

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Executive Board Sub Committee on Thursday, 7 December 2006 in the Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chairman), Harris, and Nelson.

Apologies for Absence: (none)

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: G. Ferguson, A. West, N. MacFarlane, N. Martin, S Wallace Bonner and E. Scott

Also in attendance: Councillor Cross

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE

Action

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

ES56 VICTORIA PARK RESTORATION, REPORT ON PATH SURFACING TENDERS

The Board considered a report which outlined the results of the tender for the supply and laying of specialist resin-bound gravel surfaces to Victoria Park's main paths.

Two tenders had been received, however, one tender arrived late and was therefore disqualified. The remaining valid tender from E.B.L. Group in the sum of £97,471.44 was within budget for this element of work and a contract for the work had been entered into in accordance with Standing Orders relating to procurement clause 3.1.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Standing Orders relating to Procurement Clause 3.2, the Committee note the report for information only, the tender was awarded to E.B.L. Group Limited.

ES57 EXTENSION OF EXISTING SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH MERSEYSIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY SERVICE FOR THE PROVISION OF

TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENTAL ADVICE

The Sub-Committee considered a request for a time extension to a service level agreement between Halton Borough Council and Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, acting on behalf of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS), for the provision of technical environmental advice in connection with planning matters.

The existing legal agreement for the provision of these services was signed on 9th June 2005 and covered a two-year period from 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2006. The new draft legal agreement would extend this time period for a further two years to 31st March 2008, at an annual cost of £15,000 in financial year 2006/07 and £15,450 in 2007/08.

It had become apparent from previous working with MEAS that they offered good value for money when compared against the charges made by consultants for equivalent services. MEAS were able to draw upon existing local knowledge and technical expertise. Additionally, they also provided advice, on occasion, on behalf of six local authorities, which enabled the cost to be shared between the six rather than borne by an individual authority.

RESOLVED: That the Service Level Agreement between Halton Borough Council and the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service be extended for two years to cover the period to end of March 2008, at an annual cost of £15,000 in 2006/07 and £15,450 in 2007/08.

Strategic Director
Environment

PLANNING TRANSPORTATION REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

ES58 ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER FOR WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ LINK ROAD

The Sub-Committee was advised that 8 tenders had been received for the construction of an access road at Widnes Waterfront EDZ. The tenders were assessed both on a price/quality basis in a ratio of 60/40 in accordance with the instructions for tendering. The most economically advantageous tender, taking into consideration both the quality and price submissions, for the construction of the access road was that submitted by Birse Civils Limited at a tendered cost of £298,129, which was not the lowest tender received.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ES59 PROPOSED ZEBRA CROSSING – CRANTON LANE,
WIDNES

The Area Forum for Birchfield, Farnworth and Halton View had previously received a request from the residents of the new houses recently built and being constructed off Norlands Lane to install a pedestrian crossing on Cranton Lane outside the shops. Following informal discussions, it was decided to investigate a zebra crossing. A possible location was found and the proposal was advertised in the local press and on site for a period of four weeks leading up to 31st May 2006.

Subsequently, comments were received from the Post Office about the difficulties a pedestrian crossing would cause to the operation of their business. In addition, a number of comments were received both in favour and against the proposal from residents in the area, and also from the owner of Cranton Fish Bar, No. 2 and Bargain Booze. A petition in favour of the crossing was also submitted via Councillor Cross. The number of people who had written supporting the crossing was 8, plus 88 people included in the petition. The number objecting was 102 including the 3 businesses above.

It was reported that a pedestrian/traffic survey was carried out on 12th September 2006. Although a controlled crossing was not justified under the former national criteria, there were a significant number of pedestrians crossing Cranton Lane. This indicated that the busiest time for pedestrians was between 18.00 and 19.00, which was unusual and the surveyors indicated that it was people using the chip shop and off-licence.

At present, there were double yellow lines on Cranton Lane outside the shops, which prohibited parking, but there was an exemption for the delivery of goods to the adjacent shops, and this was particularly important for deliveries to the Post Office. The installation requirements of a zebra crossing included zig-zag lines which would prohibit parking, loading and unloading. Contravention results in the driver being prosecuted for an endorsable offence and therefore delivery drivers would not stop on them to deliver to the shops. This would cause operational problems for the shops.

It was reported that in the last five years there had been two reported injury accidents in the vicinity and neither of them involved pedestrians. Both the accidents involved parked cars. Therefore in view of the comments received, it

was clear that the zebra crossing proposal, however desirable, would be divisive.

An alternative improvement for pedestrians had therefore been developed. This would widen the refuge island and provide an additional length of footway outside the barbers shop. This would help to reduce the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles and provided, it was hoped, an acceptable compromise.

The Committee heard representations from the ward councillor, Councillor Cross, who addressed Members in support of the zebra crossing proposals.

RESOLVED: That the report be referred back to the Highways Department for further information on the original proposal to install a zebra crossing, the possibility of installing an additional refuge island and the alternative proposal of widening the refuge island and providing an additional length of footway outside the barbers shop.

Strategic Director
Environment

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

ES60 INTERMEDIATE CARE CRISIS BEDS

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought authority to continue with the contract for two residential intermediate care crisis beds with Southern Cross/Highfield Health Care (Beechcroft Care Home), for up to six months, to suspend Contract Standing Orders, and approve delegated powers to enter into a contract without going out to competitive tender.

The Beechcroft Crisis beds were opened on 12th August 2005, these beds were an essential part of the service, and enabled the authority to manage more complex risk issues, negating the need to admit unnecessarily to more intensive services. The occupancy rate of these beds was 95%.

It was reported that compliance with Standing Orders was not practicable for reasons of no expressions of interest returned within timescales for the provision of this service. Expressions of interest had been requested twice. The existing contractor did express an interest verbally, however, due to administrative difficulties did not return a written expression of interest.

The request for waiver of Standing Orders was made to sustain this essential operational service, particularly over

the winter period. The waiver was requested for a period of six months, to allow the time to again explore the market for the provision of these beds. Following the six month period, delegated authority was requested for the Operational Director (Older People) to award the contract, within the framework of Standing Orders, to 31st March 2008. If the waiver was not agreed, this could result in a decrease in service provision, particularly in Runcorn. This could result in an increase in admissions both to long term care and hospital, due to the lack of services in the community.

RESOLVED: That for the purposes of Standing Order 1.6c, that is if compliance is not practicable for the reason of the level of training support that has been provided within this environment and the need to continue to operate the service of two intermediate care crises beds in Runcorn, Procurement Standing Orders be waived in respect of the extension of the present contract with Southern Cross/Highfield Health Care (Beechcroft Care Home) for a period of up to six months from 31st December 2006.

Strategic Director
Health and
Community

MINUTES ISSUED: 14th December 2006

CALL IN: 20th December 2006

Any matter decided by the Executive Board Sub Committee may be called in no later than 20th December 2006.

Meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.