

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 11 November 2004
Subject: Council notice boards and billboards
Responsible Officer: Chief Executive
Contact Officer: Peter Brown, Head of Communications
Portfolio Holder: Communications, Partnership and Human Resources
Key Decision: No
Status: Public

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To note the contractual position.

Reason for report

The legal requirement to give a full year's notice of non-renewal of the contract with Adshel allows for a new provider to be identified to improve the current provision of community notice boards.

Benefits

It is an opportunity to raise the Council's level of marketing and presence to residents and visitors to the borough.

Cost of Proposals

There are no direct costs arising from the proposal to identify a new provider of community notice boards. However, a review of the location of notice boards and the charging policy may have future financial implications.

Risks

None associated with the decision.

Implications if recommendations rejected

If the proposal to identify a new provider is not approved the contract with Adshel will terminate in November 2005 and the Council and community groups will lose the use of community notice boards.

Section 2: Report

Brief History

There are 20 community notice boards situated throughout the borough, 19 of them in a poor state of repair and not in corporate colours. The exception is the one situated on the Civic Centre site.

The notice boards were provided by Adshel as part of a deal signed in 1993 (known as the Adshel Free Standing Unit Agreement). The contract gives the Council a fee in return for Adshel using various sites in the borough for large billboards. In addition Adshel supplied 20 notice boards, maintained them and provided someone to change the information every two weeks.

The boards have not been regularly maintained. Three are unusable due to vandalism and of the remaining 17 virtually all are scratched, unlit and generally shabby in appearance.

The contract is due to finish in November 2005 but one year's notice is needed if the contract is to be changed or not renewed. The deadline to cancel or amend the contract is 5 November 2004, if missed the contract states that the existing situation continues for a further five years. The contract therefore has been terminated. There is now the opportunity for the Council to look at providers for the service.

At the September meeting of the Publications Advisory Panel it was resolved to recommend to Cabinet that a thorough review be undertaken of the siting and numbers of boards around the borough and to investigate more interesting ways of presenting information on boards with a focus on IT solutions. The Panel also recommended that the current policy of charging local organisations to use the boards and the fee charged to commercial organisations needed to be reviewed.

Options considered

Since the original contract in 1993 public notice boards have progressed from the basic metal board with light. There are now options for electronic screens and digital information points using unusual pedestal or octagonal designs. These would provide an opportunity to raise the level of the Council's marketing and presence to residents and visitors.

Not replacing the existing notice boards was considered but rejected as they are widely used by local community organisations and by different council service areas to promote new initiatives, opportunities and events.

Consultation

The Publications Advisory Panel has been consulted but no wider consultation has taken place.

Financial Implications

In looking at alternative providers it is suggested that the Procurement Manager contact other West London Authorities to establish whether they would be willing to look jointly at alternative providers. This would bring the Council's purchasing power to good effect.

There may be further financial implications of reviewing the charging policy and location of the notice boards and these will be built into the MTBS once recommendations on these areas are approved.

Legal Implications

Included in the body of the report.

Equalities Impact

None

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Appendix A – Report considered by the Publications Advisory Panel on 2 September 2004

Appendix B - Recommendation from the Publications Advisory Panel – 2 September 2004