

SUBJECT:	Beaconsfield Common Land - Car Parking
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services
	Prepared by - Head of Environment

Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to discuss parking on Beaconsfield Common Land and consider the way forward.

Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This matter is related to the Council's medium-term aims of a thriving and sustainable district, which protects the Green Belt and character of the area and enhances the quality of the built environment.

Background.

- 3.1 The Council are the managers of the common land in the old part of Beaconsfield that is shown in yellow and green on the plan at Appendix A by virtue of a Scheme of Management under the relevant common land legislation. This land is either owned by Bucks County Council (BCC) or Hall Barn Estates (HBE). There is also adjacent blue land owned by HBE that is not within the common.
- 3.2 A working group has met in 2010 consisting of the Council, BCC, HBE, and the Town Council (TC) to discuss the parking on the common land. Concerns had been raised that the current largely uncontrolled nature of the parking is causing local difficulties and that there are times when no parking is available. The meeting explored whether greater parking controls should be introduced and whether additional adjacent parking could be created. It was agreed that a parking survey should be carried out to see if there is a problem that needs to be addressed.
- 3.3 The current Scheme of Management, the current Byelaws made there under, and the ability to make relevant byelaws have up until now provided very limited controls on the parking on the common land. Enforcement has been limited to discouraging vehicles being advertised for sale, removing abandoned cars and removing unauthorised traders such as food vans.
- 3.4 The parking on the common land is unregulated, spaces are not marked out and cars can be parked by anyone for any period of time. The parking is used extensively by residents, visitors, shoppers, workers in the area and possibly by commuters. Phase 1 of the environmental improvements scheme in 04/05 on the common land attempted to address some parking issues for example by design discouraging large vehicles parking.
- 3.5 The car parking survey was carried out by RTA associates. The report concludes that the theoretical parking capacity of the common land of 425 spaces is often exceeded and that there are many conflicting demands for the available parking from many different types of users. A significant amount of parking is occupied by people who work in the old town and this reduces the parking available for

visitors, shoppers and other short term users. Residents with no off street parking can find it difficult to park.

- 3.6 Improvements in the management of the available parking could be achieved if controls were introduced but any controls on the length of stay would displace parking into adjacent residential streets and this would likely cause problems which in turn would require additional measures to control. RTA's report recommendations are attached at Appendix B:
- 3.7 Officers have investigated whether it would be possible to provide further long parking in the vicinity. Planners have been consulted and given that there are other potential options for resolving any parking issue, there are no special circumstances which would justify considering a site in the Green Belt.
- 3.8 This matter was considered at the Environment PAG on 3rd February 2010. At that time it was agreed that recognising the difficulties of reconciling the different interests of users of the common land and the uncertainty over the future direction of civil parking enforcement, the Cabinet Member has decided to request the officers to explore further the possibilities for introducing byelaws which could control parking on the common land. The investigations should include for report to the working group of interested parties, as and when appropriate, and a further report to the Policy Advisory Group in due course.
- 3.9 Officers provided a verbal update on progress on this matter at the Environment PAG on 22nd July. At that time Officers were awaiting further information from DEFRA as to whether existing or new byelaws could be used to control parking.
- 3.10 This matter was further considered at the Environment PAG on 7th February 2011 and considered the following two options:

Option 1 - Explore land swap and release of current land from common land

Under this option, the current land would be released from its common land status by designating an adjoining area of open space of the same size as the current common land as common land following the process detailed in the report.

Option 2 - take no further action on this matter

The PAG did not favour pursuing option 2 for the reasons given in the report.

A member expressed the view that the issue of parking on the Common Land should not be dealt with in isolation but that a holistic approach should be adopted to deal with parking generally in Beaconsfield. The Cabinet Member undertook to seek the comments of Beaconsfield Ward Members on the issue and to arrange a further meeting to discuss the option with the Town Council, Hall Barn, BCC and District Councillors.

4. Discussion

- 4.1 Officers and the Portfolio Holder have met with representatives of the Parish Council and Hall Barn Estates during May. It was clear from these discussions that there was no clear consensus as to the way forward at this time.

- 4.2 It was suggested that the Council could engage with the Chamber of Commerce to see if there was any way of persuading the offices to behave more responsibly, encourage them to produce green travel plans and persuade them to use their own parking spaces for their staff. It is not clear what results if any this would have.
- 4.3 Members views are therefore sought as to what further action should be taken on this matter.
- 4.4 In addition there is an opportunity to enhance pedestrian safety and prevent further unauthorised parking at the area near the Saracen’s Head pub. Some old white posts exist on the corners of London End and Windsor End, and Wycombe End and Windsor End. These need replacing and it is proposed to install some black cast iron bollards similar to the ones recently installed on the opposite corner.
- 4.5 Members are asked to consider the installation of bollards in this location. The cost of removing the old metal posts and installing approx 17 new removable bollards will be in the region of £10,000. Should Members approve this officers will liaise with the County Council to progress this. There is a sum of £243,000 in the capital programme for phase 2 improvements at this site.

5. Resource and Wider Policy Implications.

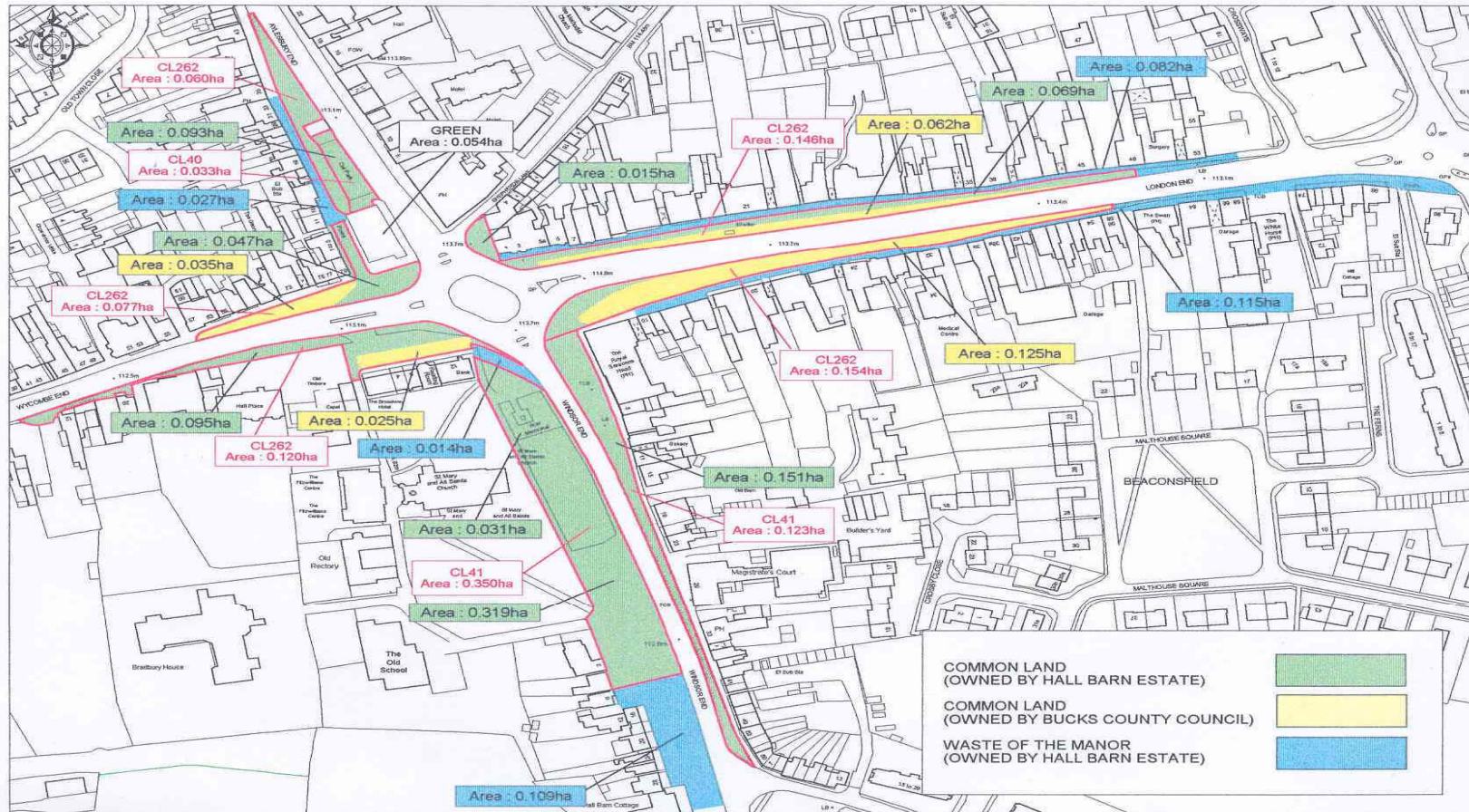
- 5.1 If Members decided to progress further option 1 above then there would be extensive officer time required during a period of increasingly limited officer resource. This could be alleviated if other parties were willing to make significant contribution to the work required.
- 5.2 The £10,000 for the new bollards would be taken from £243,000 in the capital programme for the phase 2 environmental improvements leaving a balance of £233,000.

6. Summary.

- 6.1 Environment PAG Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to advise the Portfolio Holder regarding:
 - 1. What further work officers should undertake with regard to the current status of the common land and any potential land swap.
 - 2. Whether to allocate £10k from the existing capital programme (phase 2 improvement works) for the installation of bollards as detailed above.

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Background Papers:	Services working file

Beaconsfield Old Town, Common Land and Waste of The Manor



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RTA report recommendations

- i. Introduce parking controls on the "common lands" with a suitable limit or limits on length of stay;
- ii. If charges are to be levied introduce a tariff structure which maximises choice for users by including a range of time bands; e.g. ½ hour, 1 hour, 1½ hours, 2 hours;
- iii. Make provision on each of the Ends for parking for the disabled;
- iv. Make provision on each of the Ends for loading and unloading;
- v. Introduce additional parking restrictions on the approaches and exits at the roundabout;
- vi. Ensure that any proposed parking bays do not obstruct footways;
- vii. Mark individual bays to maximise the capacity of the parking areas;
- viii. Consider parking permits for residents of the Ends who do not have off street parking facilities;
- ix. Consider visitor parking permits;
- x. Monitor displacement of longer stay parking into neighbouring residential streets and consider where necessary additional parking controls and permit parking schemes.
- xi. Ensure that the rationale behind a new parking scheme is fully understood by the public.