

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 07 September 2020

Portfolio:	Policy and Resources
Subject:	Osborn Road Multi-Storey Car Park
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priorities:	A Dynamic, Prudent, Progressive Council. Maintain and Extend Prosperity.

Purpose:

To outline a proposal to extend the life of, and modernise, the Osborn Road Multi Storey Car Park.

Executive summary:

The Osborn Road Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) was constructed in 1973, providing nearly 40% of the town centre parking spaces. The car park is now reaching the end of its useful life and options have been considered to determine the future of the asset.

Due to the fundamental changes occurring in town centres and, in particular, high streets across the UK, coupled with the shift from combustion to electric vehicles, it is very difficult to predict the parking requirement beyond 5-10 years.

An option for a permanent replacement has been considered, but in light of the uncertainties surrounding the future demand, alternative options have been explored and the recommended approach is to undertake a full refurbishment of the car park, with works to improve the structural integrity of the building for up to 15 years.

If agreed, the work would be progressed on a similar time frame to the new arts and entertainment venue in the town centre. Together, this construction work would represent a significant investment by Fareham Borough Council in the town centre.

Recommendations:

That the Executive approves: -

- (i) The outline proposal for the refurbishment of Osborn Road Multi Storey Car Park; and

(ii) the car park scheme be added to the capital programme.

Reason:

The Osborn Road MSCP provides a large proportion of the town's car parking spaces and is approaching the end of its useful life. The options put forward will ensure that the town centre parking supply continues to meet demand.

Cost of proposals:

The estimated cost of the refurbishment is £5.5m and would be financed through borrowing. The cost of finance would be met from increased parking income and proposals for this are the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

Appendices: **A: Stride Treglown Stage 2 Concept Design Proposals**
 B: Summary Cost plan for the Refurbishment Works
 C: Proposed Decorative Brickwork Illustration

Background papers: **Initial design papers, survey reports**

Reference papers: **None**

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	07 September 2020
Subject:	Osborn Road Multi Storey Car Park
Briefing by:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Portfolio:	Policy and Resources

INTRODUCTION

1. The Osborn Road Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) was constructed in 1973, providing over 800 “pay on foot” parking spaces over six decks. It is also the location of the Council’s car parking control office, and the Shopmobility service for the town centre.
2. A review was undertaken in 2012, which identified the schedule of maintenance and repair work that was required. It also identified the need for regular inspection to be carried out, to ensure that the car park remained structurally sound for the following five years.
3. While this approach has ensured that the car park continues to provide a large proportion of the parking in the town centre, it has become more evident that the car park offer is no longer suited to the demands of current and future users. A review was commissioned in 2019, and this report presents options for the car park’s future.
4. The MSCP is a significant asset to the town centre, providing nearly 40% of all town centre off street parking, and is ideally located for visitors to Fareham Shopping Centre, Fareham library, Civic Quarter public services and public amenities such as the new arts and entertainment Venue. It also provides spaces for town centre workers, some of which are based in the Civic Offices.
5. The Council’s Corporate Strategy recognises the importance of promoting economic vitality across the borough and the need for attractive, vibrant town and district centres to support this. The Strategy states: -
 - *Priority 4: Maintaining and Extending Prosperity. We will commence the regeneration of Fareham Town Centre, which will include the provision of new homes, improvements to retail, leisure and entertainment facilities and changes to parking provision.*
6. A parking survey, undertaken in 2018 identified that the Osborn Road car park is rarely used to its full capacity, and that demand could be fully met through the provision of approximately 500 spaces in that location.

7. Good progress is being made to deliver a new £12m arts and entertainment venue, which will replace Ferneham Hall, with construction due to commence in the Winter 2020/21. It is therefore timely to consider the requirement for acceptable parking provision which meets modern standards, to support the new venue.

EXISTING PARKING OFFER WITHIN THE MSCP

8. The car park was designed at a time when parking requirements were very different to today. Vehicles were much smaller, electric vehicles were not in use, accessibility arrangements were less relevant and issues within society (such as rough sleeping, drug misuse, etc) were not considered through design.
9. Expectations of multi storey car park users today are of a much higher standard, and some of the best, modern facilities reflect this, with
 - a. spaces that are big enough for modern day vehicles;
 - b. a good supply of accessible spaces for customers with disabilities, or young children;
 - c. readily available electric vehicle charging points;
 - d. access/exit routes that are well-lit, clean and inherently safe; and
 - e. a design that discourages misuse.
10. In contrast, the Osborn Road MSCP does not provide the most welcoming customer experience, with spaces that are unsuitable for larger cars, and a décor which is functional but unwelcoming. The car park also has a history of attracting anti-social behaviour, which deters users, particularly after dark.

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY AND USEFUL LIFE OF THE MSCP

11. The car park was constructed by the British Lift Slab company in 1973 using an innovative method of construction at the time, where the slab is jacked up into position. This eased the construction process and the inclusion of ramp parking increased the efficiency of the structure.
12. Regular investment up until 2012 ensured that the concrete structure remained in good order. However, with the condition of the structure deteriorating it was agreed to implement a programme of basic maintenance and inspection every six months to maintain and monitor the car park for a period of five years.
13. Maintenance over this period included the removal of loose material with the treatment of any exposed steelwork to reduce corrosion and ensured that the structure continued to be reported as safe.
14. The construction standards for concrete multi storey car parks have now been updated and the lift slab approach is generally recognised as being flawed, if not strengthened by other means. The other issue raised through the inspections was the risk of a falling section of concrete onto a member of the public. Considering these concerns, the frequency of the inspection and maintenance visits have been increased over the last year. This is supplemented by visual monitoring between each survey by the Council's

parking and property teams.

15. The current view is that without significant investment, the car park has a useful life of less than 2 years.

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

16. Town centre economies have, for a number of years, been experiencing a significant level of change. As the online retail economy continues to grow rapidly, the traditional role of the high street as the place for people to do their shopping is reducing. At the same time, recreational uses on the high street, including bars and coffee shops, hair and beauty provision, services and leisure activities, have seen an increase as high streets continue to adapt to the changes in demand.
17. It is widely expected that the structural change in the role of high streets will continue throughout the coming years, and this is likely to have a direct impact on the scale and type of parking required, and the way in which it needs to function for the benefit of town centre visitors, workers and residents.
18. Also relevant to the future of the Osborn Road MSCP, is the adjacent new arts and entertainment venue, to replace Ferneham Hall. Once complete, the range of uses in the venue will be greater, as will the number of evening performances across a wide range of genres. The new venue is expected to attract a much larger number of visitors and the primary car park to serve them is likely to be the MSCP. Consequently, the purpose of the car park is likely to range from being mainly a daytime facility as a shoppers/workers' car park, to one which also has a more prominent role to service the evening economy of the town.
19. Discussions with the Shopping Centre owners and the new arts and entertainment venue operator have both indicated that a plentiful supply of good quality day and evening car parking in that vicinity is very important in supporting the services they offer.

OPTIONS

20. In order to develop the proposal for the future of the Osborn Road MSCP, the following options have been explored.
21. **Do nothing:** It was necessary to consider the implications of taking no action in relation to the car park, and simply continuing with the monitoring regime currently in place. This option has been rejected as the structural integrity of the car park is approaching the end of its useful life and will therefore require it to be permanently closed. Given the significant parking provision that the MSCP offers the town centre, there would be an immediate shortfall in provision that would be detrimental to the town centre economy.
22. **Maintain and repair to minimum standards:** This option was considered as a viable option and would preserve the car park for potentially 5-10 years. Whilst this would minimise the level of capital investment required, it would not address any of the shortcomings of the existing structure in relation to meeting customers' expectations.
23. **Demolish and replace in the current location:** This option would provide an opportunity to deliver a modern car park facility which meets the latest parking standards and customer expectations and would deliver these in a prime town centre location. This option is inevitably the highest cost option but would provide a large

number of parking spaces for the next 40+ years. This option does, however, have a number of drawbacks, beyond the cost of providing it, in particular:

- a. The car park would be designed at a time when the town centre is experiencing a structural change, and there is a high risk that the provision would either be excessive, or simply not meet the needs of the town centre in the latter decades of its useful life; and
- b. as it supplies a large number of parking spaces to the town centre and potentially the new arts and entertainment venue, the temporary removal would leave a significant shortfall in supply for a period of 2+ years. At a time when the UK economy is fragile, this could have long lasting implication for the town centre economy.

24. **Demolish and Re-provide in an Alternative Location:** Alternative locations with good access to the town centre amenities are inevitably limited. The favoured alternative location would be Lysses car park, but due to the proximity of the conservation area, along with the land levels and accessibility, it is not an ideal alternative. Initial design work suggested that capacity on this site could, at the very most, be increased by 400 spaces, which would only go part of the way to replacing the Osborn Road MSCP. It would also be a very challenging option in planning terms. For comparison purposes, modelling this option considered a low-cost steel framed construction, as it would likely be the most cost-effective way of meeting current need.

25. **Upgrade the Existing MSCP:** This option would involve significant improvement to the existing structure of the car park, as well as improvements to the access routes (lifts and stairwells), fascia treatment to preserve the structural integrity and improve appearance, resurfacing and relining to modern day vehicle standards and improved connectivity to the surrounding amenities. This option would preserve the life of the car park for 15+ years and achieve many of the benefits of a full re-provision, but with a significantly lower capital investment. Clearly this option also needs to be considered alongside the life expectancy of the structure, which is much shorter than a full rebuild option.

26. When assessed against the objective of providing sufficient, good quality and modern car parking in the town centre in the most cost effective way, the final option "Upgrade the Existing MSCP" is felt to be the preferred option, and further work was undertaken to explore this in detail.

UPGRADING THE EXISTING MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK

27. To explore this option further, work has been undertaken by a design team appointed by the Council, comprising architectural, structural engineering and quantity surveying expertise.

28. The outcome of the feasibility work undertaken by the team is attached in Appendix A. In summary, the scope of work that could be undertaken to upgrade the car park is set out below.

29. The traditional method to strengthen a car park of this type would involve large steel supports throughout the structure, but advancements in technology offers a new solution using carbon fibre which would reduce the encroachment into individual parking spaces.

30. The second key piece of work would be to make the concrete structure safe from loose/falling material with the removal of defective material, treatment of corroded steelwork and finished with a concrete repair system.
31. To improve the appearance of the car park decks and prolong the life of the structure, all surfaces including decks would be coated in a protective covering. The existing lighting would be upgraded to LED with revised controls. These works would provide significant improvements to the user experience of the car park compared to the existing arrangements.
32. In conjunction with these works, the layout of the parking spaces would be revised, so that all spaces could accommodate larger, modern cars. Improvements would also be made to walkways on the vehicle decks, to improve the safe movement of pedestrians.
33. The existing main staircase and lift provision in the South East corner of the car park would be upgraded, with new finishes to the lift cars, new door finishes and new call buttons inside and outside the lifts. The control systems would also be upgraded to reduce failure, but it would be possible to retain and overhaul the main plant.
34. A further lift with staircase access would be provided for public use on the North East corner, adjacent to the main entrance of the new arts and entertainment venue, with paving improvements to improve and direct pedestrian flow from the car park to the venue.
35. The external façade of the North and Eastern sides of the building would be enhanced with a safe cladding system which would enclose the existing openings to reduce the ingress of rain and improve security and safety. In association with this work we will look to eliminate areas that allow access to the roof area parapets. The design of the cladding system could also be created to integrate well with the brickwork pattern of the adjacent new arts and entertainment venue and modernise the appearance of the car park within the vicinity. An illustration of this has been marked Appendix C.
36. Upgrades are planned to the car park control system and CCTV. Additional security shutters will be provided to the vehicle entrance which with the recently installed shutters to the pedestrian entrances which will look to secure the complete car park when closed.
37. A ready supply of 12 electric vehicle charging points would be initially provided, with the option available to increase this number in the future.
38. The Shopmobility provision would be retained at the basement level.
39. Options would need to be explored to identify possible alternative locations for the Car Parking Control Office. For example, space may be identified at the Council's Depot or within the Civic Offices.
40. Finally, the refurbishment option has allowed for approximately 2,790sqm of solar photovoltaic panels on the top deck of the car park. This could generate around 300kW of power and could potentially be sufficient to meet all power requirements for the car park, and also export excess power generated to the National Grid, or adjacent premises.

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS

41. In light of the structural issues and general condition of the car park, some form of action must be taken if the car park is to remain available for use. Given the importance of the MSCP to support the town centre economy, particularly bearing in mind how fragile it is likely to be in the short to medium term, the option of minimal maintenance was also discounted.
42. The option to demolish and rebuild the car park in its current location is the highest cost option, but also has the longest life expectancy of 40-50 years, whilst meeting the expected standard for modern day parking. However, in light of the changing nature of town centres, coupled with a fundamental shift away from combustion-based vehicles over the life of the car park, there is a risk that the car park may not be best suited for the modern vehicle in 20 years' time.
43. The option to substantially refurbish the car park would extend the life expectancy to the mid 2030's and offer a much-improved customer experience whilst ensuring that the structural integrity is maintained. Over the extended life of the car park, anticipated changes to the town centre, parking requirements, and a shift away from combustion engines is likely to be well progressed, which would inform the longer-term approach to parking provision beyond mid-2030's.
44. A comparison of the costs and life expectancy associated with the viable options is shown below.

	Refurbishment	Demolish and re-build in current location
Number of spaces provided	500	500
Estimated scheme cost	£5.5m	£14m
Construction period	12-18 months	18-24 months
Life expectancy	Up to 15 years	40-50 years
Average Capital cost per year of life	£367k-£550k pa	£280-350k pa
Capital expenditure per space per year	£734 - £1,100	£560 - 700

45. As can be seen, the relative capital cost of each option are very different, and whilst the new build option is marginally more cost effective on this basis, the refurbishment option achieves a broadly similar outcome and allows the changing demand for parking spaces to become well established before concluding the most suitable longer term option, beyond the 2030's.

PROGRAMME

46. If it is agreed in principle to proceed with the refurbishment option, the following steps to construction would be pursued.

Sept 2020	Autumn 2020	Spring 2020/21	Summer 2021	Autumn 2021	Autumn 2022
Approve scheme in principle	Appoint: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design team - Structural Advisor - Project Manager 	Finalise design (RIBA 1-4) Submit Planning application	Seek approval to proceed Procure contractor	Commence works	Completion of all works

47. This preliminary timescale would enable the car park to be refurbished on a similar timescale to the completion of the new arts and entertainment venue. It is, however, subject to detailed design and structural review, which could result in the completion date being prolonged.
48. In addition to the normal Design Team appointments, the Council would also appoint an Expert Structural Advisor, to oversee the project design and construction, to ensure that the outcomes, in particular the life expectancy and safety standards, are achieved.
49. It is likely, and preferable, that the work could be undertaken in phases, allowing the car park to remain partially operational during the construction period. Close co-operation with the contractors responsible for the delivery of the arts and entertainment venue would also be necessary, to minimise conflict and disruption to nearby residential properties.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

50. The proposal to refurbish the Osborn Road MSCP would require a capital investment of £5.5m, as shown at Appendix B. Whilst the initial cost report indicated a higher figure than this, opportunities have already been identified to reduce the cost through a value engineering exercise, (for example through the choice of cladding systems, tailoring the scope of work on each floor, etc).
51. It is proposed that this project would be financed from borrowing, with repayments of the debt finance being met by a proportion of the overall parking charges raised throughout the Borough. A report elsewhere on the Executive agenda sets out proposals to revise the car park charging arrangements, and if approved, the increase in income would be sufficient to accommodate the debt finance costs of this proposal, as well as help to meet the £1.5 million shortfall in the Council's medium term financial plan.
52. In addition, the provision of a significant amount of solar PV panels, would greatly reduce the utility costs of operating the car park, and the feed-in tariff (a payment made to households or businesses generating their own electricity) derived from this addition would also contribute towards the debt financing arrangements.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

53. A full project risk assessment would be undertaken as part of the detailed design, and throughout construction preparation/delivery. However, at this stage, the potential risks are as follows: -
- a. that the budget estimate is insufficient, affecting the viability of the proposal;
 - b. that the life expectancy of up to 15 years cannot be assured; resulting in further extensive works in the interim period;
 - c. that the structural enhancement does not perform as well as expected, resulting in the car park having to close; and
 - d. that the funding source, identified for this project, is insufficient, putting further pressure on the Council's revenue/capital budget.
54. These risks will be actively considered by Officers through the design phase and presented to Members as part of the final project approval to proceed.

CONCLUSION

55. The Osborn Road MSCP plays a significant role in meeting today's demand for parking in the town centre. However, considering its condition a significant investment in the asset is required to ensure safe and improved usage for up to 15 years.
56. Taking account of the changing demand for parking in town centre locations, coupled with a shift from combustion to electric vehicles over the next decade or two, the option to undertake a significant refurbishment of the car park is preferred.
57. This is a cost-effective option which extends the asset life of the car park and enables the "structural" change in demand for parking to take place, before a long-term solution is put in place. At the same time, it will bring the car park up to modern standards, become a much more attractive and inviting facility for users and complement the new arts and entertainment venue once it is complete.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Stride Treglown Stage 2 Concept Design Proposals

Appendix B - Summary Cost plan for the Refurbishment Works

Appendix C - Proposed Decorative Brickwork Illustration

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Ian Cousins, Property Manager (Ext 4835)