

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C/056/2006-07.**

**Date of meeting: 9 October 2006.**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.**

**Subject: Reprographics Section - Purchase of Replacement Platemaker.**

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### **Recommendation:**

**That a growth bid be made for capital provision in the sum of £35,000 for 2007/08 in order to purchase a replacement platemaker for use within the Reprographics Section.**

### **Report:**

1. A platemaker or plate setter is the equipment that produces a rectangular plate, either paper or metal with an image of a document that is then put onto a printing press and from which printed documents are produced.
2. The Reprographics Section has a platemaker, which was purchased second hand and is now 8 years old. The equipment uses a chemical process to etch the document image onto the plate.
3. The equipment is now obsolete and no longer supported by the manufacturer in respect of spare parts. The existing maintenance contract will expire in November 2006 and the manufacturer has recently advised that it will not renew the contract on its expiry.
4. The manufacturer has stated that it will do its best to continue to source second hand spare parts to keep existing equipment operational but offers no guarantees.
5. The existing platemaker is also not fully compatible with the latest versions of desktop publishing (DTP) and Windows operating software in use within the section, which places limitations on production.
6. A platemaker is an integral link in the offset printing process and therefore the existing equipment needs to be replaced.
7. There are limited options for equipment within the size and price band relevant to the size of this Council's printing operations, but several manufacturers equipment have been researched and the proposal is that the Council should invest in a relatively new product that uses a chemical free process.
8. This will have several benefits, firstly it will contribute to the Council's protecting the environment policies by eliminating the current use of chemicals, secondly the equipment uses more durable material for the plates and finally there will be a saving of approximately £1,000 per annum in operating costs.
9. The second hand market has also been explored. The only equipment available within the size and price band relevant to this Council's printing operations uses a chemical process. The market is rapidly changing to equipment that uses non

chemical processes, therefore any second hand equipment purchased now is likely to have a limited life expectancy which will be considerably less than the machine that now requires replacing.

**Statement in Support of Recommended Action:**

10. A new platemaker is required to enable the Reprographics Section to continue to support and produce the Council's printing requirements. The type of replacement equipment proposed will have environmental benefits as well as producing a small saving on operational costs.

**Other Options for Action:**

11. Do nothing whilst the existing equipment remains operational, accepting its limitations and the risk of requiring an urgent supplementary estimate when it breaks down and spare parts cannot be sourced.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

12. No external consultation.

**Resource implications:**

**Budget provision:** £35,000 capital provision in 2007/08. Approximate saving of £1,000 per annum on operating costs.

**Personnel:** Nil.

**Land:** Nil.

**Community Plan/BVPP reference:** No specific reference.

**Relevant statutory powers:** Nil.

**Background papers:** Nil.

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** Contribution to Council's Environmental policy by replacing a chemical process with a non-chemical process.

**Key Decision reference (if required):** N/A.