

Meeting of the Cabinet – 8th February 2012

Joint Report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Corporate Resources

Housing Repairs and Maintenance: Procurement and Delivery of Services

Purpose of Report

1. To report back to Cabinet the outcomes of negotiations with the unions (GMB and UCATT) to agree terms and conditions for Building Services craft workers.

Background

2. Cabinet received a report on 7th December 2011 setting out the options available to the Council to manage the Council's repairs and maintenance service. In addition to continuing to work on the Joint Venture option (that being the preferred externalisation route), officers were asked to re-enter into negotiations with the unions to ascertain if an in-house solution could be found. Officers were asked to conclude the negotiations by the 31st January 2012.

Negotiations

3. Following the establishment of the following core principles and objectives, a series of meetings with the unions took place, the final one being on Friday 27 January 2012:-
 - (a) A Local Agreement that recognises the status of and covers all JNC Craft Worker National 'Red Book' employees within Building Services (DACHS).
 - (b) A set of terms and conditions which ensure the organisation remains sustainable and adaptable to future changing needs.
 - (c) Maintain continued performance improvement and further enhance operational efficiency.
 - (d) Listen to and engage with the workforce before final decisions on service delivery are made.
 - (e) Provision of opportunities and funding to support staff development and multi-skilling.
4. The conclusion of the negotiations in reaching a position where the unions could recommend acceptance of the proposed terms and conditions to its members, recognised that the organisation going forward had to be flexible and adaptable to meet future service needs.
5. Having concluded negotiations it is intended to undertake joint road-shows to present the Agreement to the Craft Workers with a ballot proposed for week commencing 20 February 2012. The agreement to undertake joint road-shows endorses the unions positive response to the proposal.

6. A successful ballot will result in planning for implementation, to include a skills audit and establishing training for those workers who would want to enhance their skills.
7. If the ballot results in a 'no' vote, it is proposed that Cabinet's preferred externalisation option of establishing a joint venture organisation is commenced.

Finance

8. Housing Repairs and Maintenance and improvements are funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Public Sector Housing Capital Programme.

Law

9. HRA finances are governed by Section 74-88 in part IV of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Equality Impact

10. If the service remains in-house, the proposed changes will be the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).
11. At the last meeting, Cabinet received an EIA that considered the procurement phase of a joint venture.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
 - 12.1 Note the progress made in respect of the negotiations with the unions to create an organisation with agreed terms and conditions that is capable of change to meet the future needs of the service;
 - 12.2 Instruct officers to take the following actions on the conclusion of the ballot.
Either:-
 - (i) If a successful ballot, implement the new terms and conditions;
 - (ii) In the event of a 'no' vote, proceed with the procurement process for a joint venture organisation.



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List of Background Papers

Cabinet Report 7th December 2011