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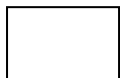
Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Executive Board

Date: 10th March 2010

Subject: Environment & Neighbourhoods Inquiry in to the Procurement of the Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2011

Electoral Wards Affected:



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

The Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods) published its draft report summarising the detailed inquiry in to the Grounds Maintenance procurement process. Within the report are twelve recommendations.

In accordance with the requirements of the constitution the response to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations need to be agreed by the Executive Board. Attached to this report is the report of the Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods).

Recommendation 1

That the chair of the Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that the relevant client groups actively engage with all Elected Members at key stages of the current grounds maintenance procurement project. We would advise that such engagement continues to be conducted through Area Committees.

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation. The process has already begun and the Grounds Maintenance update will become a regular agenda item on Area Committee meetings.

Recommendation 2

That Area Committees are recognised as key stakeholders during the procurement of future grounds maintenance contracts and are engaged from the start of the procurement process in order to inform key decisions.

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation and the Environmental Champion from each Area Committee will be involved in the engagement with Area Committees.

Recommendation 3

That clear guidelines be drawn up immediately in relation to Elected Member engagement throughout all stages of the procurement process and particularly for high profile projects. That these guidelines be brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.

The Director of Environment & Neighborhoods agrees with this recommendation and will raise it at Corporate Leadership Team to consider the application of guidelines corporately.

Recommendation 4

That the Chair of the Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that all local Parish and Town Councils are actively engaged at key stages of the current grounds maintenance procurement project.

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation and will ensure that Parish and Town Councils are engaged at key stages of the procurement process through Area Committees.

Recommendation 5

That the Executive Board considers an immediate risk assessment for conducting a further option appraisal as part of the current procurement process so that the option of awarding smaller contracts for the grounds maintenance service is considered again and involves the engagement of local Parish and Town Councils.

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods considers this recommendation no longer relevant, as these options will form part of the proposed procurement approach for the next Grounds Maintenance contract. This report will refer to option appraisal work done to support the procurement approach that will be recommended and also include reference to how Parish and Town Councils can be involved and engaged.

Recommendation 6

- i. That details of the analysis conducted by the Grounds Maintenance Project Board in relation to the benefits and limitations of having an output specification for the new grounds maintenance contract is shared with Elected Members.**
- ii. We further recommend that such analysis is brought to the attention of the Executive Board for its consideration.**

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation and will ensure that the information is presented as requested to both Executive Board and Scrutiny Board.

Recommendation 7

- i. That the Chair of Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that further work is carried out to quantify the size of the problem in dealing with unregistered land and its financial impact on the Council.**

- ii. **We further recommend that consideration is given to the feasibility of setting aside a separate budget for maintaining such pieces of orphan land until ownership matters are resolved.**

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with the recommendation and will refer to this in the report to Executive Board referred to in 5 above.

Recommendation 8

That the tendering process for the new grounds maintenance contract encourages a localised approach towards the delivery of the new service and particularly if the service is to be packaged as one city wide contract.

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation in principle. Through the new contract specification bidders will be encouraged to adopt the approach. In addition further control can be exercised over the new contractor through client influence over the work programme.

Recommendation 9

That the Grounds Maintenance Project Board gives further consideration to strengthening existing arrangements for dealing with adverse performance issues, including the introduction of more stringent penalties and for this to be fed back to the Scrutiny Board as part of its ongoing review in to the procurement of the new grounds maintenance contract.

The Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees that robust procedures need to be in place to deal with contract monitoring and adverse performances. The four clients have agreed a contract monitoring and administration model and advice is currently being sought regarding adverse performance penalties.

Recommendation 10

That the Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that each of the ALMOs and Highways Services works in partnership with Elected Members and local Parish and Town Councils to develop a framework for delivering more robust monitoring arrangements for grounds maintenance as part of the current procurement project.

The Director for Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation and will ensure that it is incorporated into the monitoring process.

Recommendation 11

That the Chair of the Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that attendance from all senior representatives on the Project Board is consistent.

The Director for Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation and can confirm that it has already been communicated to all Programme Board members.

Recommendation 12

That the Chair of the Grounds Maintenance Project Board ensures that a full commitment is given by the Project Board to work in partnership to successfully

deliver on the procurement timetable for awarding the 2011 grounds maintenance contract.

The Director for Environment & Neighbourhoods agrees with this recommendation.