

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Decision Made: 17 May 2011

PARKING SERVICES - PARTNERSHIP WITH SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Issue for Decision

To consider the outcome of the recent tendering of the Council's parking enforcement contract and options to introduce a partnership arrangement for parking services with Swale Borough council.

Decision Made

1. That the partnership arrangements for parking services with Swale Borough Council as identified in the report of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services be agreed.
2. That the partnership commence on 1st June 2011, or as soon as possible afterwards with temporary arrangements put in place.

Reasons for Decision

The Council's parking services team undertakes the management of "on street" parking operations on behalf of Kent County Council by way of an agency agreement, together with the management of the Council's "off street" car parks. The parking restrictions and orders are enforced through a contract currently undertaken by APCOA which commenced in 2004. A two year extension was granted in 2009. The service has generally operated well with few complaints.

The contract is due for renewal commencing on 1st June 2011 and the normal procurement arrangements have been undertaken. However discussions with Swale Borough Council suggested that it would also be interested in outsourcing its parking enforcement service which is currently provided "in house".

These discussions led to tenders being issued with two lots, one for Maidstone alone and one for Maidstone combined with Swale. Several tenders were received and evaluated.

The results of the tendering produced very favourable results for a combined contract with annual savings for Maidstone of approximately £146000. Significant savings were also projected for Swale through efficiency and effectiveness. The winning contractor was APCOA and the tender has been accepted.

It is proposed to retain £40000 of the savings in the parking budget for a number of reasons but primarily relating to the volatility of parking income which is affected by outside influences. Maintenance budgets have been used to offset against previous income shortfalls and repairs are becoming necessary in several car parks.

The combined enforcement contract will need careful management and having discussed with Swale the best way to do this, it is considered that a combined partnership operation for both authorities would be the best way forward. Both authorities use the same processing software. Although this is not a Mid Kent Improvement Partnership project, the board is aware of the proposals.

Partnership proposals

The current structure for parking services is provided in Appendix A of the report of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services. Under the new arrangements there will be one parking service manager for both Maidstone and Swale and one back office manager for the processing of penalty charge notices, parking permits etc. The back office staff will remain the same in both authorities although this will be reviewed after 12 months. Traffic orders etc will be processed by Maidstone Borough Council staff for Swale on a cost by cost basis. A partnership agreement is being prepared. The revised structure is provided in Appendix B of the report of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services.

The new partnership arrangements will generate additional savings of £36000 for Maidstone and further savings for Swale and will provide a cost effective, efficient service with improved services to the public.

It is therefore proposed, to undertake the necessary negotiations with staff and trade unions and introduce the partnership to coincide with the introduction of the new contract i.e. from 1st June 2011. As timescales are tight, if it is not possible to have all the partnership elements in place by that date the temporary arrangements will be put in place. This will involve the relevant staff being seconded to Swale on a part time basis.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

The partnership proposals could be rejected, but this would prevent savings being made and a more effective and efficient service being provided.

Background Papers

None

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: 24 May 2011
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