
Executive

31 August 2017

Report of the Assistant Director Communities and Equalities

Portfolio of the Executive Member for Transport & Planning and the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism.

Proposed Temporary Use of Part of Castle Car Park

Summary

1. This paper seeks approval for the temporary use of part of Castle Car Park between May and September 2018 for Shakespeare's Rose Theatre, a "pop-up" restoration theatre.

Recommendations

2. The Executive is asked to:
 - Agree the proposed use of part of the car park subject to planning permission and other relevant statutory approvals.
 - Note the alternative parking arrangements proposed.
 - Delegate to the Assistant Director Legal and Governance the drawing up of a lease.

Background

3. The Council has been approached by Lunchbox Theatrical Productions Limited (LTP), a major producer of top quality international entertainment, with a proposal to site the pop-up theatre on part of the Castle Car Park, from 21 May to 23 September 2018 (with the theatre operational from 18 June to 2 September).

Proposal

4. Shakespeare's Rose Theatre will be Europe's first full-scale working replica of a traditional Shakespearean Theatre which is modelled loosely on a combination of the Rose Theatre and the Globe Theatre which were built in 1587 and 1599 respectively. It will aim to attract 100,000 people over the ten week season, including up to 20,000 students.

5. The twelve-sided, three storey building will create a remarkable theatre experience for approximately 950 people including a standing audience of 300 who will enjoy a high level of involvement in the show. With a 100+m² stage most of the audience are within 15m of the action. Around the theatre there will be a “Taste Village”, show casing local food and beverage as well as an area for free wagon performances.
6. Four plays: Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth, Richard III and A Midsummer Nights Dream, will be produced by esteemed UK directors, including potentially a production by York Theatre Royal. Approximately 140 shows are anticipated over a ten-week season.
7. Shakespeare’s Rose Theatre will be a significant addition to York’s visitor attractions helping to further the imperative in York’s Economic Strategy of *Making a fresh, loud statement of cultural and visual identity*. It has the potential to create a lasting legacy in terms of national and international publicity and cultural recognition, as well as opportunities for schools to benefit educationally. LTP are building partnerships across the city, for example with the Theatre Royal who will be heavily involved, to ensure that the attractions complements existing product in the city and benefits its wider economy.
8. This major cultural attraction will benefit residents and visitors alike. It will be affordable with ticket prices for adults starting at £12.50. The theatre will create an additional spend in York’s economy, estimated to be close to £7m, as well as additional employment.
9. There will be opportunities for the Business Improvement District (BID) to get involved in and support the project and the Council will be discussing this with them.
10. The pop-up theatre will provide an excellent offer for schools and students. An experienced drama teacher has been engaged to lead work with schools in liaison with the city’s Cultural Education Partnership. All schools will be contacted and they will be offered curriculum material as well as pre-show talks with cast and creatives. Morning workshops will be offered for younger children. There will also be an offer for university students. The offer to schools will be priced in order to make it accessible for all. The project will also be seeking national sponsorship to facilitate a subsidy of the student ticket price.
11. The theatre proposal complements the council’s high-level vision for the regeneration of the Castle Gateway which was approved by the

Executive in January 2017. This aims to improve the economic, cultural and social vibrancy of the area and to drive increased footfall into it, all aims to which the Shakespeare's Rose Theatre can make a significant contribution. The proposal also follows the strategy of allowing temporary, "meanwhile" uses of council sites in order to animate the area whilst the long term master plan is developed. This strategy has previously seen a three year tenancy offered to a community interest company called Spark:York to provide start-up space for local business on Piccadilly, which will open in late summer 2017.

12. The council have appointed consultants BDP to articulate the Castle Gateway vision into a master plan for the area. This is currently being developed and is being informed by the *My Castle Gateway* public engagement project. This will allow high level master plan options to be taken to the Executive with a subsequent consultation early in 2018. One of the key aims of the high level vision, and the working assumption for the master planners, is that the Castle Car Park is to be closed and replaced with alternative uses. This is vital to unlock the potential of the area and improve the setting of the city's international heritage and cultural assets.
13. The use of Castle Car Park for Shakespeare's Rose Theatre would help to facilitate this aim, and act as a catalyst and important step to the redevelopment of the site. The temporary part-closure of the car park for the theatre would allow officers to understand the impact of the displacement of car parking on the highway network over a significant period of time without incurring the associated loss of revenue. Furthermore, it would also start to break the public perception of this area as a car park and encourage further public debate about its future.
14. The proposed timescales correspond with the timeline for the regeneration. Once a preferred master plan and delivery model is approved for the Castle Gateway in early 2018 there will be a process of implementing the delivery model and the preparation, submission and determination of the necessary planning applications for the redevelopment of the Castle Car Park site. This process will extend beyond the period proposed for the theatre so has no impact on the council's capacity to implement the master plan, and as above would assist in refining the preferred master plan options by giving real data on the impact of the temporary part closure of Castle Car Park.

15. Shakespeare's Rose Theatre would help drive temporary vibrancy to the Castle Gateway, raise the profile of the area, allow the council to understand the impact of the displacement of car journeys without an impact on revenue, and potentially pave the way for the long-term redevelopment of Castle car park as the key to unlocking the regeneration of this part of the city.
16. The proposal is subject to planning permission being granted and LTP are taking the necessary steps in this regard.

Options

17. The Executive may agree or refuse this proposed use of part of the Castle Car Park.

Analysis

18. 135 car parking spaces will be needed for the pop-up theatre (out of the 318 available).
19. Lunchbox will reimburse the Council a total of £197,308:
 - £1,616 per day for the period 28 May to 19 June
 - £1,679 per day for the period 20 June to 4 September
 - £1,616 per day for the period 5 September to 16 September
20. In putting forward their reimbursement proposal LTP have used figures provided by the council for lost revenue over the relevant period. Officers are satisfied that this value represents the amount of lost income from 135 spaces using 2016 as a guideline for usage.
21. It is possible that the Council may need to remove a small number of additional spaces in order to operate the remodelled car park safely. Although this would result in a reduction in income it is reasonable to assume that potential users of Castle Car Park will be dispersed to other car parks. If only 20% of those displaced vehicles move to council car parks this would cover the maximum potential loss of income from these spaces. Displacement levels above this would result in additional income to the parking account. It can of course be expected that the theatre will bring additional visitors to York.
22. There is currently more capacity than demand for parking in this area of the city and the temporary loss of capacity in Castle Car Park can therefore be accommodated.
23. To further assist with parking it is proposed to keep the upper floor of Piccadilly car park open beyond its normal 6:00 pm closing time in

order to offer guaranteed event parking for customers attending performances. Tickets for this would be sold by LTP and income passported to the Council. Officers are working with Lunchbox to explore this option further and how it will be staffed.

24. With regard to business rates it is anticipated that the theatre will be assessed separately for business rates. LTP will pay any additional rates over and above those that CYC would otherwise have been assessed to pay for the normal use as a car park.
25. It is therefore recommended that the proposal is accepted.

Implications

Financial:

26. The reimbursement of £197k reflects the anticipated lost income from the car park over the time period. There is a small risk that the council will lose £40k of revenue, which is less than 1% of overall parking revenues, and it is highly likely that this will be offset from car park users relocating to other council car parks.
27. A small sum may need to be expended from existing highways capital funding in order to ensure that the car park surface is in a suitable condition for the additional foot traffic that will be attracted by the theatre.
28. It is estimated that the economic benefit of the theatre to the city's economy in terms of additional visitor spend will be in the region of £7m.
29. **Property:** The council will enter into a lease with LTP. This will provide for LTP restoring the site after the event.
30. There are no other implications.

Council Plan 2015-19

31. The proposals in this paper support the Council Plan aim of *A Prosperous City for All* where:
 - Local businesses can thrive
 - Efficient and affordable transport links enable residents and businesses to access key services and opportunities
 - Everyone who lives in the city can enjoy its unique heritage and range of activities.
 - Visitors, businesses and residents are impressed with the quality of our city

Risk Management

32. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and failure to meet stakeholders’ expectations, which could in turn damage the Council’s image and reputation. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score has been assessed at less than 16. This means that the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a substantive threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

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Annexes

Annex 1 - Plan showing footprint of theatre

Annex 2 - Artist’s impression of the theatre