

SECTION E

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT – METHOD STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Introduction

1.1 A key source of information regarding the non-price factors to be used in the evaluation process will be that of method statements.

1.2 Tenderers will have their own approaches to drafting such statements and it is not the intention of the Town Council to be prescriptive in that regard. Tenderers will need to be aware, however, that the evaluation team will be examining each statement with a view to understanding and passing judgement upon:

- what is to be done and why?
- how is it to be done?
- by whom is it to be done?
- when is it to be done?
- where is it to be done?
- what information and evidence is to be used?

1.3 Tenderers are required to prepare method statements in respect of:

- human resource policies and practices;
- customer care;
- identifying and effecting continuous service improvement;
- organisational and service delivery arrangements including contract and performance management practices;
- environmental policies and practices.

1.3 The requirements of each statement are given in the following paragraphs. In practice it is recognised that there are linkages across the statements, e.g. training issues have a relevance to customer care. To avoid confusion and duplicated information the briefs for each statement instruct Tenderers how to handle those linkages.

2. **Human resource policies and practices**

2.1 Staff are the key ingredient to an effective service delivery, not only in direct operational terms, but also in terms of the working relationship with the Council and its staff.

2.2 The Town Council acknowledges the autonomy that a Contractor enjoys in deciding upon applying its human resource policies and practices but, notwithstanding this basic position, the Council would not wish to be associated with an organisation which follows anything less than good human resource practice.

2.3 It is against this background that there are certain areas of human resource activity upon which the Council invites method statements. Those are:

- the maintenance and development of staff competencies, not only in the operational areas of the grounds maintenance service, but also in the managerial and supervisory areas;
- the practices adopted to encourage the required behaviours and performance standards;
- arrangements for ensuring stability in the staff deployed upon the Council's contract and their commitment to ensuring that the service provided is of the highest standard;
- equality and health and safety issues.

2.4 Tenderers should exclude from this method statement any specific reference to the areas covered by the other method statements as it is a requirement of those statements to address human resource matters.

3. **Customer care**

3.1 Customer care is about responding to and satisfying customer expectations. In the context of the grounds maintenance service, the term 'customer' has several interpretations viz:

- the Town Council and its representatives;
- the community as a whole;
- special interest groups within that community.

3.2 Customer care is seen by the Council as an overall concept embracing three interrelated elements viz:

- a complaints procedure;
- the setting of performance standards for customer contacts;
- a customer satisfaction programme.

3.3 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action, by the contractor or its staff affecting an individual customer, a representative grouping or the client. This definition is sufficiently broad to cover issues such as:

- failure to achieve standards of service;
- delays in responding to the service requests;
- inappropriate employee behaviours or attitudes.

3.4 Performance standards are associated with the behaviours regarding personal contact, telephone use and handling correspondence. The essential measurement attributes are considered to be those of timeliness and appropriateness: contacts should be positive, informative, friendly and effective.

3.5 The third element – customer satisfaction – is used to denote a process which systematically measures the level of customer satisfaction. It interacts with the complaints procedure and service delivery standards, but also recognises that satisfaction is a wider concept than these two areas, for it embraces not only the core of any service, but also the ancillary features e.g. the provision of timely and accurate information to the Council. Monitoring of customer satisfaction is seen as a continuous programme.

3.6 Tenderers are required to explain how they approach customer care matters within their organisation and to relate their practices to this contract. The method statement should show clearly the extent to which a Tenderer's practices accommodate the elements of customer care as defined by the Town Council and should deal with any human resource issues specifically related to customer care.

4. **Identifying and effecting continuous service improvements**

4.1 The Town Council is seeking continuous service improvement. Tenderers are to submit details of their approach to identifying and effecting such improvements and to explain clearly any implications for the Town Council. The Council draws a distinction between improvements in service delivery and improvements in the service itself.

- 4.2 In the former case, the Council's interest is in the contractor continuously seeking new ways of working so as to improve its operational efficiency and economy and, therefore, to make less demand upon the world's scarce resources. The interest is in securing the same outputs with fewer inputs and, therefore, the Council will be seeking positive changes with regard to the use of labour, equipment and materials. Tenderers are required to explain their approach to identifying and effecting efficiency and economy improvements and to explain how the Council could share in those benefits.
- 4.3 In the second case, in view of the fact that the chosen Contractor will have extensive experience of the grounds maintenance service, it is the expectation of the Town Council that it will be able to Tender advice to the Authority with regard to the nature of the service itself and the standards.
- 4.4 The Council is not averse to activating the change procedures within the contract conditions and to making amendments to the service requirement if those amendments would lead to more cost effective arrangements and generate additional benefits to the community.
- 4.5 Tenderers are therefore required to advise as to how they would go about identifying potential improvements in the nature and standards of service and to deal specifically with how they would evaluate their ideas when viewed from the perspective of the Town Council. If they already have some ideas for improving the specified service these would be welcomed as evidence of their innovative and creative approach.
- 4.6 Tenderers should include in this statement any directly relevant human resource policies and practices.

5. **Organisational and service delivery arrangements including contract and performance management practices**

5.1 The Town Council requires Tenderers to demonstrate their awareness of the Council's requirements by advising of the organisation structure they propose for the contract and the resources to be applied to the delivery of the services: when so doing Tenderers are required to take into account the contract and performance management practices detailed in the Tender documents. As well as the ongoing arrangements, the Council is also keen to learn about the transitional arrangements for taking on responsibility for the contract. In addition Tenderers are invited to detail their approach to a selection of operational tasks which they deem to be key to the satisfactory delivery of the service.

5.2 Tenderers should, therefore, provide details of:

- their transitional plan;
- the proposed operational, supervisory and managerial arrangements including role and responsibility descriptions;
- person specifications for key personnel, e.g. those with a supervisory/quality assurance role;
- proposals with regard to the assets to be deployed and the materials to be used;
- any use of sub-contractors and temporary or self employed labour;
- any support and backup facilities;
- their discharge of key operational tasks.

5.3 With regard to the contract and performance management practices detailed in the Tender documents, Tenderers are invited to comment and expand upon those requirements if they believe improvements could be effected to the proposals.

5.4 Directly relevant human resource practices should be included in this statement. Excluded from this statement are environmental issues.

6. **Environmental policies and practices**

6.1 The Town Council has as one of its key values the protection of the environment. The grounds maintenance service, of itself, also has direct environmental implications. The Town Council, therefore, will need to be satisfied that its chosen contractor is attuned to environmental issues, operates sound environmental policies and practices throughout its whole organisation and will discharge the particular contract with the Town Council in an environmentally friendly manner.

6.2 As such, Tenderers are required to provide the Council with a copy of any environmental policy statement and supporting procedure and practice notes.

The Council has a particular interest in:

- energy management;
- recycling and waste disposal practices;
- the use of chemicals and artificial fertilisers;
- the protection and encouragement of fauna and flora;
- noise pollution,

and invites Tenderers to deal specifically with these areas.

6.3 Included in this method statement are human resource matters and any direct impacts upon the service delivery arrangements.