

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Housing & Environmental Services Director

13 April 2006

LEASE OF CAR PARK OFF COLES LANE, LINTON

Purpose

1. To seek endorsement by Cabinet of the following decision made by the Housing Portfolio Holder on 8 March 2006:

“Subject to Cabinet approval, offer a long-term lease of the car park site off Coles Lane, Linton to Linton Parish Council at nominal rent, subject to the leaseholder being responsible for ongoing maintenance and payment of NNDR (rates).*”

*Note that a condition of the lease would be that the site remains in use as a free public car park.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	The car park is a valuable asset to the village centre.
	Sustainability	Imposing car parking charges would increase parking and congestion in village streets.
	Partnership	To work in partnership with the Parish Council

Background

3. The disposal of all the Council's public car parks is being put forward as part of the budget savings exercise following council tax capping.
4. The car park has 35 parking spaces (see location plan attached at **Appendix A**).
5. The Council has right of way over the access road owned by the Secretary of State for Social Services. Use and maintenance of the access is shared with the Health Centre who own the adjoining car park.
6. Interest in leasing the car park site has been received from Linton Parish Council.

Considerations

7. The car park is well used by local shoppers and business people and is a valuable asset to the village centre.
8. Planning confirmed that they would strongly oppose any change of use of this car park. An application for affordable housing on this site would not be encouraged.
9. Maintenance costs of the car park over the last 10 years and current National Non-Domestic Rates are shown at **Appendix B**.

10. A valuation of the car park site has been obtained from the District Valuer, based on a sale subject to a covenant restricting its future use to car parking only but not precluding the purchaser from charging for car parking use. The market value of the freehold interest with vacant possession has been assessed on this basis at £52,000. If a condition were imposed to preclude parking charges, the value of the site in its current use is nil.
11. There would be considerable opposition from local residents and problems arising if car parking charges were introduced, particularly in view of the fact that the Health Centre car park is free of charge. If parking charges were introduced, users would park in adjoining streets, causing congestion elsewhere in the village. Leasing the land to the Parish Council would ensure that the car park remains free of charge.
12. Leasing the site to the Parish Council would relieve the Council of future maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Options

13. To accept the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder as above.
14. To offer the land on the open market, subject to a covenant restricting its future use to car parking only, at £52,000 (not precluding a purchaser from imposing charges).
15. To retain the land in Council ownership.

Financial Implications

16. Leasing the site would save the Council future maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Legal Implications

17. None.

Staffing Implications

18. None.

Risk Management Implications

19. None.

Consultations

20. Shire Homes have been consulted and support the Portfolio Holder's decision.
21. Councillor Mrs Smith and Councillor Batchelor have been consulted and support the Portfolio Holder's decision.
22. Linton Health Centre has been consulted and supports the Parish Council in their decision.

Conclusions/Summary

23. The car park is well used and is a valuable asset to the village centre. Change of use of the site would not be favourable. If the site were sold on the open market and parking charges were introduced, users would park in adjoining streets, causing congestion elsewhere in the village. Leasing the land to the Parish Council would ensure that the car park remains free of charge. Although there would be no capital return through leasing the site at nominal rent, the Council would be relieved of future maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Recommendation

24. Cabinet is recommended to accept the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder as stated above.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. Linton car park: maintenance costs over last 10 years and current annual rate.

Contact Officer: Jenny Clark – Lands Officer
Telephone 01954 713336