

Capital Programme Review 2024-25

Project Appraisal Form

**COMMITTEE &
PROPOSAL
NUMBER**

Environment 1

PROJECT TITLE

Ashley Centre Barriers Replacement

ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER

Officer responsible for project planning and delivery of the scheme. Accountable officers are also responsible for post project review.

Richard Chevalier

DETAILS OF PROJECT

<p>Project scope, what is included/excluded in the scheme</p>	<p>The purpose of the project is to procure a new barrier-controlled system for use in the Ashley Centre Car Park to replace the existing system which is at end of life. The new system will ideally incorporate an Auto Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system at the entry and exit of the car park, with paper ticket system in place as a back up, a variety of payment systems to be available including cash, card and mobile app as well as the ability to pay at the exit station.</p>
<p>Project outcomes and benefits</p>	<p>The primary outcome and benefit will be to provide a new modern parking system for over 600,00 visitors who use the Ashley Centre car park each year. The project aims to introduce a system which will improve the parking experience for our visitors, remove the frustrations caused by the current system and give us a modern fit for purpose system for the mid-long term. Members asked for more detail on how the system would operate so whilst there may be some variation depending on final choice of product the system would be expected to work as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In 97%+ of cases as the vehicle approaches the entry barrier the ANPR cameras will read the number plate and the entry barrier will lift accordingly. 2) In the small percentage of cases where the number plate cannot be read then the driver will collect a ticket issued by a machine at the entry gate. 3) The visitor will visit the shops and establishments within the Town 4) When ready to leave the car park user can make payment by one of three ways <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) They visit a pay machine, key in their registration number and make payment for their stay in the car park by cash or card b) They drive to the exit barrier, their registration number is read and they make payment by card at the exit station or c) They use a mobile app or QR code, key in their registration on their phone, and make payment for the appropriate fee. <p>(For those who entered with a paper ticket then the ability to insert the ticket into the pay machine or the exit station to make payment</p>

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	<p>will be available).</p> <p>The major benefits for the car park user will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The removal of chip coins “tokens” which add an unnecessary level of stress to car park users particularly as they can be confusing for new users, lost inside or outside of the car or left at pay stations. The charging of a replacement fee for a lost token is one of the primary reasons for anger/frustration amongst users. b) The ability to pay at the exit. Currently if a user has forgotten to pay or is required to pay an extra amount then they need to leave their car at the exit barrier and walk to the nearest pay station. c) The ability to pay remotely using a mobile phone, thereby avoiding queues at pay station. <p>All of these things should reduce delays for other car park users exiting the car park.</p> <p>From a security perspective the ANPR cameras will also be able to identify any vehicles of interest should an incident or accident occur.</p> <p>The other major consideration for this project is that our current system provider has advised that many of the parts used to service our existing equipment, including the tokens, will be obsolete from the end of 2024, meaning that once existing supply in stock has been exhausted we will be unable to repair parts of the machines. The Ashley Centre car park generates gross income in the region of £2million each year for the Council, which goes toward operating and maintaining the car park as well as supporting a number of other essential Council services. If the equipment does fail this could severely impact the income generated for the Council as a whole and cause significant reputational damage to car park users.</p>
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FINANCIAL SUMMARY

		Cost of Project £	Comments and detail where necessary. Provide appendices where relevant. Examples of business cases spreadsheets can be found in the Finance Handbook
a	Estimated cost of purchase, works and/or equipment	240,000	Cost to replace two entries and two exits at the Ashley Centre, nested entry and exit systems and ANPR camera equipment within the car park.
b	Consultancy or other fees	0	
c	Total Scheme Capital Costs (a+b)	240,000	
d	External Funding Identified (e.g. s106, grants etc.) Please give details, including any unsuccessful funding enquiries you may have made.	0	

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e	Net Costs to Council (c-d)	240,000	
f	Internal Sources of Capital Funds Identified (e.g. repairs & renewals reserve etc.)	0	
g	Capital Reserves Needed to Finance Proposal (e-f)	240,000	
h	Annual Ongoing Revenue Additional Savings as a Direct Result of the Project	30,000	There would be a saving on Maintenance, Parts and Labour service charge costs in year 1 as the equipment would be under warranty.
i	Annual Ongoing Revenue Additional Costs as a Direct Result of the Project	10,000	From year 2 there would be a maintenance cost but it is likely to be similar to that currently paid for the existing maintenance contract and the replacement of tokens. During any installation / transition period there may be a period where elements of the car park are out of use which may impact on revenue for a short period of time. An approximate loss of two days revenue calculated although it may not be this significant.

Year	2024/25 £
Spend Profile of Scheme – please identify which year (s) the scheme spend will fall into	240,000

REVENUE IMPACT

Can Revenue Implications be funded from the Committee Base Budget? – Please give details	There is currently a budget for ongoing Parts, Labour and Maintenance as well as a budget for replacement of tokens. It is anticipated that this existing budget will be sufficient to cover for any ongoing Maintenance budget for the new equipment.
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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Does the scheme meet any of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan targets, and if so, which ones?	N/A
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FOUR YEAR PLAN 2020/24

Is this investment linked to EEBC's Key Themes? If so, say which ones and evidence how. How does project fit within service objectives?	Opportunity and Prosperity With the Ashley Shopping Centre completing a refurbishment and re-brand and a new key retailer coming into the Centre next year a modern and operational car park will support the vibrancy of the town.
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TIMESCALES

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What is the proposed timetable for completion of the project? Give estimated start and finish dates for each stage of the project. These dates will be used as milestones during quarterly budget monitoring to assess performance of project delivery.

		Target Start Date	Target Finish Date
1	Design & Planning	Apr 2024	Apr 2024
2	Further Approvals Needed	May 2024	May 2024
3	Tendering (if necessary)	June 2024	July 2024
4	Project start date	August 2024	
5	Project Finish Date		Sep 2024

BASELINE CRITERIA

All capital schemes are assessed against criteria set by the Capital Member Group annually. Proposals should meet at least one of these criteria. State which capital criteria(s) for assessing proposals are met and why. Leave blank any which are not met.

Spend to Save schemes should meet the following criteria:

- Payback of the amount capital invested within the project within 5 years (10 years for renewable energy projects).
- The return required on capital employed should be linked to the potential cost of borrowing (MRP) rather than potential loss of investment income.
- Risk of not achieving return on investment is low.
- Clear definition of financial cost/benefits of the scheme.

Members may consider schemes with longer paybacks on major spend to save projects going forward, especially those that incur borrowing.

<p>Is there a guarantee of the scheme being fully externally funded and is it classed as a high priority? Please give details of funding streams, including any restrictions on the funding.</p>	<p>It will not be externally funded but is a high priority as a key income generator for the Council</p>
<p>Is the Scheme a Spend to Save Project? Will investment improve service efficiency including cost savings or income generation? What is the payback in years?</p>	<p>No, the income generated by the car park covers the cost of the proposal.</p>

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Is it mandatory for the Council to provide the scheme? Is investment required to meet Health and Safety or other legislative requirements? If so state which requirements.	No
Is this project the minimum scheme required to continue to deliver the services of the Council? - Is investment required for the business continuity of the Council? If so, say how.	Yes. The provider of our current equipment is unable to support it from next year with many of the parts being obsolete. The car park receives over 12,000 visitors per week and therefore if the car park equipment fails there will be a significant impact to revenue and to the Council's reputation.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Is investment identified in the Council's Asset Management Plan?	Yes
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PRIORITISATION

State which **one** of the four prioritisation categories are met and why.

1	Investment essential to meet statutory obligation.	
2	Investment Important to achieve Key Priorities.	
3	Investment important to secure service continuity and improvement.	The investment will enable the Council to maintain and operate a key income generator but also provide an important service to visitors to the Town and its retail and social establishments.
4	Investment will assist but is not required to meet one of the baseline criteria.	

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHEME

1	Outline the risks of delivering this project to timetable and budget. (Please do not include risks to the service or asset if project is not approved.)	The project timetable will depend on the availability of the chosen provider and their installation team. From the Council's perspective the main installation would ideally take place in the summer months when demand is a little less than at other times.
2	Are there any risks relating to the availability of resources internally to deliver this project	The project is not likely to require large staffing resources however there will be a few key decision makers involved.

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3	Consequences of not undertaking this project	<p>With the existing equipment at end of life and replacement parts soon to become obsolete there is a danger that devices within the car park cease to work. This could impact an entry station (currently two) or an exit (currently two) and therefore lead to increased queues to enter or exit the car park. There could also be an impact on pay stations. Currently the car park has seven pay stations (two on Level 1 and 3, and one on levels 2, 4 & 5) so failure of one machine may lead to members of the public having to use other floors to pay. This could have an increased impact outside of shopping centre hours when no lifts are available.</p>
4	Alternative Solutions (Other solutions considered – cost and implications)	<p>With reliance on the existing equipment not a feasible option beyond this year the other alternative is to introduce pay and display, supported by a mobile telephone / app option. This would require a number of pay and display machines to be installed in the car park with users required to pay for parking in advance, either at a machine or via a mobile app. In terms of cost this would be a cheaper alternative, potentially around £100,000 in terms of initial cost and would remove the need for barriers at the entry and exit altogether. However there would likely be some drawbacks or risks to this option namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A return to pay and display may be seen as a regressive step in terms of usability and progression by car park visitors and local partners such as the Ashley Centre and Global House. b) Visitors would be required to pay for their anticipated length of stay and unless using RingGo may under or overpay for their length of stay which can cause frustration. c) Income would likely reduce as users may not pay for their full stay or may take their chances of not paying at times perceived to be low in enforcement. d) The system would require a greater civil enforcement presence. Officers would be required to routinely patrol the car park and issue Penalty Charge Notices to those who have not paid. Reputationally this could have an impact on car park users and may also lead to increased conflict between members of the public and staff. e) There would be a health and safety risk to consider if officers are patrolling on foot around a compact busy car park throughout the day. The risks would include the increased chance of being hit by a vehicle and inhalation of fumes. f) Without the barriers there would be an increased risk of vehicles driving at speed at the car park entrance and exit, which is near the primary pedestrian crossing.

Is consultation required for this project? Please give details of the who with and when by.	The Car Park Working Group will be consulted to consider their views and once procurement complete the chosen provider will be consulted with in terms of how the transition can be most smoothly delivered.
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Ward(s) affected by the scheme	Town
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Accountable Officer Responsible for Delivery of the Scheme

Name and Signature Richard Chevalier

Whole life revenue costs of capital project

Where savings or budget virements are being used to part fund a project, the relevant budget manager must sign the appraisal form.

Accountable Officers for the revenue implications of the project

Project Manager Name and Signature Date

Revenue Budget Holder Name and Signature Date

Service Accountant Name and Signature Date

Director Name and Signature Date
