

DISPOSAL OF OLD SHIP LANE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND CAR PARK – FURTHER ISSUES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 A report was submitted to Policy & Finance Committee on 8 April 2003, in which proposals were made in relation to the closure of Old Ship Lane public convenience and disposal of the site, including the car park. Minute 182/03 is attached to this report as Appendix A.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 There had been little public response when the Old Ship Lane public convenience has been closed for periods of time, following vandalism. However, in response to the report on 8 April 2003, two petitions have been received with 1080 signatures opposing closure of the car park and the loss of the car parking space in Old Ship Lane (see attached letter, Appendix B). Subsequently, a further 100 signatories to these petitions has been received. Objections have also been received from Rochford Parish Council, the District Chamber of Trade and Commerce and Rochford Hundred Amenities Society. Copy letters attached as Appendix C.
- 2.2 This report also advises Members of the options in relation to either the disposal of the site or the potential use of the site for car parking. A plan of Old Ship Lane car park is included as Appendix D.

3 POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND CAR PARK SITE

- 3.1 The potential for the site of the public convenience and the adjacent eight space public car park would provide a viable redevelopment site for residential / commercial use, which would have a reasonable value.
- 3.2 An initial feasibility study has been carried out and the site has potential for development of either three houses or up to six flats, or as a small retail outlet with accommodation or offices over. This has been verified with Planning Services, and such a development would help contribute to the provision of new housing in the District on a Brownfield site.
- 3.3 As indicated in the previous report, an alternative option for the car park could be to either sell to the Public House or to the Doctors Surgery if they were interested. This could provide for additional car

parking space for these, although this would provide little in the way of a Capital receipt for the District Council. However, no expressions of interest have been received from either party to date.

- 3.4 The site could also be retained for public parking, details for which are given below.

4 OPTION FOR RETAINING A CAR PARK

- 4.1 The previous report indicated that the car park contains eight parking bays, one of which is a disabled bay. The car park is well used but is not a pay and display car park and so generates little revenue. Should demolition of the public convenience be the chosen option, the site could provide two additional parking spaces.
- 4.2 Current management of this car park requires patrol officers to regularly visit, note the location of the vehicles and check whether they are still in the same position after more than one hour. In financial terms, this is not a cost effective use of the patrol officer's time.
- 4.3 Better management of this car park would be through the installation of a pay and display machine, although the pay back period on the cost of purchase and installation would be approximately one year.
- 4.4 Back Lane Car Park has 182 spaces and has sufficient capacity to absorb any small increase in vehicles on all days, except on a Tuesday morning, when the market is in the Square. A count of available spaces has been taken by the Transportation Section and is included in the table below.

| Back Lane – No. of Available Spaces | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 10.00am | 11.00am | 12.00pm | 1.00pm | 2.00pm | 3.00pm | 4.00pm |
| Tuesday - 06/05/03 | 1 | 8 | 16 | 31 | 41 | 69 | 70 |
| Tuesday – 13/05/03 | 2 | 5 | 17 | 28 | 70 | 78 | 89 |
| Tuesday – 20/05/03 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 26 | 54 | 66 | 93 |

- 4.5 If the Council were to dispose of the Old Ship Lane car park, then an additional disabled bay would need to be located either on the public highway or in Back Lane Car Park, to replace the lost disabled bay in Old Ship Lane.

- 4.6 The petition seeks to retain the existing car park, in order to meet demand for parking adjacent to the shops in North Street and to Raphael House in Old Ship Lane.
- 4.7 If there is an identified need for short term parking to allow for passing trade to the shops and businesses in North Street, the solution probably rests with better management of the existing on-street parking, to ensure that long term parking does not take place in areas where the demand is for passing trade to the shops. The opportunity to provide this better management of on-street parking arises with decriminalisation of on street parking, with Rochford District Council taking on the management of this from October 2004.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Old Ship Lane public convenience has frequently been vandalised in recent years. The public convenience is currently closed and boarded up to provide security to the building. Should the site remain as a car park, the opportunity for nuisance and vandalism could remain although there are no reports of vandalism to vehicles in this car park. Management of this area needs to be considered if the car park is to be retained as a key feature of the town centre area.
- 5.2 A potential development of either residential or commercial use could present the opportunity to provide improved passive surveillance of the area.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This small site within the Rochford Town Centre could provide an opportunity for a development which would positively impact on the environment in Old Ship Lane.
- 6.2 Should the site be retained and enlarged as a car park in total, then there will also be the need to consider how to improve the environment of this area.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Funding has already been agreed for the refurbishment of the five public conveniences at £100,000 Capital and Revenue in 2003/4 and £50,000 Capital in 2004/5. An increased budget has also been agreed for an improved cleaning regime. However, disposal of this site could provide resources to fund the public convenience refurbishment

programme and support the additional cleaning regime for a period of up to two years.

- 7.2 Demolition of the public conveniences and reinstatement of the site for car parking would cost in the region of £7,000 + £2,500 for a new pay and display machine. This cost would arise if the site were retained for parking, but could be offset against a receipt if disposal is the chosen option. The value of this site would be dependent on the outcome of an initial planning application and at this stage it would be considered to be in excess of the £50,000 stated in the previous report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Provision of public conveniences is not a statutory obligation and there is alternative provision in Back Lane, Rochford, which was fully refurbished in 2001.

9 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Rochford Parish Council has objected to the disposal of the car park at this site. A letter dated 17 April 2003 objecting to the loss of the car parking is attached – included in Appendix B.

10 RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to recommend

- (1) Whether Old Ship Lane Public Convenience and Car Park be disposed of through local agents at market value and on such other terms and conditions as the Head of Legal Services considers appropriate.

Or

- (2) Whether Old Ship Lane Public Convenience be demolished and redeveloped for car parking purposes to provide a total of approximately 10 spaces to the rear of the Old Ship public house.

Roger Crofts
Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

None.

For further information please contact David Timson on:-

Tel:- 01702 318110
E-Mail:- david.timson@rochford.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

**182 DISPOSAL OF OLD SHIP LANE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND
CAR PARK**

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) inviting Members to agree the disposal of the Old Ship Lane Public Conveniences and Car Park.

During debate concern was raised that this proposal would lead to the loss of more car parking spaces in the centre of Rochford following on from the regeneration of the Market Square which had already resulted in a loss of car parking spaces. Thames Gateway was seeking to promote Rochford as a centre for arts, which could generate more demand for parking facilities.

Reference was also made to the need to retain a disabled parking space in Old Ship Lane for those attending chiropody and hearing clinics at Raphael House.

While there was some support for the possibility of demolishing the public conveniences in Old Ship Lane and using the whole site as a pay and display car park Officers confirmed that it would not be financially viable to install and maintain a machine for approximately 8 car parking spaces.

A motion moved by Cllr C R Morgan and seconded by Cllr C J Lumley that the public convenience in Old Ship Lane be demolished and the resulting area used for additional car parking spaces was lost on a show of hands.

Responding to a Member enquiry about whether the value of the land would be enhanced should outline planning permission be already available for residential development of the site, Officers confirmed that the valuation obtained for the site had been an informal one, given the unusual nature of the site.

Resolved

- (1) That outline planning consent be sought for change of use of the Old Ship Lane public convenience and car park site to residential.
- (2) That, subject to the outcome of (1) above, the Old Ship Lane public convenience and car park site be disposed of through local agents at market value and on such other terms and conditions as the Head of Legal Services considers appropriate.

Concluding the debate it was perceived that there would be some merit in giving careful consideration to all possible uses for the site.

On a motion moved by Cllr C R Morgan and seconded by Cllr C J Lumley it was further:-

Resolved

- (3) That (1) and (2) above be subject to further consideration of all possibilities for the site by the Finance and Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee. (CD(F&ES))

Appendix B

25-27 North Street
Rochford
Essex
SS4 1AB

6th June 2003

Ms. M. Martin,
Committee Clerk,
Committee Section,
Rochford District Council,
South Street, Rochford,
Essex. SS4 1BW.

Re. Possible disposal of Car Park located in Old Ship Lane for Residential use

Please find enclosed two petitions from business's, shops, residents, shoppers and other visitors of Rochford Town centre.

In recent weeks most of the shop-keepers and business's in Rochford have been displaying petitions, one organised by myself, and a second by another shop-keeper in North Street who has used slightly different wording. Together these petitions contain 1,080 signatures of people who are extremely upset and strongly oppose the possible loss of these parking spaces.

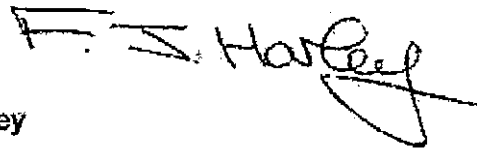
The recent regeneration of Rochford Market Square has already meant the loss of 11 valuable parking spaces, a loss which has had a detrimental effect on the viability of business's in the Town Centre and surrounding area. Now the Council are proposing the loss of a further eight spaces in a small, but well used car park in the heart of Rochford. One of these bays is for disabled use. This bay in particular is in great demand for those shopping in North Street and for those who wish to access Raphael House, a medical facility also located in Old Ship Lane.

Our main car park in Back Lane is also well used and on Market Day filled to capacity. Car parking is barely sufficient for our present needs and often shoppers from outlying districts are taking their business elsewhere as they cannot find parking space within Rochford Town.

Once car-parking spaces are lost, they will not return. If we are to see Rochford prosper we must look to the future. We need more spaces not less especially as I understand, from reading articles in the local press, that the Thames Gateway Plan wishes to promote Rochford as an Arts and Crafts Centre. If this is so, where will our visitors park?

In view of the immediate and long-term effects the loss of parking spaces will have on Rochford Town, I do ask that you give this matter full and careful consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F.J. Harley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr. F.J. Harley

Appendix C

ROCHFORD & DISTRICT
CHAMBER OF TRADE & COMMERCE

Chairman - Humphrey Sytler

5 May 2003

Mr. S. Scrutton
Director of Planning Services
Rochford District Council
South Street
Rochford

Dear Shaun

Rochford Town Centre and Supermarket Site

At our Chamber meeting with you recently when we discussed in some detail the Supermarket proposals on the North Street / Bengallow site, you asked that we send you our "wish list" of benefits and facilities that should be incorporated in the negotiations between the tenderers and Essex CC, Wimpys and the District Council. We also asked that you let us know whether you agree to these points and also if you have additional matters from the RDC's perspective for us to support as appropriate.

1. Creating space by Andrews Taxi or within the supermarket site for 6 - 8 taxis. This would then take the pressure off the 5 places in the Square. We suggest you reconsider the siting of the Disabled space in the Square to locate it in the south east corner where the larger taxis can unload on the passenger side.

2. Allowing for rear access to properties in North Street from the supermarket site, thus taking releasing kerb space in North Street which is probably to become subject to parking restrictions. In any case it will need to be regulated with the future construction traffic and later delivery vehicles.

3. Incorporate some form of pedestrian access from the Hospital to Union Lane for retail users. We see that all our efforts to ensure vehicular access have been fruitless, but we consider that pedestrian access for residents as well as hospital staff is vital for the success of the supermarket.

4. Pedestrian access from the north for residents of Daly's Road / Ashington Road direction should be incorporated.

John
OVER

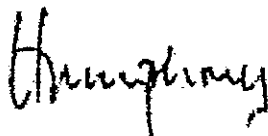
Little Duggons, Hyde Wood Lane, Chawdon, Rochford, Essex SS4 3RR
Tel: Office 01702 344132, Home: 01702 258049, Mobile: 01776 860363
Fax: 01702 341727 e-mail: humphrey.sytler@aol.com

5. Sufficient car parking so that vital short term spaces in the Square are not lost to the Supermarket.

6. High standard of architectural and landscape design to create a flagship development, ie. Avoid urban cramming.

Furthermore, we hear that there is a proposal from the RDC to demolish the Old Ship Lane Public Conveniences and to build houses on the whole car park site. We would strongly object to this proposal, as it runs contrary to all the objectives to bring regeneration and economic activity into Rochford. That small carpark is ideal for those coming from the Stanbridge direction and thereby reduces congestion by not needing to park in Bank Lane or the Square. Could you please register our preliminary views with the Chairman of the respective Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Copy to Cllr. Mrs. J. Chapman
Cllr. Mr. R. Pearson
Cllr. Mr. M. Clarke



ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Rooms
West Street
Rochford
Essex SS4 1AS

Telephone/Fax: 01702 540722
Email: rochford.parish@btinternet.com

Clerk to the Council: Mrs. J. V. Rigby Cert. HE Local Policy

17 April 2003

Our ref: jvr/general/160403

Mr. R. Crofts
Rochford District Council
Council Offices
South Street,
Rochford
Essex SS4 1BW

| FINANCE | | |
|-------------|------|-----|
| 22 APR 2003 | | |
| CD(F) | UES | HRE |
| HAS | HITS | PA |

Dear Mr. Crofts,

Toilets, Old Ship Lane, Rochford

I have been requested by my Parish Council to write to you regarding the proposals for the sale of the above site, and the car parking area.

Whilst members did not comment on the original proposal to demolish the toilet, they are extremely concerned about the inclusion of the car park area in the proposals for the sale of this site, which was not mentioned when they were initially consulted.

The loss of this valuable car park will have a severe detrimental effect on the general parking situation in Rochford, particular as this will also result in the loss of another disabled parking bay. Additionally, there is the question of the parking requirements of visitors (including the elderly and infirm) to Raphael House when this re-development is completed.

Rochford Parish Council trust that this letter is brought to the attention of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the matter is discussed.

Yours sincerely,

Janice V. Rigby
Clerk to the Council

Roger Crofts
Rochford Hundred Amenities Society

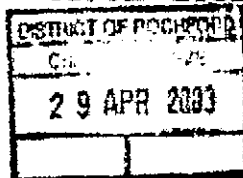
Registered Charity No. 295697

Chairman:
Jeremy Squier,
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Hon. Secretary:
Mary Tanqueray,
The Hollies,
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cc Councillor P. Webster



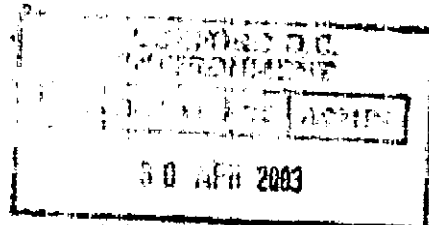
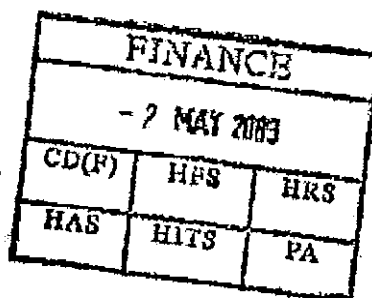
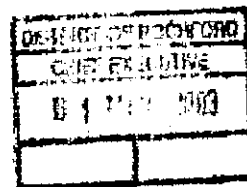
26th April 2003

Dear Mr Croft,

Reports have appeared in the press suggesting that Rochford Council is contemplating the sale of land including car parking spaces in Old Ship Lane. If this is the case, this Society feels that such a loss would be much to the detriment of this town and its people, especially at a time when growth and regeneration should be prime objectives.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Tanqueray (Mrs)
Secretary



Appendix D

