

## Decision by Portfolio Holder



**Report reference:** CRS-003-2020/21  
**Date of report:** 18 September 2020

**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Commercial and Regulatory Services – Councillor A Patel

**Author:** Qasim (Kim) Durrani                      **Democratic Services:** J Leither

**Subject:** Approval for allocation from Sustainable Travel Projects budget for Covid-19 Safer Places Project for Epping High Street improvement works project

### Decision:

Approval is sought for the allocation of £71,442 from the existing Sustainable Travel Projects budget and Reopening High Streets Safety Fund to top up Essex County Council funding to install street furniture, carry out other minor repair and improvement works at Epping High Street under the Covid-19 Safer Places Project. The project will improve safety of visitors to Epping High Street by facilitating safe social distancing, improvement in public realm will facilitate businesses in their economic recovery.

<b>ADVISORY NOTICE:</b> <i>A Portfolio Holder may not take a decision on a matter on which he/she has declared a Pecuniary interest. A Portfolio Holder with a non-pecuniary interest must declare that interest when exercising delegated powers.</i>	
I have read and approve/ <del>do not approve</del> (delete as appropriate) the above decision:	
Comments/further action required: None	
Signed: Councillor A Patel	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
<i>Non-pecuniary interest declared by Portfolio Holder/ conflict of non-pecuniary interest declared by any other consulted Cabinet Member:</i>	<i>Dispensation granted by Standards Committee: Yes/No or n/a</i>
None	N/A
<b>Office use only:</b> Call-in period begins: 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	Expiry of Call-in period: 7 <sup>th</sup> October 2020

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Democratic Services IMMEDIATELY**

### Reason for decision:

To avail the opportunity of improvement works being carried out by Essex Highways under Safer

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Portfolio Holder:**

Streets project to top up their budget and allocate funds for Highway Rangers or Council contractors to install enhanced street infrastructure and carry out public realm improvement works that facilitate compliance with Covid-19 restrictions.

#### **Options considered and rejected:**

The Council can refuse to top up ECC funding. This will result in ECC implementing a scheme of basic standard which will present ongoing operating challenges to Monday Charter Market and potentially costs.

If separate funding is not allocated to improve and enhance street furniture and carry out minor improvement works then an opportunity would be lost to maximise chances of economic recovery of Epping High Street.

#### **Report:**

1. A large number of businesses have been affected by Covid-19 to varying degrees. For the District the most noticeable impact has been on the High Streets and small shops and businesses. The Council has undertaken a number of initiatives both during the peak of the Pandemic as well as afterwards to help and assist businesses, residents and other stakeholders. These have been reported previously to Members at Cabinet and Full Council.

2. The Council is undertaking a number of steps to assist and support revival of local economy. This includes both direct and indirect interventions. A number of projects and programmes are being planned for Covid-19 recovery. One such initiative is the Covid-19 Safer Places Project. This project will see interventions to facilitate safer social distancing and easier access for walking and cycling on local high streets and town centres in; Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton, Ongar and Buckhurst Hill.

3. Officers prepared grant bids for the Department of Transport Active Travel Fund. The Council has nominally been awarded £116,000 under this Fund. The submission exceeded this sum and includes the costs of the provision of stickers, additional Environmental Health Officer costs to support the reopening of shops, restaurants and cafes safely and potential schemes to support active travel and social distancing for Loughton High Road, Debden Broadway and Buckhurst Hill.

4. Government for Cycling and Walking Initiatives fund which had £250m out of the £2billion budget for support to help social distancing. The Council's bids were £60,125 for Epping Town Centre and Sun Street Waltham Abbey £25,740. Essex County Council was initially advised by the Department for Transport that it had been awarded up to £1.9m from the fund (although this was subsequently decreased to just over half that amount as a result of bids not meeting the criteria) and the District was successful in its bid for specific funding to bring forward a scheme for Epping Town Centre.

5. Further bids were also submitted for Phase 2 for Buckhurst Hill, Loughton and Ongar but were not successful – but were also included in our Reopening High Street Safety Fund claim. We are waiting a formal confirmation however it is understood that the Council has been nominally awarded £116,000 and there are likely to be surpluses available in this after the additional costs for Environmental Health Officers are taken into account.

6. The government allocation meant that ECC had to prioritise allocation for short and medium term works. The first phase of short term works saw the introduction of 20mph speed limit in and around Epping High Street as well as the Safer Street initiatives like the pedestrianisation of parts of the High Street by expansion of footways onto the highway.

4. The next phase of the works will see relatively permanent works like bollards and planters. ECC has allocated £17,000 for installation of removable bollards for the High Street, bollards for the top end of Station Road and the provision of cycle racks. In order to use the grant funding the order for

the works needs to be placed as soon as possible. Removable bollards are not best suited for the weekly removal and storage that is necessary for the operation of Epping Charter Market. Following discussion with the Town Council and Members it is considered that the more suitable bollards would be retractable lockable bollards which would cost £47,000.

5. It is recommended to avail this opportunity and provide top up funding to ECC in order to carry out a more enhanced scheme and one better suited to the operation of the market. At the same time, it is proposed to implement minor public realm improvement works along the high street. These include repairing pavement trip hazards, painting railings, repairing signposts and installing some new litter bins. A full list of proposed works is listed in Appendix-1. It is intended to replace or repair street litter bins and install a few new ones that are recycling friendly. The two types of litter bins that the Member Task and Finish Panel agreed are show under Appendix-2. The final type of bins selected will be after advice from the Council's Conservation team.

6. This is the first phase and officers are working on proposals for other town centres and high streets where plans are at different levels of development these will be progressed in due course.

**Resource Implications:**

Approval is sought to reallocate a sum of £71,442 from the Sustainable Travel Projects as well as underspends from Reopening High Streets Safely Fund to pay for the proposed works listed below:

Item	Cost	Detail
Top up ECC funding to install robust retractable and lockable bollards	£30,000	This will top up the £17,000 allocated by ECC for basic bollards
Costs to complete works outlined in Appendix 1	£35,850	Includes all material costs and contractor costs
Replacement of old litter bins with new recycling friendly	£5592	Costed at Olympic style bin
Time to completion	34 days	

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Highway Ranger service has been delegated from ECC to the Council and that will allow the minor works being carried out on the public highway.

The Council is a Principal Litter Authority and has the powers to install and replace litters bins and benches etc.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Repairs to the pavement will remove trip hazards which will assist pedestrians. The repainting and repair of railings will improve the look of the High Street.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Epping Town Council in respect of the ease of operation of the Monday Charter Market. Conservation Officer for the type of street litter bin most suitable for Epping Town.

**Background Papers:**

Cabinet approval of Development Bid Budgets.

Scrutiny Member Waste Task and Finish Panel that agreed the wo types of street litter bins for the District.

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**Impact Assessments:**

N/A

**Risk Management:**

If the works are not planned and coordinated then this could cause disruption to the businesses and visitors and shoppers. It is proposed to mitigate this by linking the works proposed by ECC and EFDC in a planned programme and minimise disruption.

Epping High Street is a conservation area and any a number of trees are Protected. All required consents and approvals will be obtained before any works are carried out. Due to their complexity and depending on resource requirements elsewhere it may take longer to complete all the works.

**Equality Analysis:**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided at Appendix 2 of this report.

**Key Decision Reference (Y/N):**

N/A

## Epping High Street Improvement Plan Work

	Issue	Rangers Outsource Essex Highways	Estimated Cost/no of hours	Total estimate of material and labour costs
	<b>General issues</b>			
1.	Remove any old flyposting signs or evidence of (zip ties, string etc), including stickers.	Ranger	2 hours	£0
2.	8 Benches - Repair, sand and paint/stain/varnish including metal work in black paint	Ranger	1 day per bench = 8 days	8 Days £50
3.	Remove Basal growth on trees along high street, only to reachable height no ladders to be used.	CountryCare Operative	3 Days	3 Days EFDC £0
4.	Paint railings	Ranger	5 days	£700
	<b>Slabbing</b>			
5.	Small scale temporary levelling of slabs outside 323 around base of tree.  Larger scale works may be needed when Tree work including crown reduction and root work approved. Root work to be carried out after leaf drop and crown reduction. completed autumn	Rangers  ECC Tree Maintenance Contract	1 day	£50  £0
6.	2 slabs outside JoJos, lift, level and relay.	Rangers	1/2day Rangers	£25
7.	O/S McColls, half slab by post adjacent to kerb lift, level and relay  O/S Nat West Tree work including crown reduction and root work approved. Root work to be carried out after leaf drop and crown reduction. completed autumn	Outsource  ECC Maintenance Contract	5 Days	£5k  £0
8.	O/S Boots, Hole in tarmac road, temporary repair with cold lay tarmac.	Outsource	1 day	£200
9.	O/S Spokes, 2 slabs lift, level and relay.	Rangers	1/2 day	£25
10.	Chinese Herb, from 172 door to	Rangers	1 day	£50

	kerb single line of slabs lift, level and relay.			
	<b>Signposts</b>			
11.	Sign opposite civic office, post needs to be straightened if possible and signs reattached. Replace post if too far damaged to straighten. If too damaged to be re-bent will need outsourced, likely need dig up posts and replace with contractor.	Rangers/Outsource	1 Day May need to be outsourced	1 day £1000
12.	O/S Douglas Allen, prep and paint post, straighten sign.	Rangers	1 day	£50
13.	Feeder pillar in area outside Barclays Bank, prep and paint.	Rangers	1 day	£50
14.	Feeder pillar at end of St John's road, Prep and paint.	Rangers	1 day	£50
15.	O/S Poppy's Kebab, Prep and paint posts, realign and raise signs including new "Parking"	Rangers/Outsource	1 day May need to be outsourced due to height	£1000 £150 (Signs)
	<b>Miscellaneous</b>			
16.	8 Replacement bins	Parking and WH Construction to install	2 days	Unicorn £2960 Olympic £3592 Installation £2400
17.	Street sweeping in general along High street in crevices especially outside civic.  Biffa contract needs to be looked at for cleaning of street bins.	Biffa	Ongoing	Within Contract
18.	Weeds along High street and outside Civic.	Biffa		
19.	Outside Civic repaint railings  Stonework at the front of the Civic	Rangers  To be included as part of work to install ramp in front of café area	1 Day	£50
20.	Planters, moveable, for placing outside M&S and Cottis Lane, to have EFDC livery	5		£10k planters £1000 plants
21.	Planters, non-moveable, for placing on the High street, to have EFDC livery	5		£10k planters £1000 plants

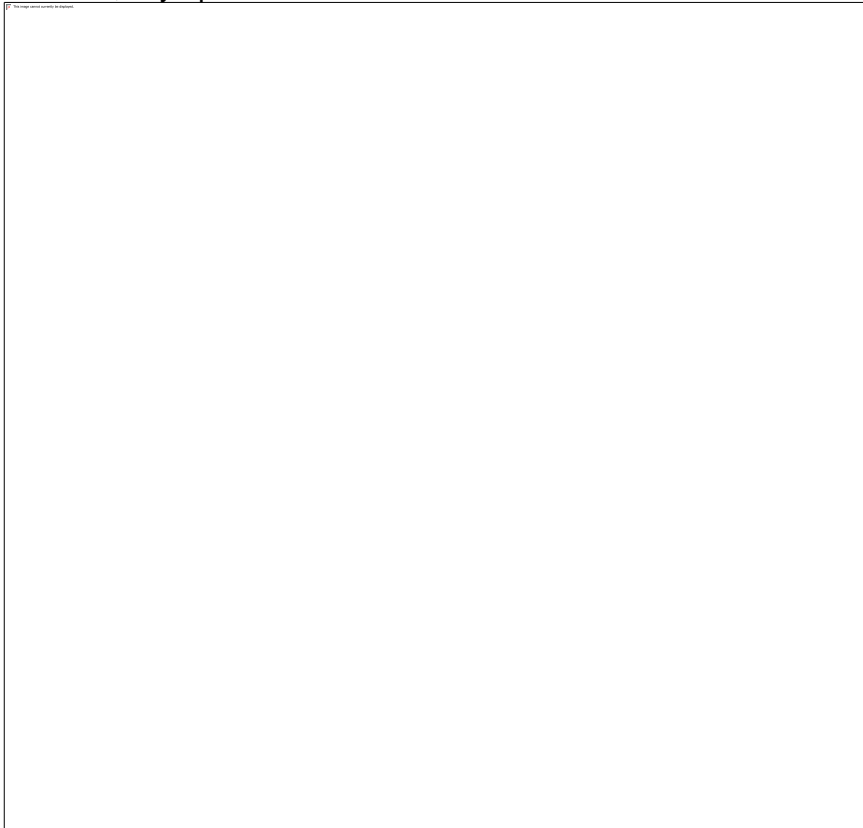
22.	Installation of Solar LED lights at the Epping Drinking Fountain	Outsourced		£5000
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**Appendix-2**

Urban Unicorn, Street Litter Bin £370:



Amberol, Olympic £449:



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