

Division(s):

CABINET – 18 JUNE 2019

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL AGENCY AGREEMENT – MANAGEMENT OF TEMPORARY SIGNS ON THE HIGHWAY

Report by Director of Community Operations

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **note the progress being made regarding partnership opportunities between Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council Operational Teams**
 - (b) **to delegate authority to the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, and the Strategic Director of Communities to agree appropriate terms of the agreement.**

Executive Summary

2. Officers at Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council have been jointly exploring opportunities for working more closely together and undertake formal partnership arrangements.
3. Following a joint workshop in December 2018, a programme of initial, low-risk projects was established across several service areas. This is now being progressed with the aim of delivering some tangible benefits for both authorities and customers.
4. One of the initial initiatives identified is temporary signage within Cherwell District Area. This is an area that has caused some local frustration especially relating to the number of illegal signs and is being addressed with an informal joined-up approach at the moment. The proposed Agency Agreement would pass this activity onto Cherwell District Council to manage. It will ensure that any non-approved signage is dealt with locally by one organisation.
5. Another is the formalisation of roundabout and other similar types of highways related sponsorship.

Introduction

6. The driver for this joint programme of work is an ambition to explore the opportunities that are emerging from the joint working arrangements between the Councils. The workshop that took place in December identified a number

of initiatives which all have the potential to create efficiencies and reduce cost, increase partnership working and build on our shared ambitions to provide better services to our customers. These initiatives include:

- Enforcement (development / highway)
 - Highway works activity (signage / vegetation / town centre footpaths / trees)
 - Groundsman activity (Public rights of Way / Parks / Property)
 - DBS checks (single or combined process between councils)
 - Property Utilisation (offices, depots, customer services/information)
 - Waste (opportunities for sharing officer resource)
 - Customer Service (cross-councils ownership, enquiry systems)
7. In addition to the above, the authorities are working together on exploring opportunities for introducing Civil Parking Enforcement. This is being done through a multi-authority working group which Oxfordshire County Council is leading, with a feasibility study currently being commissioned.
8. Oxfordshire County Council already has many agency agreements in place with Oxford City Council, local Town and Parish Councils and District Councils. This proposal is an addition to these and is likely to be followed by others over the coming months/ years.

Scope of Agreement

9. The two authorities already have an existing Agency Agreement which covers grass cutting with a lifetime of 5 years that has been in place since February 2016. The proposal is to extend this agreement to include:
- approval and management of the removal of temporary signs e.g. for housing developers and local events
 - management of the removal of unauthorised signs/banners/posters, currently being undertaken by OCC Highways Maintenance utilising Skanska, (including temporary storage).
 - management of roundabout and other similar highway sponsorship.

Operation & Monitoring

10. This would be a new arrangement for both authorities building on the established grass cutting agency agreement, and as such the success of the arrangement for both authorities will be monitored and kept under review.
11. The income generation from sponsorship will be monitored and managed by the councils. Any surplus income will be used to offset the costs of managing the temporary signs. Any surplus will be shared between authorities.
12. The agreement will require that Oxfordshire County Council policies, specifications and best practice will be adhered to. This will include ensuring required information is uploaded to the county council's asset management systems.

13. The Agency Agreement will detail the escalation process should the need arise through poor performance or other reasons. This will include clauses for termination of the agreement by either party.

Risk Management

14. The risk of including sponsorship within the agency agreement is it may impact on any countywide sponsorship approach. This will be mitigated by each element of delegated functions having a 1-year notice period attached to them in the agreement.

Key Dates

15. It was considered and supported by Cherwell District Council Executive on 3rd June 2019.

Financial and Staff Implications

16. There are no staffing implications. Any additional work will be managed within existing Cherwell District Council resource, but current activity suggests this is minimal.
17. No specific funding is proposed to be provided for this activity as it is currently considered by Cherwell District Council to be self-funding, with income from sponsorship funding the other activity in the agency agreement.
18. It would be operated with open book principles with 50/50 allocation of any surplus income that remains after costs for running the services within the agency agreement have been met.

Equalities Implications

19. None

OWEN JENKINS
(OCC) Director of Community Operations

GRAEME KANE
(CDC) Chief Operating Officer

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Paul Fermer (OCC) Assistant Director of Infrastructure Operations
Ed Potter (CDC) Assistant Director, Environmental Services

May 2019