

	Executive Committee 28th November 2018 Covent Garden Displacement Plan	Agenda Item No. 5
Title	Covent Garden Displacement Plan	
For further information about this report please contact	Paul Garrison 01926 456333 paul.garrison@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	Clarendon and Brunswick	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive 25 th July 2018 Minute number 37	
Background Papers	Creation of additional car parking in Leamington, Executive Committee, 07/02/18. Reports to Planning Committee 9th January 2018: W/17/1700 Covent Garden Multi-Storey Car park, Russell Street, Leamington Spa; W/17/1701 Riverside House, Milverton Hill, Leamington Hill; and accompanying documents Car Park Strategy report, Executive 28th June 2017; Car Park Strategy working papers including Leamington Car Park User Survey 31/10/17; Multi-storey car park survey report – update, Executive 29/06/16; Council HQ Relocation and replacement of Covent Garden car park project parts A and B, Executive 20/04/16 Leamington Car Park Displacement Strategy, Executive 25 th July 2018	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes – Ref 979
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No
This will be relevant at the level of each individual project's implementation.	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief /Deputy Chief Executive	25/10/18	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	25/10/18	Rob Hoof
CMT	06/11/18	Chris Elliott, Andrew Jones, Bill Hunt

Section 151 Officer	25/10/18	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	25/10/18	Andrew Jones
Finance	25/10/18	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	30/10/18	Cllr. Mrs. Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Users of the car parks in Leamington Spa have been consulted on the closure of Covent Garden through a public survey.		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 Members will be aware from the statements made at Council on 14 November 2018 that the final consideration of HQ relocation project will no longer be considered on the agenda for this Executive meeting. It is now intended that these will now be presented to an Executive meeting in January and any funding proposals considered by a Council meeting in February, on dates yet to be arranged. Consequently, it is now unlikely that the Covent Garden car parks will close before March 2019.
- 1.2 The Council has given a commitment to local businesses that its displacement plan will have been finalised, widely communicated and that the supporting staffing and signage arrangements will be in place before the car parks close.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on the progress made in implementing the proposals agreed by Executive on 7th February 2018 and considers the recommendations made by the independent parking specialists (WYG), jointly commissioned by the Council and BID Leamington to review the draft displacement plan proposals.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Executive note the progress made on the previously agreed proposals, last considered when an update report was presented to the July Executive, in respect of:
- The provision of additional public car parking capacity at WDC owned sites at Archery Road, Court Street, Princes Drive and Riverside House.
 - The revised allocation of long and short stay car parking spaces at the St. Peters multi-storey car park.
 - The recruitment of additional staff to support the management and delivery of the car parking displacement plan.
 - The delivery of an effective signage strategy to ensure smooth traffic flows and clear information on parking options.
 - The development of a communications plan to ensure there are clear messages about parking availability and Leamington being "open for business" during the displacement period
- 2.2 That Executive note that an independent marketing specialist is being commissioned to assist the Council to develop the marketing and communication strategy for the displacement period.
- 2.3 That Executive note the findings of the specialist parking consultant, WYG, jointly engaged by Warwick District Council and BID Leamington to review the effectiveness of the Warwick District Council's draft Displacement Plan and the recommendations they have made on how this should be strengthened, as set out in section 3.3
- 2.4 That Executive approve the recommended responses to the 29 recommendations contained within the WYG report, as set out in Appendix 3.
- 2.5 That Executive agree that the provision of additional temporary car park capacity at the Edmondscote Track is explored in detail and that the necessary planning consents are submitted subject to the outcome of the current feasibility work, and the provision of a seasonal park and ride service is explored further, as set out in section 3.4
- 2.6 That, subject to approval of recommendations 2.4 and 2.5, Executive agree to release funding of up to £150,000 from the Car Parks Repairs and Maintenance

Reserve to fund the delivery of the additional recommendations not currently within the proposed Displacement Plan.

- 2.7 That Executive note the commitment given by the Council to local businesses that the Covent Garden car parks will not be closed until the Displacement Plan has been finalised and that a further update on progress will be provided as part of the final reports that will be presented to Executive and Council in early 2019 on the outcome of the Stage One work on the relocation project.

3. **Reasons for the Recommendations**

3.1 Recommendation 2.1

- 3.1.1 Members will recall that the Executive approved proposals to create additional public car parking provision on WDC land at Court Street, Archery Road, Princes Drive and Riverside House. Planning applications were subsequently submitted and considered by the November Planning Committee in respect of the first two sites with the latter two due to be considered by Planning Committee on 11 December 2018.
- 3.1.2 The application for the creation of a formal 66 space car park at Archery Road, to replace the existing informal area which has capacity for 47 vehicles was refused by Committee contrary to officer recommendation. Officers are currently reviewing the reasons for refusal and are planning to re-submit an application for the lighting associated with a smaller, formalised car park for consideration by the January Planning Committee. Some works can be done under permitted development rights.
- 3.1.3 The application to extend the existing surface car park at Court Street, with the creation of an additional 42 parking bays was granted. Construction work is underway, managed by our specialist construction consultant, and it is anticipated that this will be complete by the end of January 2019.
- 3.1.4 The application for the proposed extension at the existing Princes Drive car park, at the western end of Victoria Park will, if approved, create a further 30 parking spaces in addition to the existing 64 bays.
- 3.1.5 The planning application for the Riverside House car park is to allow it to be used for public car parking at weekends during the whole of the displacement period. This application has been submitted by the Council's Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) 'PSP Warwick LLP' rather than the Council itself. Subject to approval it will provide a minimum of 260 public parking spaces at weekends.
- 3.1.6 The LLP has requested that, to allow it to deliver its s106 obligations in respect of the planning consents it obtained for the Riverside House and Covent Garden sites, changes are made to the existing parking arrangements at St. Peter's multi-storey car park with, as previously reported, increased prioritisation for short-stay visitors.
- 3.1.7 The Council has agreed that dedicated short stay parking will be made available at the point that the Covent Garden car parks close. It is currently proposed to dedicate the lower floors of the car park to short stay car parking (maximum stay of 3 hours) with the remaining floors being available for unrestricted, all-day parking and for season ticket holders. However, it is proposed that this initial allocation of floors will be reviewed throughout the displacement period, allowing future variations of short stay/long stay designation to be made based on actual demand.
- 3.1.8 To facilitate this flexibility of use the Pay on Foot management system will be temporarily removed and replaced by Pay and Display machines when the proposed

changes are implemented in the New Year. Design work on the location of payment machines and new car park signage is being progressed. All necessary work will be ready in advance of the closure of the Covent Garden car parks..

- 3.1.9 The July Executive approved proposals to recruit additional front line and back office staff to support the implementation of the displacement plan.
- 3.1.10 A permanent Project Manager has been appointed and is in post, and will be lead officer for the development and delivery of the Displacement Plan. Two additional Rangers have also been recruited to provide resilience during the displacement period and will be in post from December 2018. Interviews have been taken place for the Business Support Officer posts and one person has been appointed so far. Further rounds of recruitment will take place to fill the remaining vacant posts.
- 3.1.11 Comprehensive and clear signage of the locations of car parks will be a critical element of the displacement plan. A specialist traffic management company has been engaged to devise an appropriate signage strategy. They have proposed that a series of information signs are erected at the locations, set out at **Appendix One** and retained throughout the duration of the closure period for the Covent Garden site. The signs are currently being prepared and will be erected prior to the date of the closures, once that date has been finalised. In addition, advanced warning signs will be installed at key locations prior to the Covent Garden car parks being closed to provide advanced public notice regarding the timescales for closure.
- 3.1.12 In addition, Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) Traffic and Road Safety Group has been commissioned to design and install new permanent highway signage to complement the temporary signage. Permanent changes to the highway signage will be made in advance of the proposed closure of Covent Garden car parks.
- 3.1.13 The provision of clear information, made widely available to local businesses and visitors, before and during the displacement period is of the utmost importance to the success of the Plan.
- 3.1.14 The draft communications strategy, set out at **Appendix Two**, recognises that a comprehensive plan is multi-disciplinary, requires input from external stakeholders and multi-stranded. The draft shown is illustrative only and both the content and dates within it will change as it is developed further. To support this a work a Communications Group has been established comprising officers from the Economic Development and Events teams within Development Services, the Car Parking team within Neighbourhood Services and the Media team within the Chief Executive's Office. External stakeholders such as WCC, BID Leamington, Leamington Chamber of Trade, bus companies and other relevant partners will also be invited to join this group.
- 3.1.15 The further development of the draft communications strategy will be guided by the appointment of an external specialist as detailed in section 3.2 below.

3.2 Recommendation 2.2

- 3.2.1 BID Leamington and other stakeholders have recommended that the Council engages a locally based independent marketing expert to review the effectiveness of the current proposals for the communication of the displacement plan given the importance of ensuring that communication is timely, appropriate and effective.
- 3.2.2 This constructive suggestion has been welcomed and, at the time of writing, the process of engaging a local company is underway. Depending on the timing of an

appointment an addendum report will be issued or a verbal update provided at the Executive meeting.

3.2.3 The brief for the appointed company is attached in **Appendix Four**.

3.3 Recommendations 2.3 and 2.4

- 3.3.1 Members will recall that following concerns raised by stakeholders as to the adequacy of the proposed displacement plan independent transport management specialists, WYG, were jointly appointed by Warwick District Council and BID Leamington to review the draft proposals.
- 3.3.2 WYG has undertaken an extensive analysis of the impact of the Covent Garden closure, assessed how the current capacity that will be lost at the site (468 parking spaces) could be replaced elsewhere in the town and made a series of recommendations as to how the draft Plan could be strengthened prior to its implementation.
- 3.3.3 The WYG report's Executive Summary is available on the Council's website and a link is available [here](#).
- 3.3.4 In broad terms the WYG report concludes that the proposed displacement plan would replace the loss of spaces from Covent Garden in full but that there would be an imbalance between short and long-stay provision. It also highlights the change to the geographical distribution of parking with limited displacement capacity available in the north of the town centre.
- 3.3.5 In their report WYG make 29 recommendations on how additional capacity could be created during the displacement period, the imbalance of provision that they identified could be addressed, signage improved and a robust communication strategy implemented to ensure that the Plan addresses the needs of different users and effectively manages parking in the town during the temporary closure period to minimise its impact on visitors to Leamington and the for local business community.
- 3.3.6 If all the recommendations within the WYG report were adopted in full the impact on the available capacity within the town would be as shown in **Table 1** below. This is based on average parking space availability at peak times (1pm on weekdays and 1pm at weekends). Additionally the WYG assessment of alternative car park supply provides both a 100% and 85% sensitivity test. At 100% it assumes every car park space is used, however guidance from the Chartered Institute of Highway Transportation suggests 85% is a more appropriate target to limit search time for spaces. The table sets out the position at the start of the proposed displacement period, i.e. prior to the opening of the 100 space public car parking provision at Station Approach in November 2019. The supply figures for the alternative provision available include a (prudent) estimate of spare capacity in existing on-street and off-street parking locations, the new provision envisaged in the initial draft Plan and the additional capacity that would be created were all the WYG recommendations to be adopted. The resultant position would be:

Table 1

Day @ 13.00 (before Station Approach car park opened)	Demand from CG	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan plus WYG recommendations (85%)	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan plus WYG recommendations (100%)	Impact on Spaces based on 85% threshold	Impact on Spaces based on 100% threshold
Weekday					
Short Stay	236	333	392	97	156
Long Stay	232	241	284	9	52
Total Spaces	468	574	676	106	208
Saturday					
Short Stay	236	235	276	-1	40
Long Stay	232	381	448	149	216
Total Spaces	468	616	724	148	256

3.3.7 However, officers have concluded that not all the recommendations made by WYG are either capable of implementation nor would be prudent to do so. The recommendations and the proposed WDC responses to them are set out at **Appendix Three**.

3.3.8 In summary the recommendations relating to the creation of new car parking capacity that can not be implemented are:

- The creation of an additional 19 parking spaces at Archery Road. The refusal of the application to create a formal 66 bay car park by Planning Committee now means that circa 47 spaces could be made available at this site. Due to seasonal demand from park users these spaces would only be available during autumn and winter months, therefore these figures have not been included.
- The recommendation for 10 new on-street parking spaces at Leam Terrace has been ruled out by WCC following consultation.
- The recommendation in respect of changes to the on-street parking provision at Newbold Terrace has been ruled out due to a need to ensure sufficient levels of long-stay parking availability.
- The recommendation in respect of changes to the on-street parking provision at Newbold Terrace East is being progressed through a pre-planning process presently but is subject to some significant potential challenges due to its location. As such is considered prudent not to include the figures in capacity forecasts at this point.

3.3.9 The impact of these proposed responses is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2

Day @ 13.00 (before Station Approach car park opened)	Demand from CG	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan with Deliverable WYG recommendations (85%)	Existing Supply plus Displacement Plan with Deliverable WYG recommendations (100%)	Impact on Spaces based on 85% threshold	Impact on Spaces based on 100% threshold
Weekday					
Short Stay	236	306	360	70	124
Long Stay	232	196	230	-37	-2
Total Spaces	468	502	590	34	122
Saturday					
Short Stay	236	135	159	-101	-77
Long Stay	232	382	449	150	217
Total Spaces	468	517	608	49	140

3.3.10 However, officers have also identified options to create additional capacity that did not feature in the WYG report figures but have been included in **Table 2**. These include the 50 spaces to be provided at Riverside House in the week for use by season ticket holders, the creation of an additional 20 spaces through changes to the layout of the car park at Riverside House, and some additional spaces at Chandos Street Car Park.

3.4 Recommendation 2.5

3.4.1 In addition to the options being explored in 3.3.9 a detailed assessment of the potential to create additional, temporary, parking capacity at the Edmonscote Track is proposed.

3.4.2 It is estimated that the site could potentially provide c. 80 additional spaces, although planning consent would be required. Initial discussions have identified potential concerns regarding the current open aspect of the site and its relationship to the flood zone but it is considered feasible to bring forward a temporary application even if the site would need to be restored to current use at the end of the temporary period.

3.4.3 If temporary provision can be created at the site it could assist with the summer seasonal pressure identified in the WYG report by providing a short-term seasonal parking option during August when the National Bowls is taking place and 'Park and Stride' public parking for major events such as the Peace Festival, Food and Drink festival and Art in the Park.

3.4.4 However, the main benefit would be to free up capacity for additional long stay parking provision throughout the displacement period. Offering this site to WDC staff as a 'Park and Stride' option would free up additional weekday public parking provision at Riverside House, over an above the current proposal for a minimum 50 public spaces for season ticket holders.

- 3.4.5 It is, therefore, recommended that, subject to the successful conclusion of the necessary feasibility work, a planning application is submitted as soon as possible.
- 3.4.6 However, this location is unlikely to provide suitable parking during the Christmas shopping period, the other period of seasonal pressure identified during the WYG report. It is, therefore, proposed that officers explore the provision of a free to use weekend only Park and Ride service during the Christmas 2019 period to bring shoppers into Leamington town centre.
- 3.4.7 Discussions are progressing with Warwickshire College which could provide c500 spaces, but other locations will also be investigated.
- 3.5 Recommendation 2.6
- 3.5.1 The proposals in section 3.3 regarding the implementation of some of the new proposals contained within the WYG report's recommendations and the cost of any suitable works at Edmondscote Track will fall outside the existing budget provision made available following previous reports on the displacement strategy.
- 3.5.2 The estimated costs of ground reinforcement works and lighting at Edmondscote Track are estimated at £60,000 and the cost of marking out of on-street parking bays at Portland Place East and Portland Place to create c.70 additional spaces is estimated at £20,000.
- 3.5.3 The potential cost of a seasonal, free to use, Park and Ride service for the Christmas/New Year period 2019/20 is estimated at £50,000.
- 3.5.4 It is proposed that these costs are met from the Car Parks Repairs and Maintenance Reserve but it would be prudent to allow for a small contingency of £20,000 for costs arising from any of the work proposed for the Displacement Plan.
- 3.5.5 However, there is also one other significant expense associated with the WYG recommendations, relating to the potential upgrade of the existing variable message signs (VMS), owned by WCC, to support roads users to find available and appropriate parking spaces.
- 3.5.6 The opportunity to upgrade the VMS to incorporate adaptable free text signage would allow for greater flexibility in the highways messaging provided on key routes into the town centre. This would not only be of benefit during the displacement period but also provide an on-going benefit during future years when major events are taking place and, of course, during the lead up to and delivery of the Commonwealth Games events.
- 3.5.7 The estimated cost of this upgrade is c£175k which is not currently funded. Officers are refining the business case for this work and will submit a proposal for consideration prior to the closure of the Covent Garden car parks.
- 3.6 Recommendation 2.7
- 3.6.1 Members will be aware from the statement made by the Leader at Council on 14 November 2018 that the final consideration of HQ relocation project will no longer be considered on the agenda for this Executive meeting. It is now intended that these will now be presented to an Executive meeting in January and any funding proposals considered by a Council meeting in February, on dates yet to be arranged.

- 3.6.2 The Council has given a commitment to local businesses that its Displacement Plan (except relating to the new Station Approach car park; Newbold Terrace East additional parking; and the park and stride facility at the Edmondscote Track; none of which are accounted for in Table 2) will have been finalised, widely communicated and that the supporting staffing and signage arrangements will be in place before the car parks closes.
- 3.6.3 A further report confirming that all the necessary arrangements are in place will, therefore, be presented as part of the decision making process on the relocation project.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

- 4.1.1 The Council’s FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several key corporate projects, including the HQ relocation project. The proposals within this report assist the delivery of that key project.
- 4.1.2 The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council’s FFF Strategy:

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposals		
The additional car parking alternatives being provided will ensure that the community will still be able to access shops and a range of other facilities during the displacement period.	New car parks will have additional lighting and CCTV to improve the public perception of safety. The increased Ranger resource will enable an increased staff presence in all car parks in Leamington.	The various strands of the Displacement Plan will ensure that any impact on the town centre resulting from the temporary closure of the Covent Garden car parks is mitigated as much as possible.
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our

<p>trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours</p>	<p>customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services</p>	<p>assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money</p>
Impacts of Proposal		
<p>The proposals will ensure that there are sufficient staff resources to adequately support the implementation of the proposed Displacement Plan.</p>	<p>Car parking is an important front line service used by staff, residents, businesses and visitors. These proposals provide both short and long term benefits to car park users.</p>	<p>Closure of the Covent Garden car parks will result in some lost revenue to the Council. The alternative car park arrangements will provide some mitigation for this loss in income. The Displacement Plan's proposals will add another circa 300 parking spaces to the town's parking stock.</p>

4.2 Supporting Strategies

Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies and the relevant ones for this proposal are explained below.

4.2.1 Local Plan

The Council has an agreed a strategy statement "The future and sustainable prosperity for Warwick District" which amongst other things seeks to:

- Support the growth of the local economy and;
- Maintain and promote thriving town centres.

4.2.2 Leamington Town Centre Vision

The Leamington Vision Strategy sets out the priorities for Leamington Town Centre in the short, medium and long-term. One of the actions set out in the vision is to invest in town centre parking including replacing Covent Garden multi-storey car park.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

5.1 The funding required to deliver the capital works relating to the additional car parks, additional staff resources, signage strategy and communications plan has previously been agreed by Executive in February and July.

5.2 Additional one-off funding of £150k is required to deliver the proposed works at the Edmondscote Track, additional on-street parking developments and seasonal Park and Ride Service recommended by the independent consultants to supplement the existing Displacement Plan. This is proposed to be funded from Car Parks Repairs and Maintenance Reserve which currently has an unallocated balance of £407,000.

6. Risks

- 6.1 The planning applications relating to the proposals for additional public car parking at Princes Drive and Riverside House at weekends will be considered at the 11 December 2018 Planning Committee. There is a risk that one or both applications might be refused which would have a significant impact on the Council's Displacement Plan.
- 6.2 There is a risk that, despite the best endeavours of the Council and the mitigation measures being put in place to minimise disruption throughout the displacement period, the public will choose not to use the spare and additional capacity available. This risk can be mitigated through the successful deployment of a robust communication strategy.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 The option to implement all of the recommendations from the parking consultant has been considered but this is not considered to be achievable or necessarily desirable upon consideration of advice from partner agencies and the impact adoption of the declined recommendation would have on the availability of short and long stay parking capacity.
- 7.2 Suggestions have been made by Councillors and by the local Chamber of Trade that any decision on the HQ scheme and closure of Covent Garden car park and by extension, of the Displacement Plan. However, as the Covent Garden car park has Alkaline Silica Reaction (ASR) and the monthly testing indicates that as this is spreading there is a real risk that a deferral could see the car park have to close because the ASR has spread to an extent that makes the whole facility unsafe. Therefore regardless of the decision on the HQ proposal itself the work on the Displacement Plan should proceed in any event. It will of course also add circa 300 additional parking spaces to the town's stock on a permanent basis.