

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28 March 2017



<b>Title</b>	Parking in Ashford		
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note		
<b>Report Author</b>	Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services		
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Nick Gething	<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Financial Sustainability		
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>To note the actions taken by officers to address residents' concerns re parking in Ashford town Centre</b>		
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>		

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 Ashford multi storey car park is a Council managed car park situated in the town centre. The car park is at no point in time used to its full capacity and has been falling into disrepair for a number of years, the upper floors have gradually been closed off for safety reasons. The decline is now to such an extent that repairs are no longer viable and the only future option is to demolish.
- 1.2 A parking survey for Ashford was completed in August 2015 which highlighted the sensitivity around the level of car parking within Ashford town Centre and the potential impact on retailers, and also residents in surrounding roads who may suffer as a result of displaced parking.
- 1.3 The disposal of Ashford multi storey car park was agreed by Cabinet in September 2016 and the sale is currently under negotiation. The disposal of this site will generate a significant capital receipt for the Council which will assist in delivering one of the three main strands of the Council's "Towards a sustainable future" programme.
- 1.4 In September 2016 Cabinet agreed that a proportion of the funding from the disposal of the car park would be set aside to improve the parking situation in Ashford, in recognition of the significant level of local concern from residents.
- 1.5 Before any improvements are considered, consultation will be carried out with businesses, visitors and residents to establish the best use of this potential funding. There may also be the opportunity to use the funding in conjunction with other funding streams that may be forthcoming from other sources such as Surrey County Council.

### **Private car parks in Ashford**

- 1.6 There are 2 private pay and display car parks in Ashford, the first by the railway station which is managed by South West trains and the second behind Ashford Antiques in Church Road.
- 1.7 The Council and councillors have been contacted by users of this car park raising concerns about the way in which this car park is being managed and run.
- 1.8 As this is a private car park and subject to different regulations to Council managed car parks the Council has no powers to intervene.
- 1.9 A number of representations have been passed to the Council from unhappy customers of the car park. On reading these statements it appears that the majority of these customers have been issued penalty charge notices due to arriving in this Pay & Display car park without the correct change and parking their car without purchasing a parking ticket as soon as they have parked. On leaving the car park to obtain some cash, the customers have been issued with a parking ticket. This is not an illegal practice on the part of the private operator but can be challenged with the appropriate parking authority if the customer feels a ticket has been unfairly issued.
- 1.10 Spelthorne officers have contacted trading standards and they confirmed that the company who operate this car park are a member of the Trade Body - BPA (British Parking Association) who have their own Ombudsman services [Parking On Private Land Appeals \(POPLA\)](#) so if a complainant has been through the company's own complaints procedure, the complainant if still unhappy, can ask for the Ombudsman to adjudicate on the complaint and this saves either party having to take the matter to court
- 1.11 Spelthorne is currently conversing with the owner of the site to establish if there are any future options for the Council to be involved with this site.

## **2. Options analysis and proposal**

- 2.1 There are currently no options or proposals as Cabinet have already made the relevant decisions.

## **3. Financial implications**

- 3.1 The disposal of Ashford multi storey car park will result in a loss of income from parking fees but will also generate a large capital sum which can be invested and will generate its own income stream.
- 3.2 A capital sum would also be provided from the disposal of the car park to be reinvested into a car parking scheme in Ashford.

## **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1 Spelthorne Council recognises parking as an economic development tool, and the importance of the businesses in Ashford town Centre both large and small are key to the local environment. They are critical drivers for accelerating job growth, residential development and cultural amenities and where possible we need to ensure that parking provision is available to all and at a reasonable rate.

### **Background papers:**

**Appendices: There are none**