

Date: 27 May 2008

Report: WOOD LANE CAR PARK, GRASSINGTON

Purpose of the report

1. To provide the information that Members need in order to take a final decision on the retention or disposal of Wood Lane car park. A plan showing the car park and its location is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework, in particular its objective 'to manage all aspects of the Authority's business so as to make the most effective use of our resources' (Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08), and 'to investigate options and decide on the future of Castle Bolton, Wood Lane and Linton car parks and toilets'.

Background

3. At its meeting on 19 February 2007 the Finance and Resources Committee considered a paper titled 'A comparative review of car parks and toilets'. The review used a questionnaire to assess all of the Authority's car parks and co-located public toilets. Scores were given out of 10 on how well a property met 'NP purposes' and also on 'service delivery importance'. A total score of less than 5 out of 20 indicated that the property was not fulfilling National Park objectives or purposes in any significant way, and should be considered for disposal or a change of management. Wood Lane car park scored 'nil'.
4. The cost of maintaining the facilities was also compared with the income generated by each site, and it was concluded that Wood Lane car park was projected to make a small amount of income. In this regard, members should note that parking at Wood Lane is currently by residents' permit only. The Authority does not operate a ticket machine for the site. There are ten marked parking spaces, though at least twelve vehicles could park on the site, depending of course on their size and how they are parked.
5. The review therefore identified that Grassington Wood Lane Car Park did not contribute materially to the work of the Authority. Consequently, Members resolved that 'officers undertake further investigations into the practicalities of disposing of Grassington Wood Lane Car Park.'

6. After the meeting in February 2007, correspondence was received from local people, and from Grassington Parish Council, giving comments on the matter. Together with the outcome of the further investigations called for by the Committee, these were reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 3 December 2007. A copy of the relevant document is attached as **Appendix 2**. The further investigations had shown that whilst local residents clearly considered this car park as a valuable local amenity, it still did not meet the purposes of the Authority. However, the report to the meeting in December 2007 pointed out that, alongside other local authorities, the National Park Authority is likely to come under the national requirement to review its property portfolio with a view to releasing appropriate land for housing. More importantly the Authority currently has an adopted policy that “it will do all it can, within its remit, to support the provision of Affordable Housing in the National Park”. Members may recall that this policy was adopted as a response to the Cams House planning case. It has been developed over recent years as the problem of affordable housing has become more acute. In the light of all the information, the Finance and Resources Committee on 3 December 2007 resolved that “subject to an appraisal of all options for further use of the site, including the appropriateness of the site to provide affordable local housing, Grassington Wood Lane car park be retained for the time being”.
7. The matter was considered again by the Finance & Resources Committee on 8 February 2008, following discussions with the Planning Officer and with the Craven Rural Housing Enabler. Other options for the site were also considered.
8. The Craven Rural Housing Enabler (CHRE) noted that the housing need in Grassington over the five years from 2005 had been estimated at 65 units, but that, to date, only 8 units have been built, and there is a significant backlog in satisfying demand (source: Housing Need Survey carried out by David Cumberland Housing Regeneration Ltd, 2005). The CRHE believed that the site could offer an opportunity to contribute towards the affordable housing needs identified by local residents, but identified two issues:
 - **The size of the site.** For a housing scheme in such a rural location to be viable for a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), there would need to be a minimum of two units accommodated on the site.
 - **Cap on Housing Corporation Funding.** RSLs are only permitted to purchase land for £5,000 per plot, so if only two units were accommodated on this site, the maximum that an RSL could pay would be £10,000 for the full site, a figure that would be considerably less than the open market value of the site.

Subsequent feedback from Home Housing indicated that two social housing units could be accommodated on the site.

9. The Finance and Resources Committee on 8 February 2008 also considered the advice of the Area Planning Officer, which confirmed that the site lies within the development boundary for Grassington and, given the size and layout of the site, the Planning Officer considered that it would be suitable for housing (either open market or affordable housing). Local plan policy H1 states that "where the development is for two or more dwellings the National Park Authority will seek to negotiate the

provision of up to 50% affordable housing to meet a defined need". In the Planning Officer's view, if one of the houses was to be local affordable housing, it should be subject to the normal restrictions relating to this type of property within the Park.

10. Members were advised that the site does offer some potential to meet local affordable housing needs and, whilst there are covenants as to where any building could be constructed on the site (see below), in the view of Home Housing's architects, these are not sufficiently restrictive to preclude the building of residential accommodation. This does not mean that such accommodation would necessarily receive planning approval, since it may not be possible to develop a design for the site that dealt with the physical and legal constraints, delivered the required accommodation and met relevant planning conditions. However, these would be matters to be considered as part of any planning application. The report added that there were also two other matters that members might wish to consider:
 - Grassington Parish Council had indicated that it believed the need for residents parking for access to the local amenities is a higher priority than affordable housing. Feedback from planning surgeries suggested that a number of Grassington residents held the same view, and the Authority could anticipate a substantial number of objections to any planning application for housing on the site.
 - The Parish Council might have concerns as to why this site was not taken into consideration when they were searching for sites a couple of years ago and they also may feel that they have had enough Affordable Housing development at the moment, since the Garrs End Lane development has only just been completed.
11. At the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 8 February 2008, the Chief Executive reported that Home Group Housing Association had carried out a feasibility study of the site and had indicated that it would be likely to submit a planning application for two affordable dwellings. However, a number of issues were raised by members in support of the retention of the car park, including:
 - a. it being suggested that while the Authority was keen to attract tourists to the Park, the site provided a valuable car park for local visitors to, and residents of, Grassington, particularly those elderly and less able, who would find it difficult to walk from the car park at Colvend to the shops in Grassington;
 - b. the need for further housing in the area being questioned, as properties in Garrs End Lane were unoccupied;
 - c. the possible detrimental impact on the viability of shops in Grassington if the car park was closed;
 - d. reference to a petition, which a member had brought to the meeting, in support of the retention of the car park that had attracted significant local support in a short period of time.
12. In the light of all the information before it, the Committee decided that:
 - a. it be confirmed that the Authority has no further use for the site;
 - b. the parish council be contacted in respect of the interest from the Housing Association; and
 - c. a further report be made to the March meeting of the Authority to include advice on the legal position in respect of the land and of any restrictions on its future use, and any further comments including from the parish council, to

enable members to decide on the need for further consideration of the matter and the process for that consideration.

13. The matter was reported to the Authority at its meeting on 25 March 2008. At that meeting, the Authority heard a question from Mr Eric Rowley of Grassington Parish Council (and the Chairman's response), and a statement from Mr J. A. Birdsall, to the effect that local people were not against affordable housing, but the issue was the location of it; and he said that 460 people had signed a petition in favour of the car park being retained, and that local people were angry about secrecy by the Authority. Mr Cecil Hammond also spoke briefly, to explain that the car park was used by, and important to, local people. The Authority decided that it would determine the matter at this (May 2008) meeting, when all the issues could be brought together in one paper.
14. Members should note at this juncture the very important point that they are not now deciding whether planning permission should be granted for the development of this site, whether for housing or for any other purpose. That would be a decision for the Planning Committee to take, based on an application submitted to the Authority, information on the responses of statutory consultees and all other relevant planning matters, and officers advice on such an application. The decision facing the Authority at this meeting is whether the Authority should retain this site, and if so for what purpose, or whether it should dispose of it, and if so on what basis.

Other Relevant Information and Considerations

The legal position

15. Two questions which have been raised during debate on this matter are whether the Authority actually owns the car park, and what are the restrictions on development of it. In fact, this property was registered by the Land Registry on 3rd November 2005. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is the sole registered freehold owner, with absolute title to the property. There is no significance in the relatively recent date of registration. The current system of land registration in England started in 1925, and still is not complete. The Land Registry approached the Authority, encouraging it to register voluntarily any property it owned which was not already registered. Wood Lane car park was registered on that basis.
16. The only restriction on the Authority's ownership of the property is that it must observe and perform the covenants contained in a conveyance dated 27th June 1927. The covenants are:
 - a. Not to erect any building other than a private dwellinghouse or dwellinghouses on that part of the land which fronts Wood Lane; and
 - b. No building shall be erected nearer than 20 yards to Wood Lane, with the exception of a garage, which may be erected at the north easterly corner of the land, immediately adjoining Wood Lane.

As requested by Members, the full text of the covenants is set out in **Appendix 3** to this report. These covenants were imposed by the conveyance of 1927. The conveyance to Skipton RDC by Ms Jean Sugden was on 23rd March 1967, and in that deed the Council promised to observe and perform the covenants. Ms Sugden bought the land which is now the car park in November 1965, the vendor being the

executors of the gentleman who had purchased it (and originally agreed to the covenants) in 1927.

17. The history of the land, other than as mentioned above, is not actually of direct relevance to the question of to what use it can now be put, but as the history is referred to in some of the correspondence (not always accurately), the position as it appears from the deeds is as follows. The conveyance of 27th June 1927 was of a much larger plot of land than YDNPA now owns. Other parts of that larger plot were sold off over the years, (one for the adjoining Police station) and eventually the remainder not already sold off (which is the land that YDNPA owns) was sold on 12th November 1965 to a Miss Jean Sugden of Linton in Craven. On 23rd March 1967, she sold the land to Skipton Rural District Council for one pound. There was nothing in the conveyance about the use to which the land was to be put, apart from Skipton RDC agreeing to observe the 1927 covenants. Minutes of Skipton RDC's Public Works Committee record that the owner (ie Miss Sugden) had offered to give the land to the Council for a public car park, and demonstrate that Skipton RDC accepted the land for this purpose, and spent money converting the land into a car park. That does not oblige YDNPA to continue using the land as a car park. There is nothing in the legal documentation constituting a trust, or requiring the land to be used in perpetuity (or at all) as a car park.
18. Officers' understanding then is that on local government reorganisation in 1974, the land was in the first place held by Craven DC (as the successor to Skipton RDC), but that they passed the deeds to North Yorkshire County Council in September 1984, presumably on the basis that the land was being used for National Park purposes. It would then become the property of YDNPA, when this Authority was established as a legally separate entity. The property would formally pass into the ownership of YDNPA on 1st April 1997, under Article 15(1)(a) of the National Park Authorities (England) Order 1996.
19. If the Authority were to consider selling the land otherwise than on the open market, it would be necessary to consider the legal constraints applicable to that course of action. Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 applies to National Park Authorities as if they were a local authority. That section provides that, except with the consent of the Secretary of State, a local authority may not dispose of land for less than the best price that can reasonably be obtained (except for tenancies of under 7 years). However, in 2003 the Secretary of State gave a general consent for local authorities, including National Park Authorities, to dispose of land for up to £2M less than its value, so long as the Authority is satisfied that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects in respect of the whole or any part of the area (ie in our case the National Park), or of all or any persons resident or present in the National Park:
 - the promotion or improvement of economic well being
 - the promotion or improvement of social well being
 - the promotion or improvement of environmental well being.

This would apply, of course, either to a sale to a housing association, or to the Parish Council for continued use as a car park. Members must decide if one of those criteria is met. If so, then the Authority may dispose of the property at an undervalue of up to £2M.

20. Local authority members will recognise the wording in the above paragraph, which mirrors the general powers of local authorities under the Local Government Act 2000 to promote environmental, social and economic “well being”. National Park Authorities do not have those general “well being” powers. They do have to pursue the two statutory purposes:
- a. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
 - b. To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public
- and, in pursuing those purposes, there is a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park. The Authority also has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the Authority’s functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. These are all relevant criteria for Members to bear in mind when deciding on the future of Wood Lane car park. Other statutory duties, such as conserving biodiversity and reducing crime and disorder, do not seem to be specifically relevant in the current context.

Authority policy

Property Strategy

21. The Authority’s Property Strategy (approved 19 February 2007) states that:

“The Authority will intend to only hold property that will support the delivery of its objectives, as laid down in the Best Value Performance Plan. To establish that this remains the case, a full review of the Authority’s property portfolio will be undertaken every five years, using a simple model to identify whether a particular property should continue to be held (and also how well it meets its intended use). This assessment will initially be undertaken by the Projects and Estates Officer, with the results reported to the Finance & Resources Committee for consideration”

The Strategy also states that “disposals will be considered whenever a property is identified as no longer meeting the requirements of the Authority”. Within the review process described above, the Wood Lane site was identified as a property which made almost no contribution towards National Park purposes, and so should be considered for disposal.

Planning policy

22. As explained earlier in this report, Members should not now be considering whether planning permission should be granted for housing (or for any other form of development) on this site. Nevertheless, some issues of planning policy are relevant for present purposes.
23. Grassington is designated as a Local Service Centre in the Local Plan 2006 and the Regional Spatial Strategy 2008, and is therefore a location where the Authority will wish to allocate land. The Authority will be writing to landowners in summer 2008 to submit sites for consideration. The Authority’s Housing Working Group, in its

Housing Development Plan document, has resolved to recommend a target of 44 affordable houses a year in the National Park, and it is intended that this should be delivered by allocating new sites within or on the edge of service towns and villages.

24. The National Park Authority relies on Craven District Council, as Housing Authority, for advice on the level of need for affordable housing. As noted in paragraph 8 above, valid and up to date housing survey data is available for Wharfedale and demonstrates a need in Grassington for 65 units between 2005 & 2010. Only 8 units have so far been built in this period. Members will see from **Appendix 5** that all have been filled with people with an appropriate local need.
25. Housing development on this site would be assessed against Local Plan Policy H1 which would support either open market or affordable housing, in principle. If two or more units were proposed 50% would be expected to be affordable. Under the terms of Policy C1, the loss of the car park would need to be weighed against the benefit to the community of the provision of affordable housing.

The views of local people and organisations

26. The Authority has received a total of 53 letters and emails in relation to this matter, as well as a petition signed by approximately 460 people.
27. All of the correspondence received will be available for Members to review prior to the meeting. The principal points made in correspondence to the Authority are summarised in **Appendix 4**. The overwhelming majority of comments described the potential closure (for whatever reason) of the car park as a loss of a facility for local people, with many commentators adding that this would be a particular problem for the elderly or disabled people, and that businesses could be affected if people no longer using that car park transferred their activities elsewhere.
28. Grassington Parish Council have provided the following comments on the site (their letter dated 7th March 2008):
“We feel this car park is an essential amenity for local residents from Grassington and surrounding villages and parishes as many people come here to shop, visit and use the bank”
“We do not feel the use of the land for housing would be anywhere near as great as leaving it as a car park for all residents of the National Park to utilise”.

This view is amplified in an earlier letter from the Parish Council (dated 30 November 2007) which states that the site is “particularly valuable to the community as it is near to the main street for elderly and those users with limited mobility or small children”. The Parish Council were offered a meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss the issue, but did not feel this was necessary.

Financial Issues

29. The financial implications of a decision to dispose of the site are limited; notwithstanding the detailed point below, the Authority has the legal capacity to

dispose of property at an undervalue if in doing so it achieves one of its stated purposes.

30. Members should note that this site does not have an open market value for unrestricted housing, because the Authority's adopted policy requires 50% of new housing in Grassington to be affordable, and the clear advice is that this site has a maximum capacity of two units. The District Valuer's valuations for the various retention / disposal options which do accord with Authority policy are as follows:

- a. Two affordable units for rent with Housing Corporation grant: £7,500
- b. Two affordable units for sale: £10,000
- c. Current use value as a car park: £16,500
- d. A single site for one dwelling and one affordable unit: £32,500

No valuation has been provided for use of the site for a single open market dwelling; that might be judged to be in accordance with Authority policy, and would result in a significantly higher land value than any of the above.

31. The loss of the site as a car park is likely to have only a very small impact on car parking revenues, because of the very small size of the car park and because at least some of the spaces are occupied as relatively long 'stays' (so of limited use to the majority of permit holders).

Conclusion

32. The options are:
- a. Retain the land in the Authority's ownership as a car park;
 - b. Retain the land in the Authority's ownership for some other purpose (as above);
 - c. Sell the land to Grassington Parish Council;
 - d. Lease the land to Grassington Parish Council;
 - e. Sell the land to a Housing Association, subject to receiving planning consent for affordable housing;
 - f. Sell the land on the open market.
33. In connection with the above, Members will recall that Option (a) has already been considered at some length by the Finance and Resources Committee and rejected on the basis that the Authority has no need for the land; and Options (c) and (e) (and Option (d) if the lease was for seven years or more) would be likely to involve selling the land at less than open market value, and would therefore require members to consider the factors mentioned in paragraph 19 above.

RECOMMENDATION

34. That Members decide between the above options for the retention or disposal of Wood Lane car park in Grassington.

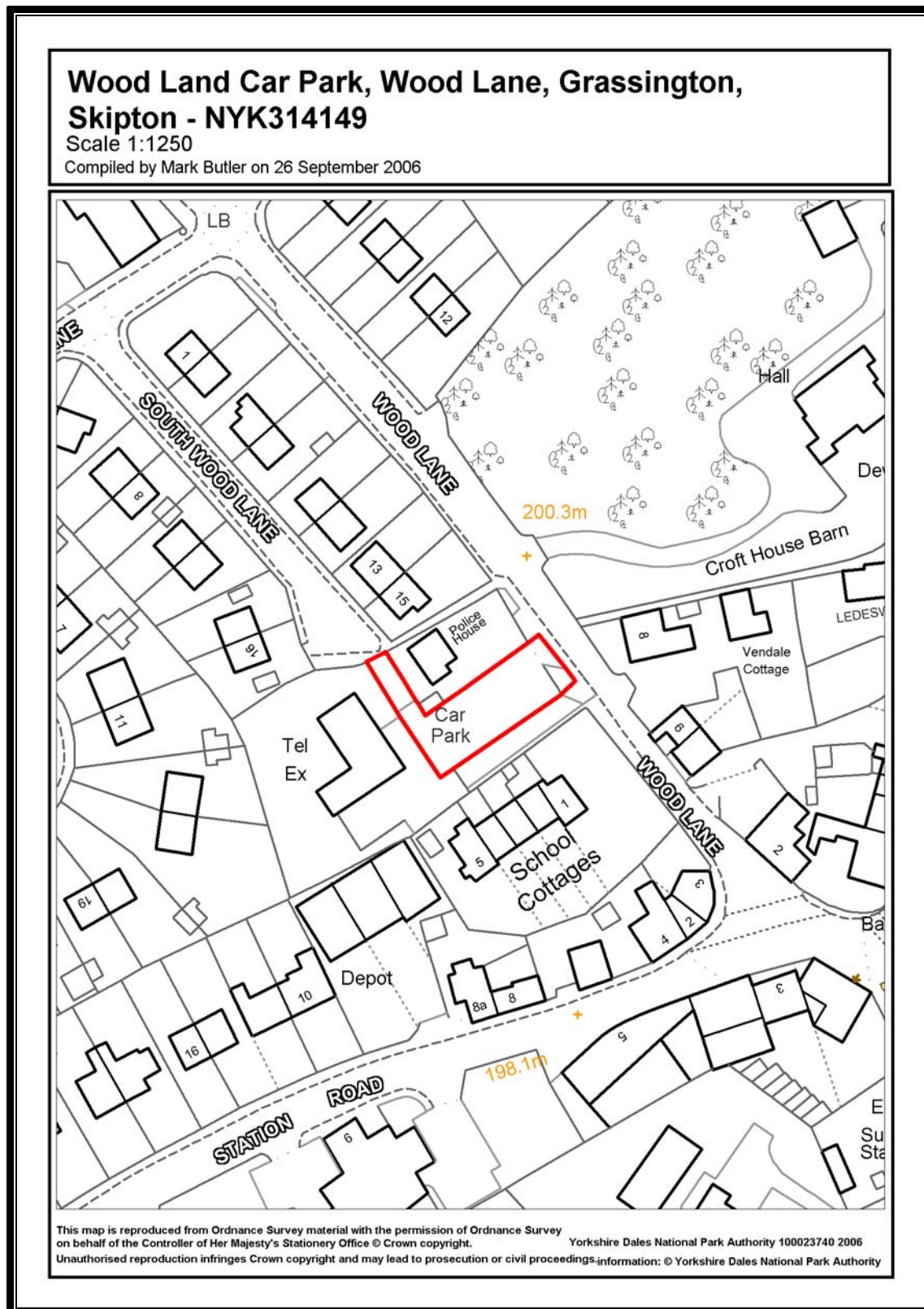
David Butterworth
Chief Executive
14th May 2008

Background documents:

Reports to Finance & Resources Committee on 3 December 2007 and 8 February 2008.
Correspondence from local organisations and residents.
Land Certificate and other deeds.

YDNPA – Grassington Wood Lane Car Park

Site Plan (note: this has been reduced to fit the page, and is not to scale 1:1250)



[This is the information presented to the Finance & Resources Committee on 3 December 2007]

Grassington Wood Lane Car Park

Analysis

The operation of Grassington Wood Lane Car Park makes no contribution to the work of the Authority; a detailed review of the initial analysis did not change this conclusion.

Public Opinion

Since the decision was taken by this committee in February 2007 to review the facility, there has been a great deal of interest from the local community, including Grassington Parish Council. Typical examples of the comments received include:

“Although there is the bigger car park (Grassington Colvend), for the elderly or infirm residents of the area this car park allows them to park near to the town centre to carry out their business”

“This car park serves a very useful function to residents of the Park, who live in villages other than Grassington”

“loss of car parking spaces in Grassington which will only add to congestion in Grassington Main Street and the surrounding streets and roads”

The overall view focuses on the concern about the potential loss of a car park that is used only by residents (rather than visitors; the car park is signed ‘for residents only’).

Options

A number of options have been identified and are analysed in the following table, which ‘scores’ a qualitative appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Table: Evaluation of the options for Grassington Wood Lane car Park

	Scoring each item between 1 and 5, 1 being low significance, 5 being high significance						
	Advantages			Disadvantages			
	Savings in running costs	Income	Feasibility	Officer time	Public opinion	Costs	Totals
1. Put the property on the market (with or without planning permission)	5	4	3	-5	-5	-2	0
2. Lease the property to Grassington Parish Council	5	1	5	-4	-1	-2	4
3. Sell the property to Grassington Parish Council for a minimal fee	5	1	5	-4	-1	-4	3
4. Retain the property in its current use and ownership	0	0	5	0	0	-1	4
5. Allocate the site for another use that met the Authority's objectives.	1	0	1	-5	-5	-2	-10

6. Lease the site to another body/organisation that would deliver Authority objectives	5	2	1	-5	-5	-2	1
7. Lease the car park to another organisation as a car park	5	3	1	-5	-5	-2	-3

Notes

1. Put the property on the market (with or without planning permission)

Savings: running costs, although these are small, excepting potential for resurfacing work

Income: The relevant planning officer has indicated that planning permission for a dwelling could be approved, although there are restrictions in the property deeds that would constrain feasibility

Feasibility: possible .

Officer time: significant

Public Opinion: Feedback from public meetings and correspondence indicates that the local community would be against this option

Costs: Estate agents/solicitors fees

2. Lease the property to Grassington Parish Council

Savings: running costs, although these are small, excepting potential for resurfacing work

Income: not likely to be considerable

Feasibility: the parish council would be interested in this option

Officer time: significant

Public Opinion: favourable

Costs: legal costs of setting up a lease

3. Sell the property to Grassington Parish Council for a minimal fee

Savings: running costs, although these are small, excepting potential for resurfacing work

Income: minimal; the disposal would be at a significant undervalue, and it is not clear how that would support the Authority's objectives.

Feasibility: the parish council would be interested in this option

Officer time: significant

Public Opinion: favourable

Costs: legal costs of sale

4. Retain the property in its current use and ownership

Savings: none

Income: as now

Feasibility: no impact

Officer time: none

Public Opinion: favourable

Costs: no additional costs (small loss made at present)

5. Allocate the site for another use that met the Authority's objectives

Savings: unknown (but only limited savings available)

Income: none

Feasibility: unlikely

Officer time: significant

Public Opinion: unknown although unlikely to be favourable

Costs: unknown

6. Lease the site to another body/organisation that would deliver Authority objectives

Savings: unknown (but only limited savings available)

Income: none

Feasibility: unlikely: given location of site, no obvious uses

Officer time: considerable

Public Opinion: unknown although unlikely to be favourable compared with loss of utility

Costs: unknown

7. Lease the car park to another organisation as a car park

Savings: unknown (but only limited savings available)

Income: none

Feasibility: unlikely

Officer time: considerable

Public Opinion: unknown although unlikely to be favourable if terms of parking different (e.g. on a commercial footing)

Costs: unknown

The results above indicate that the preferred option would to either lease the property or sell to Grassington Parish Council to retain it as Residents parking.

Conclusions and recommendation

The site currently makes no contribution towards delivering national park purposes, although it is an amenity for local residents. One option suggested by the scoring matrix would be to dispose of the property by a lease, for the Parish Council to continue to operate the site as a car park. However, there is no clear 'space' between this and the option to retain the car park in three short-term, which in fact achieves the same score on this (albeit qualitative) matrix.

Alongside other local authorities, the National park Authority is likely to come under the national requirement to review its property portfolio with a view to releasing appropriate land for housing. Consequently the Authority's Planning Department has been asked to examine the site. The results of this investigation will be reported to this meeting.

Full text of the covenants contained in the Conveyance of 27th June 1927

“The Sub-Purchaser for himself and his successors in title hereby covenants with the Purchaser and her successors in estate owners for the time being of the dwellinghouse and premises on the North or North East side of Wood Lane aforesaid and now occupied by Dr Crosbie that he the Sub-Purchaser will not at any time hereafter erect any building other than a private dwellinghouse or dwellinghouses on such part of the land hereby conveyed as fronts immediately to Wood Lane aforesaid And that no building shall be erected nearer than twenty yards to the said Wood Lane with the exception of a garage which may be erected at the North Easterly corner of the said close of land immediately adjoining the said Lane”

Feedback received to date

This Appendix summarises the issues raised in correspondence (letters and e-mail) received by the Authority to date in relation to Wood Lane Car Park. A fair proportion of this correspondence was generated by a letter from Grassington Parish Council urging all recipients to write to the Authority.

A full list of the correspondence is included at the end of this Appendix, and copies of all letters and e-mails will be available to Members at the meeting of the Authority on 27 May 2008. The earlier correspondence focuses on the potential closure of the car park, and the later on the loss of the car park because of development, albeit that the issues raised are substantially the same.

The Authority also received a petition in February (plus a supplementary list dated 12 March 2008) bearing approximately 460 names, stating that *'We the undersigned consider that THE RESIDENTS' CAR PARK off Wood Lane is an essential amenity to residents of Grassington, to those who work in Grassington, and to those from the Dale who regularly shop in Grassington. It is extensively used and MUST REMAIN'*. The petition was submitted by Mr Birdsall of Wood Lane, Grassington.

Analysis

The following analysis identifies all of the points raised by the correspondence listed (excluding the petition, which simply makes the point noted above). The figures shown in brackets are the number of correspondence items making that particular point, though it will be appreciated (from the correspondence list) that some people or organisations have made the same point several times. Nonetheless, the 'frequency' of comments does give a form of priority weighting to the comments, which are therefore ordered starting with the most frequent first.

The main thrust of these comments are that the loss of the car park would be the loss of a facility for local people, with many commentators adding that this would be a particular disbenefit for the elderly or disabled people, and that businesses could be affected if people no longer using that car park transferred their activities elsewhere. Where it is felt that a commentary was likely to be helpful, these are added beneath each item, below (*in italics*).

1. Closing the car park would be an inconvenience to local people who use the car park (32), especially the elderly or disabled, taking a much-used amenity away from the town.
2. Businesses will be adversely affected if people take their custom where parking is more convenient (21)
3. Ownership of the land is far from clear and the legitimacy of a sale is in doubt (9), and that previous owners of the site intended it for a car park in perpetuity, giving it to the people of Grassington as a trust, such that the Authority can neither legally nor morally sell the car park as building land; ...*(it) would be a breach of trust which could entail any members of the Park Authority voting in favour of any disposal to a*

liability for breach of trust. **Comment:** *as summarised in the report, there is no question about ownership, or the status of that ownership, of the land concerned; nor would disposal of the land be a breach of trust in law; nor could members be personally liable.*

4. If the car park was no longer available for locals, it would cause much havoc because locals would not use Colvend and that would result in much double parking and blocking up the square causing inconvenience and congestion and, potentially, additional danger to pedestrians (7)
5. The car park is used by people attending the nearby medical and dental surgeries (4)
6. Concern from residents living adjacent to the site that any development would reduce light to their residence (2), noting that their own past development proposal was turned down because it could be seen from the car park (1). **Comment:** *this would be a consideration in any planning application that might be made and considered, but as yet no such application has been made.*
7. That there is an economic benefit to the park in selling the site for housing, and that this is just another means of the raising finance (2). **Comment:** *any receipt from the site is likely to be small and is not a major consideration.*
8. Question as to whether any surplus land at Colvend will be offered for affordable housing as an alternative (2). **Comment:** *the review which identified Wood Lane as not fulfilling National Park purposes also concluded that the Colvend car park did fulfil such purposes; the latter is not surplus to requirements.*
9. Parking at Colvend as an alternative is too expensive as the charges are too high (2). **Comment:** *this implies that some purchasers of season tickets may be unaware that they can use any NPA car park.*
10. If people drive to Skipton instead of Grassington, the carbon footprint and will be increased. (2) **Comment:** *given the current cost of petrol and the availability and location of parking in Skipton, this would perhaps seem unlikely; the same argument applies to item 2, though that is not a reason in itself why people should make decisions purely based on convenience and cost benefit. It is perhaps worth reiterating that the car park itself holds around 12 cars, that some spaces are filled long-term during the day, and that the consequent impact on the economy of Grassington is likely to be very small, especially given that, if the site became residential, it would create additional year-round customers for local services.*
11. One of the strong attractions of Grassington is the quality of goods offered by many of the shops. If they were forced to cease to trade, they would undoubtedly be replaced by the tourist trivia and rubbish you would expect to see in Blackpool but not in this beautiful setting of Wharfedale, and the appeal of the Grassington would be lost (2)
12. Question as to whether further low cost housing is required (Coniston with Kilnsey PM), and that the value / use of the land for housing wouldn't be anywhere near as great as it is as a car park for residents to utilise (Grassington Parish Council) (2)

13. The proposed housing development would create further demand for parking from residents of the proposed housing development and their visitors (1) **Comment:** *this would be considered as part of any planning application.*
14. If every available piece of land adjacent to the centre is built on with flats or housing, then there is a chance that we will lose the core 'feel' to Grassington which brings so many visitors through the year and who keep the village and its businesses thriving (1).
15. The Authority should take on the development of the 'halted' flats opposite the newsagent, as affordable housing, in preference to disposing of the car park for that purpose (1) **Comment:** *these premises were subject to enforcement action, and construction is likely to resume at some stage once the planning issues have been resolved; the development already includes a 'local occupancy' component.*
16. Whatever expenses are incurred in relation to this car park are more than covered by the payments you receive for permits (1).
17. It is the only car park for local workers at premises who cater for tourists in Grassington (1)
18. The Town Square car park should be reserved for short-stay shoppers (1)
19. Any houses that will be built on the site will be private and not low cost for local people (1).
20. Expressing anger at the lack of transparency, if not secrecy, in the way in which the Planning authority seeks to achieve an irreversible change which could affect so many people in Wharfedale (1). **Comment:** *officers from the Authority have been in communication with Grassington Parish Council since April 2007 concerning proposals relating to Wood Lane. There have been no Planning Committee meetings on this issue, as no planning applications have been received.*
21. Grave concern about short consultation time allotted to this proposal (letter received 9 March 2008) (1)
22. The car park is used as a place for people to leave their cars in the evening when they go on coach trips to nearby cities. This provides a safe place (next to the police station) at such a time (1)
23. The car park should be released for general car parking, not just permit holders (1) **Comment:** *it is not viable to install a ticket machine in the car park owing to its small size.*
24. Discretionary use of the car park to certain regular Grassington workers commuting from beyond the present limit is strongly to be recommended (1)
25. Purchased residents permit specifically so that could park at Wood Lane (1)

List of correspondence received

Date of letter / e-mail	Correspondent
2/4/07	Grassington Parish Council (Sheila Denby, Clerk)
Undated;recd 11/4/07	Appletreewick Parish Council (Karen Stewart, Clerk)
14/4/07	Kettlewell with Starbotton Parish Council (Miss GM Holliday, Clerk)
21/4/07	Kate Rhodes, Appletreewick
2/5/07	Grassington Parish Council (Sheila Denby, Clerk)
17/5/07	Peter Weatherhead, Appletreewick
18/6/07	Mrs Karen Lodge, Grassington
25/6/07	Threshfield Parish Council (Jane C Sayer, Clerk)
30/11/07	Grassington Parish Council (Susan Graham, Clerk)
1/12/07	Shelagh Marshall, Embsay
10/12/07	Mrs K Lodge, Grassington
20/1/08	PA Haslam, Grassington
30/1/08	JA Birdsall and Mrs MW Birdsall, Grassington
1/2/08	Julie Holt, Threshfield
5/2/08	Grassington & District Old People's welfare (Judith M Ariss, Committee Secretary)
5/2/08	Judith M Ariss, Linton Falls
5/2/08	Christine Bell, Threshfield
5/2/08	HE Hobson, Threshfield
6/2/08	David Hobson, Threshfield
6/2/08	Karen Lodge, Grassington
6/2/08	Margaret Hartley, Threshfield
6/2/08	J Metcalfe, Linton
7/2/08	CL Clarkson, Linton
7/2/08	John Bennett, Linton
8/2/08	Colin Ginger, Conistone
11/2/08	Kettlewell with Starbotton PC (Gillian Holliday, Clerk)
20/2/08	Long Ashes Residents Association (Mr H Ibbotson), on behalf of 128 residents living on site
26/2/08	Mrs JL Foster, Kettlewell
7/3/08	Grassington Parish Council (Susan Graham, Clerk)
7/3/08	Diane Low, Grassington
8/3/08	Charles Trevor, Threshfield
10/3/08	Kate Midgely, Grassington
8/3/08	JB Hodgkinson (no address given)
8/3/08	Conistone with Kilnsey Parish Meeting (MJ Clarke, Hon Secretary)
9/3/08	Cracoe Parish Meeting (John IL Holden, Clerk)
9/3/08	David Isaac, Grassington
9/3/08	Grassington Chamber of Trade (Howard W Jones, Chair)
9/3/08	Elaine Turner (member of Chamber of Trade), Grassington
10/3/08	Kettlewell with Starbotton PC (Gillian Holliday, Clerk)
10/3/08	Hebden Parish Council (Sheila Ely, Clerk)
11/3/08	Linton Parish Council (Mrs S Browning, Clerk)
11/3/08	Miss Jan Gibson (no address given)
12/3/08	JA Birdsall, Grassington

14/3/08	Buckden Parish Council (Tim Berry, Clerk)
18/3/08	Eric Rowley, Grassington
19/3/08	Maggie Gallagher, Grassington
31/3/08	Keith and Sheila Aaron, Threshfield
Undated; recd 2/4/08	B Stubbs, Grassington
undated; recd 7/4/08	Mr S Coates, Kilnsey
7/4/08	Mrs June Wardle-Harpur, Starbotton
7/4/08	Mr Harold Ibbotson, Threshfield
8/4/08	Appletreewick Parish Council (Karen Stewart, Clerk)
7/5/08	Cllr J K Roberts, Craven District Council

The need for Affordable Housing in Grassington

The following information is provided further to the request to clarify the level of affordable housing need in Grassington.

David Cumberland Associates carried out a housing needs survey on behalf of Craven District Council, the findings of which were issued in September 2005. This report outlined the anticipated level of affordable housing need according to sub areas within the district. The level of need in Grassington is stated as 13 dwellings per year over a five year period (April 2005 - March 2010), equating to 65 units over the full five year period. To date, only the eight units provided at Garrs End Lane have gone any way towards satisfying this shortfall.

This need should also be placed within the wider context of Grassington's role as a local service centre for much of Wharfedale. The Craven housing needs survey revealed an annual need for 18 houses throughout Wharfedale (excluding Grassington itself), with a further requirement of 9 per annum in Embsay & Eastby. Clearly we can see that the shortfall of affordable housing is deemed to be acute.

Some doubts have been expressed about the accuracy of information presented in housing needs surveys. The surveys are conducted using a 100% sample of households, the response rate to which was around 25%. This response rate is comparable with other surveys undertaken in the National Park and is deemed to be sufficiently statistically robust to support the report's findings. The survey is based around questionnaires that seek to establish the nature of need anticipated by individuals and households. Responses are then assessed to determine whether respondents are genuinely in need of affordable housing, or whether their need could be satisfied by some other means. It would be unreasonable to expect these surveys to be 100% accurate given that they are attempting to forecast five years into the future. There are good reasons for this, particularly since the survey is essentially based around people's personal circumstances that are bound to change over time. Given the level of need that exists however, the surveys present a strong case for the need for further affordable housing in Grassington and Wharfedale. It is also worthy of note that the Authority will be using the housing needs evidence as a basis for the ongoing review of housing policy, including setting a target for overall affordable housing provision.

Particular concerns have been voiced regarding the way in which the Garrs End Lane units were allocated. These concerns have acted to undermine confidence in remaining levels of affordable housing need within Grassington. The Authority has been in discussions with Craven District Council, Home Housing and the Craven Rural Housing Enabler in an attempt to clarify this situation.

Of the eight units created at Garrs End Lane, 5 have been allocated to people currently residing in Grassington itself. This leaves three units where proposed occupants do not currently reside in the parish – two of which currently reside in adjoining parishes but work within Grassington. It is perhaps the final unit that has attracted most attention, since this occupant currently resides in Skipton (outside the Park). It should however be emphasised that in this instance the head of household is already in full time employment within Grassington parish – this is a 'local connection' as defined by the Section 106 agreement

and adopted Local Plan policy. **This does not therefore in any way conflict with the objective of offering these houses to people who have a need for affordable housing within the immediate parish in the first instance.** The policy does not seek to make a distinction between the types of priority need identified i.e. employment within the parish is equally as valid as current residency. The final outcome is a scheme occupied by eight households, all of which have a local need stemming from Grassington parish itself, and whom the housing association have deemed to be in need of affordable housing.

While the final occupants of the Garrs End Lane scheme include only two of the sixteen households who were cited as being in housing need at the point of application, this is perhaps not surprising. The planning application was considered during late 2004/early 2005, and occupation of the units was largely determined towards the end of 2007. Given the time that had elapsed, it should be expected that people's circumstances may have altered in the meantime.