

## **PARENT & CHILD BAYS IN THE ASHLEY CENTRE CAR PARK**

**Head of Service/Contact:** Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services

**Urgent Decision?(yes/no)** No

**If yes, reason urgent decision required:**

**Annexes/Appendices (attached):** **Annex 1** - Ashley Centre Level 4 Floor Plan  
**Annex 2** - Equality Impact Assessment

**Other available papers (not attached):**

### **Report summary**

This report seeks a decision from the Committee as to whether or not it wishes to add designated parent & child bays or additional wider bays for general use to Level 4 of the Ashley Centre car park at the expense of a number of regular sized parking bays.

### **Recommendation (s)**

**That the Committee decides either to:**

**1) Approve one of the following changes:**

- a) Add 12 parent & child bays to level 4 of the Ashley Centre car park, at a net loss of 6 parking bays overall.**
- b) Add 12 additional wider bays to level 4 of the Ashley Centre car park, at a net loss of 6 parking bays, but that these bays are retained for general use rather than specifically for parent & child bays.**
- c) Add 12 parent & child bays and an additional 10 wider bays to level 4 of the Ashley Centre car park, at a net loss of 11 parking bays overall.**

**Or**

**2) Reline the car park within the existing model retaining the maximum number of bays available.**

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## **1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy**

- 1.1 The proposals within this report relate to the Council's Key Priorities of "Managing our Resources" and "Supporting Businesses and our Local Economy".
- 1.2 The Committee will need to consider the effective management of car parking spaces, the potential loss of revenue from removing car parking bays against the potential gains as car park users requiring wider bays may increase their use of the Ashley Centre car park.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The average size of a car in the UK is increasing.
- 2.2 As part of the Capital Programme, works are due to take place on level 4A and 4B of the Ashley Centre car park to introduce a waterproof deckshield. Once these works are complete level 4 of the car park will need to be re-lined.
- 2.3 In addition to what the Committee agrees the capital project will see the introduction of pedestrian walkways on level 4 and the introduction of up to 11 'wider' bays for larger vehicles visiting the car park.
- 2.4 In recent projects in the car parks at Hook Road, Depot Road and the rear of Town Hall, parent & child bays have been introduced to cater for those visitors who are attending the car park with young children.
- 2.5 The Ashley Centre car park does not have any parent & child bays currently.
- 2.6 Parent & child bays are difficult to enforce. They are advisory only and therefore if a visitor does decide to park in a parent & child bay without a child in accompaniment then a penalty charge notice cannot be issued.
- 2.7 A local resident has an online petition with over 1,200 signatures requesting that parent & child bays are introduced within the Ashley Centre car park. It should be noted that this petition is currently 'live' and has not been submitted to the Council.
- 2.8 The layout of the car park on level 4 is restricted due to numerous supporting concrete pillars. The width between these pillars is generally 7800mm. This length could fit three regular 2600mm bays or two parent & child bays with necessary hatching to allow access.
- 2.9 As per the plan on the attached appendix six areas have been highlighted which could accommodate two parent & child bays rather than three regular bays. These bays are situated closely to the pay station and the lift lobby within the Ashley Shopping Centre.

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- 2.10 The 11 wider bays referenced in 2.3 would be situated on the end of aisles and would therefore be less suitable for parent & child bays as there would be more vehicles passing close by.
- 2.11 The Ashley Centre car park contains 660 bays in total, 638 of which are available to visitors to the car park. At weekends an additional 137 bays are available on the extended area of level 4.
- 2.12 Anecdotally some parents have commented in the past or been seen to drive to the quieter levels 4 of 5 of the car park or park on the end of aisles as it will give them a better chance of having room to access their vehicles when they return.
- 2.13 An informal survey was conducted between 11:30am and 12 noon on Friday 22 February 2019 to assess how many car park users may benefit from the introduction of parent and child bays. The survey witnessed 16 car park users either entering or leaving the lifts on the ground floor of the Ashley Centre car park with children estimated to be aged 4 or under. (Only those entering or leaving the lifts were counted as it could be safely assumed that they had visited the shopping centre by car).
- 2.14 The same survey was carried out on Tuesday 26 February 2019 (in school term time) and the result was that 18 car park users with young children were witnessed entering or leaving the lifts.

## **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 The proposal put forward is to create either:
  - 3.1.1 12 new parent & child bays on level 4B of the Ashley Centre car park.
  - 3.1.2 12 additional wider bays on level 4 of the Ashley Centre car park for general use
  - 3.1.3 Or 12 new parent & child bays and an additional 10 new wider bays for general use on level 4B of the Ashley Centre car park.

## **4 Financial and Manpower Implications**

- 4.1 In 2017/18 the Ashley Centre car park generated £1.73 million in revenue from car park fees. Divided equally across the 638 bays available during the week this equates to £2,700 per bay.
- 4.2 It is difficult to quantify the potential impact on income of the loss of a number of bays, as there will only be a loss of revenue when the car park is at or close to full capacity. In 2017/18, the Ashley Centre car park reached capacity at various times of the day on a total of 27 days.

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- 4.3 It is also difficult to assess what additional income would be gained from the addition of parent & child bays but their introduction and any subsequent publicity may encourage previously dissatisfied car park users to return to the Ashley Centre.
- 4.4 The cost of lining the car park will be met by the existing capital budget for the project. Any subsequent works to add or remove bay markings after the completion of this capital project would incur additional cost.
- 4.5 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** It is not possible to quantify the financial impact of reducing the number of bays in the car park as it is not known what additional income could be realised from the promotion of the parent and child bays, nor what income could be lost as a result of the reduced capacity during peak times.
- 4.6 Officers will continue to monitor the performance of the Ashley Centre car park and investigate alternative options if an adverse effect is seen as a result of any changes made following the Committee's decision.

## 5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed. The benefits do not directly impact a set equality strand but would positively impact those car park users with small children.
- 5.1 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** No implications for the purpose of this report.

## 6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 The introduction of parent and child bays within the car park would enable car park users with small children to park in a potentially safer location with increased access for buggies and car seats in parking bays situated more closely to the Ashley Shopping Centre.

## 7 Partnerships

- 7.1 The addition of parent and child bays may benefit some of the retail outlets in the Ashley Centre.

## 8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 The introduction of parent and child or additional wider bays within the Ashley Centre car park would reduce the overall capacity at peak times increasing the length of any queues of users wishing to access the car park when full. Additional work could be undertaken to promote the use of Hook Road car park and the Epsom Gateway car park (Saturdays only) prior to peak periods of parking.

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- 8.2 There is a small risk that at times when the car park is full that the only available bays could be parent and child bays meaning other users may be unable to park within a bay.
- 8.3 There is a risk that other car park users may choose to park in parent and child bays causing potential arguments between car park users.
- 8.4 There is a risk of an adverse media response if the Committee decision is not in favour of parent and child bays.

**9 Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 9.1 That the Committee considers the information within this report and decides whether it wishes to add parent and child bays or an increased number of wider bays within the car park at the expense of some regular parking bays.

**Ward(s) affected:** Town Ward;