

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 10th MARCH 2004

REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillors Mrs Bradley, Cllr Garner and Cllr Edwards)

This report addresses the corporate priorities of DELIVERY, ENVIRONMENT and HEALTH

INTRODUCTION OF PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE DLO

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation, which required a local authority to expose its contracts to open competition, has now been superseded by the Best Value/Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime. This gives local authorities the opportunity to explore more flexible and effective means of service delivery.
- 1.2 Partnering is a method of working which has recently become popular in both the public and private sectors. Instead of signing up to a rigid contract both parties agree broad objectives and work together to achieve them whilst sharing risks and benefits. In this way a more integrated and flexible approach is taken, based on doing what needs to be done rather than just doing what the contract stipulates. The four principles of partnering are:
 - **Mutuality:** A common purpose with a mutual benefit
 - **Commitment:** Parties are prepared to commit resources to the mutual endeavour
 - **Clarity:** Each party is clear about who is doing what
 - **Openness:** Both parties are prepared to raise issues concerning the quality of the working relationship
- 1.3 There are three areas where increased efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved by entering into a partnering arrangement with the DLO these are:
 - a) Grounds maintenance (including parks and open spaces and Housing land)
 - b) Street cleaning
 - c) Housing responsive repairs
- 1.4 This report is set out in two parts. The first will deal with items a) and b) of paragraph 1.3 and will explain the measures, which will be put in place to ensure that the Council continues to have reassurance over both cost and quality. The second part will provide similar information regarding c) and will also make proposals regarding the Gas Servicing and Repair Contract which is currently held by a private contractor.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report will recommend that the Council formally agrees to enter into partnering arrangements with the Deane Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) in the three areas identified in paragraph 1.3.

PART 1 FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND STREET CLEANING FUNCTION

3. Background

- 3.1 The DLO currently carries out grounds maintenance work in parks and open spaces, current contract value £600,510pa, which is the responsibility of Cllr Mrs Bradley and on Housing land, current contract value £270,160pa which is the responsibility of Cllr Garner. These contracts are currently in a second period of extension, which will expire in April 2004. The Executive now needs to decide whether it wishes to formally enter into a partnering arrangement with the DLO or whether it wishes to tender the contract in open competition.
- 3.2 The DLO also carries out the Street cleaning function under a contract currently worth £464,860pa, which expires at the end of June 2004. This is the responsibility of Cllr Edwards.
- 3.3 The contractual arrangements for grounds maintenance between the Council and the DLO have been extended to allow for trials to be carried out into new ways of working in partnership
- 3.4 These trials have been successful with no loss of quality and financial savings of approximately £60K, which have already been realised, through the dismantling and reduction of the Client side. In addition savings in revenue service budgets of £63K were made in 2003/04 whilst still maintaining an excellent standard of grounds maintenance, which contributed to Britain in Bloom successes in both Taunton and Wellington, “Best in Show” award at the Taunton Flower show, demonstrating horticultural excellence and a Green Flag award for Wellington Park demonstrating quality in all aspects of parks management.
- 3.5 The Proposals contained in this part of the report were considered and supported by the Review Board at their meeting of 4th October 2003.

4. Introduction

- 4.1 The report of the Government’s Urban Green Spaces Task force recommends that local authorities should develop (or update) and implement a Greenspaces Strategy, which integrates with neighbourhood renewal, regeneration, planning and housing development, community development, local health improvement and culture, children’s play and sports strategies. Published reports of the Best Value Inspectorate already show that achieving and delivering best value for parks and green spaces means taking a strategic approach.

4.2 It can be seen therefore, that considering the grounds maintenance contract in isolation could impede this process.

4.3 The Greenspaces strategy is nearing completion and is due to be presented to the Health and Leisure Review Panel in April. This will then inform the Council's decisions on the priorities for action, which in turn contribute to the generation of the performance parameters for partnering agreements. It includes a service review with recommendations for further work to improve the service in line with outcomes of the public consultation by assessing the deployment of both human and financial resources.

5. Report

5.1 The current contracts for grounds maintenance were let under CCT legislation. The Government has recognised that such arrangements can be inflexible and may not be able to meet the aspirations of members and the wishes of the community. The Best Value regime allows local authorities to explore different methods of service provision provided that they can prove that the value of these arrangements represent best value.

5.2 The benefits of a partnering arrangement are that an integrated approach can be adopted towards Green space management, which is more flexible and responsive to the wishes of the members and the community.

5.3 Even greater efficiencies will be realised when the Cleansing contract is integrated. Current thinking is that geographically based arrangements rather than task based will provide the best combination of effectiveness and efficiency. In addition tasks can be carried out according to need rather than on a time based specification. The effect of this will be that a team will be responsible for the integrated management of an area and will be empowered to do what ever needs to be done to keep it in a clean tidy and well maintained condition making best use of the budget available. This should therefore support the "Crisp and Clean Initiative".

5.4 However, due to the requirement to audit the success of the street cleaning service under BVP 199, the additional work involved in "Crisp and Clean" the work on the Waste best value action plan, increases in recycling and other pressures on the Waste Services unit it will not be possible to extract financial savings by dismantling the client side of the street cleaning service although increases in efficiency are likely to result.

5.5 The work on partnering for the street cleaning is not as far advanced as the contract is still in place. However, as it is likely that the greatest improvements will be achieved through the integration of cleansing and grounds maintenance it is proposed to start to work on the street cleaning arrangements at the same time as grounds maintenance is being implemented.

5.6 Should the Council wish to pursue the option of partnering then mechanisms will need to be put in place to be able to demonstrate that this is a best value option. This will need to include information that indicates that the cost of the new arrangements is

competitive and that quality is being maintained. This is addressed in the following two sections

6. Cost

6.1 There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be taken into account when assessing whether the cost of the service is reasonable.

- The grounds maintenance contracts were awarded to the DLO in a competitive tendering process as a result of them submitting the lowest bid. Since that time the contract price has only been increased in line with inflationary rises.
- The DLO wins contracts of a similar nature in a competitive environment. The most recent being the grounds maintenance contract for County Council schools which commenced in January 2003. Overall the unit rate prices for these contracts are higher than their equivalents in the Taunton Deane contracts.
- The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) collates comparative data relating to the management of open spaces (see Appendix 1.) This information can be used to benchmark costs between similar authorities. The latest figures available indicate that the cost of this service per household is “good” with a ranking of 2nd out of 7 local authorities. The cost per hectare of maintained land appears to be above average but this is due to the nature of the land being maintained and this does not represent a like for like comparison.
- By moving to a partnering arrangement financial savings are made, which have already been realised, through the dismantling and reduction of the Client side.
- In addition the service budgets have been cut by £63K in 2003/04 with no loss of quality. A further cut of £23K has been agreed for 2004/05
- The DLO will be required to actively pursue benchmarking opportunities with similar organisations to ensure that they continue to provide best value services.

7. Quality

7.1 Quality is a slightly more complicated issue, as there is no single measure that will satisfy this requirement. The DLO has a good track record in delivering these services but quality will still need to be monitored through a range of indicators and evidence as follows:

- The DLO have a robust supervisory structure in place to monitor quality
- The Community Parks Officer will have an important role in establishing community satisfaction with the quality of the service and in ensuring that the community has a role in shaping the direction and standards of service. This

will particularly include consulting specific community groups in line with the equalities agenda and could take the form of site visits and feedback.

- A Community Survey was carried out earlier in 2003 based on a random sample of 1 in 9 homes. The response rate was in excess of 20% and overall the ratings were good. Such surveys will be useful tools in checking the priorities of the public and in measuring their satisfaction with the quality of the service. The Greenspaces strategy recommends monitoring quality by repeating the Borough wide survey every two years.
- The APSE data mentioned in paragraph 6.1 and attached as Appendix 1 will provide benchmarking data
- An independent review was carried out in August 2002 that compared the Council's Parks and Green Space service against the Institute of Leisure and Amenities Management (ILAM) Parks and Green Space Quality Scheme. Overall the Council scored within the 50%-55% band, which reflects the industry average for organisations in the early stages of using the scheme. The report produced a set of recommendations in the form of an action plan that addresses deficiencies to deliver continuous improvement. The Council could decide to seek external validation under this scheme. The ILAM scheme is based on the European Foundation for Quality Management model which has already been used in several area across the Council
- The Parks service has undergone a Best Value Review which resulted in *two stars "good and likely to improve"* rating. This review also produced an improvement plan that is being implemented.
- The Green Flag award scheme (see Appendix 2) is a quality standard for Parks and Green Spaces across England and Wales. Wellington Park has already been awarded a Green Flag and will be reassessed in 2004. Vivary Park will be entered for the award in 2004. The scheme provides a benchmark against which the quality of public parks and green spaces can be measured and is now adopted as the National Quality Standard by CABESpace (the new Government Agency for Parks and open spaces). The Council will have a rolling programme of entering qualifying areas as a quality measure. CABE space will also be publishing guidance on best practice for Councils on the management of open space. The proposed arrangements will allow us to have more flexible arrangements to respond to this guidance.
- An integrated management plan is in place for Wellington Park and a similar plan has been approved for Vivary Park. This demonstrates successful new ways of working during the partnering trials.
- Work is in hand to refocus the Parks service on open space management as well as maintenance.

- On housing land the Service Charges Working Group, which is composed of Elected Members and Tenants, would be an ideal group to discuss service specifications and quality of provision.
- The proposal to recruit voluntary Environmental Wardens could result in a further way of measuring quality both in terms of grounds maintenance and street cleaning.
- ENCAMS (previously the Tidy Britain Group) cleanliness of the Borough and this could be repeated at appropriate intervals as an external verification of service quality.
- An Environmental Policy has recently been adopted for the Parks service and compliance would be a quality measure.
- The DLO will be required to actively pursue benchmarking opportunities with similar organisation to ensure that they continue to provide best value services.

7.2. Much of this work and resultant improvements relies upon the excellent working relationship between the DLO staff and the Leisure Development team, which is driving it forward. The external Consultant working on the Greenspaces strategy has been impressed with this relationship and considers this to be the most vital element in continuing the improvements that have already begun in the Parks service.

8. Added Value

- 8.1 In addition to the cost and quality measures members should be aware of the added value, which results from having an in-house DLO.
- 8.2 Having a large manual work force equipped with a variety of vehicles and equipment is a valuable resource for the Council to call upon particularly in times of emergency. The DLO responds to emergencies caused by the weather eg flooding, storm damage, snow and ice, and also responds to civil emergencies, fire, explosion, or chemical release.
- 8.3 In addition the DLO contributes towards corporate and community events. These include, Royal/VIP visits, the Carnival, the flower show, the marathon, Remembrance Day and several charitable events. Storage is also provided for a wide range of equipment for example polling booths and the Christmas lights.
- 8.4 No retainer is paid for the provision of emergency call out services or and no charges are levied for storage or community and charitable support.
- 8.5 The DLO could introduce charges for these services, which would improve its profitability, and potentially increase the annual contribution to the general fund. Alternatively, the current “benefits in kind” could be acknowledged as part of the profit element returned by the DLO.

- 8.6 Another opportunity for gaining added value from the partnering arrangement would be to increase its profitability and hence its potential to contribute to the general fund. This would be done by a combination of efficiency savings, increasing the profit element on contracts and enlarging the business base by tendering for more work.
- 8.7 As part of the value measures for partnering, targets could be set to increase profits. For example a phased year on year target up to 10%. A comprehensive profit measurement mechanism will need to be agreed with the Head of Finance

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The financial implications for the partnering option are as follows:
- A saving of approximately £60K through the dismantling of the client side (already realised)
 - A reduction in the service budget 2003/04 of £63K was achieved with no loss of quality by rationalising the annual bedding strategy. (already realised)
 - A further reduction in the service budget 2004/05 of £23K.
 - Increase in DLO profits
- 9.2 There would be financial implications to the retendering option that would include the cost of contract production and letting and the possible reformation of the client side

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Council's Standing Orders have recently been revised and updated to facilitate these more modern methods of working. The new standing orders were approved by Full Council on 16th December 2003.
- 10.2 These proposals have been discussed with the Audit Commission, (previously District Audit) and they have no objections to this course of action provided that the Council continue to monitor quality and cost.
- 10.3 The partnering agreement will run from April 1st 2005 and will be reviewed by 31st March 2009. Break clauses will be included to address poor performance.

11. Summary

- 11.1 By adopting a partnering arrangement with the DLO a more integrated approach can be taken to managing the Councils open spaces as a whole whilst achieving savings that could be reinvested in the service.
- 11.2 There is a significant amount of information available to monitor both quality and cost and this will be refined as part of the partnering process. The proposals in this report are a starting point setting out a quality cost framework and it is anticipated that the monitoring systems will become more robust as the arrangements develop.

PART 2 FUTURE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR HOUSING RESPONSIVE REPAIRS AND GAS SERVICING AND REPAIR

- 12.1 The purpose of this part of the report is to update and obtain the approval from the Executive on two matters. The first is in regard to the procurement of a Partnering arrangement with Deane DLO for the Responsive Repair Contract, which expired on the 31st March 2003.
- 12.2 The second is in regard to the existing contract arrangements with MJT Mechanical Engineering for the Gas Servicing and Repair Contract, which expired on the 31st March 2003.

13. Background

- 13.1 In October 2002, the Housing Review Panel endorsed a report presented to them by the Housing Manager (Property Services) on the procurement of the Responsive Repairs Contract, recommending that the Executive approve the partnering proposals. Unfortunately, the report did not progress at that stage pending the review of Council Standing Orders. The existing value of work undertaken each year associated with this Contract is approximately £2.25 million pa.
- 13.2 In November 2002, the Tenants Forum endorsed a report presented to them by the Chief Architect on the procurement of the Gas Servicing and Repair Contract, recommending that the Housing Review Panel pass this for approval. The existing value of the contract is approximately £600,000 pa.
- 13.3 In October 2003, the Tenants Forum and the Housing Review Panel have considered the two matters included in the Executive Summary above and have recommended approval to the two recommendations. When considering the report the Housing Review Panel requested that some guidance should be included relating to the type of 'outputs' and quality controls which will be built into the Partnering arrangements.

14. Additional Information

- 14.1 The existing contract (for council house repairs) incorporates the use of the Specification/Schedule of Rates for General Building Maintenance work (including electrical work) on Council maintained dwellings and public buildings.
- 14.2 Past tendering has resulted in Deane DLO having competed successfully every two years since 1980 up until 1999. The table below demonstrates in financial terms the competitiveness of Deane DLO over a ten year period for tenders received for the four contracts. It is clearly evident from these tenders that Deane DLO have produced significant savings to the Council and the tenants. In particular, the last tender demonstrates graphically the problems which would result if Deane DLO were not competing.

Date	Deane DLO	Next Lowest	Saving
1989/90	£314,920	£555,029	43%
1991/92	£305,030	£428,000	29%

1993/94	£338,769	£433,825	22%
1995/96	£405,125	£562,870	28%
1997/98	£998,028	£1,189,522	16%
1999/2000	£1,046,124	£2,262,335	54%

14.3 Previous tendering for the Gas Servicing and Repair Contract has result in MJT Mechanical Services submitting the lowest tender by a significant margin on the last two occasions. The actual figures have not been included in the report due to commercial confidentiality and the recommended proximity of a re-tender.

14.4 Over the past three years during the period of extensions for these contracts the Council has employed Michael Riley FRICS, an independent Chartered Quantity Surveyor with a number of years experience in preparing and administering the contractual and financial aspects of building, building refurbishment and planned and routine maintenance contracts. M J Riley was instructed to ascertain the level of increase in both labour and materials in the building industry and to recommend to the Council a fair and reasonable adjustment to be used for the existing schedule of rates covering both the responsive repair contract with the Deane DLO and the Gas Servicing and Repair contract with MJT Mechanical Services. Bearing in mind the initial base rates, which produced significant savings over the competitors it is recognised that these adjusted rates, are providing value for money.

15. Future Arrangements

15.1 When considering the range of controls that will be built into the Partnering arrangements it should be acknowledged that forming a Partnering arrangement is not an easy option. In comparison with traditional tendering, the initial agreement and subsequent controls together with the necessary ongoing monitoring bring new demands and a significant change in the culture of those involved.

15.2 If the Partnering arrangement is agreed, significant work is required to ensure the documentation is appropriate for the task. This will include performance indicators that bring about continuous improvement. Quality controls will have to be developed to ensure the quality of service is maintained and where possible improved. Both Client and Contractor will work together continually reassessing standards involving key stakeholders. The document will include break clauses which will be applied should either party fail on their agreed commitments.

15.3 Meetings have recently been held between officers from the Housing Service, Deane Building Design Group and Deane DLO. At these meetings a range of performance related and contractual issues have been considered.

15.4 It is intended that the Response Maintenance Contract will achieve continuous improvements and it was decided that all the items should be included in the Performance Improvement Plan, but some will be incorporated immediately whilst others will require further consultation. The following items 15.5 – 15.16 set out the results of the above meetings and outline the various improvements proposed.

15.5 Priorities

15.5.1 Continuous improvement in performance necessary from Deane DLO in meeting priorities, improved handling by Housing staff, including interrogation when receiving reports regarding vulnerable tenants.

15.5.2 Make training available to staff involved in prioritising work orders.

15.5.3 As part of the Housing Best Value Review there will be a focus group concentrating on priorities and whether they need reviewing.

15.5.4 The “Valid Work” list of eligible repairs that is used to measure performance is considered adequate at present but is to be re-considered as a potential second tranche modification.

15.6 Policy and Procedures

15.6.1 It is intended that responsibilities for rechargeable repair works, re-charging and Schedule of Items should be produced/refined. This is all to be considered under the improvement strategy covered by Organisational Improvements.

15.7 Composite Items

15.7.1 It is intended to create broader more inclusive repair items and group some repair items in order to simplify job descriptions, simpler more accurate pricing, and correspondingly simpler and cheaper administration. Not all works will lend themselves to this, but it will be employed wherever possible. The initial list is soon to be issued.

15.8 Work Quality and Customer Satisfaction

15.8.1 A ‘Receipt Pack’ for tenants was suggested which could be generated from the issue of a works order. This ‘pack’ would incorporate a questionnaire and a satisfaction survey for the tenant to complete, each going respectively to contractor and client group. It was thought that a simple scoring system could be incorporated backed up by any text that the tenant wished to use.

15.9 Working Hours

15.9.1 To assist in meeting priorities and finding tenants at home, Deane DLO already work staggered hours. It is intended to extend this with more workmen operating this way and linking it in with an expanded appointment system. An appointment system already exists and is showing success with about 12% of visits being made in this way. Improvements to the process will assist greatly in plans to increase the effectiveness of the appointments system. Bournemouth Council operates a new system (Xmbrace) to handle appointments. Certain TDBC officers will be visiting Bournemouth as part of the Best Value Review to see the system in operation. Following this visit the results will be analysed as part of the review of IT processes in the Housing

Service and if appropriate incorporated as an improvement to the service provided.

15.10 Cost

15.10.1 Improvements to be made, year on year, on average cost per repair and per property. Continuous improvements in working efficiency will manifest themselves in lower costs. However, it should be noted that expected improvements in other areas at the same time may well increase costs initially.

15.11 Safety

15.11.1 Reduce number of reportable incidents. Current DLO records are very good, detailed and comprehensive. They can be utilised as a basis with the information available being streamlined to suit requirements.

15.12 Respect for People

15.12.1 This is to be directed at occupiers and the workforce. Further training is planned to improve the current level of officer awareness with regard to customer care, including specifics for disabled customers.

15.12.2 To avoid repeat visits, the workforce is empowered to arrange and agree further works whilst visiting a property up to a certain value. At present this has to be phoned back to Housing for authorisation but the system is to be improved, possibly by use of Xmbrace or similar so that the workforce will become more flexible and efficient with less repeat visits and travelling time. There will also be further benefits, albeit not cost-orientated, in that customer satisfaction should improve from the reduced disruption.

15.13 Multi-Skilling

15.13.1 Wherever practical, or permitted, this will be introduced to avoid numerous disturbances to the occupier and reduce travelling and “down time”. This will obviously improve efficiency but will need to be applied carefully only to certain trades and be supported by training for the workforce with, perhaps, a grading for tradesmen with additional skills.

15.14 Monitoring Performance

15.14.1 Monitoring and measurement of the above items will be based mainly on completions, being within time limits, costs, satisfaction, safety records, and occurrence of appointment visits. Records of the past few years in these areas will be plotted, with the trends being extended as a forecast through each year. Performance results will be plotted against these, with the expected improvements easily identified above, or below, the projection as appropriate.

15.14.2 With some of the improvements proposed it is considered difficult to set targets for improvement. It is felt that any improvement above the projected performance level could be viewed as success, whilst concentrating on where

a particular priority lies, or where improvement seems to be lagging behind others. Monitoring will encompass as many of the stakeholders in the scheme as possible so that a broad range of viewpoints may be accommodated. Results of monitoring will likewise be published widely to raise awareness, show where we are successful, and illustrate areas for further effort.

15.14.3 In order to set the required performance levels Officers will work with the Tenants Forum so that they can influence the targets to be achieved. In turn it is also proposed to arrange for a small group of Tenant Forum members to act as the ongoing monitoring body who will in turn report to the Tenants Forum on a quarterly basis.

15.15 The following are some typical performance indicators, quality controls and areas of the service improvement that could be included within the new document:-

15.15.1 Performance Indicators

Percentage of all repairs completed within local target times, e.g. 90% year 1; 91% year 2.

Percentage of repairs completed within Government time limits, e.g. 90% year 1; 91% year 2.

Percentage of non-urgent repairs where an appointment was made and kept, e.g. 5% year 1; 10% year 2; 15% year 3.

15.15.2 Quality Controls

Overall tenant satisfaction with Repair Service, e.g. 85% year 1; 87% year 2.

Satisfaction levels for individual completed repairs, e.g. 95% year 1; 96% year 2.

15.15.3 Service Improvements

Telephone answering – 75% of all calls to be answered within 8 rings year 1; 5 rings year 2.

Flexible working hours – Key trades, i.e. plumbing, electrical and carpenters, to undertake a percentage of repairs, by agreement, outside normal working hours.

Multi-skilled tradespersons – Certain repairs, e.g. replacing sink and base unit, replacement doors, to be carried out by single tradesperson.

15.16 It is proposed to examine the existing organisational arrangements because it is considered, once the partnering arrangement is operational, certain changes bringing closer working relationships could result in a restructure and savings through efficiency.

16. Proposals

16.1 In regard to the procurement of the Responsive Repairs Contract, it is suggested that the context of the original report submitted to the Housing Review Panel with supplementary comments as requested be approved by the Executive.

16.3 There is one amendment that is recommended and that relates to the commencement of the contract. In the original report it was agreed to commence the contract from the

1st April 2003 for a period of five years. It is recommended that the new contract commence from the 1st April 2004 until the 31st March 2008.

- 16.4 For information, Appendix 3 provides an update on progress made with the proposals recommended in the original report.
- 16.5 In regard to the procurement of the Gas Servicing & Repair Contract, it is believed the basic context of the original report endorsed by the Tenants Forum and Housing Review Panel provides a solid foundation of how this matter should proceed. However, it is believed too long a period has passed since the last time this contract was market tested in 1997, to warrant a partnering approach to be adopted. It is therefore suggested to formally extend the expired contract to the 31st March 2005, when a full market testing exercise would take place with the potential for a partnering approach to be adopted with the successful contractor. This would enable the Chief Architect and the Property Services Manager ample time to construct a robust tender package, taking fully account of the requirements of adopting a partnering approach and the true ethos of Best Value; being that of appointing a contractor based on quality rather than merely that of price.

17. Recommendations

- 17.1 It is recommended that the Executive agree the approve the move towards a partnering agreement with the DLO for the provision of the Grounds Maintenance service and the Street cleaning service
- 17.2 It is recommended that the Executive agree the adoption of a Partnering Responsive Repair Contract with Deane DLO from the 1st April 2004 to the 31st March 2008, incorporating an annual uplift based on the Building Cost Indices as published by the Building Cost Information Services (BCIS). The contract would have break clauses built into it in order to address poor performance, the eventual outcome of the Best Value Review and the outcomes relating to the Housing Stock Options.
- 17.3 It is recommended that the Executive agree the extension of the existing Gas Servicing and Repairs Contract with MJT to the 31st March 2005, incorporating an annual uplift based on the Building Cost Indices as published by the Building Cost Information Services (BCIS). From the 1st April 2005, a new contract would be granted to a contractor after the completion of a tender exercise, adopting a Best Value approach and including the option to adopt a partnering arrangement.

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Appendix 1

APSE Data 2001/2002

Taunton Deane Parks 2001/2002 (2206). Group H4							
Indicator	Indicator Definition	Highest	Average	Lowest	Taunton Deane	Ranking	
PI 01	Cost per Hectare of Maintained Land (excluding CEC)	£6,305.55	£1,456.78	£1,880.78	£6,300.00	900	
PI 02	Cost per Hectare of Unmaintained Land (including CEC)	£9,867.53	£4,050.81	£1,886.30	£5,000.00	800	
PI 03	Charge per Hectare - Country/Side/Country Parks	£1,730.12	£767.32	£217.87		N/A	
PI 05	Charge per Hectare - Bays/Ways	£863.56	£556.19	£358.33		N/A	
PI 08	Cost per 1,000 Head of Population (excluding CEC)	£18,205.20	£13,014.31	£8,483.34	£10,200.00	27	
PI 07	Charge per Hectare - Category B Parks	£12,014.02	£6,803.11	£2,308.79	£3,700.00	26	
PI 06	Charge per Hectare - Secondary Schools	£1,585.37	£1,506.49	£1,337.58		N/A	
PI 09	Charge per Hectare - Primary Schools	£5,467.09	£2,420.38	£1,105.11		N/A	
PI 10	Charge per Hectare - Council Housing Land	£7,379.65	£4,745.89	£1,759.14	£3,900.00	27	
PI 11	Charge per Hectare - Highways Land High Maintenance	£6,884.67	£3,029.89	£1,218.97		N/A	
PI 12	Highways Maintenance per Foot Lane Employee	36.14	7.84	3.02	0.00	407	
PI 13	Percentage of Bug Refuges	0.00%	4.72%	1.49%	4.00%	407	
PI 14	Total Staff Cost as a % of Total Cost	73.89%	60.90%	55.20%	58.5%	317	
PI 10	Staffs per Hectare and comparable Bays	107.88	57.00	14.00	55.00	58	
PI 16	Human Resources and People Management	79.00	63.85	17.00	56.00	48	
PI 17	Cost per 1,000 Head of Population (including CEC)	£19,724.64	£13,556.26	£10,587.85	£11,500.00	27	
PI 18	Percentage of Population	4.70	2.80	1.73	4.28	17	
PI 19	Percentage of Population by Age Structure	97.80%	95.48%	5.26%	20.00%	59	
PI 20	Cost per Household (excluding CEC)	£41.92	£30.86	£22.80	£23.80	207	
PI 21	Cost per Household (including CEC)	£45.42	£32.87	£25.05	£20.00	217	
PI 22	Customer Satisfaction Surveys	82.02%	51.42%	41.37%		N/A	
PI 23	Other Expenditure	80.00%	46.17%	20.00%	80.00%	12	
PI 24	Charge per Hectare Low Maintenance Country Parks and Estates	£1,124.50	£469.23	£14.99		N/A	
PI 25	Charge per Hectare High Maintenance Country Parks and Estates	£1,648.50	£704.65	£125.80		N/A	
PI 26	Plant and other costs as a % of total cost	30.47%	24.86%	16.87%	47.00%	27	
PI 27	No. of FLEs that Exceeds Highways and Low Maintenance	10.50	0.25	2.00	4.10	60	
PI 28	Charge per Hectare Low Maintenance Highways Land	£653.85	£419.88	£173.88		N/A	
PI 29	Charge per Hectare All Highways Land	£5,884.67	£1,907.68	£173.68		N/A	
PI 30	Percentage of Maint. Public Open Spaces per 1,000 Head of Population	6.55	2.78	1.45	3.98	69	
PI 31	Central Establishment Charges as a % of Total Expenditure	8.70%	6.52%	4.14%	6.50%	27	

Key:	Performance	Quartile
	Excellent	Top
	Good	Upper Middle
	Below Average	Lower Middle
	Poor	Bottom

Appendix 2

The Green Flag Award Scheme



The Green Flag Award Scheme represents the national standard for parks and green spaces across England and Wales.

It was originally planned to encourage good environmental practice and to promote ways of managing public places without the use of pesticides. However, it was soon realised that good environmental practices in themselves did not make for a good park, but that the park itself needed to be well used and held in high regard. A comprehensive period of consultation ensued out of which the 8 green flag award criteria were developed. These criteria are key to the operation of the award scheme and continue to be relevant over 6 years after they were first developed.

It is an independent award that aspires to give voice to public expectations about what parks can and should offer. It aims to set standards for management and to promote the value of parks and green spaces as social places as well as places for walking, play, informal sports and for contact with the natural world. Although the Award was set up for public parks it was recognised that a wider range of green spaces needed to be included if the quality of public green spaces across the United Kingdom was to be improved.

The Criteria against which parks are judged are:

- 1) A welcoming Park
- 2) Healthy Safe and Secure
- 3) Clean and well maintained
- 4) Sustainability
- 5) Conservation
- 6) Community involvement
- 7) Marketing
- 8) Management

The Green Flag Award has now become the benchmark against which the quality of public parks and green spaces can be measured. It also recognises the diversity and value of green space to the local community and includes:

- Town parks
- Country parks
- Formal gardens
- Nature reserves
- Local nature reserves
- Cemetery and crematoria
- Water parks
- Open space
- Millennium greens
- Doorstep greens

- Community run greenspace

A new development this year is the **Green Pennant Award** scheme. This is the first of a series of specialist awards under the Green Flag umbrella and it is designed to recognise community managed green spaces.

APPENDIX 3

RESPONSIVE REPAIR CONTRACT - UPDATE ON PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

1. Use of one contract. All Repairs throughout all areas of Housing Stock now administered via one contract.
2. Trial multi-skilling. Further trials will be undertaken during the new arrangement as some efficiency gains should be possible.
3. Flexible working hours - certain repair works have been undertaken outside 'normal working hours' when mutually agreed with tenant. Therefore, scope for this together with limited working on Saturday mornings to be included in revised contract documentation.
4. Contract specification to reflect Corporate Priorities - amendments, where appropriate, to be included.
5. Extend decorating grant - continued efforts being made to extend this to include other suppliers of materials. It is hoped to have those in place for the revised contract arrangements.
6. Components/materials to meet sustainability and environmental priorities - final specifications to be amended as appropriate. Taking into consideration costings and benefits achieved.
7. Upgrade telephone system - changes in place, which allow call monitoring. Final improvements will be influenced by Somerset Direct (Customer First).
8. Include Schedule of Rates to allow work to be undertaken on minor works/extensions - dependent on compatibility with Standing Orders, yet to be revised.
9. Survey form (Decent Homes standard) to be devised for visiting officers - revised forms now being trialed, these will be used by all inspecting/visiting officers where opportunity and time permits
10. Enhancement of the appointment system - increased monitor of appointments being made, which has produced benefits especially reducing abortive visits.