
Scrutiny Management Committee

20 November 2006

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Draft Remit for Highways Maintenance Procurement Review

Summary

1. At its meeting in September 2006, Scrutiny Management Committee agreed to proceed with a review of topic no. 135 into Highways Maintenance Procurement and the PFI bid. In accordance with the new scrutiny procedures for managing reviews and topics agreed at the last meeting of this Committee, a draft remit (Part A) for the review is now attached for Members' consideration at Annex A.

Background

2. Councillor Simpson-Laing registered the above topic and attended the meeting of this Committee in September to outline her reasons for so doing and in the light of new developments since the topic had originally been registered, she was asked to update her original topic registration to make reference to the PFI bid. A revised registration form was submitted.

Consultation

3. Councillor Simpson-Laing was reconsulted on her original topic registration as indicated above. The remit potentially arising from that registration has subsequently been discussed with the Head of Highway Infrastructure and the Chair/Vice Chair of SMC. Those discussions have resulted in the draft attached at Annex A, proposing the issues raised in this topic registration be dealt with in 2 parts. The attached proposed remit relates only to Part A of this review. The reasons for this are set out in the 'Analysis' Section (paragraph 5) below.

Options

4. Members can approve or amend the proposed remit. A remit must, however, be agreed and in place before the first meeting of the Ad-hoc Sub-Committee can meet.

Analysis

5. It seems that some work is already ongoing within the City Strategy team to prepare for the outcome of the current PFI bid, anticipated in January 2007. This work involves looking at alternative options for the procurement of highways maintenance should the PFI be unsuccessful. The draft remit centres entirely at this stage on how scrutiny might help prepare for the procurement of highways maintenance when the outcome of the PFI is known and consequently, how it can contribute to maximizing the Council's efficiencies and improving its procedures. This is purely to enable the scrutiny review to respond to the immediate needs of its remit and contribute proactively to the ongoing development work in anticipation of the outcome of the PFI bid in January 2007.
6. It is suggested that a further remit (Part B) be brought back to SMC for consideration in due course to deal with the outstanding issues in the revised remit which relate to gaining an understanding of the alleged financial loss to the Council caused by delays in the procurement process since 2003.
7. Naturally, it is anticipated that the same membership of the Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee will move on to consider Part B of its remit once it has completed its review under Part A attached.
8. **Corporate Priorities**
9. This review will contribute to improving 'the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets and open spaces' through contributing to improving the Council's procurement arrangements for highways maintenance. In rationalizing our procurement arrangements, it may help to improve our organizational effectiveness.

Implications

10. There are no known financial, HR, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, IT or other implications at this stage of the process.

Risk Management

11. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with undertaking this review, other than the potential of not maximizing efficiencies in the Council's procurement arrangements for highways maintenance.

Recommendations

12. Members are asked to consider the draft remit (Part A) attached in connection with a two stage approach for dealing with the review of highways maintenance procurement arrangement.

Reason: In order to progress existing agreed scrutiny reviews within procedural and constitutional requirements.

Contact details:

Author:

Dawn Steel
Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 01904 551030

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Report Approved

Date 14.1106

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Part A Draft Remit – Highways Maintenance Procurement

Background Papers

Topic Registration Form No. 135