

Agenda item 8

For Ratification and approval: To ratify acquiring a third FTC vehicle on a contract basis and approve additional Ranger hours

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Summary

To enable the Rangers to work efficiently and effectively, we have arranged a 3-year lease of a new electric vehicle. An existing EMR will cover the first year and Cllrs are asked to note that there will be a budgetary requirement for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

This report details the reasons behind this decision; and outlines the financial implications.

Additionally, we would like to increase the hours of the current part-time Ranger post to full-time (an increase from 3 days per week to 5 days per week)

Again, this to enable the team to work effectively – providing greater scope to realise opportunities (and to react to problems and emergencies)

Background

At present, the Rangers are limited by the need to plan their work around the availability of the two existing vehicles; and this is having an impact on their capacity to look after the town's parks and green spaces.

A third vehicle will offer the team and the Council that much more flexibility and that much more productivity. A third vehicle will also prove important as and when we assume responsibility for the play spaces at Packsaddle (including Chapmans Close) and Tower View; these spaces are on separate sides of the town - and looking after them will stretch our estate across the town.

We have collectively identified a newer, improved electric vehicle as the preferred option. This not only meets the need for an additional vehicle, but also meets our ambitions of looking after the town in the right way; and leading and exemplifying good practice.

Financial

We have identified and negotiated a 3-year lease agreement (in favour of an outright purchase). This decision was based on initial costs and future flexibility.

The main considerations of the lease are:

- More expensive in total (with the total costs detailed on the attached spreadsheet)
- But a cheaper initial outlay
- A revenue implication - year-on-year for the next 3 years including the current financial year
- Greater flexibility to upgrade; replace etc. as technology improves
- Servicing, repairs and maintenance all included in the lease
- A loan vehicle in the event of breakdowns, repairs or emergencies

We have £7,500 in an EMR for a new vehicle (to 31 March 2018). This sum will cover the first six months of the lease - from October 2017 to March 2018. The balance will be used to update the decal livery on the two existing vehicles.

- In 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 we will need to allow for (fixed) annual hire costs of £8,637.20
- If desired, we would also need to budget a final payment to purchase the vehicle at the end of the agreed lease (an estimated £8,250)

Additional Ranger hours

With Michael Gerrard having left, we will be advertising for a new Town Ranger very shortly.

Michael's full-time hours have been taken up by Redd How – one of our current Rangers – with immediate effect.

This leaves the part-time hours that Redd was working; and with a view to building on the excellent work of the team (and looking ahead to the future) it would be ideal if we could increase these hours so we have four full-time Rangers on the team.

The increased salary costs are roughly £8k per whole year. The cost of doing this in the current financial year can be met from existing budgets; but please note the implications for future years.

Recommendations

1. Ratify the 3-year lease of the new vehicle
2. Note the financial implications of the new vehicle for the financial years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020
3. Approve the additional hours for the Ranger team, creating four full-time posts.