

REPORT OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 14 September 2007)

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr D Busk

2. URGENT ITEM – RE-TENDER FOR THE HCC BASINGSTOKE SCHOOLS GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Chairman agreed that the Committee should consider this report as an urgent item by reason of the special circumstances namely that the re-tender is above the threshold for the Director to submit under his delegated powers and the closing date was imminent. At the last meeting of the Committee it was agreed that the re-tender be submitted by the Director under his delegated powers as the expected value of the contract would fall within the range of £50,000 to £250,000. It has now been assessed that the re-tender will be in excess of £250,000 due to the increased quantities and therefore an urgent decision was required.

It was agreed that the tender for the HCC Basingstoke Schools Grounds Maintenance Contract be re-tendered for the agreed sum.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2006 and 7th June 2007 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4. DIRECTORS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1st APRIL 2007 TO 30th JUNE 2007

Consideration was given to the Director's Report which covered the period 1st April 2007 to 30th June 2007.

(a) Financial Position

The NFDC accounts for the first quarter showed an underspend of £25,000 against the net budget of £2.635m. This figure included an adjustment of 2.5% for the anticipated pay increase.

It was reported that the waste performance and reward grant for last year had not been received by any of the Districts. The amount of grant was based on recycling performance and this was the first year that the funding had gone through Hampshire County Council to distribute. The Committee were keen to know what the reasons were for the delay and what would happen next year. The Assistant Director agreed to establish the latest position and to circulate a response to members of the Joint Committee.

The TVBC accounts for the first quarter showed a surplus of £134,000 against a profiled budgeted surplus of £125,000. Additional costs of £22,000 had been identified for the agreed pay increase which wasn't included in the figures. Work was ongoing to produce the TVBC accounts in the same format as NFDC accounts as requested at the last meeting of the Committee. It was anticipated that this would be achieved for the next meeting of the Committee.

(b) Operational Issues

It was reported that the Central Purchasing Service Level Agreement had not been renewed for 2007/08. TVBC felt that it would be more advantageous to invest money in their own service. However, TVBC are also heavily involved in a joint procurement project being carried out in all Hampshire Districts to look at improved shared purchasing.

The issue of overspends in the NF Refuse Collection section due to holiday and sickness cover was raised. New sickness management procedures were being piloted at NFDC Whilst sickness was still running at high levels some inroads were being made to reduce absence rates. Lessons learned would be shared across the Partnership

Work was progressing to provide 'Skills for Life' training. A number of road shows had been held at each depot with 143 employees attending. There was a high expectation that many of those would take up follow-up training. Subject areas and training packages were currently being developed. Training sessions would commence in October.

There were some health and safety issues in the Engineering Works section and following a significant reportable accident a full review of working procedures had been undertaken. A number of improvements had been identified and were being implemented.

Accident statistics were presented as actual accidents per 1000 employees. The information was presented in this form to enable easier comparison between both Authorities. Accident levels were running at about the same level across the Partnership.

The Committee were updated about the Highways Term Maintenance Contract that Engineering Works Section undertake in partnership with Balfour Beattie Infrastructure Services for HCC. The contract was due to expire in May 2008 and the section had expressed their wish to continue with this local arrangement. If the tender was unsuccessful this would have an impact on the work in the Engineering Works Section from May 2008 onwards.

The contract with Carillion to carry out reactive maintenance repairs to the Council's housing stock had been extended to July 2008. Carillion undertake repairs to 50% of the housing stock in the north of the District, with the remainder being undertaken by the in-house Building works team. The future of the reactive maintenance contract was under review and a decision would need to be made on whether to re-tender the 50% currently being carried out by Carillion or bring this in-house.

Grounds Maintenance had commenced the provision of a burial service for TVBC on 1st April 2007. This was working well.

Problems relating to soil erosion and cutting of grass at Barton on Sea had now been resolved with an agreed cutting frequency implemented. It was important that this frequency be adhered to in the future.

Concern was raised at the cliff top erosion at Milford-on-Sea which was having an impact on the footpath along the cliff. Land would need to be purchased in order to move the footpath further back. A panel had been set up to review the situation.

Considerable effort was being devoted to managing and reducing the levels of sickness in the Waste and Streetscene sections. Sickness levels were included in the end of year report but the Committee requested that these be reported on a quarterly basis in future.

It was reported that the Alternate Bin Collection (ABC) waste collection system at TVBC was going from strength to strength and was working well. A Service review on street cleaning would be submitted to TVBC Executive on 26th September 07. The report would outline 3 options for consideration to enhance the street cleaning in the Borough.

There was now a full compliment of vehicle fitters in TVBC.

A new set of performance indicators for NF Central Purchasing was presented. The new indicators would provide a more meaningful picture of purchasing efficiencies. Some further work would be needed to set up systems to collect the data required. Those indicators where data already exists would be reported with immediate effect.

The Joint Committee agreed:

1. To note the content of the report.

Chairman