

Area West Committee – 16th March 2011

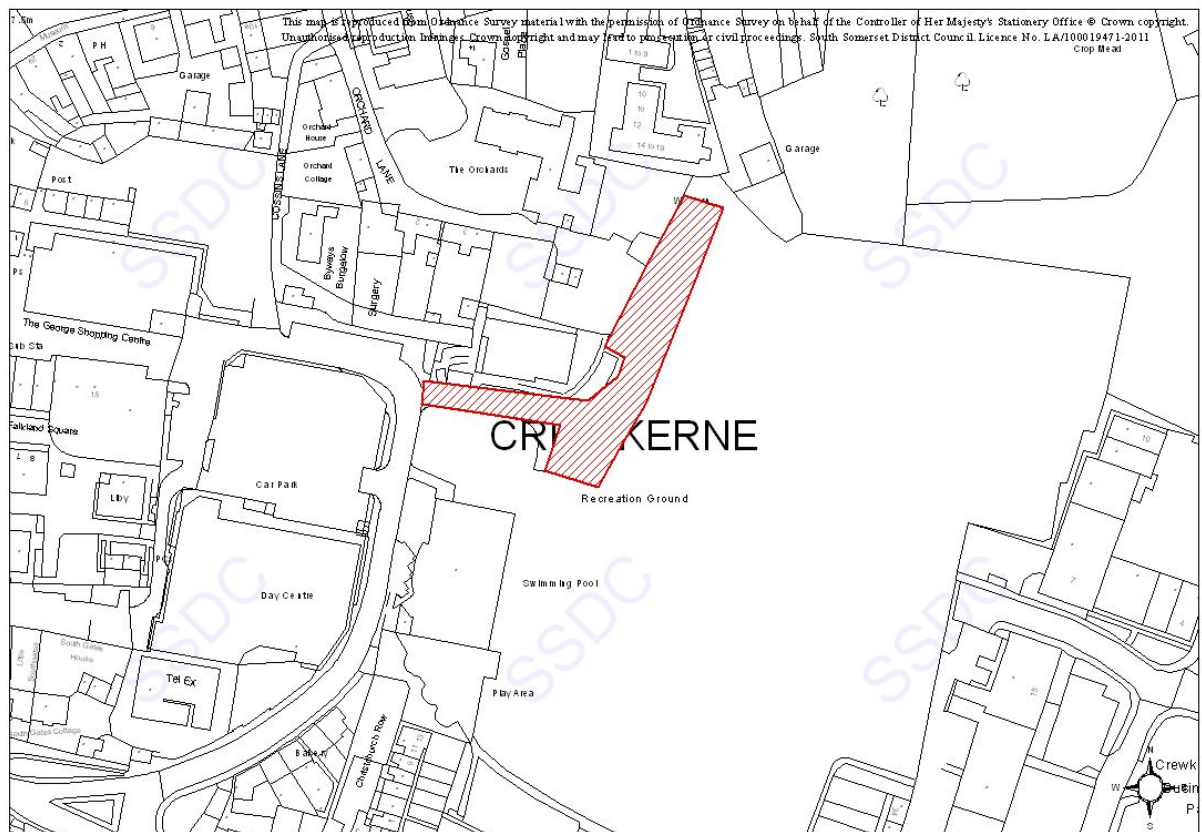
Officer Report on Planning Application: 11/00109/R3D

Proposal:	The retention of part of Henhayes temporary car park for a period of two years (GR 344363/109664)
Site Address:	Recreation Ground Henhayes Lane Crewkerne
Parish:	Crewkerne
CREWKERNE TOWN Ward (SSDC Member)	Mr. M. Best (Cllr) Mr. G.S. Clarke (Cllr) Mrs. A.M. Singleton (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Andrew Gunn Tel: (01935) 462192 Email: andrew.gunn@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	8th March 2011
Applicant:	South Somerset District Council
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr A Shaw South Somerset District Council Engineering and Property Services Council Offices Brympton Way Yeovil BA20 2HT
Application Type:	Minor Other less than 1,000 sq.m or 1ha

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application has been referred to the Area West Committee as the District Council is the applicant.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The site comprises a tarmaced area of 0.19 hectares located in the north western corner of the Henhayes sports ground. It is located to the east of the Henhayes Centre. Wooden post and rail fencing has been installed along the eastern and southern boundary of the car park.

The site currently provides 51 temporary car parking spaces, originally established following the construction of the Waitrose supermarket. Previously, the area between the football and rugby pitches provided around 180 parking spaces during the construction of the supermarket. This larger parking provision was removed at the end of the temporary permission, which expired on 02/02/2009. An additional temporary consent was granted for the current parking area in February 2010 for a period of 2 years. A decision on the previous application was delayed to allow highway concerns to be addressed. Thus, the previous application was granted in February 2010 with the 2 year temporary consent expiring on 2nd February 2011.

This application seeks a further two year consent to run until 2nd February 2013. This will provide continued additional long stay town centre parking until a satisfactory permanent solution is found.

HISTORY

08/03498/S73 Planning permission granted for the variation of condition 1 of 06/00999/COU to require the cessation of the car park use on or before 1st February 2009.

06/00999/COU Planning permission granted for use of land as temporary car park (06/10/06). Condition 1 stated:-

"Permission hereby granted shall be for a limited period of 24 months or until the opening of the decked car park proposed as part of the supermarket submitted under application No. 06/01012/FUL. Upon the expiration of that period the playing fields shall be reinstated in accordance with a method-statement and specification, including a time scale for such re-instatement, to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of any development on the site."

06/01004/FUL Planning permission granted for new Day Centre (to replace existing facility), associated access road and parking, amendments to the Orchard Nursing Home and Aqua Centre Car Parking (06/10/06)

06/01012/FUL Planning permission granted for construction of foodstore, associated service area and decked car parking (06/10/06)

Also relevant is the recent approval of new sports and changing facilities immediately to the south of this site, ref. 09/03087/FUL and the revised application 10/04095/FUL.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise,

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (adopted April 2000)

STR1 - Sustainable Development

STR2 - Towns

STR4 - Development in Towns

Policy 9 - The Built Historic Environment

Policy 40 - Town Strategies

Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006)

ST5 - Principle of Development

ST6 - Quality of development

TP6 - Parking

CR1 - Existing Playing Fields

National Guidance

PPS1 - Sustainable Development

PPG13 - Transport

PPG17 - Planning for open space, sport and recreation

PPS25 - Flooding

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

Goal 3 - Healthy Environments

Goal 4 - Services and Facilities

CONSULTATIONS

Crewkerne Town Council

No comments received.

Local Highway Authority

I refer to the above-mentioned planning application received on 18th January 2011 on which I have the following comments on the highway aspects of the proposal.

As I am sure you are aware the Highway Authority in response to the previous application at the site raised no objection. Whilst there were concerns raised regarding the potential impact upon the capacity of the junction of Bryants Row with the A356 additional information was provided which showed that the temporary car park and the spaces associated with the adjacent Waitrose Store, whilst well used, were operating below capacity and that the impact on the junction was insignificant.

Whilst no similar additional information has been provided as part of this current application I have visited the site on numerous occasions and it appears that the two parking facilities are still operating below capacity and as such to raise an objection now may be unreasonable.

Landscape Officer

I note the latest application to extend use of the temporary car park to the east of the Henhayes Centre, for a further two years.

You will know that the provision of the current temporary site was a necessity to enable the construction of the Waitrose development. Whilst the completed Waitrose site now provides additional parking over that originally supplied by the South Street car park, we are advised that there remains a need for further parking, primarily to provide for long-stay. I have not seen the figures to substantiate the case for additional spaces, but having noted the Waitrose underground car park to be little used during the week, then the need for additional parking should be justified, and I see no such evidence forming part of this application. Neither is there any evidence of a sequential search for a permanent site, and this surely should also form part of the application? Without such justification I cannot see grounds for approval.

Henhayes Field is the town's prime playing field area, it directly abutts the Conservation Area to the southeast, and is overlooked by many properties to the north, as well as the town's main leisure facilities at the field's west edge, which will in due course include the recently consented sports pavilion. As such, Henhayes Field is clearly an integral component of the town's core, with landscape and community value. The long term establishment of a car park

along its edge is not a favoured solution, and if not acceptable in the longer term, then a temporary consent is also inappropriate, other than if it establishes a time limit for a permanent solution to be found.

I see no evidence that the case is made for this further time extension of the car park, and there is no landscape support for it. However, given the current state of play I suspect that an extension may be unavoidable. To ensure the sympathetic long-term growth of Crewkerne's centre, and the conservation of its landscape assets, any potential consent should be conditional upon requiring an undertaking to develop a long-term solution for parking, that is complementary to the town's character; current needs; and future development potential. If this is part of a forward looking town centre plan - possibly along the lines of that envisaged by the EbD 6 years ago - then this interim use of Henhayes for parking might yet prove to be worthwhile.

Sport England

I note that the application involves extending the period of time to use part of the temporary car park at Henhayes as a car park. The main part of the temporary car park (which was located between the football and rugby pitches) has now been returned to playing field use, following the completion of the Waitrose store. An application to extend the period of use of the remaining part of the car park was granted on 22nd February 2010 - that permission expires on 2nd February 2011. A condition of that approval was that the land be re-instated as playing field.

As you will be aware, Sport England objected to the previous application (my letter dated 20th October 2009 refers). Our main concern was that part of the temporary car park (ie those spaces which lie at the southern end of the temporary car park) fall within the outfield boundary of the cricket pitch.

As the proposal affects land used as a playing field in the last 5 years, the consultation is statutory under the terms of the General Permitted Development Procedure Order 1995 (as amended). In commenting on any planning applications referred to us as a statutory consultee, we assess whether the proposal meets any of the 5 exceptions to our Playing Field Policy 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' (available on the Sport England website).

If we do not consider any of the exceptions apply, then we will oppose the development. Our policy relates to all or any part of a playing field or land last used as a playing field, or land allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit local plan. I have assessed the application against our national playing fields policy, and can confirm that Sport England objects to the proposal because it is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions in our playing fields policy.

Engineer

No objections.

Environmental Protection Unit

No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

8 letters/emails have been received with 7 raising objections and 1 in support of the proposal.

The objectors raise the following comments:

- How many more years will the car park stay?
- The land is public open space and should be returned to public use for general recreational use.

- This temporary use has gone on too long with no solution found.
- Only obvious land for car park close to the town is the field to the north of the rec.
- One option is to retain the temporary car park provided the council acquired additional replacement land for public open space.
- Could use underused land at the Cropmead Estate - could create a pedestrian link through to the recreation ground.
- Create an underground car park with soil and grass on top to retain recreation use.
- The reaction ground is being incrementally eroded with piecemeal development
- What chance is a solution going to be found in the next 2 years?
- Will there be repeated renewals for temporary permission?
- Youths congregate in the car park creating noise
- Only one viewpoint is considered - that of the Town Council. Decision has already been made.
- I don't believe that the Town or District Council want this to be a temporary car park.
- No progress has been made regarding an alternative site in the last 4 years.
- If the Orchards are used as an alternative, this will require an access road, most likely through the current car park.
- If the new sports pavilion is built, will the car park be returned to green field? Of course not.
- There are parking spaces in other locations in the town that should be used.

The letter of support has been received from the Co-Chairman of the Trustees of the Henhayes Centre. They comment that the car park is essential to their activities, particularly as the centre attracts many elderly people. They ask that the council keep this car park in the longer term and to acquire other green space adjacent to Henhayes to make up for the loss to the users of Henhayes Recreation Ground.

CONSIDERATIONS

The key issues are the need for the car park, impact on the use of the sports pitches, the impact on highways, and the impact on residential amenity.

Need for the Car Park

The commencement of the Waitrose development resulted in the loss of a significant proportion of the town centre car park in South Street. This necessitated a requirement to find a short term parking solution before a satisfactory long-term solution was found. It is regrettable that to date, this long-term solution has yet to be found, hence the submission of this application to extend the temporary time period for a further 2 years.

In order to make an informed assessment as to whether this temporary car park is still required to serve Crewkerne, information and/or evidence was sought, particularly in relation to whether any recent car park surveys had been undertaken to ascertain levels of occupation. A copy of an occupancy survey of the car parks in Crewkerne undertaken between 20th October and 29th October 2010 was received. This has been attached as an appendix to this report (Appendix A).

It is accepted that this is a fairly limited survey covering only a short snapshot in time. However, it does show that on a majority of days, the Henhayes car park had a very high occupancy rate with only a handful of spaces available. This reflects more anecdotal evidence that this is a well used car park. Moreover, on the majority of survey days, over 50% of the spaces were occupied by long stays. This latter point is not surprising given the conclusion of the Council's Car Parking Strategy, published in 2006, which stated that the Council should adopt as a priority for Crewkerne, the establishment of additional capacity to include Long Stay provision for workers during 2007-2008. It is regretted that this need has not been found to date but it does add weight to the argument to retain the Henhayes car park in the short term.

In addition to the need for additional capacity for Crewkerne identified in the Car Parking Strategy, the survey undertaken in October 2010 reveals that whilst the two existing permanent long stay car parks in the town (Abbey St and West St) have spare capacity (around 40-45 spaces between them most days), this spare capacity is very likely to be fully absorbed should the Henhayes car park no longer exist. Moreover, the loss of the Henhayes car park without any suitable replacement parking provision is very likely to mean that both the Abbey Street and West Street car parks would exceed 85% occupancy, which is considered to be the optimum occupancy for car parks.

It should also be noted that based on the car park study undertaken in October 2010, the South Street car park operates at a near 100% capacity, thus there is no or very little ability for this car park to absorb any of the current Henhayes users.

Impact on Sports/Recreational Use

Sport England have maintained their objection to the application on the basis that the proposal does not meet any of their exceptions to their playing fields policy. However, the boundary of the car park, as defined with wooden post and rail fencing, will remain in the same location as previously approved. Importantly, the rugby, cricket and football pitches are able to be satisfactorily accommodated within the recreation ground and available for use. On this basis, it is not considered that the car park has such a detrimental impact on the use of the sports pitches to warrant a refusal. Moreover, whilst it is accepted that the original proposed lifespan of this car park has grown, it is a temporary consent, and thus any consent will be conditioned to ensure the use ceases after 2 years along with the reinstatement of the playing field within 4 weeks of the expiry date.

Highways Impact

The Highway Authority are satisfied that the usage associated with the car park does not result in a significant impact on the junction of the A356 with Bryants Row. Therefore, the Highway Authority do not raise an objection this application.

Residential Amenity

It is not considered that the normal use of this car park would give rise to any undue adverse impact on the amenities of the occupiers of Wyvern Court. Concern has been raised by one resident about noise levels at night caused by cars and noisy youngsters. However, the police should be contacted regarding concerns about any antisocial behaviour that may be occurring in the car park.

CONCLUSION

Whilst it is regrettable that no long-term replacement has been found to date for the Henhayes car park, it is considered that the need to maintain adequate town centre parking whilst a long-term solution is found is important. It is clear that the car park is well used and it is not considered that the objections raised could justify a refusal of the application. It is therefore recommended that a 2 year temporary consent to run from 2nd February 2011 to 1st February 2013 is granted.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Temporary Consent

JUSTIFICATION

The further temporary use of this land as a car park until 1st February 2013 would ensure the continued provision of adequate car parking facilities to serve the town centre whilst permanent provision is found without undue impact on highways safety. It would not create any adverse impact on sporting facilities in the town or result in undue detriment to the character and appearance of the locality or harm to residential amenity. As such the proposal

complies with policies ST5, ST6, TP6 and CR1 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006).

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. The use of this land as a car park shall cease on or before 1st February 2013. Within 4 weeks of the cessation of this use details of the reinstatement of the playing field, including a method statement, specification and time scale, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved the reinstatement shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details unless agreed otherwise in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate re-instatement of the playfield, the permanent loss of which would be contrary to policy CR1 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006).

Appendix A

Crewkerne Car Parks

Date: 20 October
2010

10am -
11am

Car Park	Abbey St	West St	Henhayes	South St 2
Capacity	55	71	44	60
Empty Spaces	11	30	13	3
Season Tickets	13	13	2	21
Long Stay	8	20	21	0
Short Stay	23	8	8	36

Date: 21 October
2010

2.20pm -
3.15pm

Car Park	Abbey St	West St	Henhayes	South St 2
Capacity	55	71	44	60
Empty Spaces	19	32	17	2
Season Tickets	14	12	0	15
Long Stay	15	13	21	0
Short Stay	7	14	6	43

Date: 22 October
2010

10am -
11.30am

Car Park	Abbey St	West St	Henhayes	South St 2
Capacity	55	71	44	60
Empty Spaces	15	30	3	2
Season Tickets	15	13	3	16
Long Stay	23	18	24	0
Short Stay	2	10	14	42

Date: 27 October
2010

11am -
12.00

Car Park	Abbey St	West St	Henhayes	South St 2
Capacity	55	71	44	60
Empty Spaces	0	11	6	4
Season Tickets	16	10	2	21
Long Stay	24	22	22	0
Short Stay	15	28	14	35

Date: 28 October
2010

2.30pm -
3.30pm

Car Park	Abbey St	West St	Henhayes	South St 2
Capacity	55	71	44	60
Empty Spaces	16	26	3	4
Season Tickets	13	13	10	17
Long Stay	18	21	22	0
Short Stay	8	11	9	39

Date: 29 October
2010

9am -
10am

Car Park	Abbey St	West St	Henhayes	South St 2
Capacity	55	71	44	60
Empty Spaces	13	33	1	23
Season Tickets	15	12	2	13
Long Stay	20	21	29	0
Short Stay	7	5	12	24