
BACK LANE CAR PARK, ROCHFORD – ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEW ENTRANCE FROM LOCKS HILL

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' approval to funding arrangements for works to complete the construction of the proposed new entrance to Back Lane Car Park from Locks Hill.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members will recall agreeing to arrangements for a new access to Back Lane Car Park from Locks Hill. Essex County Council agreed to fund the works to accommodate the new access. These works have now been completed. However, in order to bring the new access into operation, some internal works within the car park were required. A sum of £100,000 was identified through the County Local Transport Plan (LTP) for improvements to traffic management in Rochford Town Centre. As Members will recall, a decision was taken to divert £85,000 to the town centre works in Hockley and Hullbridge, leaving £15,000 to complete the construction of the new Locks Hill entrance.
- 2.2 It was therefore thought that the majority of the costs would be met by Essex County Council. However, they were only able to finance works in the highway and not within the area of the pay and display car park.

3 PROPOSED WORKS AND COSTS

- 3.1 The works required to bring the new access into operation are as follows:
- Install single direction plates at the new entrance and at the Back Lane exit
 - Install bollards at the new entrance and at Back Lane
 - lining and other minor accommodation works
- 3.2 The aim of the scheme is to construct a new entrance at Locks Hill and to reserve the existing entrance/exit at Back Lane for an exit only, thus relieving the Back Lane/West Street junction from a significant number of two way vehicle movements. Works are required at both the new entrance and the existing entrance/exit to create one-way flow.
- 3.3 It was concluded that the simplest method of preventing vehicles from using the new entrance as an exit would be the installation of one-way plates in the car park surface and to reinforce the one-way flow to do the same at the Back Lane exit.

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- 3.4 An estimate for completing the works was prepared and it seemed that they could be undertaken from the car park maintenance budget, which is available to undertake repairs and improvements works within the car parks.
- 3.5 As explained above, works are actually required to both the new entrance and the existing entrance/exit to ensure that the traffic flow is regulated and therefore the cost for the scheme will be higher.
- 3.6 The estimates returned from approved contractors have now been received and are in excess of the sum originally considered for the single entrance. The lowest estimate received was £14,800.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 There is no doubt that the revised access/exit to Back Lane Car Park will:
- improve traffic conflicts at the Back Lane/West Street junction – at the moment, the narrow width of Back Lane at its southern end, and the form of the junction cause significant difficulties and conflicts for traffic entering and departing the car park
 - improve traffic circulation around the town centre, by removing traffic from West Street that intends to use the car park
- 4.2 However, in order to ensure that maximum benefit can be gained from the revised arrangements, it is essential that a one-way flow is established, and a physical barrier is therefore required to prevent vehicles from travelling in the opposite direction. In addition, the legal arrangements with the owner of the Locks Hill estate included an agreement that when opened, Locks Hill would be an entrance only to the car park.
- 4.3 Whilst part of the cost of the required works can be funded from the car park maintenance budget, this will leave little leeway for other maintenance/improvement works required in the current financial year. If Members are happy to fund the works in this way, then the aim would be to keep maintenance works to a minimum, though if, for example, the winter weather proved to be particularly poor, there may be a requirement to seek a minor adjustment to the capital programme.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The new Locks Hill entrance to Back Lane Car Park will have significant positive benefits for traffic movements in the town centre, but maximum benefit can only be gained from changing the existing entrance/exit to an exit only.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The lowest tender for carrying out the works listed in the report is £14,800. It is likely that the works will be part funded from the car parks maintenance budget and part funded from the capital programme.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the works to implement the new Locks Hill entrance to Back Lane Car Park be funded as outlined in the report and the actual financing reported to Members as part of the budget process.

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Background Papers: None

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