



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: INFRASTRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

Date of Meeting: 19th July 2004

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

No

Inside Policy Framework

Title: OFF STREET CAR PARK EXTENSIONS

Report of: HEAD OF COMMERCIAL & TECHNICAL SERVICES

Report reference: CTS 11/04

Summary:

This report proposes two modest extensions to the short stay car parks at the Civic Centre and Bitts Park to provide an additional 34 spaces. The capital costs can be met from a budget already allocated for additional parking.

Recommendations:

It is **recommended** that the Executive supports the extensions to the Civic Centre and Bitts Park car parks at an estimated cost of £74,500 and that this be vired from the budget allocated for Newark Terrace.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: EN 103/02

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 At its meeting on 30th September 2002 the Executive approved a strategy of pursuing a modest increase in parking in the short term (report EN 103/02). In coming to this view the Executive supported the principles of the parking policy set out in Local Transport Plan 1. Indeed, in regularly reviewing the charging policy and adjusting the balance of long/short stay parking in the central area the Council has fully met the requirements set out in LTP1. Unfortunately, the development of Park and Ride has not progressed and as a result has not delivered any of the increased capacity set out in that plan and it is unlikely that these will be achieved within the next 3-5 years.
- 1.2 It is essential that the Council continues to deal with the traffic growth and increased parking demand until such time as alternative sustainable parking options are in place. Should the council not respond in the short term to the increased demand then the economic vitality of the City Centre would be adversely affected. The Executive has responded by initiatives such as a seasonal Park and Ride scheme at Christmas 2003, which had a very limited benefit and by supporting modest car parking extensions at Town Dyke Orchard and Bitts Park car parks. Planning permission for these was refused in December 2003.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to present further proposals for modest extensions to the existing short stay car parks at the Civic Centre and at Bitts Park as follows:

1.3.1 Civic Centre

The proposals are shown on the plan included as Appendix A. This provides for a net increase of 11 spaces on the site formerly occupied by the temporary Portacabin.

Since the amendments to this car park took place when the Lanes was extended the use of the space as a key location in the City Centre has grown. At peak times (based on ticket sales) the level of usage is very high, approx. 75%, and it is estimated that the car park is full for part of the day between 50-75% of charging days/year. The modest extension will provide some essential additional capacity and partially offset the 6 spaces lost when the increased width disabled parking bays were created in the car park.

The estimated capital cost of the work is £29,500 and the estimated additional revenue income would provide a pay back within 3-4 years.

1.3.2 **Bitts Park Car Park**

This car park has a good access to Castle Way and is used by parkers to the City Centre and also for those people who use the growing leisure facilities in Bitts Park. The recent major investment in an interactive water feature is an example of this. A plan of the proposals for an additional 23 spaces is included as Appendix B and the layout has been agreed with the Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport.

The current level of usage is extremely high at approx. 85% in peak times of the day and this is expected to increase further for the reasons set out above. Like the Civic Centre the additional spaces will offset those lost when the wider disabled bays were provided.

The proposed layout does not have any significant impact on the existing trees.

The capital cost is approx. £45,000 and the increased revenue income is anticipated to provide a pay back in approx. three years.

- 1.4 Other temporary parking initiatives are being considered particularly for the run up to Christmas 2004 and discussions are ongoing with a range of interests. There are no proposals to repeat the Park and Ride scheme of 2003 because whilst this provided some very useful experience the costs are prohibitive in costs and projected levels of usage.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Consultation to Date. Cumbria County Council, City Centre Business interests, Head of Planning Services and Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport.
- 2.2 Consultation proposed. Through the formal Planning process. The County Council would need to approve the proposals and any changes to the Car Parking Orders would be advertised.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is **recommended** that the Executive supports the extensions to the Civic Centre and Bitts Park car parks at an estimated cost of £74,500 and that this be vired from the budget allocated for Newark Terrace.

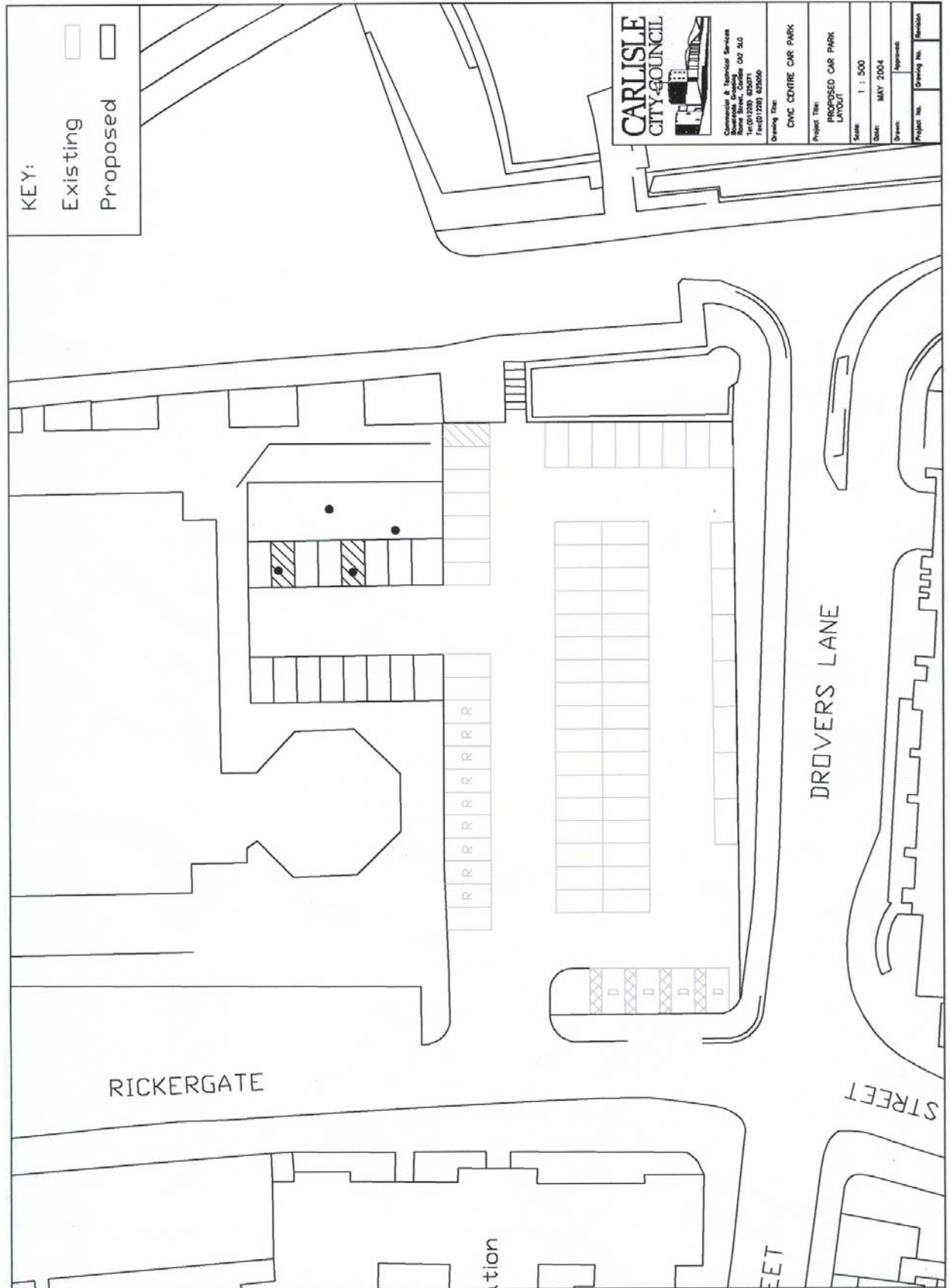
4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

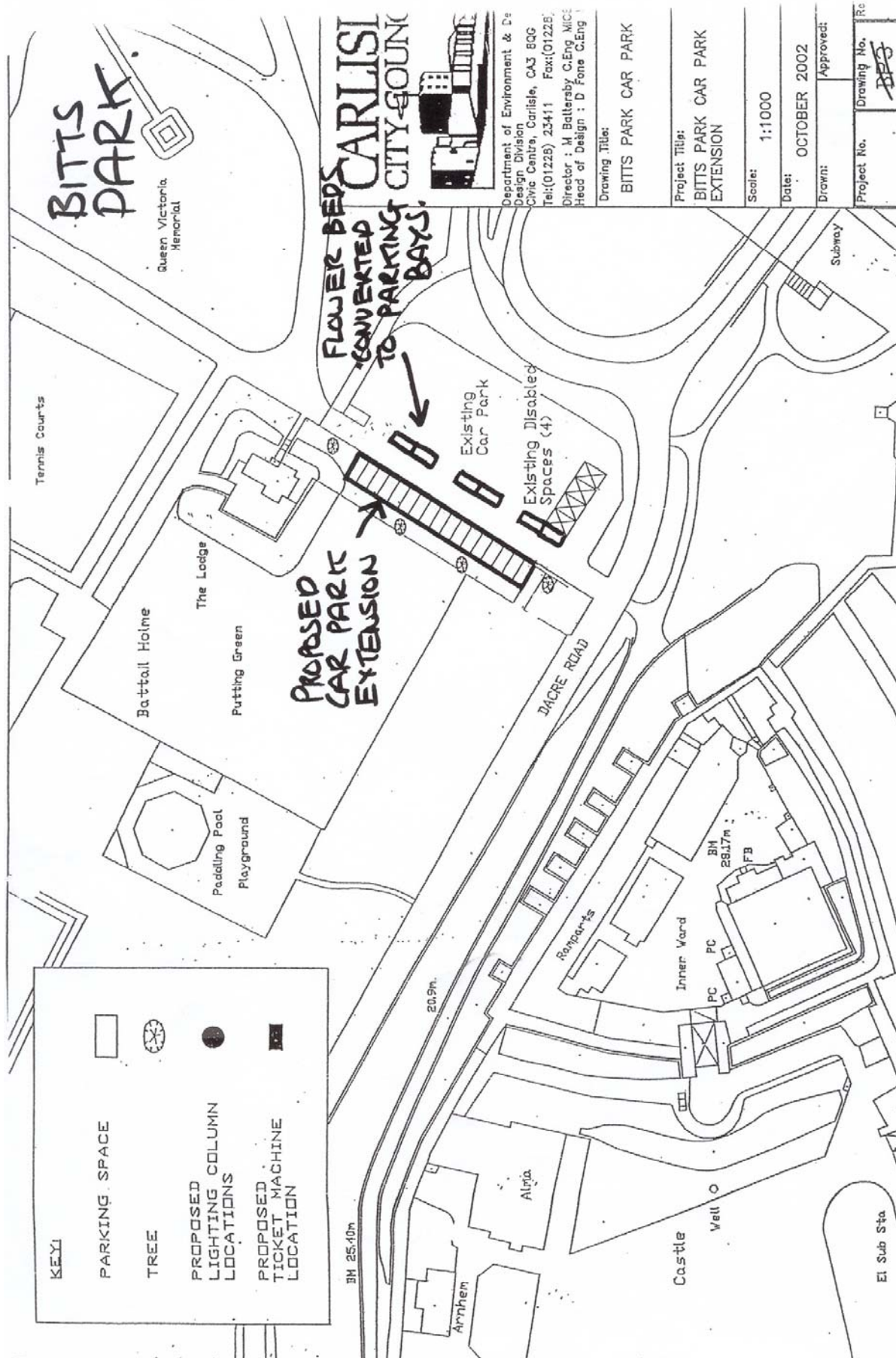
To provide additional short term parking capacity to meet growing demand, in accordance with the Executive's previously agreed strategy.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – Would be managed/constructed in-house within existing resources.
- Financial – The Council has allocated £150,000 in 2004/5 for additional car parking in Newark Terrace linked to development in that area. The Head of Property Services advises that negotiations have been identified that this is unlikely to proceed in the short/medium term and as a result the capital costs could be vired to meet the estimated costs, to achieve a similar purpose.
- Legal – Not applicable.
- Corporate – The Head of Property Services comments that in asset investment terms, this is a sound investment to make because of the income returns that would be made to the Council.
- Risk Management – Should the Executive approve the proposals, Planning Permission would still be required and which may not be forthcoming. Design costs and fees would be lost should this be the case.
- Equality Issues – Not applicable.
- Environmental – The extension to the Civic Centre car park is proposed for the area formerly occupied by temporary offices. No trees would be removed. At Bitts Park the loss of an area of grass and planted traffic islands needs to be balanced by the increased capacity for visitors by car to enjoy the facilities in Bitts Park. The good access on to Castle Way is considered to be helpful. Without viable parking/transport alternatives being in place the failure to provide additional parking is likely to produce more "touring" for available spaces.
- Crime and Disorder – The design would embrace all the existing standards to retain current security standards.

- Impact on Customers –Increased parking provision would sustain access to the City Centre and leisure facilities in Bitts Park.





BPL4
Revised Nov 2003

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 19 JULY 2004

EX.142/04: EXTENSIONS TO OFF STREET CAR PARKS (Key Decision)

(With the consent of the Chairman, and in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, this item had been included on the Agenda as a key decision, although not in the Forward Plan)

Portfolio Environment, Infrastructure and Transport

Subject Matter

To consider a report from the Head of Commercial and Technical Services (CTS.11/04) containing proposals for two modest extensions to existing car parks at the Civic Centre and Bitts Park to provide an additional 34 spaces. The capital costs could be met from a budget already allocated for additional parking in Newark Terrace which was unlikely to proceed in the short to medium term.

The proposals for the Civic Centre would provide for a net increase of 11 spaces on the site formerly occupied by the temporary portacabin. The estimated capital cost of the work was £29,500 and the estimated additional revenue income would provide a pay back within 3 to 4 years.

The proposals for Bitts Park would provide an additional 23 spaces. The estimated capital cost was £45,000 and increased revenue was anticipated to provide a pay back in approximately 3 years.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services further reported that other temporary parking initiatives were being considered, particularly for the run up to Christmas 2004 and discussions were ongoing with a range of interests. There were no proposals to repeat the park and ride scheme of 2003 because whilst this provided some very useful experience, the costs were prohibitive bearing in mind the projected levels of usage.

Extensions to the car parks would be subject to the formal planning process and the County Council would also need to approve the proposals and any changes to the Car Parking Orders would need advertising.

Summary of options rejected

None

DECISION

That the Executive supports the extensions to the Civic Centre and Bitts Park car parks at an estimated cost of £74,500 and, subject to approval by the City Council, this sum

be vired from the budget allocated for additional car parking in Newark Terrace which was unlikely to proceed in the short to medium term.

Reasons for Decision

To provide additional short term parking capacity to meet growing demand, in accordance with the Executive's previously agreed strategy.

EX-14204: EXTENSION OF SHORT TERM PARKING AT THE CIVIC CENTRE AND BILLS PARK
(With the consent of the Chairman, and in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, this item has been included on the Agenda as a key decision, although not in the Forward Plan)

Portfolio : Environment, Infrastructure and Transport

Subject Matter

To consider a report from the Head of Commercial and Technical Services (CTS 1104) containing proposals for two modest extensions to existing car parks at the Civic Centre and Bills Park to provide an additional 34 spaces. The capital costs would be met from a budget already allocated for additional parking in Newark Terrace which was unlikely to proceed in the short to medium term.

The proposals for the Civic Centre would provide for a net increase of 7 spaces on the site formerly occupied by the temporary pedestrian. The estimated capital cost of the work was £29,500 and the estimated additional revenue income would provide a pay back within 3 to 4 years.

The proposals for Bills Park would provide an additional 27 spaces. The estimated capital cost was £45,000 and increased revenue was anticipated to provide a pay back in approximately 3 years.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services further reported that other temporary parking initiatives were being considered, particularly for the run up to Christmas 2004 and discussions were ongoing with a range of interests. There were no proposals to repeat the park and ride scheme of 2,403 spaces which has provided some very useful experience, the costs were prohibitive during a period of projected levels of usage.

Extensions to the car parks would be subject to the formal planning process and the County Council would also need to approve the proposals and any changes to the Car Parking Orders would need advancing.

Summary of options rejected

None

DECISION

That the Executive supports the extensions to the Civic Centre and Bills Park car parks at an estimated cost of £74,500 and subject to approval by the County Council, the sum

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 AUGUST 2004

IOS.98/04 CALL-IN – OFF STREET CAR PARK EXTENSIONS

Councillors Miss Martlew, Mrs Rutherford and Stockdale had called in for scrutiny Minute EX.142/04 of the Executive meeting on 19 July 2004 dealing with extensions to off-street car parks.

The decision in EX.142/04 was –

That the Executive supports the extensions to the Civic Centre and Bitts Park car parks at an estimated cost of £74,500 and, subject to approval by the City Council, this sum be vired from the budget allocated for additional car parking in Newark Terrace which was unlikely to proceed in the short to medium term.

The reason given by the Members for the call-in was to scrutinise the decision against the Off Street Parking Policy and seek clarification on budgetary matters.

The Members who had called-in the decision were then invited to expand on their reasons for call-in. The Members were seeking reasons why further car parking spaces were needed and whether this complied with the Local Transport Plan.

Clarification was also sought on the proposal to vire funding from the Newark Terrace scheme which had been included in the 2004/05 budget. Members were concerned that Overview and Scrutiny had not been formally informed that this scheme would not now be going ahead in 2004/05 and sought the reasons for this. Members had previously been informed that this site would be used for car parking in the short term and would consolidate the City Council's land holdings in the vicinity.

Members also referred to the fact that a recent planning application to extend Bitts Park car park had been refused by the Development Control Committee and clarification was sought on why a new application would succeed.

Councillor Bloxham, Environment, Infrastructure and Transport Portfolio Holder responded, indicating that the Executive believed there was a need for additional car parking spaces because a number of spaces had been lost as a result of making disabled parking spaces wider. The Civic Centre car park extension would tidy up the land upon which a portacabin had been sited and provide needed short stay car parking for City Centre shoppers. The Bitts Park car park extension had been refused by the Development Control Committee but Councillor Bloxham was of the opinion that there had been a slight misunderstanding at Development Control Committee when the matter had been dealt with. The Committee had been unaware that the County's Local Committee were in agreement with the car park extensions and that they did not affect

the policies in the Local Transport Plan. There was additional demand for parking at Bitts Park following the opening of the water feature, the extension of tennis and other leisure activities in Bitts Park and the car park was also used by City Centre shoppers. The Bitts Park car park was used to 85% capacity at peak times.

The Executive considered that these two modest increases in car parking provision were justified and so were recommended for approval. With regard to the proposals for Newark Terrace, Councillor Bloxham understood that the new owner of the site no longer wished to proceed with the sale of the site to the City Council.

Discussion then followed between Members of the Committee, Councillor Bloxham and relevant Officers at which the following points emerged:-

- (a) The proposed land acquisition at Newark Terrace would not now go ahead in the short to medium term as the new owner of the site did not wish to sell at present. The breakdown of negotiations had not been reported back to Overview and Scrutiny, although it was not normal practice to report such matters.

Members of the Committee considered that background information on the reasons for the breakdown of negotiations could have been circulated to Members with the papers for this meeting.

- (b) Members referred to the fact that Devonshire Walk car park was underused and was close to Bitts Park. Encouragement in the form of either free or reduced parking fees could be considered to enhance usage of this car park, negating the need for an extension to the Bitts Park car park.

It was noted, however, that there was no footpath from Devonshire Walk car park to the water feature in Bitts Park.

- (c) The current Local Transport Plan contained an assumption against providing further long stay car parking in the City Centre. Whilst the City Council had applied all the various measures and policies within the Local Transport Plan, the Plan contained an assumption that, by 2003, 1,250 car parking spaces would have been provided on edge of City sites for park and ride. This clearly had not happened and was unlikely to in the short to medium term. Traffic flows in Carlisle were growing at 2% per annum and shoppers would be discouraged from shopping in Carlisle if car parking provision was insufficient to meet demand.
- (d) Members were satisfied that the proposals for the Civic Centre car park should not be referred back to the Executive.
- (e) A Member referred to the reasons for refusal of the recent planning permission for an extension to the Bitts Park car park and was of the view that nothing had changed and the reasons for refusal were still valid.
- (f) A Member considered that the proposals represented a piecemeal approach to car parking provision and that a proper policy should be in place against which proposals for additional car parking could be measured.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services pointed out that a Car Parking Strategy had been agreed in August 2002 and a copy had been circulated to Members with the background papers for this meeting. He acknowledged that this Strategy was in need of review. This would be undertaken alongside a review of the Local Transport Plan which was to be undertaken by the County Council in consultation with the City Council. He had, however, taken steps to discuss with Officers of the City and County Council and City businesses options for temporary long stay parking in the City Centre area.

The revised Local Transport Plan should include a requirement for car parking spaces in the City to be reduced when park and ride was implemented to ensure the success of any park and ride scheme. Parking was recognised as a key issue for the revised Local Transport Plan.

- (g) A Member referred to Council land near the Matalan store which had been used as a temporary car park last Christmas.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services reported that the Head of Property Services was actively marketing the sale of this site for other uses but that it may be used as a temporary car park again this year if still in Council ownership.

- (h) Regarding the Civic Centre car park, a Member considered that access arrangements should be looked at with the aim of providing separate access and exit points.
- (i) A Member considered that parking was a rapidly changing picture and that current policy needed to be updated. There was a need to carry out a comprehensive review of parking policy to include park and ride and residents parking schemes and for Planning to review their policies relating to car parking provision for new development in the City Centre area.

Councillor Bloxham acknowledged that the current Parking Strategy was now out of date and should be reviewed in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan review.

- (j) A Member noted that cars were being parked in the Mayor's drive and the path leading from the Devonshire Walk car park to the Sheepmount. This should be addressed as no parking fees were payable for this parking.

In dealing with the call-in, the Chairman reminded Members that the Committee could :

- (1) refer the matter back to the decision maker, in this case the Executive, for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.
- (2) refer the matter to full Council;
- (3) not refer the matter back to the decision maker, in which case the decision would take effect from the date of this meeting.

RESOLVED – 1. That this Committee accepts the proposals for the Civic Centre car park.

2. That the proposals for the Bitts Park car park be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration for the following reasons:-

- (a) There were concerns that the reasons for refusal following consideration by the Development Control Committee of a planning application for a similar proposal for the Bitts Park car park remained valid and that the planning grounds for refusal had not been overcome.
- (b) The Devonshire Walk car park was currently under used but was in a suitable location for access to the City Centre and Bitts Park. The Executive could investigate ways of increasing usage of this car park through a review of pricing policy, rather than seeking to extend the Bitts Park car park.
- (c) The current car park strategy was now out of date and in need of review. It was noted that this was to be undertaken in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan review. This Committee considers that a comprehensive review of parking across the City, to include residents parking schemes, should be undertaken with input from this Committee.
- (d) The Committee is concerned that virement is proposed from the budget set aside for the purchase of the site at Newark Terrace, which it is noted is unlikely to proceed in the short to medium term.

3. That following discussions on the call-in, the following additional matters be forwarded to the Executive for consideration:-

- (a) the possibility of providing a separate access and exit to the Civic Centre car park.
- (b) The position regarding car parking on the Mayor's Drive and path leading to the Sheepmount from Devonshire Walk with a view to some form of control being implemented.
- (c) The provision of a path for pedestrians linking the Bitts Park water feature with the Devonshire Walk car park.

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2004

EX.157/04: EXTENSIONS TO OFF STREET CAR PARKS (Key Decision)

Portfolio Environment, Infrastructure and Transport

Subject Matter

To consider Minute IOS.98/04 of the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 4 August 2004 detailing the outcome of the Committee's deliberations on a call-in of Executive decision EX.142/04 of 19 July 2004 to extend car parking at the Civic Centre and Bitts Park car parks.

In dealing with the call-in, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepted the proposals for the Civic Centre car park.

The proposals for the Bitts Park car park were referred back to the Executive for reconsideration for the following reasons:-

(a) There were concerns that the reasons for refusal following consideration by the Development Control Committee of a planning application for a similar proposal for the Bitts Park car park remained valid and that the planning grounds for refusal had not been overcome.

Executive's response -

Councillor Bloxham, Environment, Infrastructure and Environment Portfolio Holder, considered that some of the benefits to be gained from extra car parking at Bitts Park had not been given due weight by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that he did not share the views of the Committee as detailed above. He considered that the Executive's decision to propose an extension to the Bitts Park car park was correct and should go forward.

(b) The Devonshire Walk car park was currently under used but was in a suitable location for access to the City Centre and Bitts Park. The Executive could investigate ways of increasing usage of this car park through a review of pricing policy, rather than seeking to extend the Bitts Park car park.

Executive Response -

Councillor Bloxham acknowledged that the Devonshire Walk car park was underused and that this would be given consideration as part of the charging review to be undertaken by the Executive in September/October 2004.

Councillor Knapton, Health and Community Activities Portfolio Holder, reported that he was proud of the wide scope of the play facilities now provided at Bitts Park and the fact that they were able to be used by children with disabilities. Members of the Executive did not consider it safe for parents with wheelchairs, prams and small children to use the Devonshire Walk car park as there was no adequate footpath for access to Bitts Park. Members expressed strong disapproval of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's suggestion which did not accord with the Council's status as a caring Council. The Council had a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure that access to facilities was easily available to all.

(c) The current car park strategy was now out of date and in need of review. It was noted that this was to be undertaken in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan review. This Committee considers that a comprehensive review of parking across the City, to include residents parking schemes, should be undertaken with input from this Committee.

Executive Response -

Councillor Bloxham reported that a comprehensive review of parking policy would be carried out in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan review.

(d) The Committee is concerned that virement is proposed from the budget set aside for the purchase of the site at Newark Terrace, which it is noted is unlikely to proceed in the short to medium term.

Executive Response -

Councillor Firth, Policy, Performance Management, Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder, acknowledged the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The correct procedure would be for the Executive to report to the City Council that the funding originally designated in the 2004/05 Budget for the Newark Terrace scheme was no longer required and to seek authority from the City Council for that money to be used for other purposes. The Executive would follow this process in due course.

Following discussion on the call-in, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that the following additional matters be forwarded to the Executive for consideration:-

(1) The possibility of providing a separate access and exit to the Civic Centre car park.

(2) The position regarding car parking on the Mayor's Drive and path leading to the Sheepmount from Devonshire Walk with a view to some form of control being implemented.

(3) The provision of a path for pedestrians linking the Bitts Park water feature with the Devonshire Walk car park.

Councillor Bloxham reported that the above three matters would be considered by the Executive at the appropriate time. The position regarding parking on the Mayor's Drive and path leading to the Sheepmount from Devonshire Walk would need to be considered in conjunction with the new Sheepmount development.

Summary of Options Rejected

None

DECISION

That having taken into consideration the points raised by the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Executive will continue with proposals to provide additional parking spaces at the Civic Centre and Bitts Park car parks.

Reasons for Decision

The Executive considered each of the points raised by the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee but remained of the opinion that there was a demand for additional car parking spaces at Bitts Park and that this car park provided the best access for parents with young children and for children with disabilities to the enhanced play facilities in Bitts Park. The decision to proceed with proposals to provide additional parking spaces at the Bitts Park car park was, therefore, confirmed.

The Executive noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had no objection to proposals to extend the Civic Centre car park.