

# Item 6

## REPORT TO AREA 2 FORUM

6<sup>th</sup> September 2005

## REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGY & REGENERATION

### **CHURCH LANE CAR PARK, FERRYHILL**

#### 1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 Sedgefield Borough Council is the owner of Church Lane car park, Ferryhill. For some time now, there has been concern at the lack of usage of the Church Lane car park, which, the consensus is that, it is linked to the congregation of young people and ongoing reports of anti social behaviour.

1.2 A number of potential solutions have been considered in the past, however, agreement about which option best addresses the problems without being detrimental to the amenity of local residents has been difficult to secure.

1.3 The Borough Council wishes to consider the options in conjunction with residents and interested parties, with a view to implementing an improvement scheme during 2005/6.

#### 2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 In light of the information provided, the Area forum is requested to indicate its preferred option to address the problems associated with the Church Lane car park.

#### 3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 Ferryhill Town Council has conducted a consultation exercise, with those residents surrounding the Church Lane car park in Ferryhill town centre, following complaints from residents regarding anti social behaviour and criminal damage to cars in that car park. Ferryhill Town Council subsequently requested that the Borough Council take action to improve the security of the car park in Ferryhill town centre accessed from Church Lane. The Borough Council conducted a survey of spaces available within the Market Place car park and found that although the car park was busy at various times of the day there were a few spaces available for use. A summary of the responses to the Town Council's survey is attached as Appendix 1, and the SBC survey details as Appendix 2.

3.2 This car park is currently underused. It is reported that residents and potential users fear that their vehicles will be stolen or damaged while

parked, even for a short time, in this car park. This places pressure on the Market Place car park in Ferryhill during the day. The Church Lane car park is reluctantly used on Fridays when the weekly market occupies the Market Place car park.

- 3.3 Complaints have been received by the Town Council from businesses and residents about perceived security/safety problems linked to youths congregating in the Church Lane car park. Businesses are also concerned that they are losing business because of the lack of usable parking spaces. The residents complain that town centre users park their vehicles in the residential areas if the Market Place car park is full rather than use the Church Lane car park.
- 3.5 A number of options have been discussed, however, there is currently no consensus over the way forward.

### 3.6 **OPTIONS**

- a. **Improve the lighting.** This option will discourage the use of the car park as a location for anti social behaviour by illuminating the activities of the youths congregating there. This does not increase natural surveillance but if used in conjunction with CCTV could improve conditions for residents.
- b. **Reduce height of wall and install railings.** To reduce the height and install railings to the top of the wall will allow for natural surveillance of the car park by local residents thereby discouraging use of the car park by youths. Most responses to the Town Council's survey state this is a good idea, although there is some concern by residents over the lack of police response to calls regarding anti social behaviour there.

Although professional thought there would be, residents did not report that the intrusion of light into their homes from car headlights would be a problem. This is yet to be tested.

There has been one response identifying the concern that youths currently sit on the car park wall and look into residents' homes. Installation of railings on a reduced wall would solve this problem.

The wall to the car park is a historic random rubble wall that leads to a listed building, St Luke's Church. Bearing in mind that the wall is historic and has been repaired in the past, it does not have any structural problems, the character of the wall has not been removed. The wall itself is not listed, however, if it is reduced in size this will mean that as a random rubble wall it will be more costly to do, requiring expertise.

- c. **Installation of a CCTV camera.** Most responses suggested that CCTV would be a popular option for residents viewing this as a panacea for the current problems being experienced. The cost of this option will include the installation of the equipment costs of monitoring and maintenance for which the Borough Council would be liable. This could mean this option is dependant on the Borough's ability to accept the ongoing maintenance costs.

The proximity of the CCTV camera to residential properties may contravene privacy legislation. This would need to be investigated.

- d. **Do nothing.** In light of the ongoing concerns from residents and other local people it appears that there is a desire to see some form of improvement, and reduction in anti social behaviour. As such the views of participants at the Area Forum will determine whether or not 'To Do Nothing' is a practicable option.

**4.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Regeneration Services Capital Programme budget allows spend up to a maximum of £20,000.

4.2 Table 1 Options and associated approximate costings.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
a) Improve the lighting	£5,000
b) Reduce the height of the wall and add railings	£10,000
c) Install CCTV ( <b>NB</b> future maintenance costs are not included)	£18,000
d) Do Nothing ( <b>NB</b> future maintenance costs are not included)	£00.00

**5.0 CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 Consultation has taken place with: residents, Ferryhill Town Council (results attached as Appendix 2), the Area 2 Forum, the Strategy and Regeneration Capital Programme Working Group. Once a decision has been made by the Area 2 Forum residents will be advised of the proposals and timescales for work to commence.

**6.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The likely timescale for these works to be completed will be March 2006 as considerations must include planning, and tendering processes.

6.2 Each of the above options on their own are likely to improve the quality of life of local residents who are currently suffering from the anti social behaviour of the youths congregating in the car park thereby reducing crime in that locality.

**7.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The chosen option and associated works as part of the Strategy and Regeneration Services Capital Programme will be subject to the normal Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements.

**8.0 LIST OF APPENDICES**

8.1 Appendix 1 Summary of responses from residents conducted by Ferryhill Town Council.

8.2 Appendix 2 Summary of survey conducted by Sedgefield Borough Council on the use of the Market Place Car Park.

8.3 Appendix 3 Consultation responses from other stakeholders conducted by Ferryhill Town Council.

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**Contact Officer** Graham Wood Strategy and Regeneration  
Manager  
**Telephone Number** 01388 816166 Ext. 4205  
**E-mail address** [gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Wards:** Ferryhill

**Key Decision Validation:** this is not a key decision

**Background Papers:**

**Examination by Statutory Officers**

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>