

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-048-2012/13  
**Date of meeting:** 3 December 2012



**Portfolio:** Safer, Greener & Highways

**Subject:** Parking Reviews

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

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

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

- (1) To agree that the lessons learnt from the recently completed parking review in Epping be applied to improve the outcomes of the Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Broadway reviews;**
- (2) That, subject to recommendation (1) above, the Buckhurst Hill Parking Review be targeted at addressing specific areas rather than an area wide review; and**
- (3) To agree to take advantage of the County Council's Highways Strategic Transformation contract in delivering the remaining parking reviews.**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Council committed to implement area wide parking reviews across the district when it held the agency agreement with the County Council. At the end of the agency agreement in 2005 a decision was taken to continue implementation of the ongoing schemes.

Cabinet has resolved not to consider any further area wide parking reviews until the current ongoing reviews at Epping, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Broadway have been completed. The Epping review is nearly complete, with minor snagging items being finalised and all work will be complete shortly. The Buckhurst Hill review is next in line and work can now commence on revisiting the scheme proposals prepared after the last public consultation in 2009.

Important lessons have been learnt from the Epping review, for example carrying out an area wide review has proven to be very divisive and it has not always been possible to address the often conflicting requirements of residents, commuters, businesses and other road users. It is easier to obtain consensus around local specific issues, for example the creation of small scale resident parking zones or address junctions with perceived safety issues.

The County Council is going through a major service change. At the centre of this change is the £3 billion Highways Strategic Transformation (HST) contract. The opportunity exists for the Council to take advantage of the larger economies of scale offered by the HST contract. It will be necessary to enter into a new arrangement with the County for the delivery of the remaining parking reviews.

This is a key decision as the parking review area will affect more than two wards.

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

To incorporate the lessons learnt in the delivery of the Epping review into the implementation of the Buckhurst Hill parking review.

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

To abandon the two remaining parking review schemes resulting in the capital expenditure to date of £142,000 having to be reallocated as revenue. Besides the financial implications the Council will be exposed to the reputational risk that it reneged on a commitment.

To ignore the experiences gained from the Epping review and implement area wide reviews in Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Broadway. This is unlikely to result in wide spread acceptance and may not deliver a clear improvement for the majority of residents and businesses.

### **Report:**

1. The area wide parking reviews were started when an agency agreement was in place that enabled the Council to manage the highway network within the District. At the end of the agreement in 2005 a decision was made to honour the ongoing schemes (Epping and Buckhurst Hill) and revisit these soon after implementation to address any issues. In addition it was agreed that, following the completion of the Broadway Town centre Enhancement, a parking review should be carried out in the Loughton Broadway area to address outstanding parking problems.

2. The first parking reviews for Epping and Buckhurst Hill were completed in 2007. As agreed, these two areas were revisited and residents consulted again to check for any errors or if areas had been missed out. It transpired that a lot of the residents did not take part in the first public consultation and wanted to change the newly introduced parking restrictions. This resulted in a much larger scope of work than had been previously envisaged.

3. There were other complications, for example the costs of advertising increased and there were additional resource requirements for revisiting the entire area of the review. Although additional budget allocation was made available to deliver the schemes, the financial risks to the Council were considerable and therefore it was also agreed that the schemes would be implemented one after the other and in the order that reflected the most amount of work already undertaken. The order of implementation was agreed as Epping, Buckhurst Hill and then Loughton Broadway.

4. The Epping Parking Review is nearly complete, minor lining work remains and officers at County Council intend to complete these shortly. It is considered that the lessons learnt from the Epping Review should be used to inform the decision making on the implementation of future reviews, and in particular the need to balance the competing needs of commuters, residents, businesses, visitors, tourists and the vitality of the town centres.

5. Attempting to address the needs of all the users while undertaking a wide area parking review is unrealistic and is likely to result in a number of users being dissatisfied. This is partly due to the absence of a universally acceptable technical solution and the lack of engagement by the majority of the users. Experience has shown that it is far easier to obtain consensus around local targeted schemes.

6. It is therefore suggested that a more acceptable approach is to address specific problematic areas rather than wider geographical areas. This enables any displaced parking

to be better accommodated within the vicinity and limits the wider knock on affects of any new parking restrictions. If such an approach is adopted for Buckhurst Hill then the parking review would address specific issues, for example: double yellow lines at junctions where inconsiderate parking is taking place or where there is a perceived safety issue, introduce resident parking zones in a street where there is a major problem and where the majority of the residents are in support etc.

7. In April 2012 the County Council entered into a 10 year 'Highways Strategic Transformation (HST) contract' with Ringway Jacobs Limited. The contract is for provision of all Highways and Transportation services across the County. The contract has been procured under the European procurement rules and enables other districts to join and take advantage of the economies of scale, provided the work is within the scope of what was tendered. The work associated with the parking reviews is such that it can be delivered through the HST.

8. There are a number of options for using the HST for delivery of the parking reviews, for example it could be a Service Level Agreement between the County, District and Ringway Jacobs. The best form of arrangement will be know once some further work has been carried out in scoping the extent of work and following further discussion with County officers. At this stage the decision is required to agree to take advantage of the HST and enter into the most appropriate form of agreement for doing so.

#### **Resource Implications:**

Epping Parking Review is almost complete. Once all the payments are settled the final cost is expected to be around £223,000. This has created a saving of £45,000 against the allocated budget.

Buckhurst Hill Parking Review scheme has already incurred costs of £99,000. There is an additional capital budget allocation of £192,000 to complete the scheme.

Costs incurred to date on the Loughton Broadway Parking Review scheme are £43,000 and there is an additional capital budget allocation of £140,000.

There is an estimated budget allocation of £377,000 in the current capital programme for the delivery of Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Broadway Parking Reviews.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The North Essex Parking Partnership will enforce any new parking restrictions brought about as a result of these parking reviews, as agents to the County Council.

#### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Ensuring optimum utilisation of available car parking spaces on the public highway. Addressing the safety of all road users and tackling issues of inconsiderate parking on the public highway.

Preventing congestion and its affects upon local air quality etc

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

Separate informal consultations have been carried out in 2009 in Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Broadway. Residents of the affected area received a letter and plan showing the impact of the proposed changes in the vicinity. Larger plans were on display in the offices and local libraries. Formal statutory consultations will be carried out if the schemes recommence both at the provisional Order stage and then at the point of formal adoption and implementation.

Buckhurst Hill Ward Members have been consulted on the proposed approach of tackling targeted areas instead of carrying out a town wide review.

The strategy for implementation of the Loughton Broadway Parking Review will be discussed with the ward members once the Buckhurst Hill review is completed.

### **Background Papers:**

Previous Cabinet reports

### **Impact Assessments:**

#### Risk Management

If it was decided to not learn from the experiences of the Epping Review and implement Buckhurst Hill as a town wide review then the scope of work could increase significantly. Affecting a large number of residents, raising expectations to solving problems for which a solution does not exist that is acceptable to the majority of users.

The County Council has entered into a contract with Ringway Jacobs Limited in April 2012 for provision of Highways and Transportation Service following a Europe wide procurement exercise. It is possible for the Council to take advantage of the contract and benefit from the recently market tested service delivery rates.

#### Equality and Diversity:

*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?* No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* No

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*  
N/A.

*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?*  
N/A.