

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 8th July 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Environment and Economy

SUBJECT: Historic Environment Service Level Agreement

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a three-year renewal of the existing Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Halton Borough Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council in respect of historic environment services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The Service Level Agreement between Halton Borough Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council for the provision of Historic Environment Services be renewed for a period of three years from 1st April 2010, to 31st March 2013; and**
- 2) Procurement Standing Order 4.1 be waived to allow Cheshire West and Chester Council to supply the services within the Historic Environment Service Level Agreement without the need for competitive tender.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On 5th March 2009, the Executive Board Sub Committee resolved that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the provision of historic environment services be renewed for a period of one year from 1st April 2009, to 31st March 2010, at a cost of £14,335.36. The SLA was extended for one year only as at that time Cheshire Council was undergoing reorganisation.

3.2 It is now recommended that the SLA is renewed for a further period of three years (2010-13). The cost for year one of the SLA (2010-11) will be £14,693.74. The subsequent years will be subject to an adjustment for annual inflation. This will be reviewed at the end of each year. As the cost of the Historic Environment SLA exceeds £10,000, it should be noted that the Council's procedures for Standing Orders have not been complied with. In this case, the Council's Solicitor has agreed that the

three written quotations for the order are not required (see Procurement Standing Order 4.1).

- 3.3 There are several reasons as to why the Historic Environment SLA is an advantageous arrangement for Halton Borough Council. The SLA represents good value for money in terms of ensuring continual and permanent access to specialist advice on the historic environment. A private sector alternative would be significantly more expensive, and the appointment of a full time member of staff with the relevant qualifications and experience would also lead to a much greater cost for the Council.
- 3.4 Additionally, the SLA incorporates the development and maintenance of Halton's Historic Environment Record which is a requirement of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.
- 3.5 Attached at Appendix A is the Historic Environment Service Agreement and Schedule, which details all of the services that would be provided within the renewed Historic Environment SLA. If the recommendation to approve the renewal of the SLA is given, the Council Solicitor and the Cheshire West and Chester Council Solicitor would formalise this Agreement and Schedule with an exchange of letters.
- 3.6 Appendix B is the summary report for Halton of the Historic Environment Service provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council for the period April to December 2009.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The SLA will ensure that the Council is able to comply with national Government policy and practice on the historic environment. This is especially relevant in light of the new Historic Environment PPS (PPS5) which replaces PPG15 (Planning for the Historic Environment) and PPG16 (Archaeology and Planning).
- 4.2 The Historic Environment SLA is also able to uphold the archaeology and historic environment based policies contained within the saved policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and provide specialist advice in terms of progressing work on Halton's Local Development Framework (LDF) documents. This includes Development Plan Documents (DPDs) such as the Core Strategy, and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), in addition to other conservation-based policy documents, such as Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The continued provision of the Historic Environment SLA has cost implications for the Council. The cost for year one (2010-11) is £14,693.74. This would increase by inflation in years two (2011-12) and three (2012-13). This is considered to be a cost-effective solution to the provision of historic environment advice that is necessary for the effective delivery of planning services within the Council.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

No implications envisaged.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

No implications envisaged.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

No implications envisaged.

6.4 A Safer Halton

No implications envisaged.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The provision of high quality specialist advice on the historic environment is of significant importance to the Borough and in particular to its planning services. The Historic Environment SLA makes provision for expert advice to be given on planning applications and the progression of LDF documents, hence improving the Council's capabilities to deal with historic environment issues efficiently. This has an impact on the Borough's built environment, in particular parts of the Borough that are considered to be of historic interest, for example, archaeological sites, conservation areas, ancient monuments and listed buildings, ensuring that they are suitably protected and well maintained.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 No implications envisaged.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 No implications envisaged.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Service Level Agreement between Halton Borough Council and Cheshire County Council for the provision of Historic Environment Services	Legal Services, Municipal Building	John Tully
Report to Executive Board Sub Committee of 14 th September 2004, "Continuation of Archaeology Service Level Agreement"	Development Control / Places, Economy and Transport, Rutland House, Halton Lea	Andrew Plant
Report to Executive Board Sub Committee of 16 th May 2005, "Extension of Existing Archaeology Service Level Agreement with Cheshire County Council to become Historic Environment SLA"	Development Control / Places, Economy and Transport, Rutland House, Halton Lea	Andrew Plant
Report to Executive Board Sub Committee of 5 th March 2009, "Historic Environment Service Level Agreement"	Development Control / Places, Economy and Transport, Rutland House, Halton Lea	Andrew Plant