

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE		Report No. 13
Date of Meeting	24 th July, 2008	
Title of Report	Cricklade Car Park Proposal	
Portfolio	Leader's Responsibilities	
Link to Corporate Priorities	None	
Key Decision	No	
Executive Workplan Ref	N/A	
Public Report	Yes	

<p>Summary of Report</p> <p>The report sets out the consideration given to a scheme proposed at Full Council as a suggested addition to the budget for 2008/9.</p> <p>The proposal and concept arose during the Budget setting at the Full Council meeting in February 2008, there was agreement that should a material underspend arise during during 2008/09 that the Executive would consider proposals to fund an expansion to the District owned Cricklade Town Car Park.</p> <p>Elsewhere on this agenda is a Revenue Report indicating that an underspend is likely to arise during 2008/09, giving rise to an opportunity to fund some or all of these schemes</p>
<p>Officer Recommendations</p> <p>That the Executive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note that an underspend scenario has arisen, therefore the scheme has been considered. 2. Agrees that due to planning issues the scheme could not be delivered during financial year 2008/09. Therefore should not be pursued further under this action from Full Council.

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.				
Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
None	None	None	None	None

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the budget setting full council meeting on 26th February 2008 there was a counter budget proposal by Cllr S.K. Doubell.

“The proposed capital budget is amended by adding:

£90,000 for the provision of a piece of play equipment in all the District Council owned play areas that can be used by children with disabilities.

£90,000 to be spent on the general refurbishment of all the District Council owned play areas that require it.

(The Play proposals are dealt with elsewhere on this agenda).

£50,000 to provide an additional 30 car parking spaces in the District Council owned car park in Cricklade.”

The minutes reflect the following as the decision

“That the Executive requests reports on the three proposed changes to the capital budget and considers whether these can be accommodated within underspends on the capital budget.”

- 1.2 The Revenue Budget Monitoring Report on this agenda indicates that NWDC is anticipating an underspend of at least £0.5M for 2008-09. The Council has received a General Consent that it may operate within its budget totals as set by the full council to deliver its planned objectives. Whilst these were not specifically allocated budget the approval was that underspends might be re-distributed for one-off projects. The motion and decision do both refer to Capital underspend, however in local authority accounting it is permissible to utilise revenue funds for capital projects (but not vice versa).

2. Options & Options Appraisal

- 2.1 Option 1: To agree the recommendations.
- 2.2 Option 2: To not approve the recommendations.
- 2.3 Option 3: To propose an alternative recommendation.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 Cricklade Town Council has for some time sought additional parking spaces for the town. They submitted a planning application and business case to extend an existing car park owned by the District Council in the vicinity of the Town Hall. The purpose of this report is not to discuss the need as perceived by the Town Council, merely to cover the issue as proposed at Full Council on the 26th February 2008, that consideration be given to utilising in-year funds if they became available to fund a proposed scheme.
- 3.2 The Town Council have provided a business case for the need for additional car parking spaces in August 2007, attached as appendix A.
- 3.3 However the resultant planning submission was not successful on the following grounds;

Planning permission (08/00553/FULL) was refused because:-

The proposed extension of the car park will result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to the nearby residents and be an unacceptable intrusion into the landscape of this part of Cricklade. It will have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the area and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Cricklade conservation area, contrary to policies C3 and HE1 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

- 3.4 After discussions with Officers in the Asset, Design and Regeneration Team who have reviewed the case, it is apparent that this scheme is unlikely to be able to be amended so as to meet planning requirements within the foreseeable future. This is not a definitive conclusion from this Council in respect of planning applications, but impacts greatly on the feasibility of undertaking this project as a one-off in year funded scheme.
- 3.5 It is therefore for this reason that the Executive is recommended to cease the consideration of this project as an in-year opportunity.

4. Community and Environmental Implications

4.1 None

5. Human Resources Implications

5.1 None.

6. Equality and Diversity Implications

6.1 None.

Appendices:	Appendix A - Parking Provision in Cricklade High Street
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Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
Budget Proposals 2008-09	Council – February 26, 2008	Draft C83

Parking Provision in Cricklade's High Street

Prepared by Cricklade Town Council

1. Background

Consultation with residents over the years has repeatedly given rise to strong feedback that there are insufficient public parking spaces situated in or off Cricklade High Street. The impact of the existing limited parking has led to:

- Residents shopping elsewhere due to their inability to park anywhere close to the High Street, particularly the elderly or infirm. This is evidenced by the fact that Cricklade has the poorest level of self-containment in terms of convenience goods expenditure of any of the settlements within the District (Source: NWDC Local Development Framework Core Strategy).
- Frequent instances of double-parking, paralysing High Street North in Cricklade.
- Loss of tourists and other visitors to the town.

Cricklade Town Council has for very many years been striving to increase parking provision in the High Street. This has taken the form of including areas set aside in their local plan for car parking, setting aside funding for its provision and actively pursuing possible development sites. Unfortunately this has, for various reasons, resulted in no increase in parking spaces in recent years.

2. Policy

Car parking policy is contained in the Wiltshire County Council Local Transport Plan and is predicated on the fact that there are more parking spaces than needed in most major towns. In the Local Transport Plan it is then suggested that this does little to control demand management or to encourage other forms of transport to be used. Indeed the opening statement is "In most of the main towns there is an ample supply of relatively cheap parking".

This assertion is patently inappropriate when applied to Cricklade. The analysis in the Appendix clearly demonstrates that Cricklade is at the bottom of the league when it comes to NWDC managed off-street car parking facilities in Cricklade. There are NO other parking facilities open to the public in or just off the High Street, other than limited on street parking.

Government guidance (Planning Policy Guidance Note 13) has made it clear that unrestrained parking provision is no longer an appropriate approach to parking provision and that policies to restrain inappropriate car use should be encouraged. Whilst this is true, it is the view of Cricklade Town Council that local access from elderly or infirm residents and the surrounding villages to the retail centre of Cricklade is hardly "inappropriate". What is appropriate is to meet the needs of these elements of our community. Indeed encouraging locals to use the retail shops in Cricklade would mean increasing convenience goods expenditure in the Town and would result in shorter car journeys as fewer people would visit the retail areas of Swindon and Cirencester less often.

The only off-street parking provision at the moment is situated adjacent to Cricklade Town Hall, where some 30 parking places are provided by NWDC and a further 5 by the Cricklade Town Hall management committee, a registered charity. This public hall caters for up to 225 individuals at a seated performance or similar event. Car parking policy used to state a minimum of 1 parking place for every 5 seats. The latest car parking action plan from WCC makes it clear that this, as well as being a minimum, is the maximum so that the action plan complies with the criteria laid down by government. Whichever way one looks at this, the number of car parking spaces that would be required today if the Town Hall had been built under the current development approach would require some 45 car parking spaces. This is just for the Town Hall, let alone the access to the retail centre of Cricklade!

To summarise, Cricklade Town Council believe that the provision of additional car parking spaces in Cricklade is NOT at odds with existing policy. Existing policy may be appropriate where an adequate supply of parking spaces is provided but where it is not, as is the case in a rural community such as Cricklade, then additional parking spaces actually means that residents would drive less than they do today. This is clearly very much in accordance with the thrust of Government guidance.

3. Cricklade Country Way Project

The proposed Cricklade Country Way project will certainly attract visitors, both local and inbound. Most of these will be directed/encouraged to the Mouldon Hill southern end of the Country Way Scheme. However it is an inescapable fact that significant numbers of visitors will head to the Cricklade northern end of the Country Way Scheme. This will include:

- Inward bound visitors who naturally believe that a recreational facility known and marketed as the Cricklade Country Way can be accessed from Cricklade - a historic market town and the first town on the infant Thames, which provides other attractive facilities for tourists. We believe that the numbers coming to Cricklade rather than Moulden Hill will be significant in terms of our infrastructure.
- Visitors to the Cotswold Water Park will be naturally drawn to the northern end of the Cricklade Country Way. Indeed Cricklade is the southern gateway to the water park. Public transport from the Water Park is poor.
- Residents from the local area including surrounding villages stretching into Gloucestershire.

Whilst there is proposed to be some limited additional parking on the eastern edge of the town as part of the Scheme this will not adequately accommodate those visitors who want to access the retail centre of the town or find parking close by the proposed new railway halt. Indeed the scheme is designed to encourage other modes of transport but reality dictates that unless some extra provision is made off the High Street then either chaos will reign or visitors will move on elsewhere to find the necessary services. Additional parking at the Town Hall would be a convenient place to access the proposed Cricklade railway halt.

4. Needs

As a market town, Cricklade needs additional car parking to support the retail activity in the town and also to encourage tourism. Being the first town on the Thames, one of the best preserved Saxon Towns and home to the rare Snakeshead Fritillary

attracts visitors to the town. Indeed Natural England estimates that North Meadow alone has some 10,500 visitors annually. These visitors are good for the local businesses and with parking at a premium in the High Street if there is insufficient parking available they will not stop.

Based on the analysis in the Appendix it is suggested that somewhere in the region of 100 car parking spaces would need to be provided to become comparable (but still worse) than Wootton Bassett. This would require circa 65 additional spaces to those being provided today.

There is little or no spare capacity for any on-street parking. Indeed the existing on-street parking is already an issue in terms of the smooth flow of traffic through the town. Additional off-street car parking facilities will assist in keeping parked traffic from the road infrastructure.

There are insufficient existing parking spaces adjacent to the Town Hall, which is clearly evident when there are functions taking place there e.g. animal shows (cats, dogs and rabbits), guest speakers, wedding receptions, birthday parties, quizzes, etc. For such events able-bodied people of Cricklade walk but people who have to travel or are infirm will need to use their car. The effect of this is that the immediate residential area suffers from the overflow.

5. Economic Regeneration Strategy

The NWDC economic regeneration strategic objective for market towns is to raise the profile and secure investment in the District's market towns to the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors alike.

One of the key strategic actions underpinning this objective is to generate and market dynamic and vibrant town centres that are attractive to investors and are able to provide facilities and services suited to the needs of the local population and local businesses. This is to be delivered by developing appropriate development briefs, where appropriate.

Bearing the above in mind Cricklade Town Council believe that an underlying essential infrastructure improvement to achieve this objective is a need for at least another 10 car parking spaces to be provided adjacent to the Town Hall, with the balance being provided elsewhere off the High Street – ideally utilising the Cricklade Town Council land behind the Vale of the White Horse Club in the High Street. This is fundamentally important if we are to regenerate Cricklade as a market town in line with this strategy, which was approved by the District Council Executive Committee on 14 April 2005.

This document was approved by Cricklade Town Council's Planning, Conservation & Transport meeting on 20 August 2007.

North Wiltshire District Council Car Parking Provision

According to the NWDC website as at July 2007 the following are the number of car parking spaces being provided by NWDC, as owner, for its six market towns:

Town	Location	Spaces/Disabled July 2007
Calne	Church Street/New Road	77/3
Chippenham	Bath Road	233/5
	Borough Parade	195/6
	Brake Mead	22/0
	Emery Gate	342/6
	Gladstone Road	38/0
	Monkton Park	76/4
	Sadlers Mead	165/6
	Spanbourn Avenue	44/0
	Wood Lane	67/0
Corsham	Newlands Road	87/4
	Post Office Lane	118/0
	Springfield Centre	82/1
Cricklade	High Street	34/1
Malmesbury	Burnham Road	17/0
	Cross Hayes	120/0
	Station Road	145/0
Wootton Bassett	Borough Fields	255/6
	Wood Street	30/0
	Total	2,147/42

The above figure is incorrect for Cricklade in that there are only 30 parking places being provided by NWDC, the remainder are actually owned and provided by Cricklade Town Hall, a registered charity. In summary, after allowing for this correction, the total spaces by town are as follows:

Town	Number of spaces	Population*	No. of people per space
Malmesbury	282	4,631	16
Chippenham	1,182	28,065	24
Corsham	287	10,780	38
Wootton Bassett	285	11,043	39

Cricklade	30	4,132	138
Calne	77	13,606	177

* According to the 2001 population figures from the Wiltshire County Council website.

What the above table shows is that Cricklade is poorly served in terms of parking places provided by North Wiltshire District Council, with only some 30 being provided – the lowest of all the market towns! Even when this is adjusted to reflect population size only Calne is served worse. Whilst it is accepted that this does not reflect the relative needs of tourist centres and / or regional centres it does stand the test of being a crude measure.