

CABINET

25 JANUARY 2011

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CRIME, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITIES

Title: Contract for the Provision of a Parks Safer Neighbourhood Team by the Metropolitan Police	For Decision
Summary: As part of the budgetary considerations for 2010/11, a review was undertaken of the way in which the Council worked to keep its parks and open spaces safe. As a result a range of options were considered and the budget approved by Cabinet included proposals to make savings from a reduction in the then Parks Police service to fund a Parks Safer Neighbourhood Team from the Metropolitan Police. This team, comprising a Sergeant and five Police Constables has now been in place since July 2010. The cost of the service is £240,000 per fiscal year and, therefore, a decision is sought from Cabinet regarding the authority to enter into a formal contract with the Metropolitan Police. Wards Affected: All	
Recommendation(s) The Cabinet is recommended to: (i) Authorise the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services to enter into a two year contract with the Metropolitan Police Authority under section 92 of the Police Act 1996; (ii) Waive the requirement to tender in accordance with Contract Rule 4.2.2.1, as the services to be provided under the contract with the Metropolitan Police are of a specialist or proprietary nature; and (iii) Indicate whether it wishes to be further informed or consulted on the progress of the procurement and the award of the contract, or whether it is content for the commissioning Chief Officer to award the contract (as provided for in the Constitution, Contract Rules 13.3).	
Reason(s) To assist the Council in achieving its Community Priority of reducing crime and improving safety in the Borough by reducing the opportunity for crime and disorder in the Borough's parks and open spaces and to provide reassurance to residents.	
Comments of the Chief Financial Officer The proposal to commission the Metropolitan Police Authority to provide a Parks Safer Neighbourhood Team was part of the Adult and Community Services savings proposals for the 2010/11 financial year. The proposed £240,000 contract with the Metropolitan Police will save the Department £300,000 per annum in a full year compared to previous provision.	

Comments of the Legal Partner		
The comments of the Legal Partner appear below in paragraph 4.		
Head of Service: Glynis Rogers	Title: Divisional Director for Community Safety and Neighbourhood Services	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2827 E-mail: Glynis.rogers@lbbd.gov.uk
Cabinet Member: Cllr. Jeannette Alexander	Portfolio: Crime, Justice and Communities	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8924 8239 E-mail: jeannette.alexander@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council previously had its own in-house Safer Parks Team of Council officers who were warranted under Home Office legislation to patrol the Council's parks and open spaces.
- 1.2 The service aimed to provide reassurance to local park users, to reduce crime and disorder in the parks in terms of both being a visible deterrent and also in terms of enforcement.
- 1.3 Evaluation showed that provision of this service at a cost to the Council of £540,000, was not effective in terms of safety in parks and open spaces.
- 1.4 At the same time the Council was faced with reducing expenditure across the range of Council services and officers were requested to look at innovative and alternative methods of providing services, delivering against Community Priorities whilst delivering value for money.
- 1.5 A range of options were considered as alternatives including reducing the in-house provision, withdrawing the service and procuring policing resources which were dedicated to the Parks from the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA).
- 1.6 Initially, the intent was to have five Police Constables at a cost of £200,000 to the Council with the MPA meeting the additional on-costs associated with management, training, uniform and pensions. This was agreed as part of the budget options for 2010/11.
- 1.7 Following discussions with the Borough Commander and Director of Finance and Commercial Services a subsequent agreement was brokered which gave the team some direct management oversight and the Borough Commander agreed to part-meet the cost of this additional provision from local policing funding.

- 1.8 As a result the team to be procured comprises one Sergeant and five Police Constables under the supervision of a local Inspector. The cost to the Council was agreed at £240,000.
- 1.9 The term of the contract is for two years and the total cost, therefore, is above the procurement authorisation for the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services and requires Cabinet approval.

2. Effectiveness of the team and progress to date

- 2.1 The team came into effect on 5 July 2010 under the portfolio of the Chief Inspector Partnerships and Community.
- 2.2 The Police Team have adopted a Safer Neighbourhood model for the parks approach, and have been attending meetings with friends groups. A safer neighbourhoods park reference group is being established together with a larger Key Individual Network of some 130 members. These groups engage with park users, both informally and formally to ensure that they are addressing the issues that matter most to the community.
- 2.3 Since its inception the team have been tremendously successful in all aspects of policing the parks and open spaces and the table below gives an indication of the achievements in terms of enforcement activity to date.

Task	July	August	September	October
Stop and Search	63	175	253	127
Alcohol Seizure	16	12	97	70
S59 notices (re anti-social use of vehicles)	2	3	2	1
Arrests	3	3	2	1

- 2.4 In addition the team have:

- Conducted a number of drug patrols targeting cannabis use and sale from vehicles;
- Engaged with events in the parks, including the Wildlife Trust Event, the Mela, the Dagenham Town Show, Spooktacular;
- Attended the Older Person's Day, Big Green Environment Day and other awareness raising events;
- Undertaken bike marking and trained youngsters in cycling proficiency;
- Attended Friends of Parks meetings and Ward Panels for strategic parks;
- Undertaken regular environmental checks around offensive graffiti and drugs paraphernalia and improper use of toilet blocks;
- Jointly arranged the removal of abandoned vehicles, liaising with Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCO) to identify the vehicle as stolen;
- Targeted poachers jointly with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Rangers;
- Prepared a database of graffiti tags used in the parks; undertaken to remove small amounts of graffiti with wipes etc provided by the Council;
- Addressed drug taking and dealing, signposting users into treatment and support services

- Addressed anti-social dog owners, both around clearing up excrement (the team carry bags for owners); given out vouchers for micro-chipping; issued fixed penalty notices for fouling;
- Tackled anti-social use of motor cars and bikes
- Addressed robbery and the use of offensive weapons, including the arrest of offenders
- Returned truanting students to school

2.5 The first four months of the initiative has seen significant impact both in terms of enforcement and engagement activities.

2.6 The inception of the team has also lead to greater engagement of the Metropolitan Police generally in parks based policing activity. This has included the use of Mounted Officers in Eastbrookend Country Park.

3. Financial Issues

3.1 The contract will be to the value of £240,000 per annum, for a two year period. As such Cabinet approval is required to enter into the contract. No provider other than the Metropolitan Police can deliver the policing required and the Council has negotiated a favourable rate for the team of six officers and their support costs.

3.2 The saving to the Council compared to the previous service provision is £300,000 per annum, £200,000 of the saving is part of the 2010/11 Departmental savings target , and the residual £100,000 savings will be part of the 2011/12 Departmental savings.

4. Legal Issues

4.1 Local Authorities and other public bodies have statutory power to enter into arrangements with the Metropolitan Police to fund additional policing services under section 92 of the Police Act 1996. Subsection (3) provides that grants can be made conditionally. The agreement which is recommended by this report contains (as its conditions) requirements on the Metropolitan Police to police various parks and open spaces within the Borough. The agreement will be within the powers granted by section 92.

4.2 The total value of contract over its two year term is £480,000. This amount is above the threshold for services which are subject to EU tendering procedures under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. Although the Council is essentially purchasing a service from the Metropolitan Police, an exclusion under section 6 (2) (l) of the 2006 Regulations EU procurement rules means that the rules are not applicable to this type of arrangement. It excludes the operation of the Regulations where services “are to be provided by a contracting authority ... because that contracting authority or person has an exclusive right (i) to provide the services; or (ii) which is necessary for the provision of the services”. The exclusion is applicable because policing services are exclusively provided by Police Authorities.

4.3 The Council’s Contract Rules provide that normal tendering requirements of the Contract Rules be waived where the services to be provided “are of a specialist or

proprietary nature". Rule 4.2.2.1 requires that the waiver is made by the Cabinet as the value of the contract is in excess of £400,000.

- 4.4 The Constitution (Contract Rules 13.3) provides delegated authority to the commissioning Chief Officer, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), to award contracts upon conclusion of the procurement process where the value of a contract is in excess of £50,000.

5. Other Implications

5.1 Risk Management

Not providing these services leaves the Council's parks and open spaces vulnerable to increased crime and disorder. Providing the service has shown that local residents are more ready to use these facilities. The reputational risk to the Council, following the high profile launch of the service and its evident success is substantial.

5.2 Staffing Issues

There are no staffing issues.

5.3 Customer Impact

Older people often feel more vulnerable in parks and open spaces. Work is ongoing to ensure that this group are supported through existing mechanisms to use our parks and open spaces which will enable them to maintain good health and independence. Equally it is a reality that younger people are often targeted as both victims and perpetrators of crime in parks. The team are engaging with young people through schools and through such activity as cycling proficiency to build trust and to provide reassurance. Low level crime and disorder, are often perceived to be perpetrated by young people and it may be that, in delivering such a service, targeted enforcement action is directed at that group. The Police undertake regular analysis of stop and search across the borough to identify whether there is a disproportionate representation from any particular equalities group. A recent report to the Community Police Engagement Group has demonstrated that there is no dis-proportionality in terms of ethnicity though more young people are targeted. Young people tend to use parks more, particularly in the evening, and it is a reality, therefore, that this age group will be targeted more. In order to mitigate some of the negative perceptions of young people work is ongoing with the Council's Communications Team to promote positive images of the majority of young people in the borough who cause no harm to the community and who make a very positive contribution.

5.4 Safeguarding Children

All Metropolitan Police officers are trained in safeguarding of both adults and children. The provision of this service means that young people can be kept safe in our parks and open spaces. Young people coming to the notice of police are as a matter of course referred to Children and Family Services through the police MERLIN form.

5.5 Health issues

Feeling safe brings a sense of wellbeing and ensures that residents, particularly older residents, use public space and enjoy their homes. Provision of this service will mean that the opportunity for vandalism and the lack of physical guardianship

does not adversely impact on that sense of wellbeing and the willingness of residents to use our green spaces. Young people need to enjoy parks and open spaces in order to maintain levels of physical fitness and ensure their health, by providing a safe environment for young people to enjoy this team will contribute to their health and wellbeing.

5.6 Crime and Disorder Issues

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act requires the Council to have regard to crime reduction and prevention in its service delivery and design. The primary purpose of this contract is to assist the Council to reduce the opportunities for crime and disorder in its Parks and open spaces and to provide reassurance to park users.

5.7 Property / Asset Issues

The Council has a range of assets and property across its parks portfolio. Regular patrols ensure that these are protected as much as is possible.

6. Options Appraisal

6.1 A value for money exercise was conducted in December 2009 as part of the budget setting for 2010/11 to determine whether the Council should continue with its in house service or contract with the Metropolitan Police to deliver the service. The result of this exercise identified that the service to be offered by the Metropolitan offered better value for money, both in terms of cost but also in terms of service delivery.

6.2 The Metropolitan Police are the only organisation able to provide policing which can enforce the law and manage crime and disorder in the parks and open spaces in the way the Council has deemed it requires.

7. Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Cabinet Minute 125 and Report, 16 February 2010 and Assembly Minute 68 and Report, 23 February 2010 - Re: The Council's Budget 2010/11 to 2012/13

8. List of appendices:

None