

Report of Economic Development Manager

Report to the Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation)

Date: 09 April 2019

Subject: Extension of Parklet Trial on The Calls

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Hunslet and Riverside	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

- 1 To seek the extension of the The Calls parklet trial, the 2018 trial was approved at Highways and Transportation Board on the 26th of September 2017. This extension will exactly replicate the 2018 trial approach, approved by Highways and Transportation Board, at a slightly different location on The Calls. This is within the same block of six pay and display bays, where the 2018 trial took place, outside 'The Old Brewery'.
- 2 Parklets originated in the USA where an individual would 'feed the meter' and put tables/chairs/planting in the parking bay creating a community space for all.

Recommendations

- 3 Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to note the content of this report and approve:
 - i) Extending the trial of The Calls parklet on the public highway from late April 2019 to November 2019 ;
 - ii) Approve the delivery of trial The Calls parklet through the general function of the highway authority to provide 'green' amenity improvements which may be exercised by a third party authorised by them under the provisions of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994.

- iii) Approve the relocation of the temporary cycle stand currently sited in a nearby pay and display bay.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek approval for a parklet on the public highway on The Calls in Leeds City Centre from late April 2019 to Nov 2019 and relocate the nearby cycle stand to create an additional buffer to the west of the parklet and replicating the streetscape of the 2018 trial (approved 26th September 2017).

2 Background information

- 2.2 On 26th September 2017 the Chief Officer of Highways and Transportation approved the installation of two parklets in the city centre, one at The Calls and one at Sheaf Street. These were onsite in 2018 have been well received and no formal issues raised. The Calls Parklet was removed in November 2018. The parklet drew positive feedback on social media, from local businesses and users. There have been several approaches from other Local Authorities seeking to replicate the trial approach for The Calls. No complaints have been received about the parklet and it did not suffer any damage from vehicles or vandalism.
- 2.3 The parklet structure and materials performed to the expected standard. There was additional watering of the plants due to the exceptionally hot weather.
- 2.4 The recommendation is the trial is extended on The Calls to further test the approach and allow time for further consideration of the city's approach on how and where parklets would be facilitated and how these support the Our Spaces Strategy design principles and ambition. An extension also allows the city to understand the changes to the streetscape and traffic flow under LP-TIP and potentially HIF (if the bid is successful) before agreeing a way forward.
- 2.5 To develop the parklet methodology approved at Highways and Transportation Board on the 26th September 2017 there was extensive consultation with the Access Officer, Highway Officers, Highways Legal Officers and Traffic Management.
- 2.6 This extension to the trial on The Calls will use exactly the same methodology the only change is the location and the request to relocate the cycle parking to an alternative pay and display bay.
- 2.7 Parklets originated in the USA where an individual would 'feed the meter' and put tables/chairs/planting in the parking bay. This is a very new idea in the UK there are a few examples, the design approach taken in Leeds appears to be more robust and safety conscious than the designs other Local Authorities have already permitted on the carriageway.
- 2.8 A parklet is an approach to developing community space within a street usually in a parking bay and is open to everyone. It is not a street café or 'private' space.
- 2.9 The parklet is owned and maintained by the proposer but open to all to use, the highway remains within the ownership of the Highway Authority (Leeds City Council). The maintenance will be to a standard set out by Leeds City Council.
- 2.10 As part of the trial the Service Manager (Parking), Communities and Environment has agreed to the suspension of the two parking bays, and the associated loss of revenue, for the length of the 2019 trial (April to November). If Leeds City

Council were to commit to a future parklet programme then a holistic approach to the loss of car parking revenue would need to be agreed.

- 2.11 There is no material change to the parklet from the previous trial. For the extension of the trial the documents, approved at Highways and Transportation Board on the 26th September 2017, will be followed.
- 2.12 The proposed parklet constitutes an improvement to the highway, and the planting may be on the highway and not just in, this offers a pathway for the Council to place parklets on the highway. Under these provisions there is no restriction to the parts of the highway where the items may be placed so they may be placed as intended on the carriageway.
- 2.13 The delivery of The Calls parklet is through the general function of the highway authority to provide 'green' amenity improvements which may be exercised by a third party authorised by them under the provisions of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994.
- 2.14 The Council has general powers of improvement under the Highways Act 1980 under S62(2) and more specific powers in relation to trees, shrubs, grass verges and related items under 62(3)(e) and S96(1).
- 2.15 Should the Council wish to roll out the 'parklet' approach across the city, a minimum standard will be developed along the lines of 'Street Café' approval process, however applications will be considered on a case by case basis and meeting the standards will not necessarily mean the parklet will be approved. The application process will need to be formally agreed by the Highways and Transportation Board prior to accepting any new applications.
- 2.16 The Calls parklet will be supplied, installed and maintained by a third party Yorkshire Design Group (YDG). They supply this amenity at nil cost to the Council and indemnify the Council up to £10,000,000.

3 Main issues

3.1 What is being proposed:

3.2 Location:

- 3.3 The extension of the trial of the The Calls parklet at a new location two pay and display bays to the east of the 2018 trial location (Appendix G). The Calls is one-way streets with relatively low traffic flows.
- 3.4 The Parklet will be located within two pay and display bays on The Calls. To the north of the site is the yorkstone flagged pavement and rear of The Old Brewery, shared offices owned by Yorkshire Design Group.
- 3.5 The proposer also wishes, at their expense, to move the temporary cycle parking rack out of the exiting bay to abut the western edge of the parklet. This replicates the previous layout in the new location. Appendix G shows the cycle existing and proposed parking location.
- 3.6 City Centre Management (CCM) will enter into an agreement with Yorkshire Design Group (YDG). YDG will provide and maintain the parklet temporary

greening and infrastructure on The Calls on behalf of CCM at nil cost, with £10,000,000 Public Liability Insurance (PLI).

3.7 The parklet will not contain any advertising.

3.8 **Design:**

3.9 The parklet will be delivered in accordance with the originally approved approach (for more information see 2.11).

3.10 Additional information

- The location (Appendix G)
- WY Fire Authority confirmation of no access requirements (Appendix I)

3.11 For the 2018 trial there was a requirement to provide hatch access within the parklet to a Fire Hydrant. This is not required in the new location see Appendix I.

3.12 The two parking bays are 12m x 2m. The Parklet is 9.6m long x 1.8m wide and has a buffer of 1.2m at each end of the parking bays. The roadside façade height will be no more than 900mm the corners will have reflective strips. The parklet planters and benches are 500-750mm high.

3.13 Design consideration has been given to the circulation space in the parklet for those with mobility needs and the permeability on either side of the parklet. There is a turning space of 1200mm x 1200mm. Back rests have been included.

3.14 The parklets are in high contrast colours to improve visibility and the height of the parklets will be no more than 900mm.

3.15 There is a reflective strip on the leading edge(s) of the parklet.

3.16 The use of natural materials and wood means the benches will be warmer to sit on than metal or stone and should have less pooling of water.

3.17 There is level access between the parklet and footway which is bridged with a ramp.

3.18 This 'pop-up' community seating has the potential to support the 'best city to grow old in' agenda as seating can be provided where, ordinarily it would not be possible.

3.19 **Emergency Access:**

3.20 The lightweight modular construction means the parklets can be easily dismantled/broken up to permit emergency access for Leeds City Council highways or statutory undertakers.

3.21 **Maintenance:**

3.22 The maintenance specification is in appendix F. This will be carried out by the proposer (YDG) at nil cost to Leeds City Council.

3.23 **Removal of structure:**

- 3.24 The parklet will be dismantled into manageable pieces and stored offsite during the Winter months. Winter maintenance will include check of all structural elements, clean and sanded where required and repair as necessary. All stained/painted items to be prepared and repainted. Decking to be pressure washed sanded and re-stained.
- 3.25 Benches and planters to be inspected, cleaned and repaired as necessary. All paint/stained surfaces to be cleaned, prepared and repainted with sand within the mix to improve slip resistance.
- 3.26 Plants to be thinned/replaced as necessary and maintained in accordance with good practice.

4 Corporate Considerations

- 4.1 Consultation and Engagement
- 4.2 As this is the extension to the trial 2018, consultations have been undertaken with Officers in Highways and Transportation to bring forward the 2018 trial. Their comments have been addressed and there is full support for the parklets as outlined in the Highways and Transportation Board report 26th September 2017.
- 4.3 Ward members have been consulted and are supportive of the extension.
- 4.4 All the design, construction and layout of the parklet remains the same as 2018. The location has changed slightly for 2019 and Highways officers have been consulted on this change and no issues were raised.

5 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.1 See appendix J for the EI Screening document.
- 5.1.2 The design of the parklet was developed based a wealth of experience, working with the access officer and user groups who bring forward other public realm developments in the city centre and the siting of street cafés. The current design was tested onsite in 2018, as part of the first trial, and no additional feedback was received.
- 5.1.3 Any adverse comments will be taken on board and acted upon.
- 5.1.4 The parklet will be enclosed with a wooden barrier/fence that will assist visually impaired city centre users by acting as tapping rails.
- 5.1.5 The decking of the parklet will have level access to the pavement assisting any disabled or visually impaired users. There is only access from the footway side of the parklet, the other three sides have a fixed continuous solid wooden wall/barrier which is no higher that 900mm.
- 5.1.6 The parklet is in high contrast colours to improve visibility and the height of the parklet will be no more than 900mm to ensure clear site lines into and out of the parklet
- 5.1.7 Tactile and fragrant planting will be used within the parklet to create a greater sensory experience.

5.2 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

Best Council Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21 Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. The programme of investment is consistent with the best Council Plan, in particular the outcomes. We want everyone in Leeds to...

- Be safe and feel safe
- Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives
- Live in good quality, affordable homes in clean and well cared for places
- Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life
- Enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts
- Earn enough to support themselves and their families
- Move around a well-planned city easily
- Live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible

5.2.1 Inclusive Growth Strategy: Big Ideas:

- 1 – Best city for health and wellbeing (Get more people to be physically active more often)
- 5– Supporting places and communities to respond to economic change
- 6 – Doubling the size of the city centre
- 8 – 21st Century Infra Structure
- 11 – Promoting Leeds and Yorkshire
- 12 – Maximising the economic benefits of culture

5.2.2 The proposals contained in this report will further the delivery of our aspiration for Leeds to be a compassionate, caring city that helps all its residents benefit from the effects of the city's economic growth. It will also help us achieve our Best City Outcomes including enabling everyone in Leeds to 'move around a well-planned city easily, be safe and feel safe, enjoy happy healthy, active lives, earn enough to support themselves and their families, enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts'.

5.2.3 The parklets potentially offer a solution to provide areas of seating where traditionally the footway widths have precluded this supports the agenda of 'best city to grow old in' and feedback on the parklet trial will be sought from this project and users.

5.2.4 In May there will be new artwork on the parklet façade. This has been developed with local community organisation, Beeston Skills Hub, and specifically a woodwork group set up for older men experiencing social isolation, to improve confidence and skills. The group are using recycled materials and paint to create and decorate new

panels. The design will be influenced by a paint effect used by the British and American navy in WW1 to make ships less easy targets for torpedo attacks. This should be a striking effect for the street, gives a nod to the waterfront and canal boats nearby, and also reference a local connection with Edward Wadsworth – an artist born in Cleckheaton and educated at Bradford College of Art, who supervised the camouflaging of over 2000 ships during the First World War.

5.3 Resources and value for money

5.3.1 The parklet is at nil cost to Leeds City Council and will be delivered and maintained by Yorkshire Design Group. The lost parking revenue has been agreed with Parking Services for the trial period.

5.4 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.4.1 The structure, provided, maintained and owned by a third party, will be placed on the highway and Leeds City Council will be indemnified for £5,000,000.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 The project is low risk this is a low cost greening and amenity project to be delivered on the public highway and is at nil cost to Leeds City Council.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The extension of the trial on The Calls allows for further testing of parklets in the city centre prior to any formal agreement on the way forward. A review at the end of the extended trial will evaluate the impact and success and make recommendations for moving forward on the principle of parklets.

6.2 This is an excellent opportunity to provide greening and community infra-structure at locations where traditional seating was not an option.

6.3 This is a unique way to support the Our Spaces Strategy and fosters community interest locally in the parklets.

7 Recommendations

7.1 The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to note the content of this report and approve:

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- ii) Approve the delivery of trial The Calls parklet through the general function of the highway authority to provide 'green' amenity improvements which may be exercised by a third party authorised by them under the provisions of the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994.
- iii) Approve the relocation of the temporary cycle stand currently sited in a nearby pay and display bay.

8 Background documents

8.1 None

