

Agenda Item A10	Committee Date 2 February 2015	Application Number 14/01316/CU
Application Site Car Park And Play Area Marine Road Central Morecambe Lancashire	Proposal Change of use of car park (East) to form new play and open space area and change of use of play area (West) to form new car park	
Name of Applicant Mr Julian Inman Lancaster City Council	Name of Agent None	
Decision Target Date 29 January 2015	Reason For Delay Committee cycle	
Case Officer	Catherine Spreckley	
Departure	No	
Summary of Recommendation	Approval	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 This application relates to a strip of land between Marine Road and the Promenade stretching from the junction with Northumberland Street to the west of the Clock Tower public toilets. At the centre of the site is the Eric Morecambe Statue surrounded by hard and soft landscaping. Immediately to the west of the statue is a public car park and beyond this is an enclosed children's play area. To the east of the statue is a second public car park.
- 1.2 The site falls within the Informal Recreation Area which runs along the seafront and a Tourism Opportunity Area, as designated under the Local Plan Proposals Map. In addition, the areas surrounding the statue and the play area are identified as Outdoor Play Spaces. Morecambe Bay is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar Site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site lies opposite the Morecambe Conservation Area.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 This application seeks consent for the change of use of the play area to form an extended car park to the west of the Eric statue, and the change of use of the existing car park to the east of the statue to an open area and new play area. To facilitate this, 3 existing vehicular access points will be closed and a new one created. A new off-street bus/coach bay, with a shelter, will be created in front of the extended car park.
- 2.2 No details have been provided of the proposed play area and shelter as the applicant proposes to install these under their permitted development rights. These rights allow the erection of buildings or equipment up to a maximum height of 4 metres or capacity of 200 cubic metres.

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 None relevant to the submission.

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

Consultee	Response
County Highways	No objection. Conditions requested.
Environmental Health	No significant implications for Environmental Health matters have been found.
Conservation	No objection.
Natural England	Regulations 61 and 62 of the Habitats Regulations have not been considered. It is requested that works be scheduled for the summer months as construction has the potential to cause disturbance to SPA birds. The proposal may provide opportunities to incorporate features which would be beneficial to the SPA such as information regarding birds of the bay. Consideration should be given to local biodiversity and geodiversity sites, local landscape character, priority habitats and species and protected species.
Town Council	No comments received in the statutory consultation period.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 No comments received in response to site notices.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 7, 14 and 17 – Sustainable Development and Core Principles
Paragraph 23 – Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres
Paragraph 40 – Town centre parking
Paragraphs 69, 70 and 74 – Promoting Healthy Communities
Paragraphs 56, 57 and 58 – Requiring Good Design
Paragraphs 109, 118 and 119 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Lancaster District Core Strategy

Policy SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design
Policy SC6 – Crime and Community Safety
Policy SC8 – Recreation and Open Space
Policy ER6 – Developing Tourism

Development Management DPD

Policy DM3 Public Realm and Civic Space
Policy DM26 – Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities
Policy DM27 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity
Policy DM32 – The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets
Policy DM35 – Key Design Principles

Morecambe Area Action Plan

Action Set AS3 – Improve Key Routes and Spaces for Pedestrians and Cyclists
Spatial Policy 1 – Key Pedestrian Routes and Spaces
Spatial Policy 3 – Morecambe Main Seafront and Promenade
Action Set AS5 – Central Seafront and Main Beach

Lancaster District Local Plan

Saved Policy T01 – Tourism Opportunity Areas
Saved Policy R1 – Outdoor Playing Spaces

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- Parking and highways
- Provision of open space

- Design and impact upon the conservation area
- Ecological impacts

7.2 One of the key elements of the Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP) is to improve integration between the seafront and the Town Centre, particularly in relation to pedestrian movement. In addition to this, Action Set AS5 seeks to achieve improved children's play area and more efficient parking adjacent to the central seafront. Although not included in the application, the submitted plans show the introduction of a new pedestrian crossing (to replace 2 existing crossings) across Marine Road Central at the northern end of Euston Road. From the new crossing a new path will lead directly onto the Promenade.

7.3 Parking and highways

7.3.1 The consolidation of the existing parking provision into one car park, together with an increase of 8 parking spaces, will be of benefit to motorists/visitors. The introduction of an off-street bus stop and a west-bound filter lane to serve the new car park will be of benefit to the flow of traffic along Marine Road Central. County Highways have suggested a number of conditions. However, whilst the application forms part of the wider vision for the regeneration of Morecambe as set out in the MAAP, in accordance with paragraph 206 of the NPPF, only conditions necessary and relevant to the proposed development itself can be imposed.

7.3.2 The proposal involves the loss of a seafront taxi rank. However, an existing rank exists nearby on Market Street and it is understood that an alternative taxi rank will be located in close vicinity of the existing rank.

7.4 Provision of open space

7.4.1 The proposed development will result in an increase in the area of open recreation space to this part of the seafront and provides opportunities to deliver higher-quality play equipment than currently exists. In addition, the proposed location of the play area is considered to be where families would expect the main children's play facilities to be sited, adjacent to some of the main seafront facilities.

7.5 Design and impact upon the conservation area

7.5.1 The proposed car park to the west of the statue presents little opportunity to retain or replace existing soft landscaping due to the introduction of the bus bay and the need to maintain a minimum pavement width. The exception to this is a grassed area adjacent to the junction with Northumberland Street which will help to soften the appearance of the car park from this viewpoint. The introduction of a grassed area and play area to the east of the statue will significantly improve the appearance of this part of the site. It is understood the proposed play area will be bespoke; tailor-made to fit the context of the site including soft landscape elements and stainless steel play equipment set on artificial grass and surrounded by new bow top fencing. The application site is separated from Morecambe Conservation Area by Marine Road Central and will not adversely affect its setting.

7.6 Ecological impacts

7.6.1 The application site lies a minimum 9m from the boundary of the Morecambe Bay SPA, SAC, SSSI and Ramsar designation. In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, an assessment has been made of the likely significant effect on these designations. Taking into account the characteristics of the application site and its immediate surroundings, together with the existing use of the site, the potential impacts are identified as disturbance to birds and surface-water runoff from the application site down onto the beach. The applicant has advised that it is intended that the proposed works would be undertaken in April and May. This would avoid the wintering bird season (as required by Natural England), and would prevent any significant risk to the bird species identified as qualifying features for the designation of the SPA. Surface water runoff has the potential to transport chemicals and other material from the application site during site clearance and construction and to transport car oil from the proposed car park into the bay. The movement of large amounts of oil or chemicals has the potential to adversely affect the bay's flora and fauna. Runoff during site clearance and construction can be avoided through the adoption of simple

mitigation measures. Surface water runoff from the proposed car park will be through the existing highway drains. Subject to these matters being controlled by way of conditions, it is concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to significantly affect the National or European designated sites. It is also considered unlikely that the proposal will affect locally designated sites or protected species not covered by the above designations.

7.7 Other matters

7.7.1 It is not anticipated that the loss car parking to the east end of the application site will have an adverse impact on the adjacent businesses. In fact, the proposal's role in seeking to improve the pedestrian connections between the Town Centre and Promenade, together with the provision of improved facilities, should be of benefit to nearby businesses.

7.7.2 The provision of a larger play area and car park may have some impact on the amenities of residential properties to the opposite side of Marine Road Central. However, in the context of the busy nature of the locality, such impact is likely to be minimal.

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 Given the nature of the proposal there are no requirements for a legal obligation.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 This application seeks to achieve some of the opportunities set out in Action Set AS5 of the Area Action Plan through the provision a direct pedestrian link from Marine Road Central to the Promenade, an improved children's play area and more efficient parking. This will be provided without detriment to highway safety, nearby ecological designations and the setting of the Conservation Area.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard 3 year time limit
2. Development to accord with approved plans
3. Implementation (construction) of consent restricted to April to September
4. Scheme to prevent surface water runoff entering Morecambe Bay
5. Disposal of surface water runoff from approved car park via existing drains
6. Construction method statement for traffic management measures
7. Delivery of off-site highway improvement works

Article 31, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010

In accordance with the above legislation, the City Council can confirm the following:

The local planning authority has considered the application as submitted and has visited the site, and it is able to conclude that the proposal is one that can be proactively supported without any amendments being necessary.

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

Background Papers

None.