

Runnymede Borough Council

LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 16 September 2010

URGENT REPORT

PEST CONTROL / STRAY DOG CONTRACT - WAIVING OF STANDING ORDERS (DTS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 By reasons of special circumstances, the Chairman of the Committee has agreed to allow the consideration of this report as a matter of urgency, namely to renew the current pest control and stray dog contract, which expires at the end of September 2010. The Contractor (CES) has offered to renew the contract for 3 years at the current price of £17,000 per annum.

1.2 To request authority to waive standing orders to enter into a contract without inviting competitive quotes.

2. Background Information

2.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure their district is kept free from rats and mice. The provision of a cost-effective pest control service by the Council enables the control of public health pests in the borough. There is also a statutory requirement for the collection of stray dogs. Originally, this was during office hours only. However, complete responsibility for all stray dogs during office hours, evenings / night time and weekends was transferred from the Police on 6 April 2008.

2.2 This Council's pest control and stray dog service was externalised in 2005 when the former Pest Control Technician formed a company, Clements Environmental Services Ltd (CES) and entered into a 5 year contract with the Council. This enabled a part-time Technical Services administration post to be deleted from the establishment, as CES carries out the administration of pest control enquiries, in addition to the treatments.

2.3 This arrangement resulted in ongoing annual savings of £30,000. Regular independent monitoring of the service is carried out by Officers. Feedback from service users is that they are usually 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service. In addition, the company very helpfully identifies pests free of charge and makes joint visits to infested properties to give advice to Officers, also free of charge.

3. Report

3.1 The contract with CES costs approximately £17,000 per annum and is due to expire on 1 October 2010. CES has written to the Council offering to extend the contract at current prices for a period of 3 years. Given the excellent level of service being provided (as set out in the questionnaire at Appendix 'J') and the already competitively priced contract, this option is being considered in this report. The annual budget for the pest control and stray dog service, including overheads, is approximately £40,000. This is low compared with most councils in Surrey, as budgets are generally in the region of £80,000 to £140,000; service levels vary between councils.

- 3.2 A separate payment of £13,000 per annum is presently paid to CES, for collecting stray dogs out of normal office hours, with £5,000 recovered from both Spelthorne Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council. These charges take into account the use of kennels at the Civic Centre. It is proposed that this cost is in future only paid by Elmbridge and Spelthorne with no contribution from Runnymede. This is to reflect the value to those councils of using Runnymede's holding kennels.
- 3.3 A separate payment of £45 per stray dog collected is paid to CES for dogs picked up during normal office hours and £80 out of hours; these costs are largely recovered from the owners of the dogs when they are collected.
- 3.4 Standing Orders require a minimum of three tenders or written quotations for contracts of this value (£17,000 per annum for 3 years is in excess of £50,000). Officers consider it unlikely that a more competitive price would be secured if the service was tendered out. It is possible that TUPE would apply to the service and a successful contractor would need to factor in taking on employees from CES. It is also possible that tenders would be for more than the current agreed amount, and the successful contractor might not provide as effective a service as the current contractor. It is therefore being recommended that Standing Orders be waived on this occasion to facilitate the renewal of the contract with the current supplier.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no contractual or regulatory issues raised by this report. The issues relate solely to internal governance and best value.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 In 2010/11 there will be a slight betterment of £3,000 per annum with costs of providing kennels being paid for by Elmbridge and Spelthorne Borough Councils. There is budgetary provision for the cost of the service.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 'K'.
- 6.2 The current contract provides for a 50% discount for residents in receipt of a means tested benefit, on the cost of rat and mice treatments, and this remains unchanged. If requested by a resident, the contractor's female technician can carry out treatments in the home. This rarely happens but indicates the willingness of the contractor to respond to the needs of residents.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that -

Standing Order C2.5, requiring at least three tenders or written quotations, be waived and a pest control and stray dog contract be entered into with Clements Environmental Services Ltd (CES) for a period of 3 years.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None.