

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leisure, Arts and Communities Committee - 9 March 2009

REPORT ON: Review of Dundee Translation and Interpreting Service (DTIS)

REPORT BY: Director of Leisure and Communities

REPORT NO: 130-2009

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report on progress achieved to date with the DTIS Review and make recommendations for the future development of the Service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 2.1 notes the progress achieved to date with the DTIS Review.
- 2.2 approves the proposals for the future development of the service.
- 2.3 requires the Leisure and Communities Department to produce a business plan to achieve best value for the service.
- 2.4 remits the Director of Leisure and Communities to report back progress to Committee in 12 months time.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Financial projections for the 2008-2009 financial year indicate that DTIS will over achieve its net income target by 37% by the end of the 2008-2009 Financial Year.
- 3.2 The review of the DTIS charging policy will produce savings of an additional £10K during the 2009-2010 financial year.
- 3.3 It is envisaged that the efficiencies will produce further savings in subsequent years.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The review was intended to:

- provide a basis for production of a business plan
- clarify staff roles
- undertake research into future demand and needs of clients
- improve efficiency of the service

4.1.2 The review process has been delayed due to a number of factors, including staff shortages, a re-structuring of the team and the inclusion of additional criteria and methods into the original remit.

4.2 Progress to Date

- 4.2.1 The work undertaken by the Co-ordinator in a temporary acting -up capacity , as well as the adoption of the Lean Service approach on a pilot basis have led to small but very significant improvements to the smooth running of the service. In particular, the invoicing and supply staff payment claims systems have been greatly improved, with a resulting reduction in the number of queried invoices and improvement in customer relations.
- 4.2.2 Discussions have begun regarding implementing a service level agreement with NHS Tayside, which is by far the biggest user of DTIS.
- 4.2.3 Work is underway to reduce the number of steps involved in internal processing of invoicing information and staff claims.
- 4.2.4 A new charging system, will be implemented from April 2009, to increase income and progress towards the goal of a self-financing service. It is anticipated that this will be perceived as fairer and clearer by clients and make it easier for them to estimate the cost of jobs when booking interpreters (see Appendix 1).
- 4.2.5 DTIS will be included in the new corporate appointment booking system when it is established.
- 4.2.6 A bid has been made within the IT budget proposals for 2009/10 to develop software which will, if successful, improve booking, invoicing, staff management and payment and production of management information.

4.3 Future Development of the Service

- 4.3.1 Research into practice in other public sector interpreting services suggests that DTIS should move away from direct access/engaging of interpreters by members of the public. No other public or community sector interpreting service operates in this way and feedback from agencies suggests that this is a major cause of confusion as to who has authorised use of an interpreter and ultimately who should be responsible for payment. The current system also has the potential to create an impression that the interpreter is acting on behalf of the bme client rather than as an objective aid to communication. It is vital to the running of a professional interpreting service that interpreters do not act as advocates.
- 4.3.2 Service Level Agreements will be established with Council departments, NHS Tayside and other partner agencies according to service demand
- 4.3.3 A Rapid Impact Assessment has been conducted on this proposal, and has led to the conclusion that these changes can be implemented over time, with the co-operation of agencies providing local advocacy and advice services for non-English speaking clients. The full impact of the change would be monitored closely over the next twelve months. In addition, DTIS staff will, where appropriate, refer clients from ethnic minority groups to the range of self-development opportunities such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provided by Leisure and Communities. This would link DTIS more directly with the department's overall ethos of encouraging independence and full participation as active citizens for all who choose this route.
- 4.3.4 It is recommended that a range of performance and quality assurance measures, including customer feedback, should be developed.
- 4.3.5 A key area of concern for agencies using DTIS, particularly Police and Health services, is the lack of provision for out-of hours or emergency cover. It is recommended that future developments should include a study of the feasibility of DTIS providing such a service.

- 4.3.6 DTIS currently operates with a team consisting of 2.5 fte interpreters and one fte clerical assistant. These cover Urdu/Punjabi, Chinese and Polish. Demand for more than 20 other languages, is met from the supply list which currently numbers 33 interpreters. In order to ensure the flexibility to meet changing demand, it is vital that a strong list of suitably qualified and motivated supply interpreters is maintained. It is recommended that the make-up of the supply list is reviewed on an ongoing basis to meet service demand.
- 4.3.7 In order to ensure consistency of approach, quality of work and improved retention of supply interpreters, it is recommended that DTIS should require interpreters to attend an "Introduction to Public Service Interpreting" course. This would form the major part of newly recruited workers' induction. Provision of such a course might be developed in conjunction with colleges which provide training for the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting. The business planning process would include a full costing of any such proposal, which would be met from income generation. Good practice in recruitment should continue, including the gathering of references, language testing, and disclosure checks.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management

There are no major issues

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance have been consulted on this report and are in agreement with its contents.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

**STEWART MURDOCH
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES
6 FEBRUARY 2009**

APPENDIX 1

Dundee Translation and Interpretation Services

Charges 2009-2010

	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>2009-2010</u>
	£	£
Interpretation per hour or part of hour	18.50	24.65
Translation per 100 words	18.50	19.00
Proof Reading per A4 page	N/A	10.00

All charges plus VAT where applicable.

Travel Costs as per standard Dundee City Council mileage/public transport rates.