


| | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
|  Employment Committee – 17 September 2014 | | Agenda Item No. 8 |
| Title | Ranger Service | |
| For further information about this report please contact | Paul Garrison – Project Officer, Contract Services Ex 6754. Email – paul.garrison@warwickdc.gov.uk | |
| Wards of the District directly affected | All | |
| Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006? | No | |
| Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number | Executive Meeting 3 September 2014 | |
| Background Papers | | |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Contrary to the policy framework: | No |
| Contrary to the budgetary framework: | No |
| Key Decision? | Yes |
| Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number) | Yes. Reference <u>630</u> |
| Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken | No |
| Assessment not applicable to the project | |

| | | |
|--|-------------|-------------------|
| Officer/Councillor Approval | | |
| Officer Approval | Date | Name |
| Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive | 02/08/2014 | Bill Hunt |
| Head of Service | 01/08/2014 | Robert Hoof |
| CMT | 11/08/2014 | N/A |
| Section 151 Officer | | |
| Monitoring Officer | | N/A |
| Finance | 6/08/2014 | Mike Snow |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | 01/08/2014 | Cllr Dave Shilton |
| Consultation & Community Engagement | | |
| Parks and Open Spaces Household Audit Warwick District Council Local Plan Consultation Consultation to follow on Public Space Protection Orders and the list of behaviours that will be enforced | | |
| Final Decision? | Yes | |

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The decision by the Council to retain the off-street car parking service has created an opportunity to create a generic "Ranger" role, to provide a range of functions, including car park management, reassurance for service users, sign posting, resolving operational issues and various enforcement activities.
- 1.2 The Executive agreed on the 3rd September 2014 to implement the new Ranger Service, therefore the council needs to recruit staff to provide this service.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Members agree for the following posts to be added to the Council's establishment:

Senior Ranger x 2

Ranger x 16
- 2.2 Members agree that the posts of; Car Parks Supervisor x 1, Car Parks Civil Enforcement Officer x 7 be deleted from the establishment list from 31st October 2014. These posts (agreed at the March 2014 Employment Committee) will now be replaced by the Ranger posts.
- 2.3 As a result of 2.2 the individual currently fulfilling the post of Car Parks Supervisor will be placed under consultation.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Council will need to have staff in place for the 1st November 2014 to operate the off-street car parking service, with the remainder of staff recruited to operate the full service from 1st April 2015.
- 3.2 The Ranger Service will include the resources identified within the 13th March Employment Committee Report, although with a much broader role.
- 3.2 A new generic Ranger Service will improve service delivery and provide an annual saving of £45k. This saving will contribute to the shortfall of £200,000 faced by WDC as a result of Warwickshire County Council externalising on-street parking enforcement
- 3.3 To recruit for the Ranger Service roles now will give an opportunity to the existing Civil Enforcement Officers to apply for the new positions. It is anticipated that this will give stability to the team by retaining skills relevant to the new roles.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 The provision of high quality parks and open spaces makes a significant contribution to making Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit.
- 4.2 Work in tackling anti-social behaviour is a significant part of the Council's vision for Safer Communities.

- 4.3 The provision of off-street car parking is key to supporting the economic viability of the local towns.
- 4.4 The principles of Fit for the Future have been considered when reviewing and designing the new Ranger Service. This proposal will improve service delivery to our customers; create a generic multi skilled role to maximise the flexibility and resilience of the service, and to deliver a financial saving.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 Based on Warwick District Council delivering the Ranger Service in-house it is expected that the expenditure of running the Ranger Service from April 2014 will be £450k for a full year. The current cost of operating the same scope of services through existing contracts and arrangements is £495k.
- 5.2 The £45k saving will contribute to the shortfall of £200,000 faced by WDC as a result of Warwickshire County Council externalising on-street parking enforcement.
- 5.3 These posts are going through HAY and the following is a detailed breakdown of the new posts and costs:-

Senior Ranger x 2, Grade F + 1% single status enhancement, total salary including on-cost = £54,424

The role will supervise and lead the team of 16 Rangers ensuring that Rangers are; supported in their role, proficient in customer service, cleansing and maintenance duties in parks and open spaces, maintenance of the pay and display systems, pay on exit systems and parking management systems ensuring that this equipment operates to its maximum potential. Senior Rangers will be responsible for compiling and monitoring of cash collection contract providing statistical information for review by senior officers.

Ranger x 16, Grade G + 1% single status enhancement, total salary including on-cost = £359,312

This role will provide front line customer service and assurance to the users of the Districts key parks and open spaces and off-street car parks. The post holder will also undertake cleansing and maintenance duties in key parks and open spaces and effective enforcement in key parks and off-street car parks. They will ensure that the pay and display machines are kept operational and support the pay on exit operations in the multi-storey car parks.

- 5.4 The current Parking Services operate from 6am until midnight 7 days a week. As a result the enforcement team receive the 1% single status enhancement on their salary. The new operation will operate during the same times resulting in the entitlement of the 1% enhancement for Senior Rangers and Rangers.
- 5.5 There may be potential funding opportunities for the role through the Police and Crime Commissioner Office but this has yet to be fully investigated. As such it is too early to establish if there is any financial benefit to the Council.

6. **RISKS**

- 6.1 Due to the generic role of a Ranger, staff will require a range of skills, in particular the ability to interact with customers effectively and to work under their own initiative. Attracting the right people to these roles is essential to

making the new service work effectively. By basing the new Ranger role around the requirements for parking Civil Enforcement Officers, the Council has a pool of current employees that it can select from who have the necessary skills.

6.2 The proposed Ranger Service supports the principles of Fit for the Future, as it introduces a highly visible, accountable and approachable presence into the District's key parks and gardens. If the Ranger Service is not established these improvements will not be realised.

6.3 It is believed that there are no risks associated with the employment changes.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

7.1 To continue with the proposal to recruit Civil Enforcement Officers just for the off-street service parking service, however this has been discounted as there is the opportunity to create a more resilient and effective generic role.

7.2 Not to include the Jephson Gardens Park Ranger in the new broader Ranger Service, however this has been discounted as the current agreement with Action 21 who employs the current Jephson Gardens Park Ranger comes to an end in March 2015.

7.3 To continue with the two parks teams provided through the Street Cleansing Contract, however this has been discounted as it has only been effective in delivering better cleansing standards, rather than the range of benefits it was intended to deliver.

7.4 To provide a Ranger Service through one of the Council's major contracts, however this has been discounted as it would not be possible to include the off-street car parking staff, and there are concerns over the calibre of staff a maintenance contractor could attract for this role.

8. BACKGROUND

8.1 How the service currently operates

8.1.1 Neighbourhood Services is responsible for both the management of off-street car parking and parks and open spaces.

8.1.2 Parking enforcement duties are undertaken by Civil Enforcement Officers employed by Warwick District Council.

8.1.3. Basic maintenance (litter picking, sweeping, emptying of litter bins) of the District's parks and grounds maintenance is delivered through the Council's street cleansing contract by staff employed by Veolia.

8.1.4 The Jephson Park Ranger is provided through an agreement with Action 21 which is due to end in March 2015. The Council will need to continue to provide a Ranger as this was part of the Heritage Lottery fund grant conditions for the refurbishment of Jephson Gardens.

8.2 **How will the Ranger Service operate?**

- 8.2.1 Implementation of the Ranger Service would see the responsibility for some elements of park maintenance to be taken in-house and delivered as part of a Ranger job role.
- 8.2.2 The Ranger Service would have responsibility for enforcement in the Council's off-street car parks.
- 8.2.3 Surface car parks will continue to be cleansed as part of the street cleansing contract. Covent Garden, Linen Street and St. Peters multi-storey car parks will be cleansed by the staff that are based in those locations. Cleansing of the parks will be one of the duties of the Rangers.
- 8.2.4 It is proposed that a total of 18 Rangers will be employed on a rota basis to be deployed on foot or as part of a mobile units as required.
- 8.2.5 The foot patrols will be organised into small geographical locations that will enable them to spend a significant time within destination parks, where one of their main roles will be to provide support and assurance to park users.
- 8.2.6 Mobile teams will visit local parks and informal open spaces on a regular basis, giving greater flexibility in responding to local issues, and supporting the work of the foot patrols.
- 8.2.7 The Service Area Plan for Neighbourhood Services will be amended to reflect the changes to the team's operational structure and organisation.
- 8.2.8 The existing Civil Enforcement Officers receive training in lone working and conflict management and it is envisaged the any newly recruited Rangers will be similarly trained. Rangers will carry two-way radios which can be tracked by GPS as a further safety measure.

8.3 **Benefits of the Ranger Service**

8.3.1 **Greater control of resources**

Bringing the responsibility for some elements of parks maintenance in-house will ensure the Council has a greater control over how its investment is used and how available resources are organised and allocated.

8.3.2 **Improved quality control**

By bringing the Ranger Service 'in-house' the Council will have direct control of the employment and management of the staff. This will ensure sufficiently qualified and experienced staff members are employed for these roles.

8.3.3 **Greater resilience**

The proposed structure ensures there is a pool of skilled staff available that can be organised and allocated to meet changing service requirements throughout the year.

8.3.4 Supporting Other Council Services

A greater presence of uniformed officers in parks and open spaces, that are able to issue fixed penalty notices, will drastically increase the Council's ability to tackle issues such as dog fouling, littering, graffiti etc.

8.3.5 Supporting/Support From Partner Organisations

The Ranger service would be flexible to the demands of the local community. Contract Officer's routinely attend local community forums and there will be sufficient flexibility within the Ranger role to be able to direct the resource to resolve any relevant issues arising from forums.

Rangers' will also gather intelligence as part of their role to support the work of local Police, PCSO's and Street Wardens. Rangers' will monitor and respond to incidents of anti-social behaviour within parks and open spaces and will work closely with local Police teams to resolve issues. Any relevant information gathered during the undertaking of their duties will be shared at routine meetings between Warwick District Council and Warwickshire Police.

As a result of this joint working arrangement it is anticipated that Warwickshire Police will support the Ranger Service with a further uniformed presence where circumstances require it.

8.3.6 Cost Savings

The annual cost for operating the proposed Ranger service will be £450K (including staff costs, vehicles and equipment). The annual cost of delivering the existing parks maintenance and parking enforcement services is £495K

8.3.7 Visibility and Reassurance

Rangers will be a uniformed presence working in the District's key parks and open spaces and off-street car parks. Within the structure of the service there will be a number of foot patrols covering small geographical areas. Their presence will provide park users with an increased level of reassurance and a point of contact for a range of issues. It is also anticipated that a uniformed presence will provide a level of deterrent against inappropriate and anti-social behaviour in parks, open spaces and car parks.

8.3.8 Enforcement

The Rangers will replace Civil Enforcement Officers and as such enforcement will form part of their role. Enforcement as always will be considered a last resort however it will be a useful tool for the Rangers to be able to issue penalties for non-compliance as it will affirm their credibility as a capable guardian within the park. As well as parking enforcement it is envisaged that the Rangers will be authorised officers and trained to issue penalties for minor crime and anti-social behaviour as part of the new Public Space Protection Orders which come into force on October 20th 2014. Further details on the scope and implementation of Public Space Protection Orders will be formally submitted at a later date by Pete Cutts in a report titled 'Changes to ASB Legislation'.