

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: TUESDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2010
title: DUNSOP BRIDGE CAR PARK – RENEWAL OF LEASE
submitted by: JOHN C HEAP - DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: GRAHAM M JAGGER – STREET SCENE MANAGER

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To report back to members on the outcome of negotiations on the possible terms of a new lease for the land on which Dunsop Bridge car park stands and

1.2 To decide whether or not to enter into a new lease under the circumstances.

1.3 Relevance to the Council's aims and ambitions: -

- Mission statement & vision shared by the Local Strategic Partnership
 - An area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
- Council Ambitions
 - To be a well managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs.
 - To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.
- Council Objectives
 - To conserve our countryside, the natural beauty of the area and enhance our built environment.
- Citizens Charter
 - We will carry out enforcement of our pay and display car parks.
- Council Priorities
 - None

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 A detailed report on the history of providing a public car park in the village of Dunsop Bridge was presented to this Committee at its meeting held on 18th May 2010.

2.2 As a result of that report Committee resolved to: - (Min 22)

1. Enter into a new 20 year lease for the car park at Dunsop Bridge based on terms set out in the report, except for the rent increase; and
2. Introduce charging for parking by way of pay and display at a date to be approved following the completion of the lease agreement.

3. ISSUES

- 3.1 immediately after the last meeting of this Committee the views expressed by members and the resolution referred to above were communicated to the Agents acting for the Duchy of Lancaster.
- 3.2 In response it was suggested that the annual rental payment should be £100 + VAT to be reviewed every 5 years to the greater of market value or RPI as opposed to 10% of the gross income from the site when charging for parking was introduced.
- 3.3 It was also proposed by the Agents that car park charging would be permitted on the understanding that agreement in principle was reached with Lancashire County Council to restrict roadside parking on the outskirts of the village, the precise areas to be discussed on site. In a response it was pointed out that if this was a requirement it was unlikely the Council would be able to achieve and as such we would be in breach of the terms of the new lease agreement at some point in the future.
- 3.4 It was suggested to the Agents that the Council would use its best endeavours to encourage Lancashire County Council to consider introducing restrictions on roadside parking but that would be the extent of any commitment that could be given. That has now been accepted by the Agents.
- 3.5 The Agents however have again brought the condition of the surface of the car park to our attention and require an assurance that the site will be resurfaced and landscaping improved on the entering into a new lease. As there is no capital budget this financial year for car park improvement work, meeting their expectation would not be possible in 2010/11. At present there is £40,000.00 in the 5 year programme in 2011/12 and a similar sum in 2013/14 but spending plans may have to change as greater pressures are brought to bear on the Council's spending in the future. Depending on the Council's priorities in future years it may be difficult to give an absolute commitment to their request but it is right to say the car park is in need of work being done to it. There are insufficient funds available in the revenue budget to pay for a full scale improvement of the car park, just minor repairs only.
- 3.6 There appears now to be the basis for an Agreement to lease the site for a period of 20 years under broadly acceptable terms and conditions as indicated by this Committee previously.
- 3.7 Notwithstanding the progress that has been made on this issue and the fact that the decision has already been taken to not refurbish and extend the public conveniences on this car park, members of this Committee may wish to take the view that in the light of the possible effect on funding of the Council's business there might be as a result of the upcoming Government Spending Review that no decision should be taken at this time as regards the renewal of the lease.
- 3.8 At present the car park is being used and is the responsibility of the Duchy of Lancaster whilst the toilets belong to the Council and continue to be open for use and repaired and maintained by us. The future position of public conveniences and car parks may need to come under review if funding in general becomes more difficult in years to come. It may therefore not be in the Council's best interest to commit itself to a new lease under the circumstances.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications: -

Resources

- The revised annual rental payment is now more in line with the expectations expressed by members at the last meeting of this committee. Should parking charges be introduced there is an estimated potential income to the Council of between £4 – 5,000 per annum. Enforcement of the pay and display system would be by way of existing staff albeit travelling to such an isolated location would be time consuming and have an effect on enforcement being carried out on other car parks. There would be an initial cost of installing the necessary equipment to support pay and display charging which would have to be met from existing limited budgets. Any commitment to resurfacing and landscape improvements would have to be funded from the capital programme.

Technical, Environmental and Legal

- The technical work involved in introducing pay and display charging for parking would be dealt with by existing staff as would any enforcement matters. The new lease agreement would be a matter for the Council's Solicitor as would be the necessary amendment to the Parking Order to introduce charging by pay and display.

Political

- The political issues affecting this report relate more closely with central government spending issues than necessarily any local political matters at the present time.

Reputation

- The Council's reputation may be affected if it doesn't enter into a new lease and the car park is eventually closed by its owners. However there is a need to decide what priority the provision of public car parks (and public conveniences) is in the Council's plans for the future bearing in mind any savings that might need to be made at some time.

5. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Decide now that the terms and conditions have been renegotiated to better meet members wishes whether or not to re affirm the previous decision to enter into a new lease for the car park at Dunsop Bridge.

JOHN C HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Background Papers

- Lease dated 23rd March 1989
- File ref 7/24/3 – Dunsop Bridge Car Park
- Report to Community Services Committee 18th May 2010, Min

For further information please contact John Heap on 01200 414461.