

Meeting:	Performance and Finance Sub Committee
Date:	23 July 2007
Subject:	Review of First Year of Partnership with Accord MP
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek Director People, Performance and Policy
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Susan Hall, Environment Services Portfolio Holder
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report outlines the proposal for a review of the lessons to be learnt from the first year of partnership with Accord MP in the delivery of public realm infrastructure services.

The report seeks nominations for membership of the review group.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Councillors are asked to:

- Agree to undertake the review of the council's partnership for public realm infrastructure services, as approved at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny on 12 July.
- Identify members of the group to undertake the project
- Report back to the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the outline scope and project plan for the review

SECTION 2 - REPORT

Brief Background

In April 2006 the council entered into a 5-year partnership arrangement with AccordMP to deliver public realm infrastructure services including:

- Design, contract and project management services
- Infrastructure works comprising: footway and carriageway maintenance, anti skid, patching, surfacing, gullies, fencing, lining, ground investigation, carriage crossings, general highway/civil/structural/ drainage/traffic, signs, responsive highways maintenance (including emergency response and winter gritting), street lighting, hard and soft landscaping, street furniture, CCTV infrastructure, playgrounds, parks and green belt
- Traffic and Road Safety services including investigations, surveys, design, consultation, promotions and other professional services.¹

These services had previously been delivered through 20 separate contracts and the consolidation of service delivery into one contractual relationship was expected to deliver a number of efficiencies and economies for the council. In particular, the benefits of the new arrangements were expected to include:

- Innovation in processes, management, design and construction
- End to end management of the design, works and administration processes
- A step change in the quality of delivery and design throughout the public realm
- A real drive to whole life costing and sustainable solutions
- Performance-led management of the partnership contract through a regime of key performance measures based on the council's priorities for the public realm
- Capacity gain generally and particularly in relation to ability to deal with peaks in workload
- Continuous improvement through development of industry best practice and professional leadership accessible through partnership
- Enhanced capability by having access to all relevant professional, technical and operational expertise
- Skills transfer to in house staff
- Access to partnership services [for] our partners²

On 12 July, a report was submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to this review. At that meeting, the Committee agreed to undertake a review on this topic, and requested that Performance and Finance developed a scope for the review, which would be reported back to Overview and Scrutiny at their next meeting. This is in accordance with the principles established by the report on scrutiny reconfiguration considered by Committee on 10 July (in particular, paragraph 3.5).

Issue to be determined

The partnership has now been in operation for more than a year and the Overview and Scrutiny committee has been asked by the executive to consider what can be learnt from the first year's operation of this contract. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on 12 July to conduct a review on this subject, and Performance and Finance Sub-Committee are now asked to develop more detailed proposals.

The Sub-Committee is being asked to nominate councillors to participate in the project. The committee is also asked to consider the areas in which it might like to focus the investigation. It is suggested that a useful starting point for the development of the scope would be the list of benefits anticipated from the partnership as outlined above. In general terms the investigation should consider:

¹ Report to Cabinet 6th April 2006

² Ibid

- What improvements in quality of the services have resulted from the partnership?
- What improvements in the cost of services have resulted from the partnership?
- What increases in efficiency in the delivery of the services have resulted from the partnership?

It is suggested that a detailed project plan and scope for the review is developed by councillors nominated to participate in the review this evening and that this is reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny committee at their next meeting. However, this should not limit the ability of the review group, once established, to begin with the gathering of evidence.

Option recommended and reasons for recommendation

Not appropriate to this report

Resources, costs and risks associated with recommendation

Costs of undertaking the review will be met from within the existing scrutiny budget. However, additional resources will be required from the public realm infrastructure service to support of the review. These resources cannot be quantified until the scope of the review is agreed.

Staffing/workforce consideration

The review of the lessons to be learnt from the first year's partnership with AccordMP will hopefully reveal useful information about the effective use of staff and their personal development in the delivery of a high profile, very technical service

Equalities Impact consideration

Development of a well thought out and designed public realm is fundamentally important to all citizens and can secure the engagement of all residents in the enjoyment of the local environment.

Current KPI's and Likely impact of decision on KPI's

There is a large number of KPI's that relate to this area of the council's work. These are listed below. The investigation of the performance of the partnership and the identification of lessons to be learnt from this can potentially have a positive impact on the performance of these KPIs.

- BVPI 119e
- BVPI 99a, b and c
- BVPI 223
- BVPI 224a and b
- BVPI 100
- BVPI 165
- BVPI 178
- BVPI 187
- BVPI 215a and b

Legal and Financial Comments

None specific to this report.

Community Safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998)

The delivery of a well-maintained, well-lit public realm is widely acknowledged to be a contributing factor to crime prevention and community safety.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Chief Finance Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Barry Evans
		Date: 29 th May 2007
Monitoring Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Stephen Dorian
		Date: 29 th May 2007

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Lynne McAdam, Service Manager Scrutiny

Background Papers: Report to Cabinet 6th April 2006, 'Public Realm Infrastructure Services'

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 10th July 2007, "Reconfiguring Scrutiny"

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 12th July 2007, "Review of First Year of Partnership with Accord MP"

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	YES/ NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES / NO
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	