

Report to the Executive 8 March 2007**Development Proposals at Kingsbridge****Report of Head of Property Services and Head of Business Development**

Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1972

Financial Implications: If the recommendations in this report are supported, it would require a contribution from the Council's Capital Resources towards the cost of the new car park. However, there would be annual revenue savings as a result of changes to the existing car park leasing arrangements and the Council would have the benefit of the capital value in this freehold asset. (Details of the financial implications are set out in the **Exempt Appendix 3** to this report). The annual savings identified will support the loss of interest and provide a route for the repayment of capital over time.

Purpose

This report seeks approval to enter into a land transaction which will help facilitate the delivery of a supermarket on land at Cookworthy Road, Kingsbridge, whilst securing alternative public car parking provision for the town.

This report supports Council Priority CP2 in that the establishment of a quality supermarket in Kingsbridge will support additional jobs at this location and potentially enhance the economic vitality of this part of Kingsbridge.

Recommendations

That Executive RECOMMEND to Council that:

- a. The financial contribution towards the establishment of alternative car parking provision, as set out in this report, is approved;**
- b. The Council takes the freehold of the alternative car parking site as set out in this report; and**
- c. The area of land between Cookworthy Road Car Park and Fore Street Car Park, Kingsbridge, as set out in this report, is transferred to the developer or other nominated body for the purposes of creating a link to the town centre from the supermarket.**

Background

1. As set out in the report to Executive on 9 November 2006, the Council currently rents land at Cookworthy Road, Kingsbridge, which is used for public car parking and provides some 123 spaces. The Council has no long term security of tenure in the site.

2. This land is in the ownership of Bayview Estates, who have been looking at the possibility of development for a significant period of time. It is allocated in the adopted Local Plan for employment uses, although in the draft 2002 Local Plan it was identified for retail supermarket use. A number of retailers have looked at the site over the past few years although none has chosen to take it forward. A significant issue is the need to provide additional public car parking to balance the loss of Cookworthy Road car park. This has been a key factor in the discussions that have taking place over the past few months.

The Current Proposals

3. As Members will recall from the previous report, the owner of the Bayview Estates site has been in discussions with a retailer with a view to this development being taken forward.
4. A critical factor for the scheme is that it relies on delivering additional public car parking. The previous report set out an option for providing the additional car parking by way of a decked car park on the Council's land adjoining Cookworthy Road car park. However, this had substantial cost implications for the Council and Members took the decision not to progress with this option. However, Members did support the principal of a supermarket at Cookworthy Road, and officers were asked to work with Bayview Estates to try and identify alternative car parking provision.
5. Following a review of potential alternative car parking sites, Bayview Estates have identified a parcel of land at Poplar Drive, which is close to the current provision. A provisional agreement has been reached by Bayview Estates for this land and for the freehold of the site to be transferred to SHDC once it has been prepared by Bayview Estates as a car park. The land would provide approximately 70 car parking spaces which it is anticipated would be used for long stay parking. It is shown hatched black on the plan attached at **Appendix 1**.

Financial Implications

6. The **Exempt Appendix 3** to this report sets out the financial details of this proposal.

Car Parking Issues

7. This proposal does offer the opportunity for the Council to secure much needed car parking provision in Kingsbridge which is otherwise at risk. It is possible that the supermarket car park, which will be limited to two hours and will be charged at similar rates to SHDC short stay car parks, may be reduce usage of Fore Street car park and thus lead to a reduction in Council revenue. The likelihood of this happening is very difficult to estimate.

Council Land Issues

8. As Members will recall, it has always been a strongly held view that any supermarket at this location could only be supported if there is a sufficiently strong link created to Fore Street to ensure a good pedestrian flow. Following detailed discussions between the Bayview Estates and officers from the Planning, Property, Business Development and Landscape and Leisure Services, a provisional plan has been agreed to achieve this.

9. The plan involves creating a physical link across land owned by the Council between Cookworthy Road and Fore Street Car Parks. This land is currently a steep bank which is a maintenance liability for the Council. It is therefore proposed that the freehold of the land in question is transferred to Bayview Estates or another organisation nominated by them for the purposes of creating the required linkages. These linkages are expected to involve both steps and a ramp, together with a seating area. The land in question is identified hatched black on the plan attached at **Appendix 2**. Whilst there is no direct payment proposed for this land, the transfer is related to the freehold ownership of the car park (see above) which will come into the ownership of the Council as part of the overall proposals.
10. As part of the linkage to Fore Street, Bayview will be required to enhance the pedestrian route through Fore Street car park and to improve the layout of the existing spaces and vehicular circulation. There is anticipated to be a loss of some spaces as a result of this arrangement. However, it is proposed that the existing public toilets at Fore Street car park are removed, which will enable additional car parking spaces to be created. Whilst, if this proposal approved, the toilets will not be directly replaced, it has been agreed with Bayview that public access will be provided to the toilets in the new supermarket. This will save the Council the cost of day to day cleaning, maintenance and utilities, together with the impending refurbishment of the existing toilets which would shortly have been required.

Planning Position

11. Bayview Estates currently have a planning application lodged with the Council which proposes a supermarket on Cookworthy Road car park and adjoining land owned by them. It includes the proposed new car park on the Poplar Drive site and also the works to create the linkages to Fore Street.
12. Clearly any view on this planning application is not a matter for Executive. However, it is important for Members to be aware that it does have a clear link to the land proposals set out in this report and importantly the replacement car parking arrangements are an integral part of the application.

Value for Money

13. The proposal set out in this report would require the Council to make a contribution from its capital resources. However, this would be balanced against an annual saving in respect of rent which is currently being paid for Cookworthy Road car park.
14. Additionally, the Council will then own the freehold of the new car park and will also save the costs of maintaining the public toilets and the area of land adjacent to Cookworthy Road car park.

Strategic Risk Assessment

	Risk	Action to Mitigate
1	Significant investment of resources in this scheme limits what can be delivered elsewhere	Savings on the current annual costs of Cookworthy Road car park mean that it will be possible to cover loss of interest <u>and</u> provide for repayment of the capital investment over time
2	Bayview decide to promote an alternative use for the site that is more detrimental to the town	The Council will have a requirement in the legal arrangements that Bayview Estates can only use the land transferred by the Council to support a supermarket development on the site
3	Bayview decide to serve notice on the Council to vacate Cookworthy Road car park	Whilst this would be unhelpful, the Council has already made provisions for additional parking spaces at the Cattle Market. The financial impact will be minimised when all issues are taken into account
4	The proposals contravene Human Rights Act provisions	There are not believed to be any Human Rights related issues in connection with these proposals

Conclusion

15. This report sets out an opportunity for the Council to support the establishment of a quality supermarket in Kingsbridge. Whilst this will involve a financial investment by the Council, this will be balanced by savings associated with moving from a rented car park site to one in the Council's freehold ownership.

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Executive
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