

Decision Maker: Resources Portfolio Holder

Date: **For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Executive and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 16 March 2016**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Key

Title: **SITE OF FORMER SMALL CIVIC HALLS, YORK RISE, ORPINGTON**

Contact Officer: Heather Hosking, Head of Strategic Property
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Chief Officer: Director of Regeneration & Transformation

Ward: Farnborough and Crofton;

1. Reason for report

A decision is sought on whether this site should be retained and used as a public car park or whether it should be sold for development. The report on this site on Part 2 of the agenda of this meeting contains the financial information.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Portfolio Holder's views are sought on whether the site of the Former Small Civic Halls, York Rise, Orpington, should be retained and adapted for use as a public car park, or whether it should be offered for sale.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Maximising the Council's assets.
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: See Part 2 report
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost: See Part 2 report
 3. Budget head/performance centre: N/A
 4. Total current budget for this head: N/A
 5. Source of funding N/A
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional):
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement: S123 of the 1974 Local Government Act
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Depending on use, up to 58 car parking spaces could be provided, or residential development providing housing, subject to the grant of planning permission.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Yes
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3. COMMENTARY

The Resources Portfolio Holder considered a report on this site on 13th April 2013 when it was agreed that the buildings on the site should be demolished. It was also agreed that future Council uses for the site should be investigated and that, if no further Council use was identified, the site should be declared surplus to requirements and advertised for sale.

Work to demolish the buildings was completed in September 2014 and alternative uses for the site were considered, including its use for public parking. There is a demand for parking in this area, although the impact of the second tier added fairly recently to Orpington Station car park is not fully known yet. The local roads are still full of commuter parking for the station, so although it has not been proved that these drivers would be willing to pay for the convenience of parking closer to the station, it is believed by officers that there is demand for parking locally. Initially it was decided not to pursue the use of the site as a car park and work was started on the preparation of the sales particulars. However, the Environment Portfolio Holder requested that the use for car parking be reconsidered and business plans have been prepared by the Director of Environment and Community Services which provide three options;

i) Option 1 Use of Existing Surface

This option would provide approximately 47 spaces and would require minor repairs and lighting improvements but would not include resurfacing the area. The parking bays would not be marked out. Payment would be via mobile telephone and so there would be no installation of payment machines or collection of cash. This is only seen as a very temporary, short-term option because of the condition of the surface. It is estimated that the initial investment could be recovered in less than a year of operation but that maintenance costs could be incurred if the use was proposed for anything other than the short term..

ii) Option 2 Improved Surface

This option would involve a limited investment in improving the parking surface, which should provide an acceptable surface for four to five years. A thin surface coat of blacktop surfacing would be applied, together with the installation of lighting and associated works. The car park would be operated on a payment by telephone only system and so there would be no costs in installing ticket machines or in collecting cash from the site. It is estimated that the investment would be recovered in 3.6 years of operation.

iii) Option 3 Higher Grade Car Park

This option would involve the resurfacing of the area to a higher standard than Option ii), requiring a more comprehensive reconstruction, offering a period for use of 20 years before significant work to the surface would be required. This would provide 58 spaces, as it would include work to incorporate an area which is at a lower level than the rest of the surface, which is the footprint of one of the buildings which has been demolished. It is estimated that the initial outlay could be recovered in 7.8 years of operation. As with the other options, payment would be by mobile telephone and so there would be no need to install ticket machines or for the collection of cash from the site.

Potential Sale

As an alternative to the retention of this site for public parking the site could be offered for sale for development. It is likely to be attractive to residential developers because of its excellent location next to Orpington Station. It is anticipated that a development of flats on the site could be a viable scheme which could generate a good capital receipt for the Council and assist in the delivery of the Council's housing targets. The site has an area of 1.16 acres, but this includes

parts of the site that are banked/steeply sloping. The site is also known to have had stability problems in the past, with land slips occurring in the 1970's and the need for a concrete retaining structure to be erected along part of the western boundary of the site. There are also underground air raid shelters under most of the site, the locations of which are known. These issues will impact on the value of the site for development, but it is considered that, despite the abnormal costs that will arise, the site would still be valuable for residential development.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council's policies include being an Authority which manages its assets well.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is currently no budget provision for any capital works that would be required to convert the site for use as a public car park.

A sale of the site would generate a capital receipt which could be invested in an income earning opportunity.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a local authority to secure the best consideration reasonably obtainable when it disposes of land (other than on a lease of 7 years or less) unless it has the benefit of an express or general consent of the Secretary of State. This property would be marketed to ensure compliance with this requirement.



Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	