

TO: ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
24 JUNE 2014

PUBLIC REALM – PROGRESS WITH MOBILISATION
Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has recently completed a major public procurement process in respect of the Public Realm. As reported to the Executive on the 11 March 2014, our current highway maintenance contractor Ringway has retained the contract for highway and engineering works. Their contract now also includes for street lighting, thereby we are consolidating the main aspects associated with highway maintenance into one contract. Street cleansing and ground maintenance services, whilst tendered as two contracts, have been awarded to one contractor, Continental Landscapes Ltd (CLL). The award of these contracts sees the outsourcing of the ground maintenance function.
- 1.2 This report appraises the Panel of the progress made since decision to award relative to the mobilisation of the new contracts that are due to commence on 1 October 2014.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 As with any mobilisation an early priority is to try to allay staff concerns. In this case we had some six months between announcement and commencement. Whilst those employees directly involved have protection rights under TUPE any change brings in uncertainty and a potential for a drop in service standards. To help mitigate this risk, those staff moving to CLL whether they are BFC or Ringway employees have all been introduced to the new company. Such contact will continue over the coming months as their management spend more time at the depot. Ringway are already working for us from the depot and from an employees perspective there is not such a big change. Ringway will see the transfer out of their street cleansing team to CLL and the transfer in of a small number of street lighting employees from the current contractor Balfour Beatty. Arrangements have been made with both organisations to deal with any personal concerns arising from the transfer on a one to one basis. The report back from all parties has been positive and morale is not considered at risk as a result of the actions being taken during this transition phase.
- 2.2 Both Ringway and CLL are working to the agreed mobilisation plans. A small number of mobilisation sub-groups have been established to work through the specific actions relating to the wide range of needs and overall progress is being managed through a monthly strategic management meeting with reports given to the Departmental Management Team. The progress made to date is good. Much of the focus so far has been on establishing clarity where needed relative to the contract requirements and firming up on the various operational details. Both companies have placed orders for vehicles, some of which have long lead in times.
- 2.3 There is still much to do to enable smooth transition. We have challenges to address in relation to IT, office moves to accommodate and new relationships to get established. With a new form of highway contract in use we also have a significant

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amount of training to complete and we are doing this jointly with Ringway. The new form of contract seeks to enable much more cost effective partnership working than the current highways contract.

- 2.4 Looking forward, new performance management arrangements have been introduced and embedded as a contractual requirement for all service areas. Extensions to contract will be linked to performance monitored through quarterly reports against Strategic Key Performance Indicators.
- 2.5 The value of the ground maintenance services to schools, and street cleansing services for BFH is being finalised. CLL has already given a presentation to the Bursars which was well received. The process of validation of the inventories against budget has highlighted a number of changes to some school inventories since the documents were drafted which are understandable. The same is so with our own inventories as we see ongoing additions as we adopt new land and with the town centre actual reductions due to the works. The Contract provides for a process of adjustment the effect of which will result in changing budgetary demands which will be reported via the budget monitoring arrangements.
- 2.6 The existing management arrangements will continue much as they are as at present save for there is in effect no longer direct access to the ground maintenance staff. We have already had to put in place the client/contractor split for this service area. As a result all landscape issues need to be reported via customer services. Simon Wise is heading up the 'contractor' team and will transfer to CLL. He has neither a budget nor resource to undertake 'non-programmed' (i.e. routine scheduled works over the year). The client function for both street cleansing and ground maintenance is now being undertaken by David Harris working to Janet Dowlman. They will seek to address any non-programmed service needs in respect to these two service areas. The arrangements for highways remain unchanged.
- 2.7 The setting up of new arrangements such as those necessary to deliver such services is not without risks. However the processes put in place are intended to ensure risks are identified and managed. To date there are no specific concerns.

Background Papers

Executive Report – Award of Public Health Contracts 11 March 2014

Contacts for further information

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