

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 6 November 2013

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Satpal Parmar – Commissioner for Environment and Open Spaces

PART I **CONSIDERATION & COMMENT**

CALL-IN: MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CONTRACT (LINE PAINTING ELEMENT)

1 **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Panel with information related to Councillor Plenty's request for the Panel to look at the management of the line painting element of the Environmental Services contract.

2 **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

That the Panel consider the information provided in response to the call-in and form conclusions on the effectiveness of the management of the line painting element of the Environmental Services contract.

3 **Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Priorities:

- Regeneration and Environment – the Environmental Services Contract is made up of two elements: integrated waste management (waste collection, recycling and disposal) and integrated street scene (street cleansing, highways maintenance and grounds maintenance). The contract aims to provide a 'one stop shop' by a single provider, demonstrating a commitment to partnership working, offering value for money and an improved service for residents.

5 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	None	None
Property	None	None
Human Rights	None	None
Health and Safety	None	None
Employment Issues	None	None
Equalities Issues	None	None
Community Support	None	None
Communications	None	None
Community Safety	None	None
Financial	None	None
Timetable for delivery	None	None
Project Capacity	None	None
Other	None	None

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications of proposed action.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of an EIA relating to the proposed action.

6 Details of Call-In

6.1 Councillor Plenty submitted the following call-in:

"I wish to call in the management and control of the yellow no parking line contract for scrutiny. Also to include disabled bay painting.

Experience of the last 18 months indicates that there is little or no control over the implementation of the contract, with a seemingly 'It happens when and if it happens' approach. As this has resulted in lines being painted some 3 months after residents were asked to keep the road clear, so there is clear evidence that the apparent lack of management/control of the outcomes from the contract result in a poor service to residents. Casework on the issue indicates staff dissatisfaction with the outcomes, with little or no ability to influence the contract outcomes, even when they are confirmed as unsatisfactory. Casework and Stage 1 complaints seem to have little or no effect on obtaining a satisfactory services, which leads me to believe that there may be inadequate control on contract outcomes.

Specific areas I would like covered are

- Typical timescale of ordering the service and it being provided.
- Procedures and processes currently used to monitor contract outcomes.
- The contractor we use sub contracts work. Are they providing adequate management of work they sub contract?
- What influence can we use, and do we use it?

- Are officers satisfied with the outcomes, especially the apparent lengthy delay between orders being submitted, and painting taking place?
- Proposals for improvement if appropriate.”

7 Officer Response

- 7.1 The operation of yellow line and road marking painting is dealt with in the Environmental Services Contract. The Environmental Services Contract is a 15 year contract with Amey (formally known as Accord/Enterprise) that has been in operation since 2002 and is managed strategically by Neil Aves (Assistant Director for Housing and Environment).
- 7.2 To manage the contract there are Strategic Quarterly Meetings that Councillor Satpal Parmar (Commissioner for Environment and Open Spaces), Neil Aves and Alex Deans (Head of Highways Engineering) attend in addition to representatives from waste and grounds. There are also Monthly Operation Meetings to deal with the programmed work and general performance of the contractor which Alex Deans leads on.
- 7.3 The contract is multi-cliented covering waste collection, disposal, recycling, grounds maintenance, street cleansing, transport scheme implementation and highways maintenance. The operation of road markings (yellow no parking line painting) in the contract is a transport operation.
- 7.4 On any given scheme or piece of work, the council officer will design the scheme and issue the works order to the contractor. The works order includes a time-limited window in which the works should be carried out. The council officer will monitor the work to ensure the work is being carried out in a timely and satisfactory standard. Once the works have been carried out satisfactorily, the work is signed off by the council officer formally for payment; the Council only pay for lines laid and not for cost of return visits (maximum 3). If the scheme is of a considerable size pre-start meetings take place, and a lead client project officer will manage the project which requires a project plan being submitted from the contractor.
- 7.5 With regard to the provision of road marking, including new or refreshing double yellow lines, these works are ordered by the council's Parking Team in the Transport Division. Due to the nature of these works the contractor sometimes has difficulty painting the yellow lines due to parked cars on the street. The Parking Team sometimes write to residents asking them not to park in a street and arrange for the council's contractors to paint the yellow lines within that window. Unfortunately not all residents adhere to these letters and the contractor is often unable to paint the lines as planned. When this happens the contractor will often take ad hoc visits in conjunction with other lining works locally to try to complete the outstanding works. The contractor is unable to issue an invoice for the lining works until the scheme or works identified on the works order are completed fully.
- 7.6 Having carried out further investigation since the Call In there are occasions when the contractor visits the site to complete outstanding lining works but this information is not being passed from the contractor back to the Parking Team. When residents call with frustrations about incomplete works, the Parking Team are not always aware of the efforts made by the contractors, nor do they have all the up to date information available. The result of this is that the council is unable to inform the public of the delays and changes that regularly occur. This issue came to light recently and there have been some improvements by the use of a spreadsheet including all ordered and

outstanding lining and signing works from the Parking Team. This has led to some improvements but we concede a concerted effort needs to be made on the part of the contractor to keep this spreadsheet constantly updated, ensuring any updates are passed to the Parking Team allowing greater control. This matter has been discussed with the contractors who are willing to proceed on this basis to improve service delivery relating to provision of lining across the borough providing a real-time picture of the works being carried out and the works still to be carried out.

8 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 Councillor Plenty's call-in raising questions about how the management of the line painting element of the Environmental Services contract is organised, and the Panel is provided with information to assist in an evaluation of the effectiveness of this.

9 **Background Papers**

None.