

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Streetscene Scrutiny Panel

Date 18 July 2019

Report of: Head of Streetscene

Subject: MOTION PROPOSING EXTENDED PARKING AT WICOR RECREATION GROUND

SUMMARY

The Notice of Motion submitted to Council on 13 June 2019 proposed that the Council extends the car park at Wicor Recreation Ground. The cost of extending the car park is estimated at £250,000 and the Motion suggested that this could come from the CIL money that the Council will receive from the development in Cranleigh Road which is circa £1 million.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Streetscene Panel:

- (a) considers the information contained in this report; and
- (b) agrees a recommendation to Council in respect of the motion proposed at the June meeting of the Council in respect of car parking at Wicor Recreation Ground.

INTRODUCTION

1. A Notice of Motion was submitted to Council on 13 June 2019 regarding the need for an extension to the car park at Wicor Recreation Ground.
2. The specific wording of the Notice of Motion is as follows: *“There is an urgent need to increase the car parking at Wicor Recreation Ground due to the increased usage of the area which is causing cars to be parked and obstruct residential areas. Therefore, it is proposed that the Council extends the car park at Wicor Recreation Ground. The cost of extending the car park is estimated at £250,000 and this could come from the CIL money that the Council will receive from the development in Cranleigh Road which is circa £1 million”*.
3. At the meeting on 13 June 2019, Council referred the item to the Streetscene Scrutiny Panel to consider and make a recommendation to Council.

BACKGROUND

4. Wicor Recreation Ground has six adult pitches and two mini soccer pitches which are served by a sports pavilion. In addition, AFC Portchester leases an area of land from the Council which accommodates a floodlit adult football pitch and social facilities.
5. When the new pavilion opened in 2012, an additional 22 car park spaces were provided giving a total of 91 spaces at Wicor Recreation Ground.
6. The main user of the site is AFC Portchester. They are one of Hampshire’s largest football clubs with a significant youth section involving girls and boys of all abilities from the age of 4 to 18. They also have a successful adult team and over recent years have expanded the facilities at Wicor Recreation with help and support from the Council.
7. The number of football matches played at Wicor Recreation Ground, at weekends during the season, inevitably results in many vehicles and the recreation ground car park is often at capacity. Up until 2017, overspill car parking was accommodated on the Cranleigh Road verge leading up to the entrance to the Recreation Ground.
8. However, a scheme implemented by Hampshire County Council resulted in a footpath and bollards being constructed along the verge of Cranleigh Road which meant the overspill parking was pushed into the roads on the nearby housing estates, resulting in complaints from residents.
9. To resolve the issue, the Council worked with AFC Portchester to try and find a way to reduce congestion and the resultant complaints from residents when matches and events are held at Wicor Recreation Ground. This resulted in AFC Portchester obtaining an informal agreement with the Vintage Bus Company to park up to 70 vehicles on match/event days in their compound, which is situated at the bottom of Cranleigh Road, adjacent to the entrance to Wicor Recreation Ground.
10. In addition, the club agreed to employ parking marshals, at their own cost, to advise drivers about appropriate parking, and to help the congestion within Wicor, Cranleigh Road, and surrounding roads. The Council helped with cutting back vegetation and making good the surface to the entrance gateway to the Vintage Bus Company site.

11. This was successful in controlling the main car parks and new overflow car park, and there were compliments from both residents and Wicor visitors including dog walkers.
12. Unfortunately, part way through the 2018/19 season the individuals who were undertaking the parking marshal duties moved away and the club struggled to find replacements. As a result, the overspill car parking was unavailable for a period. However, the club Chairman has given assurances that the arrangement will be in operation for the start of next season, September 2019.

ALL WEATHER PITCH PROPOSAL

13. In August 2018 AFC Portchester approached the Council with a proposal to construct a full-size artificial football pitch on the land they lease from the Council at Wicor Recreation Ground.
14. Whilst the Council was supportive in principal, there were concerns that the informal arrangement for overspill parking was unlikely to be a long-term arrangement. Therefore, serious consideration needed to be given as to how, a growing club like AFC Portchester, could accommodate additional vehicles at peak times.
15. The Council undertook a desk top study to establish a budget cost to provide an extension to the existing car park at Wicor to provide 55 additional car park spaces. This was an area of 1200sqm at a price of £195 per sqm giving a total of £234,000 as a base cost. Adding a contingency and allowance for inflation gives a current budget estimate of circa £250,000.
16. At the time, the Council suggested that AFC Portchester should include this cost in its estimate to construct the all-weather football pitch.
17. At present AFC Portchester are still intent on progressing the proposal for the all-weather pitch but are not ready to bring it forward now. Given that AFC Portchester are intent on progressing the proposal to construct a new artificial football pitch, an option could be to incorporate the provision for a car park extension into this project, rather than to pursue the car extension as a standalone project.

FUNDING

18. The use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding would not be advised, as the Council has a major ongoing Borough wide project, replacing Ferneham Hall with a new Community Arts and Entertainment venue, for which the Executive have formally committed all available CIL money. It is anticipated that this project will require all existing CIL receipts, together with future receipts for the next 3-4 years, to complete the project, and as this is a Council priority, it would not be advisable to deviate funds from this commitment at this time.
19. Unfortunately, there is no S106 funding available for the car park extension. Since the Council's adoption of CIL the Council has not legally been able to secure S106 contributions towards open space and ancillary facilities (such as parking), unless they are provided on the application site for any new residential development.

20. The only other option would be to use other capital resources, but the Council's 5-year capital programme exceeds the current resources available, so this would only be possible if the Executive agreed to divert funds that are allocated to existing projects to this parking scheme.

RISK ASSESSMENT

21. A constraint on the proposed extension to the existing car park will be the existing LPG gas tank that serve Wicor Pavilion. This building is remote from the gas network and heating / hot water is provided by LPG fired boilers. It is a requirement that no hard surfaces are laid over these tanks and access is provided. This would exclude the car park being constructed over the tanks.

22. A detailed study will be required to determine a suitable location for the extension of the car park. However, to avoid the gas tanks, any extension of the existing car park is likely to compromise the adjacent football pitch.

CONCLUSION

23. AFC Portchester are the main user of the Wicor Recreation Ground for football. The success of the club has resulted in an increase in the number of teams playing at Wicor at the weekends during the football season.

24. AFC Portchester have an arrangement to use the Vintage Bus Company compound as an overflow car park at weekends. In addition, they employ Parking Marshalls to advise visitors about appropriate parking. When this arrangement is in operation it has been successful in helping to avoid inappropriate parking.

25. The Council has allocated all the available CIL receipts and capital resources to priority projects. Therefore, to fund the £250,000 car park extension, available funds would need to be diverted away from priority projects.

Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: None

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Mark Bowler, Head of Streetscene (Ext 4420)