

SEVENOAKS TOWN CENTRE PARKING REVIEW

Cabinet **6 March 2014**

Report of Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services

Status: For Decision

Also to be considered by: Economic and Community Development Advisory Committee –
26 February 2014

Council 1 April 2014

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: In Autumn 2013 Members requested Officers to give consideration to providing additional parking provision in Sevenoaks Town Centre. This report details a proposal to provide additional parking capacity in Sevenoaks Town by ‘decking’ the existing Council owned Buckhurst 2 and/or the Suffolk Way car parks.

It details a review of current parking provision and the results and conclusions from a parking survey undertaken by an independent company in November 2013.

It provides details of estimated construction costs for various options for these two car parks and the existing planning policies and scope for both sites.

The report provides a breakdown of estimated costs per option and the likely estimate of additional income generated. It also provides options for funding the project.

The report also identifies opportunities for increasing parking in the areas near the railway station by ‘decking’ the existing Council owned Bradbourne car park.

This report supports the Key Aims of a dynamic and sustainable economy; effective management of Council resources and assisting with the aim of greater financial self sufficiency.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Roderick Hogarth

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Recommendation to Cabinet: That

- (1) a planning application be submitted to provide an additional 300 car park spaces on the existing Buckhurst 2 car park by providing a two storey elevated car deck.
- (2) it be recommended to full Council that:-
 - (a) subject to planning consent, to undertake a Procurement exercise for the project and subject to the successful tender being within the estimated costs as outlined in this report, to award a contract to design and build the elevated car park decks on the existing Buckhurst 2 car park.
 - (b) a budget of £3.5-£4.0 million be approved to be financed by borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board.
 - (c) that delegated authority be granted to the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Resources and Economic and Community Development to, after consideration of the tender evaluation, accept the most economically advantageous tender, to award the contract and authorise expenditure and approvals within the estimated costs outlined in this report and the borrowing approval.
 - (d) that a planning application be submitted for the decking of the existing Bradbourne car park to increase parking capacity in the area adjacent to the railway station.
 - (e) a planning application be submitted to provide additional parking spaces in the existing Suffolk Way car park by providing either a one or two storey elevated car deck, to allow for longer term provision of additional short stay parking capacity.

Reason for recommendation: To provide essential additional car park capacity in Sevenoaks as evidenced by the parking survey report and demonstrated by current demands on existing parking provision.

Introduction and Background

1. In Autumn 2013 Members requested Officers to investigate the provision of additional parking capacity in the Sevenoaks Town Centre and adjacent to the railway station.
2. It was evident from demonstrated demand levels and from existing in-house usage surveys that capacity, particularly for long stay parking, was at a critical usage level in Sevenoaks Town Centre.
3. Accordingly, an independent survey was commissioned in November 2013 that has provided an evidence based report on the current usage levels and the need for providing additional capacity.

4. Leading on from this report a technical feasibility study was commissioned to determine how and where this identified additional capacity, could be best provided within the constraints of existing town parking demands.
5. The estimated costs of providing this additional capacity, on two Council owned sites, Buckhurst 2 and Suffolk Way have been identified.
6. The existing planning policies relating to these sites has been considered.
7. Finally, the financial implications have been considered regarding the potential cost of a scheme; the likely additional annual income this could generate and the options for funding.
8. Consideration has also been given to increasing parking capacity on the existing Council owned car parks adjacent to the railway station.

Review of Current Parking Provision – Sevenoaks Town Centre

9. The following relates to the parking stock in the town centre and to the assessment of parking demand, and comprises the following sections:

Current Parking Stock

The Blighs Development

Current Parking Situation

Parking Survey

Parking Survey Results and conclusions

Current Parking Stock – Car Parks

10. The parking stock in the town centre reduced slightly with the commencement of the Marks and Spencer development in London Road. The “old” section of the Blighs car park comprising 49 public short stay spaces and 17 private spaces was lost to the development, along with 5 spaces forming part of the main Blighs car park. Hence, in total 54 public pay and display (p&d) spaces were lost.
11. The residential part of the development will also lead to the loss of the Pembroke Road car park. To date, as at the end of January 2014, 23 spaces have so far been taken by the development. It is expected that the remaining 31 spaces will be lost in the next couple of months.
12. Certain car parks in the town centre are only available on certain days. This means that the total number of spaces available fluctuates depending upon the day of the week. It is important that this is taken into account in reviewing the ability of the parking stock to meet parking demands. The split between long stay and short stay provision also needs to be reflected in how well the parking stock can meet different parking needs.
13. In assessing the availability of parking in the town centre, certain assumptions need to be made and relevant factors concerning parking use need to be taken into account. The following car park summary information should be noted:

- The Blighs car park (168 p&d spaces; 7 disabled spaces; short stay parking up to 3 hours) is the most centrally located car park in the town centre and proves to be very popular. As a result of this, and to help manage parking provision and the turnover of spaces, the tariff structure is higher here than in the other town centre car parks.
- The Buckhurst 1 car park (37 p&d spaces; 3 disabled spaces; short stay parking up to 4 hours) is not available on Wednesdays when the market is held.
- The Buckhurst 2 car park (291 p&d spaces; no disabled spaces; long and short stay parking) has been joint long stay and short stay use Monday to Saturday. However, at the time of preparing this report, a proposal to ease the long stay parking situation by removing short stay use from the Buckhurst 2 car park during the working week, has been approved by the Council's Portfolio Holder. The change is due to be implemented in the next few weeks. However, in practice the car park has been predominantly used as long stay during the working week and, hence, it has been specified as such for the purposes of this assessment. In respect to Saturdays, although it is available for short stay use, its location away from the town centre tends to render it less well used in preference of the other town centre car parks apart, perhaps, from use by visitors to the leisure centre and, therefore, for the purposes of this assessment it is considered as also being long stay on Saturdays.
- The South Park car park (138 p&d spaces; 7 disabled spaces; short stay parking up to 4 hours) is available as short stay but it also contains a number of business season tickets (32 number) and resident permit holders (7 number). The arrangement is historic and has continued for many years, but more recently as a temporary measure to help ease pressures on long stay parking, a small number of season ticket holders were transferred from the Buckhurst 2 car park. This long stay element in the south Park car park therefore needs to be included in the assessment of long stay parking in the town centre.
- The Suffolk Way car park (212 p&d spaces; 9 disabled spaces; short stay parking up to 4 hours) includes the parking spaces at the Sevenoaks leisure centre as these are publicly available (the higher and lower level areas immediately adjacent the leisure centre – 43 p&d spaces; 4 disabled) which are managed by Sencio Community Leisure.
- The Pembroke Road car park (currently reduced to 33 p&d spaces; no disabled spaces) operates as long stay only Monday to Friday and on Saturdays changes to short stay only.
- The Council office car park (140 spaces – excluding the front visitor car park) is available for public use, free-of-charge, on Saturdays only. It can be used for either short stay or long stay parking. However, the car park has been considered to be short stay for the purposes of this assessment.
- Marks and Spencer: the car park (79 p&d spaces; 2 disabled spaces) being provided as part of the Marks and Spencer development are excluded from this assessment on the basis that they provide parking facilities to meet the 40% new trips likely to be generated by the store as stated in the Planning Application assessment.
- Waitrose: whilst it is acknowledged that the parking facilities (152 p&d spaces; 10 disabled spaces) provided by Waitrose are publicly available for pay and display parking, because of the need to buy goods at the store in order to obtain a refund of

the parking fee, and taking into account that the car park is located behind the store and away from the immediate town centre, it is not considered to operate as a public short stay car park in the same way that others do in the town. Therefore, it has been excluded from this assessment.

The total number of car parking spaces available for short stay and long stay use (including disabled parking spaces) for the different days of the week are as follows:

Short Stay

- Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays – 581 spaces
- Wednesdays – 541 spaces
- Saturdays – 760 spaces (but will reduce to 727 when the Pembroke Road car park is removed)

Long Stay

- Mondays to Fridays – 324 spaces (but will reduce to 291 when the Pembroke Road car park is removed)
- Saturdays – 291 spaces

Current Parking Stock – On-Street Parking

14. In addition to off-street parking, on-street parking facilities including pay and display are provided in and around the town centre. The following should be noted:
- In the immediate town centre, short stay pay and display parking with a maximum stay of 2 hours is provided in the High Street (20 spaces), London Road (17 spaces) and South Park (22 spaces).
 - A little further out of the town centre, in the area of The Vine, long stay pay and display parking is provided in Holy Bush Lane (26 spaces) and Plymouth Drive (27 spaces). This provides long stay parking for all day and short stay parking for up to 2 hours.
 - 2 hours free parking is provided in many of the roads on the periphery of the town. As part of the Council's permit scheme, non-residential permits are offered to accommodate people who seek long stay parking facilities a short walk from the town centre, and offer a cheaper option to parking in the town centre.
 - Some of the residential roads immediately adjacent the town centre are provided with residents' only parking to give preference to residents where parking facilities are limited.

The Blighs Development

15. The planning application for the development comprising a new Marks and Spencer store and residential units was considered and approved at the Development Control Committee meeting on 29 November 2012. The sufficiency of the parking proposals and the effect upon the public car parks in the town centre was assessed on the basis that the development would generate a maximum of 40% new trips, which would be the point at which the car parks included in the development would reach capacity.

16. By averaging the minimum and maximum rates of utilisation obtained from in-house parking surveys, and having made an adjustment to account for the effects of the development, the following indications were made for the parking assessment in respect to the planning application:

Short Stay

- For Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, occupancy of the town centre car parks as a whole would range from 88.4% in the morning to 77.1% in the afternoon.
- For Wednesdays, occupancy would range from 94.7% in the morning to 86.3% in the afternoon.

Long Stay (Buckhurst 2 Car Park)

- For Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, occupancy of the Buckhurst 2 car parks would range from 109.6% in the morning to 106.9% in the afternoon.
- For Wednesdays, occupancy would range from 109.6% in the morning to 104.4% in the afternoon.

17. Short stay provision was not considered to be a problem. The assessment had been based on 40% new trips being generated which was considered to a worse case scenario. The provision of variable message signing will also assist in directing people to available spaces. However, with the loss of the Pembroke Road car park to the development, it is evident that there will be insufficient spaces in the town to meet future demand for long stay parking.

Current Parking Situation – Long Stay Parking Provision

Buckhurst 2 Car Park

18. Long stay parking is provided in the Buckhurst 2 and Pembroke Road car parks, although it is expected that the Pembroke Road car park will be lost to the development over the next few months.
19. Parking in Buckhurst 2 can be by paying daily (pay and display or pay by phone) or by provision of a season ticket. A season ticket does not guarantee that a space will be available. However, a concession is offered on the cost which, based on a 5 day week 45 week year, works out at 87% of the equivalent cost of buying a day ticket.
20. In order to try and ensure that the car park is not over-subscribed the number of business season tickets issued for Buckhurst 2 car park is limited to 150. However, as the car park is open to day ticket purchasers, it's a case of 'first-come first-served' in respect to finding a space irrespective of whether someone might have a season ticket.
21. In addition to business season tickets, the Council also issues resident season tickets for the car park. These are for residents who live in properties in the immediate town centre which do not have any parking facilities. Due to pressures upon the car park, these are now limited to one per property for new applications.

South Park Car Park

22. Historically, a small number of business season tickets and residential season tickets have been issued for the car park. Due to the recent pressures upon parking in the Buckhurst 2 car park, 10 season tickets holders were transferred to the South Park car park to help ease congestion in Buckhurst 2. Additional pressures upon the Council to assist with parking facilities for the doctors of the Town Medical Practice who lost their own parking facilities to development, also served to increase the numbers using the car park. More recently, we have assisted the South Park Medical Practice with staff parking facilities following the temporary loss of parking at the practice due to development. This additional long stay use has served to increase pressures upon short stay provision in the car park. New residential season tickets are not being issued and the number in the car park is gradually reducing as they are naturally given up. There are currently 39 business and 7 residential season tickets for the car park.

On-Street Parking

23. In addition to the on-street pay and display long stay parking in the area of The Vine, the Council provides non-residential (i.e. business) permits in many of the roads within walking distance of the town centre. These are provided where there is sufficient road space once the allocation of residents' permits has been taken into account, and leaving a certain proportion of spaces for visitors.
24. A total of 250 permits have been issued for 6 different parking zone areas on the periphery of the town. The allocation for non-residential permits is now more or less fully taken up, with only more recently additional spaces provided in areas furthest from the town (in Hitchen Hatch Lane and Woodside Road) remaining available. These are less likely to be taken up due to their location and the walking distance in to the town. There is currently a waiting list for permits in roads nearer the town centre.
25. The non-residential permits cost £270 per year. This is equivalent to 50% of the cost of buying a day ticket on-street (£2.40 a day) and is 33% of the cost of a season ticket for the Buckhurst 2 car park (£819).

Long Stay Parking Problems

26. In 2009, at the time the on-street permit scheme was introduced, there was some transfer of season ticket holders from the Buckhurst 2 car park in to the new on-street parking areas due, it is thought, to the cost differential. Over recent years, there has been a gradual build-up in the numbers of people seeking long stay parking in the town and increases have been seen in the take up of both the on-street permits and car park season tickets. The loss of private business parking spaces in the town to development had contributed to the increased demand.
27. In the months leading up to the start of the Marks and Spencer development, the Council was receiving reports from season ticket holders for Buckhurst 2 that spaces were becoming difficult to find. These were users who were tending to come and go on business visits during the day i.e. surveyors and architects, rather than staying parked for the whole day. There currently appears to be many such users in the car park.

Historically, the car park was used for traditional long stay, where people would turn up, park, and remain parked for the whole day. However, in more recent years there has been a noticeable change of use and an increase in the type of business use where users need to go out on visits, possibly coming and going a number of times during the day. Although this type of use could be considered to be more short stay rather than long stay, it is acknowledged that season tickets and, indeed, pay and display day tickets, offer this type of user greater convenience and at a lower cost when compared to using the short stay car parks. The downside is, of course, that there is no guarantee that spaces will be available at any time during the day and increased pressures and demands for long stay parking are leading to more and more people not being able to find a space if they leave and later return to the car park.

28. At the time of preparing this report, a proposal to ease the long stay parking situation by removing short stay use from the Buckhurst 2 car park during the working week, has just been approved by the Council's Portfolio Holder. The change is due to be implemented in the next few weeks.

Parking Survey

29. The Council engaged an external survey company to record parking use in the town centre car parks and in the surrounding roads on a Wednesday, Friday and Saturday for two consecutive weeks starting the 06 November 2013.
30. The purpose of the survey was to determine the degree to which parking provision is meeting parking needs. It would also provide valuable information regarding parking use on Saturdays. A morning count was undertaken between 11.00am and 12.00 noon and an afternoon count between 2.00pm and 3.00pm, these being the general peak times for parking use. In addition, an early count at 9.00am was carried out in the Buckhurst 2 and Pembroke Road car parks on weekdays of the survey.
31. The survey results have been assessed in respect to long stay and short stay parking.
32. The survey results in terms of spaces available have been adjusted to specifically exclude disabled parking spaces in order to produce a more realistic set of results. While Disabled Blue Badge Holders may use any space in the car parks should none of the designated disabled spaces be available, all other users are restricted to using standard parking bays.
33. The results have been averaged for the different days of the week surveyed. In accordance with good practice, and to ensure the availability of adequate spaces, utilisation levels should generally be no higher than 85%. A traffic light system has been used in the results tables below to grade the utilisation levels and, hence, indicate any critical areas:

green indicates utilisation levels of less than 80% (acceptable)

yellow indicates levels of between 80% and 89% (possible concern)

red indicates levels of 90% and over (critical).

34. The provision of variable message signing being provided in connection with the Marks and Spencer development will help inform motorists where spaces can be found. Although it could be argued that higher levels of utilisation could, therefore, be tolerated, there still needs to be an adequate provision of parking facilities to ensure that people are not deterred from coming into the town and to help secure the viability of the town centre as a whole.

Parking Survey Results and Conclusions – Long Stay Car Parks

35. The following results were obtained in respect to the Buckhurst 2 and Pembroke Road car parks.

Table 1: Survey Results – Buckhurst 2 and Pembroke Road Car Parks:

		Wednesday			Friday			Saturday	
		9am	11am	2pm	9am	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	83	8	14	82	6	25	151	167
	Utilisation	74.4%	97.7%	95.7%	74.8%	98.1%	92.3%	48.1%	42.6%
Peak Values	Spaces available	78	4	12	78	1	25	149	140
	Utilisation	75.9%	98.8%	96.3%	75.9%	99.7%	92.3%	48.8%	51.9%

36. The reasons for the low numbers parked at 9am is not clear, as the car parks should be at their busiest at this time of day. It is assumed that some business people will have parked and then gone out on their business by that time, and would probably be replaced, to some extent, by others arriving later.
37. There are very few spaces available at 11am and 2pm on the weekdays, and accordingly the utilisation levels are very high. The spaces that are available are probably a result of business people having left the car park, leaving spaces that hadn't yet filled.
38. The results for Saturday show that long stay parking is not an issue on this day of the week.
39. The Council carries out an informal monthly survey of car parks in the town centre to provide usage records on a sample basis. The checks are undertaken twice a day during one week of the month to record the number of spaces available at morning and afternoon peak times. It is not always possible to carry out the survey on each day of the week, but Wednesdays are usually recorded. Average figures are produced for the other days of the week. Data from the Council's in-house survey from April to October 2013 is attached as Appendix 'A'. As can be seen, there is good correlation between the full parking survey undertaken and the Council's own informal survey data.

40. However, as the Pembroke Road car park will soon be lost, the results shown in Table 1 should be adjusted to show the effect if long stay parking was only available in the Buckhurst 2 car park.

Table 2: Adjusted Survey Results – if Pembroke Road long stay parking is transferred to the Buckhurst 2 car park:

		Wednesday			Friday			Saturday	
		9am	11am	2pm	9am	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	50	-26	-19	49	-27	-8	151	167
	Utilisation	82.8%	108.8%	106.5%	83.3%	109.3%	102.7%	48.1%	42.6%
Peak Values	Spaces available	45	-29	-21	45	-32	-8	149	140
	Utilisation	84.5%	110.0%	107.2%	84.5%	111.0%	102.7%	48.8%	51.9%

41. For comparison purposes, it is noted that the utilisation rates from the parking survey correspond well to those produced as part of the assessment for the Planning Application for the Blighs development.

42. The table shows the effect of the loss of the Pembroke Road car park upon long stay parking provision. However, this is not, perhaps, the true position in respect to total long stay parking needs in the town. A further calculation should be done to take account of the following factors:

- at the time of the survey, separate counts of the number of Buckhurst 2 business season tickets holders who were actually parked at the time of the survey indicate that, on average, 90 season ticket holders were not present in the car park when the survey was undertaken;
- the figures for Buckhurst 2 ought to be adjusted to include long stay use (i.e. season ticket holders) currently allocated in the South Park car park (39 number in total).

43. Transferring all long stay parking to the Buckhurst 2 car park would effectively increase the availability of short stay in the in South Park car park.

Table 3: Adjusted Survey Results - if all long stay parking is transferred to the Buckhurst 2 car park:

		Wednesday			Friday			Saturday	
		9am	11am	2pm	9am	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	-85	-161	-154	-87	-162	-143	151	167
	Utilisation	129.2%	155.2%	152.9%	129.7%	155.7%	149.1%	48.1%	42.6%
Peak Values	Spaces available	-90	-164	-157	-90	-167	-143	149	140
	Utilisation	130.9%	156.4%	154.0%	130.9%	157.4%	149.1%	48.8%	51.9%

- 44. The figures would suggest a shortfall approaching 170 parking spaces if all long stay parking is to be accommodated in the Buckhurst 2 car park. Working to a utilisation rate of, say, 90% to provide some spare capacity would mean that a total of 221 spaces would be required.
- 45. As mentioned earlier, residents' permits are issued for the Buckhurst 2 and South Park car parks. While it could be expected that many residents take their car to work during the week, previous surveys last Summer showed that there were on average 20 residents were parked in Buckhurst 2 and South Park car parks during the working day. The provision of residents' permits therefore further reduces the availability of spaces and this should also be taken into account in any calculation for future parking needs thus increasing the number of spaces required to 241.

Parking Survey Results and Conclusions – Short Stay Car Parks

- 46. For the reasons given earlier, the survey results for short stay car parks have been assessed on the basis of availability of pay and display parking spaces only, i.e. disabled parking spaces have been excluded. This reduces the number of spaces available in the town centre to the following:
 - Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays – 555 spaces
 - Wednesdays – 518 spaces
 - Saturdays – 734 spaces (but will reduce to 701 when the Pembroke Road car park is removed)

Table 4: Survey Results Car Parks – Short stay parking (excluding disabled parking spaces):

		Wednesday		Friday		Saturday	
		11am	2pm	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	41	66	30	60	58	81
	Utilisation	92.2%	87.4%	94.7%	89.2%	92.2%	89.0%
Peak Values	Spaces available	40	64	23	52	36	53
	Utilisation	92.3%	87.6%	95.9%	90.6%	95.1%	92.8%

The results show that utilisation of short stay spaces in the town centre is generally high.

- 47. However, should the long stay / season ticket element currently using the South Park car park be relocated to the Buckhurst 2 car park, this would then free-up short stay spaces and effectively reduce utilisation rates for the town centre. Therefore, the survey results are adjusted accordingly in the following table to take account of the numbers recorded during the survey (the figures having been averaged).

Table 5: Adjusted Survey Results Car Parks – Short stay parking (excluding disabled parking spaces) with long stay element removed from South Park car park:

		Wednesday		Friday		Saturday	
		11am	2pm	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	69	94	58	88	58	81
	Utilisation	86.8%	81.9%	89.6%	84.1%	92.2%	89.0%
Peak Values	Spaces available	68	92	51	80	36	53
	Utilisation	86.9%	82.8%	90.8%	85.6%	95.1%	92.8%

- 48. As can be seen, by moving long stay parking out of the short stay car parks utilisation rates would reduce but would still be at fairly high levels, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays. This is despite the Council office car park becoming available on Saturdays.
- 49. The survey results compare reasonably well with data from the Council’s in-house survey, as shown in Appendix ‘A’. There are, however, slight differences in the way information is recorded for the Council’s surveys. The in-house survey does not differentiate between pay and display spaces and disabled Blue Badge spaces, it is merely a count of all spaces available. For this reason, the utilisation rates for the in-house survey are likely to be lower than those for recent full parking survey. This, and the fact that data is not available for exactly the same period, would inevitably lead to some variance between the two sets of data.
- 50. The provision of a variable message signing system will help in directing people to where parking spaces are available and would allow the car parks to better operate with fewer spaces available. However, if utilisation rates remain high, meaning that people need to hunt for spaces when they enter their chosen car park rather than finding them relatively easily, the net effect may be that people are put off using the car parks and may use them less frequently. This could, of course, ultimately have an impact upon the viability of the town centre.
- 51. As can be seen from the adjusted survey results in Table 5, the highest utilisation rates occur on Fridays and Saturdays with a peak value of 95.1% being achieved. These levels of utilisation do not leave much room for increased use of the car parks as people may be deterred from using them well before the saturation point is reached. The provision of additional short stay spaces would offer room for expansion in terms of car park use which, in turn, would encourage use of the town centre shopping facilities.
- 52. To reduce peak levels of utilisation to a generally acceptable level of operation, additional spaces would need to be provided. It is estimated that to achieve utilisation of 90% would require an additional 40 spaces; to achieve nearer 85% would require 85 additional short stay parking spaces.

Parking Survey Results - On-Street Parking

Short Stay Pay and Display Parking in the Town Centre

53. The following results were obtained for the 54 parking spaces provided in the High Street, London Road and South Park in the town centre.

Table 6: Survey Results On-Street – Short Stay P&D Parking in the Town Centre

		Wednesday		Friday		Saturday	
		11am	2pm	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	9	9	7	7	5	5
	Utilisation	84.3%	83.3%	88.0%	87.0%	91.7%	90.7%

54. The on-street spaces in the town centre provide a cheaper option to parking in the car parks and tend to be very well used. The survey results are probably as expected with greatest utilisation on Saturdays, closely followed by Fridays.

55. It is not considered that the use of on-street parking in the town has a direct effect upon usage of the car parks. There is no potential to introduce further on-street parking in the town.

Long Stay Pay and Display Parking on the outskirts of the Town

56. The following results were obtained for the 65 parking spaces provided in Plymouth Drive and at The Vine in Holly Bush Lane. Although these areas also provide for short stay parking for up to 2 hours, use during the working week is predominantly long stay.

Table 7: Survey Results On-Street – Long Stay P&D Parking near the Town Centre

		Wednesday		Friday		Saturday	
		11am	2pm	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	13	13	8	7	49	34
	Utilisation	80.8%	80.0%	88.5%	89.2%	25.4%	48.5%

57. The survey shows that spaces are available during both mornings and afternoons. However, it is considered that as a norm, fewer, if any, spaces are usually available on weekdays.

Short Stay Free Parking near the Town Centre

58. Roads providing free 2 hours parking were included in the survey. The following roads within an approximate 10 minutes walking distance of the town centre provide a total of 460 on-street parking spaces: Argyle Road, Crownfields, Eardley Road, Gordon Road, Granville Road (down as far as junction with Eardley Road), London Road, Park Lane, Pound Lane, St, Botolph's Road (down as far as junction with Vine Avenue), South Park, The Drive and Valley Drive. The area is shown on the map attached as Appendix 'B'.

59. Although it could be argued that some roads within the area, such as Crownfields and Valley Drive, might not appeal to people wishing to park for the town centre they do, nevertheless, offer parking facilities within relatively easy reach of the town.

60. The survey results for this area are as follows:

Table 8: Survey Results On-Street – Short Stay Free Parking near the Town Centre

		Wednesday		Friday		Saturday	
		11am	2pm	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	115	116	119	159	178	175
	Utilisation	75.0%	74.9%	74.2%	65.4%	61.4%	62.0%

61. The utilisation levels show that parking spaces are generally available on all days. However, people visiting the town centre are more likely to want to park fairly close to the shops and other facilities and, hence, would probably prefer to use the town centre car parks despite having to pay and display.

Parking Survey Results – Disabled Parking

62. The opportunity was taken to review the use of disabled parking spaces in the town centre.

63. Excluding the disabled parking spaces at the leisure centre, there are a total of 23 spaces provided on Wednesdays and 26 spaces on other days in the car parks and on-street in the immediate town centre.

64. The survey results for these are as follows:

Table 9: Survey Results – Disabled Parking in the Town Centre

		Wednesday		Friday		Saturday	
		11am	2pm	11am	2pm	11am	2pm
Average Values	Spaces available	3	7	2	7	7	10
	Utilisation	86.9%	71.7%	92.3%	73.1%	73.1%	63.5%
Peak Values	Spaces available	2	6	0	6	4	9
	Utilisation	90.9%	72.7%	100.0%	76.0%	84.0%	64.0%

The highest utilisations levels were on Wednesday mornings and Friday mornings, with a peak value of 100% Friday afternoons.

65. Whilst disabled Blue Badge Holders may use the standard parking spaces in the car parks if there are no disabled spaces available, use of these would be dependant upon the degree of disability and this might not always be a viable alternative.

66. Blue Badge Holders can park for up to 3 hours on yellow line restrictions on-street and many such areas in and around the town centre, such as Rockdale Road, are regularly used for this purpose. This may mean that sufficient spaces on-street within easy reach of the immediate town centre may not be readily available.
67. In view of the high utilisation levels, consideration could be given to increasing the provision of dedicated disabled parking spaces in the town centre to accommodate the needs of Blue Badge Holders.
68. Although consideration could be given to increasing provision in the car parks, this would be at the loss of general parking facilities. As an alternative, it would make better sense to provide any additional spaces on-street, locating them in the existing pay and display areas in the High Street and South Park. In this way, disabled facilities can be placed in the heart of the town centre enabling good access to amenities.

Summary of Findings of Independent Parking Survey Report

69. The independent parking survey clearly shows very high utilisation rates for the Buckhurst 2 long stay car park. By adjusting the results to add all long stay parking currently taking place in the town centre car parks, a more realistic indication of long stay parking needs can be determined. The outcome of the assessment is that between 170 and 221 additional parking spaces are needed.
70. In respect to short stay parking, and having made an adjustment for removing the element of long stay parking from short stay car parks, the results indicate high utilisation levels on Fridays and Saturdays. Although the variable message signing system being provided as part of the Marks and Spencer development will assist motorists in being find available spaces, it is prudent to consider increasing the provision of short stay parking in the town. It is estimated that 40 additional spaces short stay spaces would be required to reduce peak utilisation levels to 90%.
71. Dedicated disabled parking bays within the car parks are showing high utilisation levels at certain times during the week. Should consideration be given to improving the provision of disabled parking, it is recommended that additional spaces be provided, within the on-street pay and display areas around the town which would provide better access to facilities.

Technical Feasibility Study

72. The opportunity to provide approximately, an additional 300 car park spaces, close to Sevenoaks Town Centre, is best served by examining the technical feasibility of 'decking' the existing Council owned car parks at Buckhurst 2 and/or Suffolk Way.
73. A specialist parking Consultant with extensive expertise in the conceptual design of parking structures, was appointed to survey both the existing car parks to provide elevated car decks to provide additional car park spaces.
74. An advantage to this method of construction compared to a more traditional construction method, is that the car decks are pre-fabricated off site, allowing a very

short construction period on-site. This is vital as the existing car parks will be in demand during this on-site construction period, and alternative temporary parking will need to be identified for this period. This is likely to be for a period of 5-6 weeks.

75. The following option estimates have been received for both the Buckhurst 2 and Suffolk Way car parks.

76. Each estimate includes for design, super structure, staircase, edger protection, drainage/water proofing, lighting, cladding, plant labour, haulage and provisional cost sums for Civils, foundations, general items, variations, electrical sub station works, CCTV and signs.

(a) Buckhurst 2 – single storey decking to provide 164 additional spaces.

Build cost: £2,736,022 (includes £162,926 provisional cost sums) @ £16,683 per parking space.

(b) Buckhurst 2 – two storey decking to provide 300 additional spaces.

Build cost: £3,749,630 (includes £250,146 provisional cost sums) @ £12,498 per parking space.

(c) Suffolk Way – single storey decking to provide 67 additional spaces.

Build cost: £1,326,768 (include £146,049 provisional cost sums) @ £19,802 per parking space.

(d) Suffolk Way – two storey decking to provide 134 additional spaces.

Build cost: £2,334,157 (includes £199,905 provisional cost sums) @ £17,419 per parking space.

77. From the estimates provided it is clear that to provide an additional 300 parking spaces the most cost effective option is to build a two storey deck construction on Buckhurst 2 car park at an estimated cost per parking space of £12,498.

78. The guaranteed lifespan of the construction method is 30 years.

79. To bring each option to planning application stage would cost as follows:-

(a) Buckhurst 2 – 164 spaces

Surveying and design -	£18,450
Planning application fees -	<u>£21,850</u>
	£40,300

(b) Buckhurst 2 – 300 spaces

Surveying and design -	£18,450
Planning application fees -	<u>£25,259</u>
	£43,709

(c) Suffolk Way – 67 spaces

Surveying and design -	£18,450
Planning application fees -	<u>£12,320</u>
	£30,770

(d) Suffolk Way – 134 spaces

Surveying and design -	£18,450
Planning application fees -	<u>£20,544</u>
	£38,994

Procurement

80. A procurement exercise will be carried out in accordance with the general principles of Council's standing orders and E.U. Procurement Directives as are appropriate.
81. There are several routes available for the procurement of a contractor to deliver these works. The traditional Design and Build approach could be used, which would include the procurement of a 'professional team', including Architect, Structural Engineer and Planning advisors, before a tender was issued for contractors to submit prices against. This approach would also necessitate SDC recruiting a 'client side' Project Manager.
82. Alternatively, SDC could utilise a Contracting Authority / Central Purchasing Body arrangement.
83. A Contracting Authority/Central Purchasing Body arrangement must have followed an OJEU compliant process to form 'frameworks' from which a panel of consultants and contractors has been appointed. SDC could use procurement framework to engage the Major Works contractor, who act as a managing contractor for the delivery of the project. This management contractor would then sub tender packages for all elements of the required works. This enables the contractor to get economies of scale as regards costs, with the spend being delivered locally.
84. Following completion of a legal agreement for the delivery of the project, they would manage the process and the managing contractor, to deliver the project. Advantages to this route of procurement include shortened procurement time vs the Design and Build method and the benefit of economies of scale from the supply chain purchasing power, local spend and an obligation to provide local training and employment.

Planning Implications

Planning policies:

85. Both sites (Suffolk Way and Buckhurst 2) are subject to the same planning policies:
86. Core Strategy:

Policy L03 – Development in Sevenoaks Town Centre – Suitable for redevelopment for retail and related uses. Town Centre car parking will be managed to ensure adequate and convenient provision for shoppers and appropriate provision for long stay parking.

87. Car park flagged up as an area of change on the map and supporting text makes reference to redevelopment would need to provide replacement decked car parking.
88. Draft Allocations & Development Management DPD:
Policy TLC1 - General town centre policy (though nothing specific about parking)
Within the Sevenoaks Town Centre area
89. In broad planning policies the provision of decked car parking areas would support the vitality of the Town Centre. In fact both car parks are earmarked for redevelopment for retail and related uses, so there is actually strong support in principle for decking both these sites.

Suffolk Way car park

90. The site lies within the Town Centre and the urban confines of Sevenoaks.
91. This is currently a short stay car park between the Kaleidoscope and Suffolk Way. It is into a prominent site and adjacent to the Sevenoaks Conservation Area to the southwest of the site. The site is opposite the service yards and rear of the shops that front onto the eastern side of the High Street.
92. Land levels vary across the site and there is extensive hard landscaping/boundary treatment within this car park. Land levels essentially drop to their lowest point by the northern access. There are no TPOs covering the site or nearby.
93. The Kaleidoscope Building and in particular its entrance is raised up and is a prominent feature building in the Suffolk Way streetscape. There are a small number of trees on the southern boundary and Buckhurst House is closest building to the south. Buckhurst House is a mix of B1 and D1 uses with no apparent residential use. There are no residential properties immediately adjoining the car park, however, residential properties in Buckhurst Lane do lie approximately 15m to the southeast. This southern end with the nearest residential properties, adjacent buildings, trees and entrance to the library is the most sensitive part of the site.
94. There is clear general policy support for this site to be redeveloped under the Core Strategy.

Buckhurst Two –car park

95. The site lies within the Sevenoaks Town Centre area as well as the urban confines. A pipeline runs through the northern section of site and southern section lies within the Area of Archaeological Potential. The southern boundary is adjacent to a Public Right of Way, whilst the Green Belt lies immediately to the east and southeast.
96. The site lies to the south of the Leisure Centre and is a relatively large and square parcel of land. The ground levels significantly change across the site, from west to east and north to south, as well as other internal variations.

97. To the east lies the Sevenoaks Environmental Park, with trees, hedges and bushes forming an extensive screen. To the south lies a narrow band of trees and behind them the important public right of way to Knole Park from the town. To the west lie the back gardens of the residential properties in Buckhurst Avenue. To the north is a small band of trees, paths and soft landscaping in front of the Leisure Centre.

General comment

98. Both of these sites have the potential to deliver additional parking spaces, through the use of decked car parks of varying scale and varying levels of needs for engineering operations required to create basement/levels as a base for a decked car park. Much will depend the quality of the new build and scale proposed and their impact on the locality.

Car Parking Adjacent to the Railway Station

99. By 'decking' the adjacent Council owned Bradbourne car park additional parking spaces could be provided for long stay commuter use, realising potential additional income and easing demand on long stay on-street parking.

100. It is therefore recommended that a planning application be submitted to 'deck' the existing Bradbourne car park.

101. To submit a planning application to 'deck' the Councils Bradbourne car park would cost in the region of £24,000 including planning application fees of £17,710.

Key Implications

Financial

The estimated cost of providing additional car park spaces is summarised below:-

Buckhurst 2	Additional 164 spaces	single storey	£2,736,022	Cost per space:	£16,683
Buckhurst 2	Additional 300 spaces	two storey	£3,749,630	Cost per space:	£12,498
Suffolk Way	Additional 67 spaces	single storey	£1,326,768	Cost per space:	£19,802
Suffolk Way	Additional 134 spaces	Two storey	£2,334,157	Cost per space:	£17,419

Predicted Income Generated For Additional Parking Spaces

102. The income figures quoted are shown net of VAT.

103. Estimated income reflects the assumed additional income from the start of 2015/16 following the construction period. This has been based on the charges proposed for 2014/15 and by applying a percentage increase year on year.

104. The estimate for the 300 space option at Buckhurst 2 is based on long stay parking only with the additional spaces divided equally between season tickets, reserved spaces and long stay pay and display charges.

Buckhurst 2 Car Park (assumed income for 2015/16)

Season ticket £714*/space x 100 spaces	£71,400
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(* equivalent to a charge of £3.81 a day for a 5 day week / 45 week year)

Reserved space £1,015*/space x 100 spaces	£101,500
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(* equivalent to a charge of £5.33 a day for a 5 day week / 45 week year)

Pay and display £942*/space x 100 spaces	£94,200
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(* based on 2014/15 +3% a day for a 5 day week / 50 week year)

Estimated additional income/year	£267,100
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105. This is based on 100% utilisation. If lower levels of utilisation are used this would reduce to:

£240,390	90%	Utilisation	Levels
£227,035	85%	Utilisation	Levels
£213,680	80%	Utilisation	Levels

106. Over a ten year period based on this allocation of spaces shown and applying a percentage increase year on year, this could produce an estimated additional income of £2,943,897 for the Buckhurst 2 Car Park based on full utilisation.

107. For the 300 space option, this could provide a full cost pay back period of the construction cost of 12-13 years. The estimated life of the construction is 30 years.

108. If 85 % utilisation were to be assumed, the pay back period would extend to 15 years.

Suffolk Way Car Park (Assumed Income for 2015/16)

109. Assuming the additional parking spaces are used for short stay parking:

Income per space	£1,744 x 67 spaces	£116,848
Income per space	£1,744 x 134 spaces	£233,696

110. If 67 additional spaces were provided in the Suffolk Way Car Park, based on applying a percentage increase year on year over a ten year period from 2014-15, this could generate an additional £1,279,241, assuming current utilisation levels. This option could provide a full cost (construction cost) pay back period of 10-11 years, which is based on the current utilisation levels for the car park. Allowing for a drop in utilisation of, say, 20% due to the provision of additional parking spaces, the pay back period would extend to 13 years.

111. If 134 additional spaces were provided for short stay use, this could generate an additional £2,558,481 over a ten year period, assuming current utilisation levels. However in view of the number of additional short stay spaces that would be provided

utilisation levels could reduce as a result. For the purpose of this calculation it would be prudent to assume that only 80% of the income figure quoted i.e £2,046,785 would be achieved. This option could provide a full cost (construction cost) pay back period of 9 years.

112. Alternatively, if the income calculation is based on the additional spaces being used for long stay, which as a result of the different charging tariffs would produce less income than the short stay option, the additional income over a 10 year period would be £723,877. This would extend the full cost pay back period to nearer 18 years.
113. A breakdown of the potential additional income generated is provided at Appendix 'D'.
114. Expenditure has already been incurred for:- Parking Survey £5,725. Technical and feasibility study £1,600. These costs have been met from existing approved budgets.

Funding

115. Utilising up to date Public Works Loan Board fixed loan rates, the following would apply.
 - £3.5m annuity loan over 10 years @ 2.66% - half yearly repayment of £200,500 (£401,000 p.a)
 - £3.5m annuity loan over 20 years @ 3.71% - half yearly repayment of £124,700 (£249,400 p.a)
 - £4.0m annuity loan over 10 years @ 2.66% - half yearly repayment of £229,000 (£458,000 p.a)
 - £4.0m annuity loan over 20 years @ 3.71% - half yearly repayment of £142,500 (£285,000 p.a)
116. Alternatively, by using existing capital receipts, the loss of investment interest on £3.5m would be between £21,000 and £35,000 per annum. On £4.0m it would be between £24,000 - £40,000 per annum (based on current investment Interest rates of between 0.6% and 1%).
117. Alternatively the project could be funded by a mix of loans and use of capital receipts.
118. It is worth noting that capital receipts from recent sales of Council owned property in Sevenoaks have realised £3.4m.
119. Due to the relatively low chance of a financial return on the Investment in this project in the short term, it is recommended that the project, if approved, be funded by Public Works Loan Board borrowing to allow Capital receipts to be available for future investment in project delivery to meet the Councils wider vision and aspirations.
120. To advance a project to planning application stage expenditure will need to be incurred for surveying and design to submit the planning application on the Councils behalf, and also for planning application fees, as outlined earlier in this report.

Financial Summary

	Buckhurst 2		Suffolk Way	
	164 spaces	300 spaces	67 spaces	134 spaces
Cost	£	£	£	£
Estimated cost	2,736,022	3,749,630	1,326,768	2,334,157
Cost per space	16,683	12,498	19,802	17,419
Estimated Additional income 2015/16				
100% utilisation	146,015	267,100	116,829	233,657
90% utilisation	131,413	240,390	105,146	210,291
85% utilisation	124,112	227,035	99,304	198,608
80% utilisation	116,812	213,680	93,463	186,925

Funding	£3.5m £	£4m £
Loan annual repayment over 10 years @ 2.66%	401,000	458,000
Loan annual repayment over 20 years @ 3.71%	249,400	285,000
Loss of interest by using capital receipts	£21,000 to £35,000	£24,000 to £40,000

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

121. The project construction costs identified in the report are estimates only and a full procurement process would be undertaken before a contract for construction is awarded.
122. Any such procurement will be carried out in accordance with the general principles of Council's standing orders and E.U. Procurement Directives as are appropriate.
123. Borrowing will be subject to the Council's financial procedure rules. New investment is made possible by the 'General Power of competence' introduced by Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
124. The proposed deckings would be built on existing Council owned car park land.
125. Any planning applications submitted would need to be considered and determined by the Councils Development Control Committee.
126. The parking survey has provided strong evidence of the shortage of long stay parking provision in the Sevenoaks Town. Failure to provide the additional car parking identified is likely to have a detrimental effect on the future economic viability of the town, and District, as a venue to work, shop and visit.
127. A parking solution is required not only to meet the current, but future anticipated demand on parking capacity.

128. Recently the Government has introduced greater powers for landowners to change the use of buildings without the need for planning permission (through its changes to the General Permitted Development order). Amendments that allow for offices to be converted to residential use and for space above shops to be converted to dwellings without the need for planning permission have the potential to increase demand for parking in Town Centres. Without the need for these changes of use to be considered through the Development Control process there is no scope for the Council to require additional parking for the new residents these developments will create, which will lead to increased demand for on-and off street parking for residents in Town Centres.
129. The additional income estimates are based on current usage and prices charged for parking.
130. Although the construction period, on site, for this method of construction is extremely short, temporary alternative parking will need to be made for existing users, during the on-site construction period.
131. The project costs, potential additional income generation, sources of funding, and pay-back period are detailed in the report.

Equality Impacts

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes. Enhanced parking provision for blue badge holders	
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

Community Impact and outcomes

132. Increased car parking capacity would have a strong positive impact on the town centre. It would allow more people to access local services, tourist attractions and support the high proportion of independent businesses in the Town Centre. The retail offer in the town continues to be of a very high standard, with high occupancy rates and continued inward investment from the likes of Wagamamas and Marks and Spencer. Further investment in parking provision will strengthen the retail offer and ensure that Sevenoaks town has increased footfall in years to come.

Conclusions

1. The parking capacity/demand survey undertaken in November 2013 has identified current critical parking levels in existing Council owned car parks (above 90% utilisation) identifying a demand for an additional 241 long stay spaces and 40 additional short stay spaces (based on 90% utilisation rates).
2. Technical feasibility studies have indicated that additional car park spaces could be provided by constructing elevated car park decks on the existing Council owned Buckhurst 2 and Suffolk Way car parks.
3. Planning advice has identified that both sites have the potential to deliver additional car park spaces through the use of decked car parking construction methods.
4. Providing 300 additional spaces with a two storey deck construction at the Buckhurst 2 car park offers the lowest construction cost per parking space.
5. Estimates on potential additional income generation indicate that the estimated 'pay-back' period to cover construction costs is acceptable.
6. As the return on investment is likely to be relatively low in the short term, funding for the cost of the project may be best facilitated by the use of the Public Works Loan Board, rather than utilise existing Capital receipts.
7. To advance the projects to planning application stage, expenditure will need to be incurred with regard to surveying and design and planning application fees.
8. Although the construction period, on-site, is very short, alternative temporary parking provision will need to be considered for existing car park users, during the on-site construction period.
9. The lowest identified estimated cost of additional car parking provision utilising the 'decking' construction method is £12,500 per space.
10. Annual income per long stay space is estimated at an average of £890 (for 2015/16). Annual income per short stay space is estimated at £1,744 (for 2015/16)
11. It is recommended that a planning application be submitted to provide additional parking for long stay parking at the Buckhurst 2 car park for the immediate future. However, to allow provision to be allowed for, in the longer term, to meet possible future short stay demand in the Town Centre and adjacent to the railway station, planning permission be applied for to provide additional capacity at the existing Suffolk Way and Bradbourne car parks.
12. This proposed project supports the key aim in the Council's vision, as detailed in the approved Corporate Plan; to either borrow or utilise existing financial resources, to generate on-going revenue income.

Appendices

Appendix A – In-house Parking Survey April-Oct 2013

Appendix B – Map of Short Stay Parking near the
Town Centre

Appendix C - Breakdown of Potential Income

Background Papers:

Parking Survey – November 2013

SDC In-house Parking Surveys – April – Oct 2013

Report from Top Deck Parking Consultancy for
Buckhurst 2 , Suffolk Way and Bradbourne Car Parks
– January 2014.

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Richard Wilson
Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services