

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-076-2015/16

Date of meeting: 3 March 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Safer, Greener and Transport

Subject: Invest to Save Funding Bid - Provision of the Off Street Parking Arrangements in the District

Responsible Officer: Qasim (kim) Durrani (01992 564055).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To consider the attached Invest to Save Funding bid for the costs associated with the procurement process for the management of the Council off street car parks; and**
- (2) That a further report be brought to Cabinet setting out the Procurement Strategy, potential savings and set up costs and timeline for the delivery of off street parking operations outside of NEPP.**

Executive Summary:

Cabinet approved to give the notice to withdraw from the off street element of the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) at its meeting on 11 January 2016. This notice has to be served by 31 March 2016 and will allow the Council to operate the off street car parking operation from 1 April 2017.

When making this decision Cabinet considered the scoping report by Road Traffic Act Associates (RTAA) which concluded that there are clear financial advantages for the Council to extract from the off street parking element of NEPP.

Cabinet also recognised that the Council does not have the in-house expertise to carry out the procurement exercise for the appointment of a provider for the off street enforcement operations, cash collections, pay and display machine maintenance and administration. It also agreed to set aside Contract Standing Orders to enable the appointment of RTAA to assist the Council with the procurement process.

This report seeks funding for the appointment of RTAA from the Invest to Save budget.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure the Council has expert professional advice when it procures a service provider for the off street car parking enforcement, cash collection and administration services.

Other Options for Action:

To not seek external expert advice would mean that the Council will not be able to prepare a

modern and fit for purpose technical tender specification.

Report:

1. The off street operation consist of: enforcement in the 18 Council car parks, receipt of electronic payments, cash collection from the 41 pay and display machines including counting and banking, administration of appeals and challenges to Penalty Charge Notice (PCNs) and first line maintenance of pay and display machines.

2. RTA Associates have been commissioned to carry out a scoping study to assess alternative options for delivery of off street operations. Their findings were very clear that there are distinct financial advantages for the Council to provide the off street parking outside of NEPP.

3. RTAA carried out soft market testing and used their industry contacts to arrive at the likely cost estimates. Although the costs cannot be confirmed until a formal procurement exercise has been carried out the range of savings are from £30,000 for an in-house operation to £100,000 for a fully outsourced operation.

4. The procurement of services for the enforcement, cash collection and administration of challenges is a complex one and will be carried out over a number of months. The Council does not have the relevant professional expertise to prepare technical specifications for an outsourced operation. Cabinet has previously agreed that an Invest to Save bid will be considered for the appointment of suitable consultancy to assist with the procurement process.

5. Cabinet has previously agreed that on the basis that the knowledge acquired by RTAA while carrying out the scoping study gives them a valuable insight into the Councils car parking operations and this can be used to prepare technical specifications for an outsourced operation. On this basis Cabinet agreed to set aside Contract Standing Orders to enable the appointment of RTAA.

Resource Implications:

£15,000 has previously been approved under the Invest to Save Fund for the work carried out by RTA Associates. Out of this a sum of £10,000 remains available. A further funding bid of £15,000 is sought to appoint RTAA to provide advice during the procurement process.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The terms of the Joint Committee Agreement of 2011 enable the Council to serve a notice to withdraw, provided it is co-terminus with the end of a financial year.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

If the car parks are not serviced properly, adequate enforcement actions is not undertaken and pay and display machines are not kept in a good state of repair then the Council is at risk of loss of income.

Consultation Undertaken:

RTA Associates have provided a schedule of rates for the various activities required during the procurement process. The intention is to avail their services for the individual items from the schedule of rates.

NEPP have been made aware of the decision.

Background Papers:

Previous Cabinet reports, The Joint Committee Agreement 2011.

Risk Management:

There is a financial risk to the Council if, once it has served the withdrawal notice, it is unable to secure a cost effective solution for the provision of all or one of the elements of the off street operation. However this risk is manageable as the fall back option of the service being provided by in house staff of the Council remains viable, albeit it does not offer the same level of financial savings as the estimated out sources solutions.

There is a reputational risk to be considered if the Council is unable to prepare a sufficiently technical tender specification, due to lack of expertise, and not attract any interest from the market.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Appropriate provision is made for parking bays for people with disabilities in the Council's off-street car parks. Free parking is provided for vehicles displaying a disabled badge.