



Cabinet

Tuesday, 12 September 2023

Update on Car Parking in Bingham

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor R Inglis

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Bingham Town Council's (BTC) Parking Strategy 2015 identified a need for additional long stay car parking. This was supported by the Bingham Community Led Plan 2016, with 91% of respondents supporting a long-stay chargeable car park. This was further supported by the 2018 Bingham Masterplan which proposed a new long stay car park.
- 1.2. There is a long-held ambition and perceived need for additional car parking in Bingham. BTC has identified a potential site for a long-stay car park which is within their ownership. BTC is leading this project.
- 1.3. In summer 2022, BTC approached the Borough Council with a request for support for the car park project. The Borough Council agreed to provide project support and identified £25k funding (originally Strategic Growth Board (SGB) and now allocated from UKSPF) to progress the project, in addition to £50,000 which BTC has allocated from their own reserves.
- 1.4. This report sets out:
 - The current position regarding car parking provision in Bingham
 - Work completed to date to progress the long-stay car park project
 - Potential next steps with a view to:
 - Better understanding the parking situation in Bingham, and
 - Improving town centre parking (if demonstrated) by developing a Bingham car parking strategy supported by Bingham Town Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) in their role as Highway Authority, with responsibility for transport and highway strategy, including on street car parking.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) recognises work completed to date to support Bingham Town Council's ambition for a new long-stay car park for the town;

- b) recognises the challenges presented by Network Rail's current lack of support for the scheme and the delay this presents to delivering a long-stay car park at the preferred site;
- c) supports the next steps as outlined in the report as a short-term solution to improve town centre parking, which could become a long-term solution if successful (paragraph 4.32);
- d) concurrently to c), asks the Director Growth and Economic Development to work with Bingham Town Council to progress an outline business case for a long-stay car park at the Butt Field site, subject to the caveats set out in 4.36 of this report, the outcome to be brought back to Cabinet; and
- e) sets up a Bingham Car Park Strategy Group to comprise membership from Rushcliffe Borough Council, Bingham Town Council and Nottinghamshire County Council as set out in the Terms of Reference in paragraph 4.40.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. There is not an easy solution to the provision of long-stay car parking in Bingham. Parking is not a borough council statutory responsibility and rests with Nottinghamshire County Council. Bingham Town Council has identified a site for a long-stay car park which is within their ownership. The site identified has significant challenges and an outline business case is required before it can be assessed for suitability.
- 3.2. The Borough Council proposes working in partnership with the Town Council and County Council to prepare a parking strategy for Bingham, including short term alternatives to the new long stay car park.

4. Supporting Information

Car parking in Bingham

- 4.1. The Borough Council currently owns and operates three public town centre car parks in Bingham, with combined spaces of 165, with additional spaces available at the Market Place operated by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC):

Newgate Street:

- Free long stay (max 12 hours)
- 106 spaces
- 7 blue badge spaces

Needham Street:

- Free up to 2 hours
- Long stay £20 (up to 12 hours)

- 39 spaces
- 4 blue badge spaces

Market Place:

- Free short stay (max 2 hours, no return within 3 hours)
- Permit holders only on market day
- 20 spaces

- 4.2. As Newgate Street and Market Place are free car parks and no ticket is required to be purchased, data is not available regarding their usage and so it is not possible to determine whether or how often they reach capacity.
- 4.3. While Needham Street is free for up to 2 hours, users are required to claim a voucher from the ticket machine which provides usage data. The data collected provides information about the number of car parking users on an annual and monthly basis. The turnover per space per day at Needham Street is on average 11.3, which means that each parking space is occupied by 11 different vehicles each day. This is a higher turnover rate than other town centre car parks in the Borough, however without more granular parking data, it is not possible to determine whether or how often this car park is at capacity.
- 4.4. By way of comparison, the Borough Council currently owns and operates car parks in other town and village centres across the Borough:

Area	Parking Spaces	Population	Ratio of parking spaces: residents
West Bridgford	276	36,487	1:132
Cotgrave	112	8206	1:73
Radcliffe on Trent	69	7204	1:104
Keyworth	89	6821	1:76
Bingham	165	10,108	1:61

- 4.5. Free short-stay parking is also available at Bingham Arena on Chapel Lane, where there are 208 spaces. Whilst intended for visitors to the leisure centre and not the town centre, currently this car park is free for 3 hours, with a flat rate of £25 over 3 hours (free all day for permit holders working at the Enterprise Centre).
- 4.6. This comparison would suggest that Bingham has sufficient parking provision relative to its population size compared to parking across the borough, including factoring in the anticipated housing growth. This data indicates Bingham already enjoys more parking per population than across all other village and town centres and twice that of West Bridgford, which is also a destination town attracting visitors from a wider area. There may be other factors which impact on car parking in the town and further review and data is required.
- 4.7. Free parking is also possible on many residential streets within and in the near vicinity of the town centre, which visitors make use of in addition to the RBC owned car parks. The Borough Council does not hold any data about on-street parking as it is the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council.

Bingham Town Council-owned land north of train station

- 4.8. As stated above, there is a long-held ambition and perceived need for additional car parking in Bingham. BTC consider that the most appropriate solution is for a new long stay car park, which, it is hoped, would free up capacity in the centre for short-stay visitors.
- 4.9. A BTC owned piece of land (edged red within Figure 1) located north of Bingham train station, close to the new Bingham Arena leisure centre and Butt Field, has been identified by BTC as potentially being suitable for accommodating a surface level long-stay car park.

Figure 1: Site Location



- 4.10. The site was originally developed as Bingham Town Gas Works in 1854. The area of the gas works was converted to allotments in the late 1980's, but these were closed in 2007 and the area was determined as 'contaminated land' under Part IIA of the 1990 Environmental Protection Act by Rushcliffe Borough Council in February 2008 due to elevated concentrations of heavy metals and other pollutants.
- 4.11. A potential site layout was prepared in 2013 by HSSP Architects (see figure 2) which suggested that the site could accommodate 233 vehicles. However, subsequent assessments have suggested this could be as low as 170 spaces.

Figure 2: Potential car park layout



Site investigations

4.12. In August 2021 BTC commissioned the following reports, which were produced by Waterman Group:

- **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal** – survey did not record any protected species on site or barriers to development, however further ecological assessments required, and works would be required to be carried out within specific months. There is also a requirement for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.
- **Geo-environmental Assessment** – survey identified some site constraints, such as made ground, a well (which would need to be located, filled and capped), buried concrete from former structures, contaminated soil. Further surveys/investigations required.
- **Utility Assessment** – various utility services are located in the tarmac access road that bisects the site. This may have implications when constructing the car park and the utility providers will have specific requirements to be met.
- **Preliminary Environmental risk assessment** – desktop investigations highlight ground contamination with presence of heavy metals, hydrocarbons, asbestos and other pollutants. Recommends further investigation including soil sampling, shallow pits, geotechnical analysis. If materials to be taken off-site, there is specific process to follow.

4.13. Whilst the preliminary investigations did not identify material obstacles to developing the land for car parking, the findings will impact on the cost of development to appropriately and responsibly deal with the site abnormal conditions set out above. Further investigations may reveal unknown challenges.

Rushcliffe Borough Council support

- 4.14. In July 2022 BTC approached the Borough Council with a request for support to progress the car park project. The Borough Council offered officer support to ease capacity issues, in addition to £25,000 of funding from the Strategic Growth Board. This was subsequently reallocated from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). It was agreed that the UKSPF would be used in the first instance, with BTC's £50k budget allocation being drawn upon once the £25k of UKSPF had been spent.
- 4.15. Working with the Clerk at BTC, the Borough Council commissioned Integrated Transport Planning Ltd (ITP) to prepare an access feasibility study for a car park at the identified site. This was completed and presented to the BTC Car Park Committee in January 2023. The study identified that access would be possible via Parsons Hill Court (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Potential vehicular access route via Parsons Hill Court



- 4.16. The adoption of the new road at Parsons Hill Court is due to take place once the road is completed, which will be in around 12 months' time. This will ensure that access will be possible should the project progress.
- 4.17. The Borough Council requested pre-application planning advice for the site on behalf of BTC, which was received in February. While the use of this land as a public car park was considered acceptable in principle from a planning point of view, a number of matters were raised by external consultees which will require very careful consideration. The most significant of these is the opposition of Network Rail (NR), to the development of the car park. Until this matter can be

resolved, it is unlikely that a favourable recommendation to support the granting of planning permission would be forthcoming.

- 4.18. As a result of this pre-application advice, the Borough Council approached Network Rail and began discussions with a number of different teams within Network Rail and also East Midlands Rail. The Borough Council has since facilitated a number of meetings and discussions with Network Rail, BTC and NCC in an attempt to work with Network Rail to remove barriers to enable their support of the development. Further details about Network Rail's current position are set out below.
- 4.19. In March 2023 the Borough Council commissioned ITP to carry out further works including:
- Scoping – engaging with Nottinghamshire County Council to discuss the requirements of a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment to support the planning application.
 - Parking accumulation – reviewing any existing parking data held and determining additional studies required.
 - Preparation of an introductory transport statement for the site (if required by NCC).
- 4.20. ITP have met with NCC and been provided with data from a parking survey conducted by NCC in 2014. As this was carried out almost 10 years ago and several things have changed in the town in this time, a new parking survey is required. This survey is expected to take place in September/October 2023. This survey will provide data on the existing level of demand for parking in the town, identifying whether there is a need for an additional car park and if so, of what size and type (e.g long/short-stay parking).

Parking Strategy

- 4.21. It is important to note that any changes to parking provision would need to be considered in the context of the wider parking strategy for the Town, working closely with Bingham Town Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. This would take into account the impact on the two existing car parks. In order to attract users to a long-stay car park in this location, the two existing car parks would likely need to become exclusively short-stay, which is a change that would need to be considered as part of Rushcliffe's Off-street Car Parking Strategy.
- 4.22. The impact on on-street parking would also need to be considered and discussed with NCC, who are responsible for this, as there is a clear risk of pushing long-stay visitors onto residential streets.

Moor Lane pedestrian level crossing

- 4.23. Network Rail were consulted as part of the recent pre-application planning process and expressed concerns about the increased foot traffic over the pedestrian level crossing which could be expected with the development of a

new car park at the site proposed. Pedestrian level crossing is shown in blue below in figure 4.

Figure 4: Moor Lane pedestrian level crossing and vehicular level crossing



- 4.24. Network Rail are also concerned about the increase in foot traffic that has already occurred following the development of the Bingham Arena. It is important to note here that Network Rail were consulted as a statutory consultee when plans for Bingham Arena were submitted. At this time, Network Rail expressed concern about the impact on the pedestrian level crossing and requested alterations to the deck to improve safety. These works were agreed with NR and completed by the Borough Council ahead of the opening of Bingham Arena.
- 4.25. Network Rail have expressed an aspiration to close the pedestrian level crossing due to the user numbers triggering a higher risk assessment score, however RBC, BTC and NCC are all concerned that this would push an increased number of pedestrians to use the Chapel Lane level crossing (shown with a yellow arrow on the above in figure 4). This route receives a heavy flow of traffic with narrow footpaths for pedestrians and therefore presents a risk if it became the only pedestrian crossing point in this area. This cannot be supported without an updated risk assessment taking place. Closing the crossing would remove direct pedestrian access to developments north of the train station, including the proposed car park and businesses located on the Moorbridge Industrial Estate. The alternative route is across the bridge at the station (shown with a green arrow on the above in figure 4) which only has stepped access and therefore is not an accessible route for all.
- 4.26. The reliance on the Moor Lane level crossing for local residents and businesses is a key consideration when reviewing the feasibility of developing a long-stay car park in this location. Closure of this crossing is likely to have a significant impact on local residents and businesses in their daily activities and is also likely to impact on trade in the town centre.

- 4.27. A number of work streams are currently underway with a view to resolving the situation relating to the pedestrian level crossing and allowing the car park project to progress. These include:
- Network Rail to revisit all possible technological solutions to improve safety at the pedestrian level crossing and report back to RBC and BTC. Network Rail to provide an explanation where solutions are considered and deemed inappropriate. Network Rail's initial review has determined that there are no technological solutions available to lower the risk assessment of this crossing.
 - Local engagement event led by Network Rail, to promote safer use of the pedestrian level crossing.
 - Network Rail to review risk assessment for Chapel Lane level crossing.
 - Network Rail to refresh plans for an accessible bridge at the train station, which would provide an accessible route from north to south. Applications for funding by East Midlands Rail have been unsuccessful. If plans are updated, new funding sources can be applied for, which the Borough Council has committed to support where practicable
- 4.28. As is reflected in the pre-application planning advice received, until this matter can be resolved it is unlikely that a favourable recommendation to support the grant of planning permission could be forthcoming. In other words, it is likely there will be a binary choice: a new long stay car park in this location will lead to the closure of the Moor Lane level crossing, thereby undermining pedestrian and cycle routes between locations north and south of the railway.

Site constraints/considerations

- 4.29. As outlined, there are a number of challenges associated with the identified site. In many cases site constraints can be overcome but dealing with them will bring additional cost and this will impact on the viability of the project. This includes:
- contamination of the land due to its former use (as explained in 4.12) – there could be considerable cost associated with remediation if the site cannot be capped, or if any material is required to be removed from site. This is still an unknown.
 - Access through the industrial estate could be challenging due to the number of cars that park on the roads in this area. An option to alleviate this could be a one-way system, however this would mean adopting an additional access point.
 - Network Rail's concerns as outlined in the above paragraphs.
 - Environmental considerations – retention of mature trees and hedgerows.
- 4.30. Whilst the site does have constraints as identified there are benefits to this site and the opportunity it presents to be a long-stay car park for Bingham:
- The site is in the ownership of BTC so there would be no additional land purchase costs for them to develop the car park
 - In the event that the identified issues from Network Rail's perspective can be resolved, the site has good access to the town centre as well as the train

station and could provide additional parking capacity for the town centre and accessible parking at the train station, which currently has extremely limited provision and nothing for the northern platform.

- 4.31. All of these factors will be areas of consideration which will be explored in more detail in the outline business case.

Short-term Solutions

- 4.32. In the context of the challenges bringing forward the car park, including the potential closure of the Moor Lane pedestrian crossing, the need for an outline business case and the complications/added costs of the contaminated land, the timescale for delivering a long-stay car park in this location could be some years off. It is imperative therefore to pursue some short-term options that could provide parking relief in the town centre within the next 12 months.

- a) RBC Officers to explore opportunities to utilise any surplus parking in the town. In the first instance this might be at Bingham Arena where there are 208 spaces. Use of the car park will be included in the car parking survey being carried out in September to understand surplus capacity that could be used for long-stay parking.
- b) Opportunities like this to be explored with other local businesses who may also have surplus parking spaces that can be re-utilised
- c) Solutions to be explored which utilise only the current parking capacity, but in new ways. Once the results of the new parking survey are obtained, it may be possible to identify opportunities to improve parking availability in Bingham by making changes to the existing provision (in terms of charging and length of stay in the current car parks). The Borough Council will work with NCC to identify possible changes to current provision and will develop plans for a pilot scheme to be trialled in spring 2024.
- d) Explore the promotion of other means of accessing Bingham Town Centre, eg public transport, considering the environmental impacts of car journeys
- e) The Borough Council will liaise with Nottinghamshire County Council and Bingham Town Council to prepare a parking strategy for Bingham. This will be informed by the parking survey expected to be carried out in September.

Next steps

- 4.33. As stated above, RBC officers are supporting the Town Council by working with ITP to commission an updated parking survey and to facilitate discussions with Network Rail, and the County Council.
- 4.34. It is proposed that the Borough Council continues to provide officer support to progress this work, attending the Town Council's car parking committee at agreed intervals.
- 4.35. Concurrently with the above, to procure an outline business case for a car park at the identified site. This would enable a decision to be taken by the Town Council about whether delivery of a new car park at this location is something they wish to progress and if so, to consider routes to funding.

4.36. It is proposed that the preparation of an outline business case be funded from the remainder of the UKSPF allocation, with the balance coming from the Bingham Town Council's allocated £50k budget. This proposal is subject to a number of caveats:

- The completion of the parking survey. If the survey does not suggest that a new car park is required to meet the parking demands in the town centre, then this proposal will need to be re-considered.
- BTC's support for the proposal, which will need to be formally confirmed.
- The receipt of satisfactory quotes for the preparation of the outline business case.

4.37. Subject to Cabinet approval, it is suggested that authority to approve the procurement of a consultant to prepare an outline business case, subject to the factors above, be delegated to the Director Development and Economic Growth where Borough Council budget is to be used.

4.38. In addition to the next steps outlined here, it is proposed that the Borough Council pursues the workstreams as outlined above in 4.32.

4.39. It is proposed that a report is brought to Cabinet in spring 2024 to provide an update on progress made against the above proposals and the outline business case.

4.40. In order to inform Cabinet and due to the importance of reviewing parking in Bingham holistically, with Bingham Town Council and Nottinghamshire County Council due to their respective roles and duties, it is proposed to set up a new Bingham Car Park Strategy Group with the following proposed Terms of Reference and Membership:

4.40.1. Terms of Reference:

- The purpose of the Group is to oversee and review the workstreams set out above.
- To liaise with Network Rail and East Midlands Rail in relation to clarifying their positions regarding the proposal for a long-stay car park on BTC owned land, as per figure 1.
- To initially meet on a monthly basis and aim to report back to Cabinet in spring 2024.

4.40.2. Membership:

- Chair: Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety - RBC
- Ward Member for Bingham - RBC
- Bingham Town Council Lead councillor
- Notts County Council Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
- Officer support to be provided by RBC, and Bingham Town Council and NCC if possible

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. The Borough Council could take the decision to withdraw support, with BTC progressing the project independently. However, based on current information, the concerns of BTC and Bingham residents relating to parking in the town are sufficient to warrant support from the Borough Council in the form of officer support and funding as outlined above. Operational and financial viability will be key considerations and will have to be proven prior to the Council looking to develop a site and acquiring it from Bingham Town Council. The alternative is that Bingham Town Council would have to take the project forward in which case the challenge would be to have a joined-up car parking strategy between the Borough, Town and County Councils. If it is not viable for the Borough Council, it is unlikely to be viable for the Town Council.
- 5.2. An alternative site could be considered. However, as far as both the Borough Council and Town Council are aware there are no other appropriate sites in or near the near vicinity of the town centre. If such a site became available, it would be considered.
- 5.3. The potential of changing the existing car parking mix at the existing Borough Council car parks will be considered (eg capacity for long-stay at the existing short-stay car parks) along with any other locations near the Town. Again, such options will be subject to operational and financial viability.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. There is a risk that work will begin on producing an outline business case, subject to the caveats detailed above, and it becomes apparent that the project is not viable. The risk here is that funding invested to get to that point could be considered wasted. However, the production of an outline business case is the only route to ultimately deciding whether a car park at the identified location is financially viable and need is demonstrated. To limit potentially abortive costs, the outline business case may make assumptions and use high level costs. If a viable business case is demonstrated at this stage, further investment can be made to evidence the assumptions made.
- 6.2. Network Rail's opposition to development at this location remains a significant risk. Without support from Network Rail, it is highly unlikely that planning permission would be obtained. RBC are facilitating conversations with Network Rail and all key local stakeholders including the local MP to try to find a resolution to allow the project to progress at this site, subject to a viable business case and demonstration of need.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

It is proposed to invest in the development of an outline business case which is anticipated would cost in the region of £20,000. As outlined at paragraph 4.14, this could be funded from the remainder of the £25k allocated from UKSPF and the £50,000 allocated by Bingham Town Council.

Any future reports will need to cost out the delivery of a car park should the identified site be considered the preferred option, and this will need to include a mechanism for funding that cost.

Part of the business case and Bingham parking strategy will be to review car parking charges in Bingham, and this has to be considered in the context of both the Council's wider Off Street Car Parking Strategy and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Any such scheme will need to be affordable, sustainable and prudent. Existing Bingham car parks are estimated to cost the Council around £20k per annum currently, without allowing for further capital expenditure (i.e resurfacing of the car parks in the future).

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

7.3. Equalities Implications

Any new car park development or changes to existing car parking arrangements in Bingham would be subject to an equality impact assessment and would be required to comply with relevant equalities legislation.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Supporting BTC to address parking challenges will ensure that residents of Bingham and the surrounding areas can access support and facilities in the town as well as utilising and supporting local businesses.
Efficient Services	There are no links to this priority in this report.
Sustainable Growth	Supporting BTC to address parking challenges is intended to ensure that Bingham has the necessary infrastructure to continue to have a thriving and vibrant town centre, as the area continues to grow over the coming years.
The Environment	Any outline business case will be required to demonstrate significant consideration has been given to the environmental impacts of any proposed development. In addition to the development of an outline business case, officers will be working to promote active travel into the town centre where this is possible.

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) recognises work completed to date to support Bingham Town Council's ambition for a new long-stay car park for the town;
- b) recognises the challenges presented by Network Rail's current lack of support for the scheme and the delay this presents to delivering a long-stay car park at the preferred site;
- c) supports the next steps as outlined in the report as a short-term solution to improve town centre parking which could become a long-term solution if successful (paragraph 4.32);
- d) concurrently to c), asks the Director Growth and Economic Development to work with Bingham Town Council to progress an outline business case for a long-stay car park at the Butt Field site, subject to the caveats set out in 4.36 of this report, the outcome to be brought back to Cabinet; and
- e) sets up a Bingham Car Park Strategy Group to comprise membership from Rushcliffe Borough Council, Bingham Town Council and Nottinghamshire County Council as set out in the Terms of Reference in paragraph 4.40.

For more information contact:	Leanne Ashmore Director Growth and Economic Development 0115 914 8578 lashmore@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	
List of appendices:	