

Wiltshire Customer First Partnership Street Urban Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Procurement

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To advise the Executive on the work of the Customer First Partnership on grounds maintenance and street cleansing and to seek a view on the future provision of the service.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To agree a mandate to undertake a joint procurement exercise in conjunction with the other local authorities within Wiltshire.**

3. Links to Corporate Business Plan 2005/06

- 3.1 The project links mainly to streetscene, partnership working and customer focus.

4. Background

- 4.1 This project is the first within the overall partnership programme to re-engineer services for frontline gains. The intended outcomes are to improve services and customer satisfaction and to reduce costs through working in partnership.
- 4.2 Streetscene is a priority not only for the Wiltshire Strategic Partnership but also is one of this Council's identified priorities. The profile is also being raised at National level.
- 4.3 The responsibility for the maintenance of public land, including the roadside is confusing to the public. This relates to land not only owned by the District Councils and the County Council but also the Town and Parish Councils and Housing Associations.
- 4.4 The quality of the streetscene and urban open space contributes greatly to the public perception of Wiltshire as a good place to live. It also affects the reputation of local government.
- 4.5 The Wiltshire Strategic Partnership have set a target for increasing customer satisfaction with the urban environment in Wiltshire by 20% by 2014.
- 4.6 The objectives of the project are four fold:
 - 1. To review and document partner organisation processes around the key delivery of urban grounds maintenance and street cleansing services (stage 1)
 - 2. To establish best practice standards and delivery mechanisms that could be adopted by partner organisations (stage 1)
 - 3. To procure streetscene services to the new processes and standards at a lower cost (stage 2) and,
 - 4. To build capability (skills, behaviours, tools and methods) in business process engineering, project delivery, partnership working and relationship management that can be applied to other potential joint working initiatives (Stages 1 and 2)

4.7 The second stage is the major stage and will not proceed without funding from the Regional Centre of Excellence because the principal barrier to the project is the availability of suitability qualified people in the partner organisation. The grant will enable partners to backfill and release the right people to deliver this project.

4.8 Each stage of the project will be on an opt-in opt-out basis

5. Details

5.1 Stage one is now near completion although there is some final checking and analysis of the data to be done. The findings will be presented to the Partnership Board in June.

5.2 However, each partner has been asked to consider whether they wish to opt in or out of the second phase, and will need to make a commitment to the project if they choose to do so.

5.3 Stage 2 of the project will:

- Deliver cashable efficiency gains by procuring grounds and cleansing services, based on new service specification and improved processes
- Embed partnership working behaviours among participating delivery and procurement terms

5.4 In 2005 this Council undertook a review of the main services provided by Cleansing and Amenities under 'Best Value' principles and is currently providing a programme of improvements across the services. The review did consider market testing the services however, this was not possible because of time restraints. This partnership project now offers an opportunity to do this as well as considering other options for service provision.

5.5 The partnership has considered a number of potential options including:

- A lead authority approach the service can be provided by one authority on behalf of others.
- A joint procurement of:
 - a) supplies and equipment
 - b) service provision
 - c) both a) and b)

5.6 As the partnership operates on an opt-in opt-out approach there may be full or partial participation by the partnership. The scope of the project enables other public bodies to participate in the procurement project

5.7 The partnership project provides an opportunity for this authority to make a decision on service delivery for the future against a range of options including retaining the services in house based on cost, quality and customer satisfaction.

5.8 The procurement timetable will be discussed at the next board meeting of the partnership but the Regional Centre of Excellence is seeking an agreed solution with the next 12 months. The partners believe at this stage, any implementation of a different procurement approach will be ready for implementation at the beginning of the growing season in 2007 (March)

6. Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 In the event of the service being transferred from North Wiltshire District Council to another provider, the Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment (TUPE) regulations will be applied.
- 6.2 The workforce have been made aware of this project and will be consulted with collectively and individually as appropriate during a continuous communication process as the next stage progresses
- 6.3 Unison has been made aware of the project progress and has been consulted on this report.

7. Community /Environmental Implications

- 7.1 Streetscene services are important to communities. The quality of the environment is judged by the effectiveness of the deliver of these services.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The project is expected to deliver both cashable and non cashable benefits. Details have not been included in this report as the financial benefits will be influenced by a number of options such as the procurement option and the number of participants in the process.
- 8.2 Furthermore, as mentioned earlier in this report, further analysis of data is required which may affect the potential net gains.
- 8.3 Members will also appreciate that the financial figures are commercially sensitive and it would not be appropriate to divulge these in this 'open' report. The report is mainly seeking a mandate to proceed on the basis that benefits of an alternative procurement solution may be assessed.
- 8.4 To undertake a procurement exercise will allow the council to evaluate value for money and the use of recourse for any future CPA, other Audit Commission Inspection or peer reviews.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The procurement process is bound by procedures of the UK and European Law.
- 9.2 If a lead authority approach is take to service delivery approval will be needed from each constituent authority to agree to form a joint committee and therefore this matter will need to be referred back to the Executive

10 Equality & Diversity Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Equality Policy.

**REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGER CUSTOMER SERVICES TO THE EXECUTIVE
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