

COMMISSIONING A STUDY TO SET A STRATEGY FOR FUTURE PARKING PROVISION IN LYMINGTON

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 19 March 2008 the Planning and Transportation Review Panel passed the following resolutions,

That it be a recommendation to Cabinet:-

- (a) That Cabinet be recommended to investigate measures to raise ring-fenced funding for future parking and transportation provision in the District;
- (b) That Cabinet be asked to authorise appropriate funding to commission research and surveys with a view to drawing up a strategy to improve transportation and parking facilities in Lyminster.

- 1.2 This report comments on the panel's recommendations.

2. LYMINGTON PARKING STUDY

- 2.1 Given the importance of car borne access to the Town in both commercial and environmental terms, the Planning and Transportation Review Panel believe it would be beneficial to undertake a study to assist in the development of a new a long-term strategy.

- 2.2 The District is made up of a number of Towns/Villages the majority of which have concerns surrounding traffic and parking. Lyminster appears to be under the greatest pressure and merits particular consideration. The panel therefore wish cabinet to consider funding a study for Lyminster that would set out options for managing the ever-increasing demands for parking provision in the Town. Cabinet may wish to consider studies in other Towns if a study in Lyminster is completed.

- 2.3 A parking study project brief for Lyminster has been drawn up and considered by an informal panel consisting of:

Local Members,
Representatives of the Town Council
Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce
Portfolio Holders for Planning and Finance
Council Officers

- 2.4 A copy of the draft brief, as amended following consultation, is attached. In essence, the brief proposes that the study be a gap analyses, predicting parking demand until 2018 and beyond and commenting on how existing facilities and assets could be changed/managed in a way to try to cope with the demand. Given the scale and location of Lyminster (surrounded by a National Park and protected areas) the informal panel felt there was little merit in using resources

to consider in depth provision of parking outside the Town itself . Never the less if it is not possible to meet predicted requirements from within existing assets it may be necessary to consider commissioning further work to explore alternative forms of provision such as Park and Ride.

- 2.5 The Council does not have the expertise to undertake such a study and would need to appoint consultants. It is anticipated that the cost of producing the study would be in the region of £15,000.
- 2.6 The study will allow the Council to set out a long-term strategy for dealing with the ever-increasing demand for parking in Lymington with the benefit of specialist and expert advice. This in turn can be built into future work and financial programmes.
- 2.7 Any study needs to take into account the difference in winter and summer demand. It is therefore, suggested that if Cabinet believe a study would be beneficial it should be commissioned in September / October 2008 with a final report being presented in autumn 2009.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Parking Study

Quotations have not yet been sought for the work however it is recommended that a sum of £15,000 be made available. The study is likely to put forward options, which if put into practice by the Council may have implications for future capital/revenue programmes.

3.2 Ring fenced Funding.

Currently the Council's financial strategy allows expenditure proposals to be considered within an overall District wide framework. This strategic approach looks to ensure resources are targeted to priority services and key local objectives. The current strategy does not allow for the ring fencing of income proposed by the Planning and Transportation Review Panel. Instead, the Council would look to consider any enhancements to local services to determine their priority against other demands and allocate resources accordingly.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 How the ever increasing pressure to provide for car borne access into Lymington is managed has a significant effect on the physical and commercial environment. A careful balance needs to be made between preserving the environment for residents and visitors and economic prosperity.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None arising directly from the report.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None arising directly from the report.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That Cabinet approve in principle an expenditure plan bid of approximately £15,000 to undertake a parking study based on the draft terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 of this report; and
- 7.2 That Cabinet endorses the existing Financial Strategy, which does not allow for ring fencing of income.

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LYMINGTON – PARKING STUDY PROJECT BRIEF

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Lymington, like many towns throughout Britain, has to face up to the difficult challenge of balancing the accessibility requirements of a modern car owning society with the aim to encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of travel. Reducing dependence on the car is a particular problem in rural areas where necessary journeys tend to involve greater distance and the options for public transport are limited. Lymington has to accommodate the needs of its residents whilst also providing an accessible commercial centre for the surrounding rural area. Added to this, is the challenge of conserving Lymington's historic legacy whilst maintaining the town's tourist trade, which makes a significant contribution to the districts economy. These factors make it necessary to find and manage a balance that satisfies all competing needs as far as possible. Achieving this balance is particularly important in view of the rising tide of traffic in towns and around the highway network.
- 1.2 On Market days and during the peak holiday periods parking facilities in Lymington are operating at capacity.
- 1.3 The Council wish to commission suitably experienced and qualified Consultants to undertake a parking/transportation study in Lymington as set out in this project briefing note.

2. PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 The current off-street provision and tariff levels in Council's car parks in Lymington are set out in the Appendix attached to this document. (These will be included when submitted to the Consultant).
- 2.2 The Council Parking Clock Scheme is designed to provide convenient and low cost parking for regular users of the Council's car parks, and was introduced in 2004 when universal off-street charges were introduced. The Scheme remains a core element in the management of off-street car parks. Details of the scheme are set out on the Councils web site www.newforest.gov.uk/parking.
- 2.3 Attached to this brief are details of previous surveys and reports which should be of assistance. These include:-
 - a) Report on introduction of on street charging.
 - b) On going 3 monthly surveys of off street car park usage.
 - c) Report on Parking Levels before and after charging introduced 2004.
- 2.4 Enclosed with this brief are extracts from plans/strategies which should be taken into account by consultants when undertaking the study.

3. MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

3.1 The Council will set up a steering group. The group will consist of:

- The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation
- The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency
- Chairman of Planning and Transportation Review Committee
- Representatives of the Town Council and Local Members
- Representative of the Chamber of Trade
- Assistant Director (Customer Services)
- Parking Manager
- Principal Engineer (Transportation)
- The Council's Valuer

3.2 The Council should be presented with a project plan at the first meeting of the steering group. This plan will set out survey and future meeting dates as well as project milestones. The Consultants should meet with the full Project Team on at least two occasions prior to the draft report being presented. Naturally the Consultants will be expected to work with officers throughout the study. The key period of demand for parking in Lymington is the Summer Tourist Season - June to the end of September. The study should take full account of the parking trends and it is anticipated Consultants will be commissioned in March 2009. A final report should be presented no later than 31 October 2009. This time period has been considered to take into account the seasonal variations in demand.

3.3 The study should be undertaken as a series of steps and is below:

3.3.1 Step 1 - Identifying the demand, both current and projected until 2018 and beyond for Market Days (Saturdays) and the summer season. Identifying the severity of the problem and the likelihood, if it has not already been reached, of the situation reaching a point where some positive action is required. A definition of when this point has been reached to be agreed between the Council and the Consultant. This definition could be built around the assumption; 'congestion and searching for spaces reaches an unreasonable level if, on average, there are less than 5% spaces vacant at any one time'.

It is anticipated that consultants will wish to undertake some survey work to ascertain occupancy, length of stay and purpose of journey.

3.3.2 Step 2 - Assess the options for increasing the usage of existing parking assets, both on and off street by use of management changes, e.g. changes in physical lay out, pricing/waiting times/enforcement. The consequences of any suggested changes need to be analysed with particular reference to the impact on:

- the town's economy and environment
- the Council's finances
- Public Acceptance
- Stakeholders comments

- 3.3.3 Step 3 - If suggestions in Step 2 do not meet predicted demand within the study period, identify possibilities for increasing the parking area within the town, e.g. decking existing parking sites or use of other council land holdings. The same considerations concerning impact as set out in 3.3.2 above should be considered.
- 3.3.4 Step 4 – The Consultants should scrutinise Steps 1 to 3 and make it known if they consider that predicted demand will not be met. If predicted demand cannot be met the Council may consider alternative provision such as park and ride, however the council does not wish this study to consider such options at this early stage.

4. KEY OBJECTIVE

- 4.1 The study should essentially be a gap analysis, estimating future demand for parking spaces over the next ten years and beyond, and consideration of alternative means for dealing with these future pressures. Utilisation of existing assets should be the starting point when fulfilling demand. The assets that should be considered include existing off and on street parking and Council land holdings within Lymington. However, wider solutions should be considered if necessary (up to step 4).
- 4.2 The study should take into account the Councils established and emerging policies and core strategy documents.
- 4.3 The study should take into account the views of stakeholders, who should play an important part in this process, ensuring their views have been fully considered. The Council has identified the following stakeholder groups.
- The Town Council
 - The Chamber of Commerce
 - The Lymington Society
- The views of commercial interests (including Tourism), residents and conservation groups need to be reflected in the study.
- 4.4 The Council does not wish to fetter the options considered by the Consultant. However, the views of commercial interests (including Tourism), residents and conservation groups need to be reflected in the study. Solutions need to be sympathetic to the environment and character of the Town.
- 4.5 Demand for parking in Lymington is seasonal and is greatly influenced by tourist demand. The study should centre on how this peak demand can be managed and provided for.
- 4.6 Any suggestions should clearly consider:
- The economic consequences to both motorist and the Council.
 - The views of stakeholders.
 - The effect that the suggestion may have on the physical environment.
 - The acceptability of proposals to the public.

- The outcome of the one site project and its effect on parking facilities in Lymington. (Study to locate all council administration in one location which could result in the expansion or closure of the existing Lymington Town Hall complex)
- The Council has considered and rejected the introduction of on street charges. The grounds for making this decision were based on the adverse reaction of the public and business community, its financial viability given use of the clock scheme and the effect such a proposal would have on the environment of the town.
- The age profile of the District and Town which has a relatively high percentage of elderly residents

5. CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSALS

5.1 The consultant's proposal should:

- 5.1.1 Clearly demonstrate they have expertise and experience suitable for this type of study.
- 5.1.2 Provide at least 2 references from clients for whom they have undertaken similar studies within the last 3 years.
- 5.1.3 Set out the qualifications and experience of the staff who will undertake the study.
- 5.1.4 Clearly set out the methods employed to complete each of the 4 steps as set out in section 2.3.
- 5.1.5 Set out a cost for each of the 4 steps set out in Section 3.3.
- 5.1.6 The methods used to engage with stakeholders.
- 5.1.7 The proposal should also set out an hourly charge rate for any work in addition to that requested in this project brief if commissioned.
- 5.1.8 If after considering this brief, the consultant identifies any omissions that could adversely effect the outcome of this study, these should be highlighted and the relevant cost itemised in the submitted proposal.

For Further Information Please Contact:

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