

**RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE FINDINGS REGARDING THE HIGHWAYS SERVICES CONTRACT**

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **15th December 2009**

From: **Executive Director : Environment Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To respond to the recommendations of the Environment & Community Services Scrutiny Committee following its consideration of the Annual Report on performance of the Highways Services Contract.**

Recommendation: **1) That Cabinet thanks the Scrutiny Committee for the report.**

2) That Cabinet approve the proposed actions to be taken by Environment Services in response to the recommendations from the Scrutiny report.

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1 Background

- 1.1 Each year Environment & Community Services consider a report on the performance of the Highways Services Contract. This year they received the third report on progress covering the period April 2008 to March 2009, and a Business Plan setting the direction for the period April 2009 to March 2010.

2 Response to Recommendations

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee have made nine recommendations as a result of the report and these are responded to below.

2.2 Recommendation (i): Benchmarking

At the Committee meeting it was explained that Cambridgeshire Highways has an aspiration to provide more comprehensive benchmarking information than they were currently able to provide. It is recognised that there would be value in being able to consider more regional benchmarking information if it could be made available. It was noted that it is important to ensure that benchmarking data is comparing "like with like". Cambridgeshire Highways will investigate opportunities to provide better benchmarking data, and this will be included in the Annual Review for 2009/10.

2.3 Recommendation (ii) - Disaggregation of Performance Information

The Highways Services Contract operates its maintenance activity based on three geographical areas. This restructure was part of an earlier efficiency included in previous corporate IPP processes. It is not possible to split the majority of activity down to District level, but work will be undertaken over the next year to identify those Performance Indicators that can be disaggregated, and this will be included in the Annual Review for 2009/10.

2.4 Recommendation (iii): Comparator Information Regarding Third Party Claims

The sharing of third party claim data between contractors is not something that is generally considered. Performance of contractors and their supply chain in this regard is part of the quality assessment that is undertaken prior to award of any contract. The Service Director of Highways and Access will discuss this recommendation further with both the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access and the service provider, to see if such information could be obtained and whether it can be presented in any future report in a meaningful way.

2.5 Recommendation (iv): Targets for Carbon Emissions

This year's Annual Review was the first time that we have been able to report our Carbon Emissions with confidence. The Service Director of Highways and Access will be holding discussions with the Cabinet Member for Highways & Access and our partners in Cambridgeshire Highways, to agree a suitable target for future Business Plans. It should be noted that Atkins, our service provider, have a corporate target of 5% annual reduction which will be used for the 09/10 Annual Review.

2.6 Recommendation (v): Investigating High Costs Where They Exist

This recommendation is accepted and officers will continue to investigate high costs where they exist.

2.7 Recommendation (vi): Keeping Track of Efficiencies

It was reported to Scrutiny that the 08/09 year was one of consolidation. A significant amount of work was undertaken to streamline processes and systems. This work has provided Cambridgeshire Highways with a sound base for moving forward and delivering further efficiencies. It is anticipated that the 09/10 Annual Review will show an increase in efficiencies identified in the year compared to 08/09.

2.8 Recommendation (vii): Staff Satisfaction

Staff satisfaction is already measured for both Cambridgeshire County Council staff and Atkins staff. Cambridgeshire Highways will discuss what survey work is undertaken within the supply chain, and include this information in the Annual Review of 2009/10.

2.9 Recommendation (viii): Member Involvement with Cambridgeshire Highways

This recommendation is welcomed and the Service Director of Highways and Access will discuss how best the current Member involvement can be enhanced. The result of these discussions will be put in place as soon as is practicably possible.

2.9 Recommendation (ix): Cabinet Involvement in Cambridgeshire Highways

This recommendation is welcomed and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Access has now joined the Supervisory Board for the contract.

3.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Resources and Performance

- 3.1.1 It is intended that the enhanced information provided as part of the Annual Review 2009/10, and Member involvement in the Supervisory Board, will give Members greater comfort in relation to the performance of the Highways Services Contract.

3.2 Statutory Requirements and Partnership Working

- 3.2.1 There are no significant implications as a result of this report.

3.3 Climate Change Implications

- 3.3.1 There are no significant implications as a result of this report.

3.4 Access and Inclusion

- 3.4.1 There are no significant implications as a result of this report.

3.5 **Engagement and Consultation**

- 3.5.1 Greater engagement with Members is an important element of the report, and one that is warmly welcomed by Environment Services. It is intended that this greater engagement by Members will enhance understanding of both the needs of the community and the pressures in service delivery.

Source Documents

- Highways Contract Annual Performance Review, ESC Scrutiny Committee, 10th November 2009
- Minutes of the ECS Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 10th November 2009

Location

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