

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
16 OCTOBER 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Adrian Chapman, Executive Director for Place and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Andy Coles, Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services, in consultation with Councillor Marco Cereste, Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration.	
Contact Officer(s):	Nick Carter, Service Director Growth and Regeneration	07950 854161

DISPOSAL OF THE DICKENS STREET AND WELLINGTON STREET CAR PARKS

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Executive Director, Place and Economy	Deadline date: 16 October 2023
<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approves the disposal of the former Dickens Street and Wellington Street car parks. Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Corporate Services, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy, the Interim Director of Legal and Governance, and the Cabinet Member for Legal, Finance and Corporate Services to take all necessary steps to facilitate the decision in Recommendation 1, including completing due diligence, approving the final terms of disposal and entering into any necessary agreements. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is submitted to Cabinet as a referral from the council's Corporate Leadership Team for Cabinet to consider the disposal of an asset that is held in the Place and Economy Directorate.

The financial detail and rationale of the potential disposal are set out in the Exempt Annex.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval for the disposal of assets, namely the Dickens Street and Wellington Street car parks.
- 2.2 This report is for the cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.3, *'To determine any key decision ...'* and 3.2.4, *'To be responsible for budget planning, monitoring and expenditure/savings over £500,000, including Discretionary Rate Relief ...'*
- 2.3 There is an exempt appendix attached to this report that is NOT FOR PUBLICATION by reason of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council. The public interest test has been applied to the information contained within this exempt appendix and it is considered that the need to retain the information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
---	-----------	----------------------------------	------------

4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The car parks are located at a key gateway to the city centre. This area of the city is currently spatially incoherent and environmentally unattractive. It is in need of a comprehensive regeneration scheme that can deliver an improved environment and social benefits for new and existing communities as well a new gateway into the city centre.

4.1.1 Car Parking Study

A study of car parking in the city has been used to show the usage of PCC’s public car parks between April 2022 and February 2023, and to identify the opportunities that this information may offer – to accommodate new developments, to release car parks for development, and to intensify the use of existing car parks. The study included each of the PCC car parks, as well as the on-street parking meters. It has identified that the Dickens Street and Wellington Street car parks are not well used.

The two car parks are allocated for mixed use development in the Council’s Local Plan adopted in July 2019. The Local Plan will remain in place until a new Plan is adopted by the Council in 2026.

4.1.2 Car Parks Site Opportunity

Lidl, the current owner of part of the Dickens Street car park site, has formed a consortium and has come forward with a new proposal for a comprehensive regeneration of the area which also incorporates the Wellington Street site. The proposal includes residential, food and beverage, electrical vehicle charging, and retail uses and would be subject to planning permission for any development.

The scheme proposed, if approved, could deliver social and environmental benefits for new and existing communities in the form of new development, employment, new homes, and an attractive gateway to the city centre.

The proposed development could also deliver financial benefits to the Council in terms of business rates, council tax and a significant capital receipt from the asset.

4.1.3 Dickens Street Car Park

The Council disposed of a portion of land contained within Dickens Street car park and the current landowner of this parcel is Lidl. Planning consent, for the portion of land, was refused for a supermarket on highway grounds and the site has since remained in an overgrown and unsightly condition.

The disposal of this portion of land has left PCC with an irregular shaped piece of retained land for parking purposes. The car park is not well utilised with the lowest income per space per day of all PCC car parks.

4.1.4 Wellington Steet Car Park

There are two leases and a licence in place for a small portion of the Wellington Street car park. This is the largest car park, and it performs below average for the income it generates per space, and the number of transactions per space.

The details are in the Exempt Annex.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 The following outlines how the recommendation links to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The Economy & Inclusive Growth

Environment

A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed. It concludes that the sale of the land will have no direct carbon emissions.

Jobs & Money

A capital receipt will be achieved from the sale.

Our Places & Communities

Places and Safety & Health and Wellbeing

This area of the city is currently spatially incoherent and environmentally unattractive for what is a significant gateway into the city centre. The disposal will allow for future developments to potentially be brought forward in the area.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This recommendation has been considered by:
- Corporate Leadership Team – September 2023
 - Cabinet Policy Forum – October 2023

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 The sale of the two car parks will generate a capital receipt.

Following disposal and subject to planning permission, the car parks could accommodate a new mixed-use development including residential and retail uses. This could regenerate an area of the city that is currently spatially incoherent and environmentally unattractive and is also a key gateway into the city centre.

A future development, if planning permission is granted, could also secure income to the Council in the form of business rates and council tax, as well as the capital receipt.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The recommendation is put forward to seek approval to dispose of the car parks and to be able to take all necessary steps to facilitate the sale including negotiating with third parties.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 **To do nothing** – This option was discounted as the car parks are currently underutilised. Also, this area of the city is in need of regeneration through new development that benefits new and existing communities.

10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Financial Implications

Financial implications are set out in the Exempt Annex.

10.2 Legal Implications

The Council has powers under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 which includes requirements to obtain best consideration which will need to be taken into account when agreeing the terms for the sale of the property.

10.3 Equalities Implications

There will be a loss of two disabled car parking spaces. This is the only negative equality implication to be considered.

Wellington Street has two disabled parking bays and Dickens Street none.

The nearest alternative disabled parking would be on-street at Brook Street (290 yards) or Crawthorne Road (352 yards). There are also disabled bays on St Johns Street near Bishops Road.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

11.1 Car Parking data analysis 2022-23.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 - Exempt Annex