

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-019-2010/11**

**Date of meeting: 19 July 2010**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Operational Planning and Transport  
Finance and Economic Development  
Leader**

**Subject: Parking Reviews**

**Responsible Officer: Kim Durrani (01992 564055)**

**Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

(1) To note that the Essex County Council is currently considering alternative advertising arrangements to significantly reduce the costs of compliance with their statutory obligations to advertise; and

(2) To avoid unnecessary delays in the implementation of the three parking reviews within existing budget allocation the Portfolio Holder of Leader, Operational Planning and Transport, Finance and Economic Development, be authorised to recommence the parking reviews subject to the following:

(a) Essex County Council confirmation that the revised advertising arrangements comply with statutory requirements;

(b) That the revised advertising costs are acceptable and can be accommodated within the existing parking review budgets; and

(c) That in the event of budgets still being breached to, following consultation with relevant ward members, scale back the extent of the schemes by for example not introducing on street pay and display parking.

### **Executive Summary:**

The last Cabinet saw a report detailing the issues surrounding the high costs of implementation of the three parking reviews. The Cabinet resolved that the County Council Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation be asked questions on the costs of the reviews. A special meeting was held with the County Portfolio Holder and regular discussions have been taking place with Senior Highways Officers.

Although the Council is committed to undertake parking reviews in Epping, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Broadway, there remain significant costs risks to the Council as the existing budget allocation is not enough to complete all three reviews.

A significant element of the cost arises from the need to place advertisements in the local press. The County Council is seeking legal advice on this matter and it may be possible to reduce these costs. However, if the outcome of these discussions is satisfactory, it would be helpful if, subject to budget considerations, the schemes could go forward ahead of waiting for the next cabinet meeting in mid September. -It is suggested that the decision to

proceed be delegated to the Leader and Portfolio Holders for Finance & Economic Development and Operational; Planning & Transport.

This is a key decision

“to seek to deal with problems associated with vehicle parking in the built up areas of the District”, Action Plan (Council Plan 2006-2010) Ref: HN7

#### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To avoid unnecessary delays associated with seeking a new Cabinet decision on recommencement of work on the three parking reviews, if revised ECC costs are within budget, or through scaling back for example not installing Pay and Display machines.

#### **Other Options for Action:**

To accept the delays associated with a deferral of a Cabinet decision until mid September 2010.

#### **Report:**

1. Cabinet on 7 June 2010 received a report detailing the status of the three on going parking reviews in Epping, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton. The report also highlighted the significant costs associated with the schemes and presented options for consideration. Cabinet deferred the implementation of these schemes whilst awaiting clarification on costs.

2. A special meeting was held with the ECC Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation on 22 June 2010. As a result of this meeting ECC began a review of the costs surrounding such parking reviews, particularly with regard to the costs associated with the statutory advertising of traffic regulation orders (*Recommendation (1)*).

3. It is possible that as a result the costs of advertising could be reduced but this will not be known until ECC has concluded this piece of work. However, County officers indicated late last week that a cheaper option was looking feasible and if this were indeed the case then it might be possible to commence work on the schemes within the Council's allocated budgets.

4. As it currently stands, if ECC was able to reduce costs of the schemes, a Cabinet decision would be required to rescind the earlier decision to suspend the reviews. This will not be possible until the next scheduled Cabinet meeting in mid September and would result in delays. In order to provide flexibility and avoid delays where possible, it is proposed that the three Portfolio Holders namely: Leader, Operational Planning and Transport and Finance and Economic Development be authorised to approve recommencement of the schemes subject to three specific conditions (*Recommendation (2)(a), (b) and (c)*).

#### **Resource Implications:**

The parking reviews are carried out by Essex County Council on behalf of the District Council. All costs associated with the parking reviews are borne by the District Council, this is because the County has an adopted policy of not undertaking any large parking schemes. It only undertakes work on safety grounds for example junction protection or where there are severe local parking problems.

The Capital Programme has a budget allocation of £672,000 for the three ongoing parking review schemes. Expenditure of £125,000 was incurred in the last financial year and is due for payment. This leaves a remaining balance of £547,000 which is £78,000 less than the

current ECC estimate of remaining work of £625,000.

If the schemes are abandoned then it will be necessary to fund abortive costs from the DDF, the ability of the Council to include new schemes in the DDF programme will be severely restricted.

**Legal & Governance Implications:**

Implementation of new parking restrictions under the Traffic Management Act 2004 brought about as a result of these parking reviews, as agents to ECC. This could mean that the District Council may not carry out this service or receive the income from it.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

Ensuring optimum utilisation of available car parking spaces on the public highway.

**Consultation:**

Three informal area wide consultations held, each resident received a letter and plan showing the impact on them, larger plans on display in civic offices and local libraries plus formal County statutory consultations

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Impact Assessments:**

Risk Management

Financial risks if costs increase further, which is likely given the contentious nature of such reviews.

The County Council is the highways authority and it has a policy of not carrying out area wide parking reviews, the Council could be challenged on why it is doing so, especially at such high costs.

Equality & Diversity

The County Council will continue to make traffic regulation to offer dedicated parking spaces for disabled badge car owners.

<i>Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?</i>		No
<i>Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?</i>		No
<i>What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?</i>	N/A.	
<i>How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?</i>	N/A.	