Cost Temporary car park that would provide approximately 14-17 spaces. The number of spaces is dependent on how the layout works round the four existing trees. This design necessitates such a small amount of change that costs are estimated to be £5K, due to this small amount this would not be capitalised and would become a one off revenue cost.

This layout would lose the existing footway, however there are existing alternative routes through the play area or on the other side of East Street.

Access to the additional parking would be from East Street which is one way and runs from West Street to Regent Road. Shoppers who were unable to park on Yorkshire Street are already directed to this street by the signage installed in 2010.



To reduce cost pay and display meters have been omitted from the Very Low Cost Temporary Car Park, but without some form of control there is a risk of abuse. If the car parking is intended to serve shoppers then there needs to be a time restriction on the duration of stay to encourage turnover. A two hour maximum stay would seem to offer the greatest benefit to shoppers and the retail businesses.

To provide enforceable parking controls an amendment to the Off Street Parking Places Order would be necessary at an estimated cost of £5K. This revenue cost would have to be charged to the scheme as there is no specific budget available.

Similarly an Off Street Parking Places Order would be required if car parking is to be charged for and this would also require the additional revenue costs to empty and service the meters required by the formal car park.

An alternative to pay and display charging that would assist traders could be through the inclusion of the Morecambe General Permit to be valid for this area as this would effectively provide for traders to park all day.

There is also a risk that uncontrolled or unrestricted parking bays could be a disincentive to obtaining a residents parking permit and that the spaces become occupied by residents avoiding the cost of buying a permit.

The total revenue cost of providing a Very Low Cost Temporary Car Park is £10K with no capital costs.

The picture below shows the area that is proposed for temporary car parking.



2.8 Temporary Car Park (Option 4)

Utilising more of the space occupied by the former play area would offer a greater number of car parking spaces. This would see the removal of the majority of the existing boundary wall to the play area and all of the play safety surfacing being replaced with tarmac. This would provide a much

larger area for parking increasing the number of spaces to 33. This car park would be accessed from Parliament Street with the exit onto East Street. A sketch showing a temporary car park is shown below.



The initial sketch indicates that this option could work around and retain nearly all of the existing street trees. One tree is indicated as being removed and would need to be replaced off site with the planting of three new trees. If the desire for one further parking space is greater than the desire to retain a tree a further space could be provided in the chevron bays through the removal of a second tree and the subsequent off site mitigation.

The additional alterations and works to provide a larger parking area increase capital costs to £19K.

The provision of a temporary car park is significantly cheaper than the £60K for a formal car park because it does not include a number of costly items such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, Pay and Display meter, height restriction barriers, boundary treatment, lifting of block paving and replacing with tarmac etc. However, if the temporary car park is shown to be needed and retained it would require all the costly items to bring it up to the standard of a formal permanent car park.

To reduce cost pay and display meters have been omitted from the Temporary Car, but without some form of control there is a risk of abuse. If the car parking is intended to serve shoppers then there needs to be a time restriction on the duration of stay to encourage turnover. A two hour maximum stay would seem to offer the greatest benefit to shoppers and the retail businesses.

To provide enforceable parking controls an amendment to the Off Street Parking Places Order would be necessary at an estimated cost of £5K. This revenue cost would have to be charged to the scheme as there is no specific budget available.

Similarly an Off Street Parking Places Order would be required if car parking is to be charged for and this would also require the additional revenue costs to empty and service the meters required by the formal car park.

An alternative to pay and display charging that would assist traders could be through the inclusion of the Morecambe General Permit to be valid for this area as this would effectively provide for traders to park all day.

There is also a risk that uncontrolled or unrestricted parking bays could be a disincentive to obtaining a residents parking permit and that the spaces become occupied by residents avoiding the cost of buying a permit.

The total capital cost of providing a Temporary Car Park is £19K with revenue costs of £5K.

2.9 Funding

In late 2009 the Council received funding from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to help support the retail industry through the recession, and in particular those communities particularly hard hit by shop closures. It is aimed to help council try out new approaches to boost retail areas. The 'unringfenced' funding award of £52,631 gives the council discretion on when and how best to spend it.

At Cabinet 19th January 2010 it was resolved to split the funding between Lancaster £22K, Morecambe £22K and Carnforth £8K *for initiatives to support the temporary re-use of vacant shops and other retail support measures*. The allocation was to be split between two initiatives comprising a rent grant scheme to support re-use of vacant shop premises, plus a second scheme to provide promotional events. Detailed approvals were to be delegated to the relevant portfolio holder.

The Morecambe and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce has been approached by the West End Partnership to utilise the funding to contribute towards a new car parking facility and this has been favourably received. The Chamber has informed the council that they support car parking in the West End of Morecambe. However, utilising the funding for car parking does not fall within the uses previously agreed by Cabinet. Cabinet would need to formally re-allocate the £22K Empty Shops Funding to car parking.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The West End Partnership has been consulted on these proposals and raised a number of points listed below.

The WEP queried why charge for parking? The Parking Strategy aims to control parking by restricting length of stay and the charge levied. Furthermore the Masterplan recommends that any car park to support the retail businesses should be short stay parking during the working day and the

charging regime structured to reduce displacement to adjacent residential areas. However, the issue of charging for parking is complicated by the amount of available free on street 1 and 2 hour stay car parking on Parliament and East Street as indicated by the survey data. In this context unless the car park offers something different to the free on street parking there is no incentive to pay to park.

The WEP want the car park to be managed to prevent misuse and anti-social behaviour. If no charge is levied there will need to be a time restriction on the length of stay during working hours to prevent long stay or even semi-permanent parking. There is also the risk that residents living in the parking controlled areas will take advantage of any unrestricted spaces and that these will not be available to visiting shoppers. Similarly it may discourage residents entitled to buy a parking permit not to do so. Enforceable parking controls would require an amendment to the Off Street Parking Places Order at an estimated cost of £5K, as previously mentioned in sections 2.7 and 2.8.

The WEP raised the issue of potential financial support from the Empty Shops Funding and Morecambe Town Council. Local traders, the Morecambe Chamber and the WEP support the Empty Shops funding being used to provide car parking.

The WEP enquired about community consultation with residents and whether planning permission would be required. Both a temporary and permanent car park would require planning permission and community consultation.

- 3.2** If a temporary or permanent car park is selected in addition to the statutory consultation required for a planning application the council would undertake further consultation with local residents and traders.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
Option 1: Do Nothing	No additional costs. Evidence indicates that existing on street parking capacity is sufficient to meet short stay shopper's parking.	No additional car parking. Remnants of play area remain detracting from quality of open space and boundary wall continues to provide cover for nefarious activities	Missed opportunity to evaluate need for car park.
Option 2: Formal Pay & Display Car Park	This option provides 38 additional parking spaces (but this might not necessarily be an advantage, as evidence indicates sufficient capacity exists already). The creation of off-street parking areas could help the regeneration of the West End.	Significant costs of £65K capital and £10K revenue annually is greater than the funds potentially available. Survey data does not indicate a need for additional off street parking. Unless they can be incorporated this proposal would see the loss of 9 mature trees	Invest proves to be a waste of resources in absence of demand. Pay and Display charges may lead to car park being unused as vacant free short stay on street parking is utilised instead.

	Formal off street parking can be promoted and signed.	that provide amenity value.	
Option 3: Low Cost Temporary Car Parking Area	<p>Lower capital and revenue cost that could be met by available Empty Shops Funding. Provides 14-17 additional parking spaces (As with option 2, however, the above points might not necessarily be advantages, as evidence indicates sufficient capacity exists already). Enables demand from shoppers and traders to be confirmed, albeit at a cost – subject to results this could lead to consideration of establishing a permanent car park. Retains all the street trees.</p> <p>Positive action to promote the retail area through the use of Empty Shops Funding.</p>	<p>14-17 parking spaces may be viewed as too few by traders. Temporary car parks often become permanent and it would, in time, require some of the features and associated costs of a more formal permanent car park. Boundary wall remains in place and will continue to provide cover for nefarious activities.</p>	<p>Investment proves to be a waste of resources in absence of demand. If proved to be needed, no guarantee that council could find resources to formalise car park. It would be hard to manage expectations once temporary car park has been provided. Without parking controls it may be abused. It may also discourage purchase of residents' parking permits. Residents not entitled to a permit Clarendon Road may also take advantage of these spaces.</p>
Option 4: Temporary Car Park	<p>Lower capital and revenue cost than a formal car park. Provides an additional 33 parking spaces. Again though, these may not prove to be advantageous. Parliament Street entrance to car park makes for easy access to a car park from Regent Road. Positive action to promote retail area through use of Empty Shops Funding. Minimises the loss of street trees.</p>	<p>Temporary car parks often become permanent and it would, in time, require the features and associated costs of a more formal permanent car park and therefore presents a future cost liability. Higher capital cost means that it would not be possible to include a means of control to the parking with the available funding.</p>	<p>Investment a waste of resources in absence of demand. If proved to be needed no guarantee that council could find resources to formalise car park. It would be hard to manage expectations once temporary car park has been provided. Without parking controls it may be abused. It may also discourage purchase of residents' parking permits. Residents not entitled to a permit Clarendon Road may also take advantage of these spaces. Future costs to formalise car park if proven to be needed.</p>

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Utilising the Empty Shops Funding to provide a temporary car park is a positive action to promote retail businesses in the West End and meets the objects of this external funding that aimed to support struggling retail businesses in the recession. Option 3 the Low Cost Temporary Parking Area is the only affordable option that will provide additional parking in the locality and include a suitable and enforceable means of control.

Although the lack of demand means there is a risk that the investment in a car parking is a waste of resources, local consultation shows that there is strong support for additional car parking. Therefore it is recommended that:

- Option 3 the provision of a Low Cost Temporary Parking Area is approved to enable demand for a permanent car parking facility to be assessed by further parking surveys over the course of the temporary period.
- That an appropriate means of control is determined.
- That the temporary period for the car park be for 12 months.
- That the £22K unspent Empty Shops Funding be allocated to meet the cost of providing the temporary parking facility.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The proposals accord with the Park Strategy and the West End Masterplan.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Presently there are some problems with anti-social behaviour associated with the open space around Parliament Street. The removal of the 1.2 metre high boundary wall to the former play area proposed in Option 2 and 4 will increase lines of sight and natural surveillance and therefore have a positive impact on anti-social behaviour. Options 2, 3 and 4 would all increase natural surveillance as there will be more people using the space as they park and go to the shops.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Enforcement of parking restrictions will require statutory process to be followed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is a question of whether the results of the survey (as reported in section 2.1), make a strong enough case to support the proposals in this report at this time. If, in 12 months time a decision has been made regarding the future use of Centenary House, the demand for parking in this area may be liable to change, but then it may be possible to secure a financial contribution to help develop permanent parking at that time.

That said, the table below summarises the 4 options outlined in this report

	Do Nothing	Formal Car Park	Low Cost Temporary Car Park	Temporary Car Park
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
CAPITAL :				
Initial Outlay	0	60	0	19
REVENUE:				
One-off costs	0	5	10	5
On-going costs per annum	0	10	0	0
EXIT COSTS				
If successful			15	43
If unsuccessful			2	2

Options 2 and 4 would involve capital investment. Under the Medium Term Financial Strategy, unplanned/unbudgeted options for capital investment (that require council financing) will normally be appraised as part of the budget process to meet the requirements of the Prudential Code – it would require a Council decision to do otherwise. Accordingly, financing of capital from earmarked reserves can only be approved by Cabinet where such capital investment proposals match with the approved use of such reserves.

In short, such controls exist to make sure that any new, unbudgeted spending ideas are considered alongside each other, to help ensure that any available resources are allocated to the highest priority areas that can be expected to deliver good value for money. This is very important – and crucially so when funding is reducing.

Should Cabinet wish to take forward options 2 or 4 therefore, Cabinet is advised that this would be best done as part of the budget process.

Should Members wish to take forward option 2, 3 or 4 it is proposed that the financing be met (or met in part) from the £22K Vacant Shops Fund allocated to Morecambe, subject to Council approval. Such approval is necessary because the utilisation of the £22K Vacant Shops funding for car parking does not fall within the uses previously agreed at Cabinet 19th January 2010. It was specifically resolved to split the allocation between *a small grants scheme to support the creative temporary re-use of vacant retail premises and funding for a small number of special events and festivals to promote the main retail centres.*

As parking enforcement already operates in the area where this car park is being proposed, it is anticipated that there would be no additional enforcement costs other than the cost of amending the Off Street Parking Places Order included in the revenue costs above. The additional on-going revenue costs associated with Option 2 relate to the emptying and servicing of the pay and display meter. As it is not intended for pay and display to operate under Options 3 or 4 there would be no additional revenue costs associated with these options – but it is highlighted that this would mean that there would be no quantitative information available on which to base any future assessment of the use of any temporary car park.

In addition, the exit costs shown relate to costs that will be incurred after the 12 month period ends. If the car park was proven not to be required there would be costs of removal estimated at £2K to remove the line marking paint and signage in addition to removal and relocation of bollards.

If however the car park was proven to be successful, there would be additional costs for Option 3 to provide sustainable urban drainage systems totalling £15K. For Option 4 the additional costs to upgrade it to the standard of a permanent car park that would include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, Pay and Display meter, height restriction barriers, boundary treatment, lifting of block paving and replacing with tarmac etc, totals £43K. In this scenario formalising Option 4 the Temporary Car Park results in a £2K higher cost than Option 2 Formal Car Park. Any such costs would be incorporated into future investment proposals to develop a permanent car park.

The capital costs for Options 2, 3 and 4 are based on recent works, tenders and quotations and have been produced in house as there is no budget to undertake detailed development work at this stage. Therefore there is a risk that the estimated costs for the options above may be subject to change.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No significant human resource implications are envisaged.

Information Services:

If ticket machines were used they would require mobile phone SIMS for remote machine management.

Property:

Property Services have been consulted and their comments incorporated into the report.

Open Spaces:

The proposal has considered the value of the open space at Parliament Street in the context of the results of the PPG17 study. With the substantial improvements made to both Regent Park and West End Gardens this area of the West End is well provided for. However, options 2, 3 and 4 would still retain some open space, seating and trees that provide amenity to the area.

The tree policy states a replacement ratio of 3:1 (3x new trees for each tree removed); generally effort should be made to incorporate the new trees into the design of any proposed development. Only if the site cannot accommodate this quantity of trees then sites elsewhere should be identified where the new trees could be planted. For Option 2, 3 or 4 every effort will be made in the detailed design process to work around and retain as many of the existing trees as possible.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Based on the information provided in this report, the s151 Officer is concerned that available evidence indicates that there is no demand for additional parking at this time and therefore any investment could prove to be wasteful. Furthermore, the recommended option would not provide any quantitative evidence on which to base any future potential investment proposals. Stakeholder expectations regarding the possibility and affordability of any future investment would also need to be managed.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

There are no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lancaster District PPG17 Study Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities.

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LCC District Parking Strategy
West End Masterplan
Empty Shops Cabinet report 19.01.2010
Empty Shops Cabinet Minute (109)
19.01.2010

Ref: