

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-019-2020/21  
**Date of meeting:** 14 September  
2020



**Portfolio:** Environment & Technical – Cllr Nigel Avey  
**Subject:** Highway Ranger Service Update  
**Responsible Officer:** Mandy Thompson (01992 564076).  
**Democratic Services Officer:** Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

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

- (1) To note the progress the progress on devolution of Highway Rangers Service from Essex County Council; and**
- (2) To agree to allocate £1,000 for repair and maintenance of Heritage Finger Posts subject to match funding from Town and Parish Councils.**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Highway Ranger service transferred from ECC to Epping Forest District Council on 1 April 2020; the purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the service.

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

To update Members on the progress of the Highway Rangers Service.

### **Options for Action:**

None

### **Report:**

1. The Highway Rangers Service provides practical support to the Local Highways Panels (LHP). The Service is funded through the ECC Revenue Budget and will be carried out in partnership with the District Council.
2. The scope of the work that can be undertaken by the Highway Ranger service is determined by the fact that it must be achievable by 2 people and a van, who carry a small selection of hand tools. Requests for Highways Rangers should be limited to work on public highways. The Rangers do not undertake excavations or works that require traffic management such as pot-hole repair which remain the responsibility of the Essex Highways.
3. The two existing Highway Rangers directly employed by Ringway Jacobs staff didn't TUPE transfer to EFDC. Despite restrictions due to Covid-19 a recruitment exercise was

carried out and we have successfully appointed two officers with an anticipated start date in August 2020 once all the appropriate pre-employment checks have been completed

4. The service will sit within the Environmental Protection and Land Drainage Team as there are a number of synergies and expertise with Land Drainage. In the interim period before the two officers take up their appointment as Highway Rangers and are operational any Highway Ranger requests and any work requests for Rangers is assessed by the Highway Liaison Officer and is carried out either by Ringway or EFDC using sub-contractors if necessary.

5. It is anticipated that at the time of Cabinet meeting the new service will be operational. A new dedicated email address will be used for requests for assistance from the Rangers [Highwayrangers@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:Highwayrangers@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) and a web page has been developed with the Councils Communications Team. Both these will be turned on once the new service is operational and a publicity launch of the service will be carried out.

6. A vehicle and equipment have been procured and will be liveried appropriately along with high visibility uniforms (see Appendix 1). In the first two weeks there will be a program of induction and necessary training to ensure the new Rangers are fully complicit with all requirements of EFDC and Health & Safety requirements.

7. As part of the launch of the new service it is proposed that an allocation of a Finger Post fund of £1000 for towns and parishes to request for finger posts to be repaired/maintained on a match funding basis as throughout the district some have fallen into disrepair. Fingerposts are invaluable in directing members of the public around large open spaces including parks, nature reserves and out town centres.

#### **Resource Implications:**

**None**

The Service is funded through an £80,000 ECC Revenue Budget and will be carried out in partnership with Essex County Council. Additional funding was agreed at February Cabinet for the set-up costs of the service.

£1000 match funding for Finger Posts will be allocated from within existing budget provision.

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

This is a partnership arrangement with ECC who have delegated their Highway responsibility in respect of Highway Ranger work to the District Council. Oversight and performance monitoring of the Service will be carried out through the LHP.

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

The Council has set aside its own budget in addition to the allocation from ECC. Once the Service commences and the two new operatives get up to speed with the core work there will be opportunities to expand the scope of the Rangers Team. As a first step the finger posts will be repaired and maintained. In the coming months other opportunities for low level maintenance work will be explored. It is intended to get the Rangers Team carry out the work which will improve the street scene.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

ECC, Ringway Jacobs and the two members of staff in respect of TUPE transfer.

**Background Papers:**

Highway Ranger Information Booklet

Appendices

Appendix 1 Vehicle and uniform livery

**Risk Management:**

If the Council fails to deliver the Rangers service, then it would have a negative impact on the street scene. This risk is being managed by working collaboratively with the LHP Liaison Officer who prioritises requests for Ranger work and allocates to Ringway Jacobs or where it is feasible the Council is using our existing maintenance contractors.

Despite issues around Covid-19 the Council has been successful in appointing two operatives to the Team who will be able to carry out the Ranger work once they are fully inducted and trained.