

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-020-2018/19
Date of meeting: 08 November 2018



Portfolio: Safer, Greener and Transport

Subject: Reinvestment for improvements and enhancements in Council car parks

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

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To agree to reinvest some of the additional predicted income because of the tariff review and recommend to Council the following Capital growth bids in the car parking budget for the 2019/20 financial year:

- (a) £100,000 for environmental enhancement and improvement works;
- (b) £60,000 for installation electric charging points subject to the outcome of the ongoing feasibility study;
- (c) £23,000 for installation of new CCTV systems;
- (d) £100,000 allocation for new LED lighting;

(2) To agree to recommend to the Council a DDF growth bid of £40,000 in 2019/20 for appointment of external consultants to carry out feasibility assessment to increase car park capacity; and

(3) To agree that the ongoing costs of £10,000 from 2019/20 onwards arising from the recommendations in this report to be funded from the additional income generated by the increase in parking charges already agreed by Cabinet.

Executive Summary:

The Cabinet agreed changes to the parking tariff at its meeting on 6 September. It is estimated that the revised tariff could result in additional income of up to £300,000 per year. It considered that some of the income could be reinvested to improve and enhance car parks. It agreed the investment will improve customer experience and help increase income.

The Council owns 20 car parks across the District with a total of 1763 parking spaces. Car parks are categorised as short or long stay with each attracting a separate set of parking tariff.

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to reinvest some of the increased income that is likely to arise because of the recently agreed parking tariff review into enhancing and improving Council owned off street car parks. Hopefully encouraging new customers and enhancing the experience of existing customers. The additional investment will make Council

car parks more welcoming, improve security, environmentally friendly and enhance customer experience. An assessment of options to increase capacity could result in proposals to invest in expanding existing car parks.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

At the September meeting Cabinet agreed to receive a further report setting out the funding growth bid for environmental enhancement and improvement in the Councils off street car parks.

Other Options for Action:

Some or all of the recommendations in the report could be rejected with varying degree of consequences, as listed in the risk management section of the report.

Report:

1. At its meeting on 6 September Cabinet agreed a new parking tariff for the District. This was the first increase since 2015 with the tariff bands of up to 2 hours stay remaining unchanged, these represent circa 85 percentage of the total usage. At the same time Cabinet also considered investment growth bids for improving and enhancing car parks. Cabinet agreed in principle with the idea of reinvesting some of the income back into the car parks however it was not convinced of the case for growth bids and asked for a further report with details of the additional investment. The estimated investment sought consists of £283,000 Capital allocation and £40,000 DDF.

2. The 20 off street car parks that the Council owns are spread across the entire District, Car Park Inventory is attached as appendix 1. There is existing budget allocation to keep these car parks in a good state of repair and cleanliness. There is no budget for improving or upgrading existing car parks and separate growth bids are required to carry out one off works. The growth bid of £100,000 equates to circa £5,000 per car park. Detailed cost estimates will be prepared once the project commences. It is an officer assessment that not all car parks will require the same level of investment. Site specific assessment and design will be carried out for each car park to determine the level and scale of improvement and enhancement. The type of works in each car park will vary for example: new combined recycling and refuse waste bins, new bollards to improve pedestrian safety, improved road markings, separation of pedestrian and vehicle movements, grass or hedge planting and large pot planters where appropriate. Some works will be carried out by the Council's term maintenance contractors whereas it may be necessary to carry out procurement exercise elsewhere. It envisaged that some car parks will see less than £5,000 spent and others more. The costs of works will range from: installation of a large pot planter for £2,000, a dual use recycling and refuse bin for £1,500, average cost of safety improvements by installing bollards or fence is £3,000, average cost of painting new pedestrian walkway road markings is £1,000, some car parks could benefit from directional boards or finger posts and their costs range from £200 to £500, it is recommended to agree a bid of £100,000 for environmental enhancement and improvement works **recommendation 1(a)**

3. One way of tackling the air quality challenges in the District is to encourage the use of electric vehicles. Enquiries from Members and residents suggest that there is demand for electrical vehicle charging points, however it is felt that the limited number of charging facilities currently in the district could be discouraging residents from switching to electric vehicles. Officers have carried out market research to engage with the private sector to find a viable solution for provision of charging points across the District. Unfortunately, the market is still fragmented and we currently consider that there is no one provider that can offer a favourable and equitable solution to all users. Each provider has their own payment solution

and loyalty scheme these result in a variety of overheads and charges especially for users who are not members of a supplier loyalty scheme. The Council is keen to ensure that the most appropriate system is installed to ensure maximum usage. ECC is leading on a County wide initiative for installation of charge points and these could include Council owned car parks, in some cases a central government grant maybe available. However, at this stage it is not clear how many Council car parks could attract government funding, something that will become clear once the Council is able to assess each site and make an application for grant funding. In case grant funding is obtained while working in collaboration with ECC then there would be no costs to the Council. ECC has a scheme for some park and ride sites in the County where the capital outlay and ongoing costs are covered by the sale of electrical charge. The estimated average cost of installation of a single machine is £6,000 without the associated ancillary works to enable power connections. If no central government funding is obtained then the Council could seek to install electric charging points in busier car parks and seek to recover the ongoing operational costs and initial capital investment. While all options are being explored it is recommended to agree a bid of £60,000 for installation electric charging points subject to the outcome of the ongoing feasibility study **recommendation 1(b)**

4. Installation criteria for CCTV systems in off street car parks is different to other sites across the District. For example District wide CCTV systems are installed following an assessment of anti-social behaviour and crime statistics whereas in off street car parks the consideration is Park Mark accreditation and evidential requirements like minor accidents or car break-ins. A Capital budget allocation of £100,000 was made at the time of the last tariff review in 2015 for installation of new CCTV systems in eleven car parks. Out of these seven car parks have had new CCTV systems installed and against the original budget allocation of £100,000 there is an underspend of £12,985. A full breakdown of works, alterations and changes in scope is provided in appendix-2. In addition, four car parks have been identified, three in need of a complete upgrade of dated CCTV and one new car park only recently converted to pay and display. The estimated cost for installation of CCTV systems in these car parks is £23,000. It is recommended to agree a growth bid of £23,000 for installation of CCTV systems. **recommendation1(c)**

5. In 2015 Cabinet approved £100,000 for installation of LED lighting in car parks. This project has proven difficult to implement due to competing work load of officers, lack of in house capability and the absence of a comprehensive solution in the market. Against the original allocation of £100,000 an expenditure of £63,000 has been incurred and the following four car parks have benefitted from new LED lighting: Traps Hill, Loughton, Darby Drive, Cornmill and Quaker Lane in Waltham Abbey. It is envisaged that to implement LED lighting project in car parks external consultants will be engaged. The estimated additional cost for the delivery of LED for the remaining car parks is £186,000. This estimate is based on the experiences from the delivery of LED project so far and includes a provision for consultancy fee. There is an existing budget allocation of £86,000 in the Capital programme. It is recommended to agree a growth bid £100,000 allocation for new LED lighting **recommendation 1(d)**

6. The Council is faced with a challenge of addressing the growing demand for safe public parking in the towns and villages across the District. While an additional 93 spaces have been created in Loughton with a further 44 planned, there is clearly demand for more spaces. The challenge for the Council is to encourage the use of sustainable transport and ensure the vitality and vibrancy of high streets and shops. The Council is keen to take full advantage of experiences of others. It is intended to appoint external consultants to explore and devise options for achieving these objectives. These could be in the form of technological interventions like occupancy display boards or assessing feasibility of building additional level of parking over existing car parks. It is recommended to agree a DDF growth bid of £40,000 in 2019/20 for these purposes **recommendation 2**

7. If the Capital funding recommended in this report is agreed then there would be the need for ongoing maintenance costs, for example: energy and maintenance of new CCTV systems, replanting and re-bedding of flower beddings, maintenance of large pot plants, emptying of litter bins and processing costs for electric vehicle charging systems. Details of costs are provided in the Resource Implication section of the report and it is recommended that the ongoing costs of £10,000 in 2019/20 be allocated against the additional income estimated due to the increase in parking charges **recommendation 3**

Resource Implications:

There are 20 car parks across the District from which the Council made an income of £1,347,000 in 2017/18 which consisted of: £918,000 by cash in pay and display machines, £300,000 paid by phone, £25,000 by chip and pin, £104,000 by purchase of Season Tickets and Resident Permits.

The recommendations in this report add to a Capital budget allocation of £283,000 consisting of £100,000 for environmental improvement and enhancements, £60,000 for electrical charging points, £100,000 for new LED lighting systems and £23,000 for replacement of end of life CCTV systems. If funding bids to central government for installation of electrical charging points in car parks are successful then there would be savings in the £60,000 sought. At this stage it is recommended to include the bid in budget growth and an update will be provided at the budget setting meeting of the Council.

It is hoped that by carrying out these enhancement and improvements the car parks will attract more users which will not only increase the income for the Council but also help bring more shoppers and visitors to the shops and businesses on the high streets.

The DDF expenditure of £40,000 is for engaging external consultants to advise the Council on options for use of innovative technologies or possibilities of expanding capacity of existing car parks.

In the fullness of time and once the electrical charging points become popular the Council will be able to recover any ongoing costs as well as capital investment in electrical charging points. However, until that happens there is a need to allocate adequate on-going budget.

The CSB expenditure of £10,000 will be met from the anticipated additional income from the revised parking tariff. The estimated ongoing cost associated with the projects recommended in this report is:

Item	Activity	Estimated yearly cost	Remarks
CCTV systems	Yearly maintenance	£2,000	
Green infrastructure	Maintain landscape enhancements. To include: General cyclic aftercare e.g. watering, weeding, pruning, seasonal planting etc.	£2,000	
Electric charging	Loss of income due to reduction in turn over of parking bay	£5,000	Although users of charge points will pay the parking fee for the duration of the stay these bays will be underutilised until EV charging becomes popular

	Back office costs for providers to support 24/7 charging operations	To be recovered from user	
	Licence and compliance fees	£1,000	Banking and transaction costs
			Electrical charge rate will be set at a level to seek recovery of these costs while remaining competitive.
Total		£10,000	

The £100,000 sought for allocation for new LED lighting in the remaining car parks will result in a further reduction in energy costs for the Council.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council has the legal powers to charge for and enforce car parking on its land.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

All the Council car parks have Park Mark accreditation. Replacement of some of the dated end of life CCTV camera systems will further enhance safety and security for users and facilitate in retaining the Park Mark status.

Installation of better quality LED lighting, bollards, litter bins and sign posts will improve safety, appearance of car parks and enhance user experience.

Consultation Undertaken:

none

Background Papers:

Cabinet report on 6 September on parking tariff review

Risk Management:

If the £100,000 requested for environmental enhancement and improvement works is not agreed then an opportunity to improve and enhance would be lost. This funding is requested to do over and above the routine maintenance of car parks. For example, some car parks don't have litter bins, some of the budget would be used to install large pot planters at appropriate car parks

If the £60,000 sought for installation electric charging points, subject to outcome of an ongoing feasibility is refused then there is reputation risk to the Council of not taking measures to improve air quality in the District. The Council could also be criticised for ignoring requests by residents and motorists to be able to charge electrical vehicles. If central government funding is obtained for some or all car parks then there would be a saving in this budget.

The £23,000 sought for installation of new CCTV systems or replacement of the end of life dated systems will improve coverage in the car parks.

The DDF growth bid of £40,000 will enable the Council to engage external consultants to assess feasibility for expansion in car park capacity. Failing to do this may mean the Council could lose out on opportunity for increasing income and helping the town centres if viable alternatives are available.