
MEETING	URGENCY COMMITTEE
DATE	5 SEPTEMBER 2006
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS STEVE GALLOWAY (CHAIR), HORTON (AS SUBSTITUTE FOR POTTER), MERRETT, REID AND WALLER
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR POTTER
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR SIMPSON-LAING

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests which they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

13. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Urgency Committee, held on 18 August 2006, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

15. HIGHWAY SERVICES - PFI OPTION

Members received a report which advised on progress with the preparation of a pathfinder of the highway maintenance Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Expression of Interest (EOI). It provided information on the key benefits and drawbacks associated with this project and recommended that, subject to a manageable affordability gap being achieved, officers were delegated authority to submit the EOI to the Department for Transport (DfT) by 10 September 2006.

The report was being considered at an Urgency Committee because there was not an Executive meeting scheduled prior to the deadline for the submission of the EOI to the DfT.

The EOI included a description of the project, demonstrating how it flowed from the overall objectives of the Council and how the project's design and implementation would deliver the benefits necessary to contribute towards achievement of these objectives. The description of the project also provided information about the scope of the services and the options

considered. It showed how an options appraisal, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, allowed the preferred option to be identified and the way in which this preferred option fulfilled the needs of the project and represented value for money.

Six options had been considered for the EOI:

- Option 1 – Do the minimum;
- Option 2 – Highway maintenance, management and works;
- Option 3 – Highway maintenance, management and works and traffic management infrastructure works;
- Option 4 – Highway maintenance, management and works and street cleansing operations;
- Option 5 – Highway maintenance, management and works, traffic management infrastructure works and street cleansing operations;
- Option 6 – Highway maintenance, management and works with limited life cycle works.

Following qualitative assessment of these six options, 2, 3 and 5 were selected as the ones for financial assessment and of those option 3 was selected as the preferred option (not option 5 as stated in the report in error). This option provided the best solution in terms of addressing the key objectives regionally, locally and for public transport and met the specific objectives in relation to highway maintenance and to traffic management. This option also gave the best value for money solution based upon the qualitative and quantitative scoring.

Headline figures from the financial model were circulated at the meeting. Councillors Merrett and Horton, whilst acknowledging that there was an in principle case for a PFI to deal with the highway maintenance backlog, expressed the view that the paperwork provided was inadequate for making such a significant financial decision. They emphasised that the information provided needed to be clearly presented and explained and that additional details were required to fully understand the financial impact on the Council, both in terms of assessing the affordability of a PFI and the knock-on consequences on the City Strategy and Neighbourhood Services Directorates, in terms of overheads and profits. They requested that their abstentions in the vote on the motion be recorded for this reason. Officers agreed to refine and expand upon the financial information provided and circulate a briefing note to Members in due course.

A revised set of human resources implications was also circulated to Members for consideration.

Advice of the Urgency Committee

That the Executive Leader be advised:

- (i) That the outcome of the extensive investigation into a PFI option to provide highway maintenance services in the future be noted;
- (ii) That the submission to the DfT of a PFI Expression of Interest for a Pathfinder Project for highway maintenance, management and works with traffic management infrastructure works be approved.

Decision of the Executive Leader

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Urgency Committee as set out above be accepted and endorsed.

REASON:

- (i) To comply with the approval given in the Executive report of 2 May 2006;
- (ii) To take advantage of the opportunity to obtain additional funding and a service provider for highway maintenance and traffic management services.

COUNCILLOR S F GALLOWAY

Executive Leader, in the Chair

The meeting started at 4.15 pm and finished at 5.00 pm.