

REPORT OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 17 June 2004)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Daniel Busk (member for Broughton and Stockbridge) was elected to the post of Chairman.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Michael Thierry (member for Ringwood North) was elected to the post of Vice-Chairman and chaired the meeting in the absence of the newly elected Chairman.

3. DIRECTORS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 31 MARCH 2004

(a) Financial Position

The provisional financial position for New Forest showed the business units operating at an overall surplus of £107,000.

The provisional financial position for Test Valley showed the business units operating at an overall surplus of £153,000, this was a substantial improvement on the £57,000 deficit achieved in 2002/03. Main points to note are:

- An £89,000 underspend on the refuse budget achieved across most of the budget heads (Employees, transport, premises, supplies and support costs). This surplus was returned to the Environment and Health budgets.
- The Grounds Maintenance Section returned a small deficit of £6,000 (2002/03 £37,000 deficit). The improved financial position was achieved through a better control on costs and the redeployment of some operational employees to the cleansing section during the quieter winter months.
- A surplus of £49,000 achieved by the building works section, of which £45,000 was returned to Technical Services.

(b) Operational Issues

The application for an Operators Licence to base a number of Test Valley refuse vehicles at Claymeadow Depot has now been withdrawn. Efforts will continue to secure an alternative site.

The new communication link between Portway and Beech Hurst has now been installed. This has resulted in greatly improved processing speeds and response times.

Members endorsed an amendment to the Partnership Constitution which is being presented to both Councils for approval. The amendment provides a framework for the submission of tenders to other public bodies up to a maximum cumulative annual value of £650,000. Members also endorsed a revised form of delegated authority to the Director of Commercial Services for

the submission of individual tenders. The proposed delegations, again to be approved by both Councils, allow for the Director to submit tenders up to the value of £50,000 in consultation with the Heads of Finance of the 2 authorities. Between £50,000 and £250,000 consultation has to take place also with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Committee. Any tenders above £250,000 and below £650,000 need to be approved by the Joint Committee.

The committee was informed that negotiations had been concluded with Raynesway Construction regarding the HCC Highways Term Maintenance Contract and that a revised schedule of rates had now been agreed.

The NF Building Works section continues to show improvements in the level of appointments achieved for Housing reactive maintenance work. It was reported that figures for April had reached a 75% level of achievement.

Members were informed of the appointment of a new Grounds Maintenance manager following the resignation of the previous postholder.

The successful introduction of the district wide chargeable green waste collection service in Test Valley was highlighted. Take up of the scheme has significantly exceeded original estimates with to date nearly 12,000 bags sold to more than 8,800 properties.

Concern was expressed in the level of MOT failures for HGV vehicles at Test Valley. Members were informed that the reason for this was because of a difference in the way Dept of Transport MOT brake tests are undertaken in comparison to the 6 weekly brake tests undertaken by the workshops on all HGV's. The TV testing is undertaken for the vehicle as a whole and the MOT test undertaken for each separate wheel. Whilst Members were reassured that there was not a safety issue with TV vehicles on the road, officers would seek to find a solution to the issue.

It was reported that the partnership is awaiting tender documents for the provision of Grounds Maintenance to HCC Schools in the Test Valley and New Forest areas. Members requested that prior to the submission of any tender a report (or briefing note if time did not permit) be brought back to the joint committee.

4. JOINT INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2003 – 2004

The first joint internal audit report on the work undertaken by the partnership was presented to the Committee. The main messages in the report were as follows:

- The joint audit review process appears to be working well.
- The internal controls and record keeping within the systems reviewed are generally sound and there are no matters of significance or consequence to be reported.