

REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE - 16 MAY 2005
REPORT ON: STREET LIGHTING PARTNERING AGREEMENT
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION
REPORT NO: 289-2005

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report reviews the existing Partnering Agreement with Tayside Contracts for the provision of street lighting services and makes recommendations on proposals to extend the Partnership.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) agree to the proposal to extend the Street Lighting Partnership for a further three years; and
- b) agree to a review of the staffing structure within the street lighting team in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive (Management).

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The costs associated with the proposed changes can be met from within the Planning and Transportation Department's revenue budget for 2004/2005, 2005/2006 and 2006/2007.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Street lighting makes an important contribution to road safety, crime prevention and the creation of an acceptable, safe, night-time environment. The after dark environment in Dundee is a key factor in the quality of life for its residents and visitors.

4.2 The use of more energy efficient equipment and light sources reduces the production of "greenhouse" gases.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Good quality street lighting benefits all groups who feel vulnerable during the hours of darkness.

6 BACKGROUND

6.1 On the 23 February 2004 the Planning and Transportation Committee gave approval to form a single operational structure with Tayside Contracts to deliver the City's Street Lighting Service for a 12 month period.

6.2 To effectively co-ordinate works and improve communications and management, the Street Lighting Partnership is based in a single office located at Tayside Contracts premises at 365 Clepington Road, Dundee.

6.3 It was noted in the previous report that there were areas of the service where duplication of effort was evident, due in the main to the old client/contractor lines of

demarcation. With the new single integrated structure approach, it became evident almost immediately that roles and responsibilities could be better defined to maximise output and fully utilise the existing knowledge and experience within the Team.

- 6.4 Due to retirements and redeployment of staff and the redefinition of new roles and responsibilities it has been possible to reduce overall staffing levels by almost 25%. It should be noted that client staffing levels have reduced by 33%. The manning levels on the operative side (Tayside Contracts) have seen an overall 9% reduction.
- 6.5 Due to the reduction in staffing levels and the redefinition of roles and responsibilities, additional responsibility has been taken up by certain individuals working within the Partnership. It is recommended that a staffing review be undertaken within the Street Lighting Team in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive (Management).
- 6.6 A number of key objectives were identified in the last report and an update on progress is listed below:

a Improved communication and awareness

Just by the very nature of working out of a single office, communication and awareness has improved dramatically. Particularly evident is the approach of both groups to each others particular challenges and cultures. The best example of this is where operatives carrying out the works now get involved in design reviews (before any work is started).

b Reduce duplication, both in terms of systems and resources

The Team now work on a common computer system and administration and database have been harmonised to eliminate duplication of information.

c Reduce the average cost to repair a lighting fault

The end of this financial year has seen major in roads into reducing the average cost of repair. The figures show a 11% reduction in cost from £34.37 in 2003/2004 to £30.68 in 2004/2005. Overall with 7,744 faults last year this has led to an overall reduction in costs.

d Improved management and reporting

A good example of where a single structure has improved the management and reporting of an activity is in the recovery of costs associated with vehicle damage to street lights. As a result of rationalisation and reducing the number of individuals involved and improving lines of communication with the Police, the percentage of costs recovered from these incidents have increased from 30.44% in 2003/2004 to 44% in 2004/2005, an additional income of £12,971.

e Improved supervision and productivity

With client staff now "on site" and able to support the existing Tayside Contracts supervisory staff, more time/resources have been made available to target the important issue of Supervision of the Operations. The tangible evidence of improvement in this area is the introduction of a formal booking in system for operatives and ongoing time study to replace outdated performance figures.

f Opportunity to devise new improved working practices to make more effective and efficient use of resources

This is an area where the Partnership working has been able to make some significant success:

- a the introduction of a Technician Electrician grade to support existing supervisory staff and in addition provide a career progression opportunity to electricians; and
- b proposals have been put in place to combine Out of Hours Standby Emergency duties with the existing night shift maintenance repairs. This has reduced the out of hours staffing levels from 4 men to a single 2 man team.

6.7 The Street Lighting Partnership continues to provide a high level of repair service and performance in terms of the Audit Scotland Statutory Performance Indicators. For the year ending 31 March 2005, 97% of street lights were repaired within the target of 7 days and 92% were fixed within the Council's own local target of 2 working days.

6.8 Customer/public satisfaction with this high level of service is borne out by the fact that the number of calls received by the Council's own freephone number relating to street lighting defects have steadily fallen from a baseline figure in 2000/2001 of 2,758 to 1,229 in 2004/2005, a 56% reduction. This has a major affect on reducing administration costs in processing these calls.

6.9 With the success of the Street Lighting Partnership over the last year it is recommended that the Partnership be extended for a further three years.

7 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning), Assistant Chief Executive (Management) and the Managing Director of Tayside Contracts have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

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5 May 2005

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