

Report to: **Cabinet**
Date of Meeting: 2 July 2014
Public Document: No
Exemption: Para 3 Schedule 12A Information relating to the finance or business affairs of any particular person



Agenda item: **27**

Subject: **Additional Car Parking, Underfleet, Seaton**

Purpose of report: The development of Seaton Jurassic will see a net reduction of 216 off-street car parking spaces locally. This report asks Members to consider a proposal to create an additional 70 spaces in a new car park to the west of the Underfleet across the road from the visitor centre and tramway terminus.

Recommendation: **To approve in principle the creation of a new 70 space pay and display car park at Underfleet, Seaton.**

Reason for recommendation: The development of Seaton Jurassic on the site of Harbour Road car park will cause the number of available car parking spaces on at this location to immediately reduce from 367 to just 150. With a prediction of some 60,000 new visitors per year to Seaton, we are already anticipating a need for additional car parking spaces locally. Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 sets out the duties of all local authorities in respect of a range of traffic related functions including the provision of off-street parking.

We have been careful to balance the needs of Seaton's residents, especially those living very close to the proposed car park alongside the likely benefits to the local economy arising from the additional 60,000 visitors per year we hope will come to Seaton to experience the Jurassic visitor centre.

This proposal will not interfere with the security of (or access to) any other premises and we believe that it will not be prejudicial to the amenity of the locality and it is in all other material respects consistent with other relevant factors including our desire to support Seaton's town centre economy.

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Financial implications: Revenue – The expected income from this proposed car park of £35,000 pa is going to take 8+ years to recover the estimated capital expenditure.

Capital - "The proposed scheme is not currently in the capital programme and no bid was put forward during the budget setting process. If this bid was approved it would require £250k to £300k from the capital reserve to fund it. Gateway 1 of the capital bid process allows schemes where

revenue savings pay back the capital investment within 5 years to progress, but this bid does not pass that gateway. This bid is being considered alone and not alongside other competing capital bids so there would have to be a compelling case to approve the bid in these circumstances. The capital bid process also requires a business case template to be completed, part of which requires an option appraisal – are there other options (summer park & ride, use of the new car park at the Axe wetlands, use of Tesco car park, could the land be used for other purposes)?

Legal implications: Section 32 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 empowers a local authority to provide suitable parking places for vehicles in their area where it appears to the local authority necessary for the purpose of relieving or preventing congestion of traffic. This must therefore be the primary reason for adding this new parking place to EDDC's parking places Order.

Legal Services have not yet been instructed to check EDDC's title to the land proposed to be used for this additional parking place, together with the rights of way allegedly granted over it as referred to in this report. Before further work is carried out on this project it is therefore advised that EDDC's title is fully investigated (Parking Services will need to instruct Legal Services accordingly).

If this project proceeds, this new parking place will need to be added to EDDC's parking places Order. Legal Services will need to be instructed at least three months in advance of the target opening date in order to seek a modification to this Order.

Equalities impact: **Low Impact**
The Council's existing 367 space Harbour Road car park on Seaton's Underfleet has been underused for a number of years. However in the existing short stay area there are disabled car parking spaces in close proximity to the public toilets and tramway terminus. The proposed additional parking will include replacement disabled car parking spaces in a convenient and accessible location.

Risk: **Low Risk**
The issue here is in reality whether the success of the town in general and the Jurassic visitor centre in particular is likely to be compromised by insufficient car parking. Other transport options exist and visitors will of course arrive on foot, by bicycle, bus and coach. However, the reality is that the regeneration and economic wellbeing of Seaton will be enhanced with the development of this car park but there is also a risk that visitor numbers do not increase as predicted and that the car park fails to deliver the predicted revenue.

Links to background information: None

Link to Council Plan: Living in, working in and enjoying this outstanding place.

Visitor numbers

The development of Seaton Jurassic is set to attract an additional 60,000 visitors to the town from next year.

Business at Seaton Jurassic will be highly seasonal, with the great majority of custom expected during the summer, school holidays and bank holiday week-ends. As a partner of the project the Council has made a conscious decision to give up over 200 spaces of the 367 space Harbour Road car park in order to build Seaton Jurassic. However, there is a growing realisation that the remaining 150 spaces (along with other on and off street parking options in the town) will not be sufficient to cope with both existing and new visitor numbers on the most popular days.

The Council owns a parcel of land on the west side of the Underfleet just across the road from the development and following an initial appraisal and topographical survey, officers are confident that this site has the potential to offer an additional 70 off street parking spaces in the immediate vicinity of Seaton Jurassic and the tramway terminus. I have included at figure 1 below an aerial photograph showing the location of the land adjacent to Harbour Road car park, the site of the Seaton Jurassic development.

Figure 1, the site of the proposed car park



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Map Tile: SY2490SE Full Reference: SY2468 9017

Local impact

Residents living adjacent to this parcel of land have already voiced concerns about the loss of green space, and they are suggesting that additional car parking is simply not necessary. Some residents are reporting previous “distress” associated with the so-called boy racers who have in the past congregated in the largely empty Harbour Road car park, citing this as a reason not to develop a new public car park so close to their homes. It has also been suggested that highway safety issues may arise from the introduction of new vehicle access points on the Underfleet with

claims that previous development proposals in the area have been refused consent on exactly those grounds. Finally they observe that part of the site includes a pedestrian right of way and a separate right of way into Jubilee Lodge used by both residents and occasionally by contractors working for them (builders, gardeners etc.).

Each of these issues has been considered carefully and all will be satisfactorily addressed in the detailed design if the project goes ahead. The design brief will certainly include the consideration of the use of materials such as grasscrete to mitigate any impact arising from the loss of the grassed area. It will also be a straightforward matter to restrict the operational hours of the proposed car park to reflect the opening hours of Seaton Jurassic should that prove to be necessary in order to discourage misuse of the space out-of-hours and thereby avoid any possible vehicle related antisocial behaviour at this location. The next stage will be pre-application consultation and then to seek planning consent (we are aiming for Development Management Committee on 18 November) whilst simultaneously commencing the necessary environmental surveys. At this stage it is envisaged that we could work through contractor selection and physical on-site works this summer and autumn with completion to coincide with the final construction stages of Seaton Jurassic. It is also worth noting that if we agree to proceed now, there is an added time pressure that is to try to complete construction of the parking in February in time to meet the peak parking demands of the 2015 Grizzly which takes place at the beginning of March.

Business Case

Our property services colleagues have done some preliminary work of this project and the estimated capital cost of developing this car park is of the order of £250,000 to £300,000. Once in use, our experience elsewhere suggests that we can expect these 70 new parking spaces to generate a net revenue income of around £500 per space per annum, i.e. a total annual income of £35,000(our most popular car parks currently generate a net income of around £1500 per space).