

Item No	Referred from:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
6A	Date:	24 March 2026
	Title of item:	Lease on Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park
To be considered alongside agenda item:		Agenda Item 10

The report considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 24 March 2026 can be found here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th March, 2026, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council](#)

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet approve the surrender of the lease for the Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park.
- (2) That, subject to recommendation 1 above, delegated authority is granted to the Director – Enterprise in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise to negotiate and approve the details of any surrender in line with the broad principles in this report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: After undertaking a review of the current operation and long-term needs of this car park, the surrender of this lease provides a positive outcome to the Council and the conditions that have been negotiated ensure there will be improvements to the car park which will benefit the public and economic vitality of the town centre.

Audio recording – 34 minutes 33 seconds

Councillor Sean Nolan, on behalf of the Executive Member for Enterprise, presented the report entitled ‘Lease on Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park’ and advised that:

- The report set out the surrender of the Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park lease, which would also be presented to Cabinet in April.
- The Martin Group were aiming to undertake a regeneration of the Garden Square Shopping Centre, and as part of this, they had contacted the Council to request a surrender of the lease.
- Negotiations between the Council and The Martin Group on the conditions of the surrender had been detailed at paragraph 8 of the report.
- It was estimated that surrendering the lease would provide a capital saving of £3.4M but could generate a revenue cost of £430,000 over 9 years.
- Plans by The Martin Group to improve the car park included automatic number plate recognition, increased security, and opening the car park for 24 hours.
- Aspirations for residential parking within the car park would be accommodated as surveys undertaken by officers had demonstrated spare capacity.
- Members representing Letchworth wards who attended a briefing with officers had shown support for surrendering the lease, and no follow up questions were received from those that could not attend.
- Thoughts on the report were requested from the Committee before consideration by Cabinet.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Winchester
- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Paul Ward
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Martin Prescott

In response to questions, Councillor Sean Nolan advised that:

- Parking tariffs had formed part of the negotiations with The Martin Group, and they had recognised the need for competitive pricing with nearby car parks.
- 24-hour parking would be thought to reduce commuter parking around the station where this had become an issue.
- If The Martin Group decided not to redevelop the shopping centre, this would not impact their surrender of the lease.

In response to questions, the Director – Enterprise advised that:

- The Martin Group would have to account for external factors such as tariffs in Council owned car parks and other car parks in the town when setting theirs.
- Season tickets and discounts for wider users of the car park had not been discussed with The Martin Group, but as they were a private company, it was speculated that they would investigate these options to encourage greater usage.
- Comments on the position of The Martin Group regarding the redevelopment could not be provided, but the surrender of the lease had been requested by them to facilitate residential parking, and the feasibility of this had been confirmed by officers.
- The Martin Group were aware of antisocial behaviour in the car park and had detailed additional security measures to address this with 24 hour opening times.

In response to questions, the Director – Resources advised that:

- Operating costs, revenue generated, and other values that the lease held such as parking provision for staff had been factored into the considerations and included in the report.
- The above factors were more helpful than using the asset value of the car park.

Councillor Martin Prescott advised that he agreed with the surrender of the lease, as the car park had never been profitable and there were concerns over the costs of repairs required, which would be at taxpayer expense. Additionally, The Martin Group would look to address the issues with antisocial behaviour and maintain parking provision for staff.

Councillor Martin Prescott proposed and Councillor Dominic Griffiths seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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