

WEBSTERS WAY CAR PARK – REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS – ADDITIONAL CONSULTATIONS (MIN 118/02)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of additional consultations carried out in respect of the redevelopment options identified for Websters Way Car Park.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At a meeting of Full Council on 25 April 2002, Members received a detailed presentation from the Council's consultants, GL Hearn, in respect of possible redevelopment options for Websters Way Car Park.
- 2.2 Members concluded that prior to reaching any decision the Town Council, Chamber of Trade and County Highways department should be given the opportunity to comment on the consultant's report.

3 REVIEW OF RESPONSES

County Highways

- 3.1 The key concerns raised by County Highways are as follows:
- ability of the road network to cope with any increase in traffic
 - accesses to the site will create a road safety hazard and a point of conflict
 - the inclusion of any free car parking
 - the location of disabled parking to serve the doctor's surgery
 - drive through restaurants can result in anti-social behaviour problems
- 3.2 In raising issues of concern about the options, County Highways point out that a detailed Transport Assessment would be required.

Rayleigh Town Council

- 3.3 In their response, the Town Council has indicated their unanimous opposition to any scheme of redevelopment, but support environmental improvements to Websters Way.
- 3.4 The Council's reasons for opposing redevelopment are:
- impact on existing commercial premises

- negative impact on the attractiveness of the town centre
 - increased traffic congestion
 - high rise residential inappropriate
 - trade for existing fast food outlets would decline
- 3.5 In addition to views on the commercial impact of a redevelopment scheme on the High Street, the Town Council also point out that no clear indication had been provided about the arrangements for car parking whilst works are carried out. The King George V Field would be unlikely to be available for this purpose.

Chamber of Trade

- 3.6 The Chamber is not opposed to the redevelopment of the car park provided this is in character with the town centre and that it be a mixed development scheme which would be beneficial to residents, shoppers and existing traders.
- 3.7 However, in supporting the principle of a redevelopment scheme for the car park, the Chamber considers that the three options as presented, are somewhat restrictive and may have limited long-term benefits for the town.
- 3.8 As an alternative, the Chamber suggests there is merit in examining a scheme proposed by a consortium led by the Rona Partnership. This scheme takes into account some additional land at the Southern end of the car park and would include a multi-storey car park, a medium sized retail food outlet, penthouse flats, restaurant, offices, doctor's surgery/clinic, function rooms and lock-up shops.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 From the summary of the responses, it is apparent that the Chamber of Trade and the Town Council have opposing views on the value of a redevelopment scheme for the car park.
- 4.2 The views expressed by the Town Council include concerns about the impact a redevelopment scheme would have on traffic in the town centre. These are concerns raised by the County Highways department, though it must be borne in mind that the Highways department is, at this stage, doing nothing more than highlighting the issues that would need to be examined in more detail through a Transport Assessment.
- 4.3 The alternative scheme promoted by the Chamber may merit some further examination, but this is a proposal that has been looked at previously by the Council prior to the appointment of

consultants. The much more extensive mix of uses proposed does not seem to reflect the findings of the Council's consultants, albeit that additional land might be added to increase the size of the scheme.

- 4.4 There is clearly no consensus emerging from the consultation responses and Members will need to consider whether there is merit in undertaking a more extensive public consultation on redevelopment options for the site at this time.

5 RECOMMENDED

It is proposed that Members consider the consultation responses and determine whether to carry out further work on a redevelopment scheme for the Websters Way Car Park, including a public consultation exercise. (HPS)

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Background Papers:

Letters from Rayleigh Town Council, Rayleigh Chamber of Trade and Essex County Highways.

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