

ESTATES & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT – CONTRACT RETENDERING

INTRODUCTION

This briefing is to inform all staff about the process to renew the contracts that maintain and manage the buildings in which we work. Since the creation of the NPS the facilities management¹ (FM) and the estates management (EM) have been contracted out, with the exception of an NPD in-house team for EM covering eastern England. These contracts divided the commercial estate (e.g. offices) and approved premises. The main external contractors have been MITIE and Morrison for FM contracts, and Colliers for EM contracts.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

It has been openly acknowledged that there have been shortcomings in the way these contracts have performed and, as part of current contract management, remedial action has been taken. Although the situation is not ideal, this has achieved steady improvement. The first of the contracts let in 2002 are near expiry.

Under NOMS the property services of Prisons and Probation have been combined into the NOMS property unit. This unit will shortly conduct a consultation exercise within the NPS. It will then create a comprehensive specification of the Service's requirements and invite tenders. New suppliers will be approved in approximately 18 months. Roger Hill, Director of Probation, has taken the role of Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the project.

In order to provide for more local flexibility in the new contracts, the contracts that run out within the next 18 months will each be temporarily extended so all the EM and FM contracts for commercial and approved premises expire at the same time.

CONSULTATION

It is important for our operational success that the new contracts enable the service to deliver the work expected of it: creating productive, safe and comfortable environments in which staff want to work.

A national event in late October 2005 for area representatives will contribute to framing the requirements that the new contracts will fulfil. We also expect that all staff will have an opportunity to participate, possibly through a

¹ FM generally describes the provision of services like cleaning, catering, pest control, security and fire safety while EM cover the maintenance and acquisition/disposal of buildings)

questionnaire during the Autumn. To ensure a user view is incorporated, Heather Harker (Chief Officer, S Yorks) and Wes Lacey (ACO, Warks) will sit on the project board, representing the commercial estate and APs respectively. (See their statements below).

Other places on the board include the Probation Boards' Association, NAPO and Unison representatives. The board will make key decisions and take responsibility for ensuring the tendering process conforms to Office of Government Commerce and EU procurement requirements.

Commercial Estate - Heather Harker, Chief Officer - South Yorkshire

"I welcome the open acknowledgement that things have been less than satisfactory. Roger Hills' desire to ensure that a "user view" should play a central role in what contracts should look like is extremely encouraging. I am pleased to have been asked to be involved, having had more than our share of problems with the contracts in South Yorkshire.

In focussing on the commercial estate I would welcome the views of managers, estates "leads", and both practice and admin staff about what they feel contracts could and should encompass. The issues of accountability, plus the need for more local control and autonomy ring loud and clear within my own area and region. I am conscious that the vast majority of comments I hear and indeed experience tend to be negative, but there are things that have worked well for areas, and we need to hear those too."

Approved premises - Wes Lacey, ACO Warwickshire

"Approved Premises have experienced particular difficulties in relation to the FM contract and many feel cynical about whether their views will be taken into account in the re-tendering. Having been a vocal critic of the contract from the outset I was surprised, but pleased, to be approached for this role. I think it is significant that Roger has opted to take the SRO role. I am persuaded that there is a genuine desire to acknowledge past mistakes and learn from them.

We know what we don't want; the challenge is to say what we do want and ensure that we get it. We will not be able to go back to the situation that prevailed prior to the contract - we are constrained by new national structures and Government tendering procedures - but there are opportunities for us to secure more local control over aspects of FM delivery. My personal hobby-horse is that the FM should complement hostel regimes by helping us deliver life skills training. The purpose of the consultation is to establish what you want. Please rekindle the energy with which you objected to the old contract and apply it to the consultation. I look forward to hearing from you."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The new contracts will apply to the Services' 1300 properties and 89 approved hostels. Some offices in which NPS staff work, for instance those which are part of Court buildings, cannot be included. Details of the estate, assessments of its condition, functional suitability, contract performance and complaints are in the *NOMS Property Service – Probation Estate Annual Report 2004/05* (www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk or www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk). The current estate provides accommodation for approximately 22500 people.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Further Briefings like this one will be produced as necessary and will be posted on the National Probation Service website at: www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk>News and Updates>Briefings

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