

## **RYECROFT CAR PARK (ADJACENT TO FORMER SAINSBURY'S)**

**Submitted by:**            **Engineering Manager – Graham Williams**

**Portfolio:**                **Environment and Recycling / Regeneration & Planning**

**Ward(s) affected:**      **Newcastle Town**

### **Purpose of the Report**

To seek authority to introduce an off street parking order, to enable the Ryecroft Car Park to be used as a public car park.

### **Recommendations**

- (a) That Members approve the introduction of an off-street parking order on the Ryecroft Car Park.**
- (b) The charges be approved as set out in the report.**
- (c) That the portfolio holder be authorised to confirm the order in due course.**

### **Reasons**

To enable the Ryecroft Car Park to be opened to members of the public as part of the wider car parking provision which supports the town centre economy.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the former Sainsbury's site has been acquired jointly by Newcastle Borough Council (NBC) and Staffordshire County Council (SCC) with a view to enabling a comprehensive retail-led redevelopment in this part of the town centre. Members will also be aware that during the period between the store closing and the acquisition (November 2010 to August 2011) the car park has been privately operated as a public car park.
- 1.2 As part of the business case for the site acquisition it was indicated that interim uses would be sought to both promote economic activity in this part of the town centre and to help defray the 'holding costs' of the premises. Subject to the precise nature of any letting of the building, the interim use of the former Sainsbury's car park as a public car park had been envisaged.
- 1.3 Once the Councils became jointly responsible for the premises the immediate task was to review the condition of the premises along with other immediate site management responsibilities. Given that the Councils did not have the necessary statutory order to operate the site as a public car park, coupled with certain health and safety issues, the car park was closed immediately and the site secured with temporary fencing to prevent trespass.
- 1.4 Representations have been received from some local businesses about the reduction in footfall at this end of the town centre since the car park's closure.

## 2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Further to the above information it is proposed to operate the surface and ground floor level of the multi-storey building as a public car park, at least in part and subject to the terms of any letting of the former Sainsbury's building and/or Civic Offices.
- 2.2 In order to operate a public car park from the site it is necessary to introduce an off-street parking order which, in turn, will enable appropriate traffic management to be undertaken.
- 2.3 Since the intention is for this car park to become pay and display, and as it is situated within the town centre ring road, it is proposed that the charges are consistent with the Midway Car Park, as set out in the table below:

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Charge £</b>
0.5 hr	0.70
1 hr	1.10
2 hr	2.10
3 hr	3.20
4 hr	4.25

- 2.4 At this stage, given the plentiful availability of other town centre car parking and due to the condition of the multi-storey car park (MSCP) it is appropriate to restrict access to the ground floor levels only (since access to the two surface level car parks is gained via the multi-storey car park). For the sake of clarity your officers consider that, in view of the medium term aspirations of redeveloping the site (including demolition of the MSCP), any necessary repairs of the current structure to enable public use would not represent good value for money.
- 2.5 Finally, it is important to note that in order to provide a suitable and safe environment for prospective users of the car park, minor concrete and lighting repairs are required. Also ticket machines and the necessary signage will need to be installed.

## 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 To do nothing would not assist the existing local businesses with the loss of footfall in the area; neither would it help the Councils to defray some of their holding costs.
- 3.2 The option of "pay on foot/exit" has been considered, however the cost would not represent good value for money given that this proposal is an interim car parking solution. The additional costs of such an arrangement compared to "pay and display" arise from both the ticket machines (significantly more expensive) and the need for increased manning/supervision to deal with the typical problems associated with this form of parking (lost tickets/tokens, barrier faults, insufficient funds, etc).
- 3.3 To establish a "pay and display" car park consistent with the operation and management of the Council's other town centre car parks.

## 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 That Members approve the introduction of an off-street parking order on the Ryecroft Car Park.

- 4.2 The charges be approved as set out in the report.
- 4.3 That the portfolio holder be authorised to confirm the order in due course.
- 4.4 This proposal will require the installation of ticket machines and information signs and completion of necessary repairs to the car park.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 To assist the existing businesses in the area, by increasing the potential footfall.
- 5.2 To help defray the holding costs associated with the site, consistent with the business case for the acquisition.
- 5.3 To enable the car park to be available for public use as soon as practically possible, certainly in good time for the Christmas shopping period.
- 5.4 To provide the most cost-effective public car parking solution for the site in the short to medium term.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 These proposals are consistent with the objectives of the corporate priorities relating to the creation of a cleaner, safer and sustainable Borough and promoting a Borough of opportunity.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 To enable the Borough Council to operate a car park open to the public an off street parking order is required.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1 The estimated costs to bring the car park into use are:
- Off street parking order - £2000
  - Ticket machines & signage - £20000
  - Repairs - £8000
- 8.2 The capital costs and revenue costs for this scheme will be shared jointly by NBC and SCC in accordance with the joint venture agreement (in the ratio 25:75). Provision has been made in the appropriate budgets for these costs.

9. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 9.1 The car park lighting will be reduced outside normal operational hours.

10.1 Key decision information

- 10.1 This item is included in the forward plan.

11.1 **Previous Cabinet or Council Decisions**

Council 29 June 2011

Council 23 March 2011

Council 28 July 2010

All of the above reports relate to the principal decision to acquire the former Sainsbury's store.