

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
24 JUNE 2015

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE TOWN HALL AND HOPE LODGE CAR PARKS TO BARRIER CONTROL

<u>Report of the:</u>	Head of Customer Services and Business Support
<u>Contact:</u>	Joy Stevens
<u>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</u>	No
<u>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</u>	N/A
<u>Annexes/Appendices (attached):</u>	N/A
<u>Other available papers (not attached):</u>	Reports to Environment Committee October 2013 and June 2015

REPORT SUMMARY

The Committee is asked to approve additional funding from capital reserves up to a maximum of £16,744 to enable the completion of the project to install barrier controlled parking in the Hope Lodge and Town Hall Car Parks.

RECOMMENDATION (S)

Subject to the approval of the decision of the Environment Committee, the Strategy and Resources Committee is asked to approve:

- 1) The purchase of infrastructure (chip and coin exit station and I.T. hardware/software) which is necessary for the completion of the project (£10,222);
- 2) The installation of bunds around the boundary perimeter of Hope Lodge car park (circa £5,000) which is not necessary but considered desirable;

A total of £16,744 (including a contingency sum which is considered best practice of £1,522) to be funded from capital reserves.

Notes

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

- 1.1 The Key Priorities of Economic Vitality and Sustainability are promoted by providing accessible, affordable car parking and minimising the anti-social effects of vehicle use.

2 Background

- 2.1 In January 2011 the Environment Committee considered and agreed the case for replacing the barrier control equipment at the Ashley Centre car park and for converting five further car parks (at Hook Road, Town Hall, Hope Lodge, Depot Road and Upper High Street) from pay and display to barrier control.

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- 2.2 The project was divided into two phases. Phase one covered Ashley Centre and Hook Road car parks. Phase two covered the Town Hall, Hope Lodge, Depot Road and Upper High Street car parks.
- 2.3 Potential suppliers were asked to tender for the project and the contract was awarded to Scheidt and Bachmann.
- 2.4 Hook Road car park was converted to barrier operation in April 2012 and the new equipment was installed at the Ashley Centre car park in August 2012.
- 2.5 There are several reasons why barrier controlled car parks provide a better parking experience for the user. Firstly the pay machines give change or the option to pay by credit card. Secondly, the user does not have to estimate the duration of their stay in advance and perhaps either pay for time they do not need or curtail their trip to avoid the risk of a penalty charge for an overstay.
- 2.6 £200,000 was approved in the Capital Programme 2012/13 which was then carried forward to the 2013/14 Capital Programme for the implementation of barrier control in Town Hall, Hope Lodge, Depot Road and Upper High Street.
- 2.7 In October 2013 the Environment Committee considered and agreed the case for conversion of the of the Town Hall and Hope Lodge car parks to barrier control at an estimated total cost for the project of £129,000.
- 2.8 A further £5,000 was agreed to be funded from revenue in 2015/16 to part finance an additional cost for CCTV, increasing the total project to £134,000.

3 Request for additional funding

Infrastructure which is necessary for successful completion of the project

- 3.1 In the original project it was proposed that the second chip and coin exit station and barrier from Hook Road would be moved to Hope Lodge to reduce equipment costs.
- 3.2 However, for a number of reasons this is not considered to be a workable proposal. Hook Road Car Park usage has increased. The majority of the users are now permit holders using the swipe facility on their card. In order to function properly, a card must be swiped in and swiped out. A driver will not be able to come back "in", if they did not swipe out on exit on the previous occasion, and the system will assume that the vehicle has remained parked and charge the card accordingly. It requires Customer Services intervention to reset affected individual cards. It is therefore essential that, so far as possible, there is always a fully functioning chip and coin exit station to ensure the exit and entry loop is maintained, otherwise the card will need to be reconfigured. With two exit stations inline, if one is out of order, the other will usually be operational.
- 3.3 At Planning Committee on the 28 May 2015, planning permission was granted, subject to conditions, for the installation of perimeter safety fencing, increase in height of existing lighting columns (and installation of new LED light fittings) on the top floor of the Hook Road car park. This is the start of the work that will enable us to open the roof, which will provide approximately an additional 100 parking spaces.

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- 3.4 It is therefore advisable that the existing chip and coin exit station and barrier remain in Hook Road as a fall back to minimise the risk, inconvenience to the users of the car park and reputational impact to the council, as well as the time which would be involved in reconfiguring all swipe cards affected by failure of an exit barrier, and possible loss of income if customers notice that the exit barrier is inoperable for a period.
- 3.5 It is also relevant that the type of exit station and barrier installed in Hook Road is of a type which is most suited to an “indoor” location, such as Hook Road. The proposed additional chip and coin exit station (£5,458) and barrier (£2,164) are the type that are recommended for a surface car park as they are more durable and suitable to being outside. The proposed barrier arm will be less susceptible to weather damage especially the wind. This should help keep maintenance costs to a minimum.
- 3.6 Various ICT items are also required including 2 x 12 port Cisco switches, 4 x Fibre GBIC modules, fibre patch cabling, maintenance, configuration and infrastructure, total cost £2,600.
- 3.7 This equipment will enable us to fully utilise all features and also provides opportunity to expand the services in the future, providing a more robust car parking infrastructure.

Desirable infrastructure

- 3.8 Currently the boundary perimeter of Hope Lodge car park is exposed and it is possible that vehicles could drive away from the car park over the grassed area without paying. Therefore, there is a risk to the income from the car park.
- 3.9 There are various options that can be considered such as planting ready mix hedging (£7,000), installing bollards (£6,500), or bunding (£5,000) where additional soil is added to the banks to increase the height and grass seeds are placed on top. Bunding is the cheapest option and will build a perimeter around Hope Lodge car park.

Contingency

- 3.10 A contingency sum of £1,522 is also required which will be returned back to the capital budget if it is not required after the implementation of the project.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** The financial costs of these works are detailed in the body of this report. If the Hook Road Barrier was to malfunction the lost income from pay as you go customers, based on 2014/15 performance, is estimated as £4,000 per week. The additional inconvenience to permit holders has been mentioned above.

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

- 5.1 Conversion of the two car parks will enable stored value Blue Badge cards to be used in additional locations. The ‘free hour’ arrangement for Blue Badge holders will remain unchanged.
- 5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** No additional comments for the purposes of this report.

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6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 The tokens used by the new equipment are more environmentally friendly than the paper tickets used at present.

7 Risk Assessment

- 7.1 The main financial uncertainties relate to the proposed additional income and cost reductions. The increase in income is especially difficult to forecast.

8 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 8.1 In order to successfully complete this project additional resources are required. Certain elements are essential and certain elements are desirable.
- 8.2 Whilst bunding is desirable, and members ought to be aware of the potential risk associated with not creating a barrier between the car park and the highway, the project could be completed without it. Hedging would be an alternative option to installing bunds. This would be more aesthetically pleasing but would be more expensive.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Town