



## Belfast City Council

**Report to:** Health & Environmental Services Committee.

**Subject:** Business Improvement through Environmental Solutions (BITES) Programme

**Date:** 8th September, 2010

**Reporting Officer:** Mr Tim Walker, Head of Waste Management, Ext 3311.

**Contact Officer:** Mr Martin Doherty, Waste Education Manager, Ext 3270

### Relevant Background Information

Members may recall that, at its September meeting last year, the Waste Management Service proposed to use the European Week of Waste Reduction (EWWR) to launch the third year of the joint Business Improvement through Environmental Solutions (BITES) initiative which is organised between the Economic Initiative and Waste Management services.

This partnership programme between the Economic Initiative and Waste Management Services, created in 2007, has been developed to assist participating companies to promote business sustainability and improve their competitiveness by helping them introduce environmental management policies, reduce environmental liabilities and enhance compliance with environmental regulations. Economic Initiatives is the lead service and Waste Management offers management support and knowledge as necessary.

The outcome of the first year was that the participant businesses realised cost savings of an average of 1% of their turnover although, in one case, £22,000 of savings were identified by one participating company.

### Key Issues

The Economic Initiatives and Waste Management Services jointly tendered for support with the delivery of BITES 2009/10, which the environmental consultancy, Mabbett & Associates, won. Twelve local businesses were recruited – a combination of small and larger businesses, none of which were active Invest NI clients. The participating companies have completed the workshop phase of the programme which comprised of a series of workshop-based training supported by site visits to consider issues such as:

- Solid waste management
- Water management
- Energy management
- Purchasing and transport management
- Environmental management systems.

Participating companies also received one-to-one mentoring to help them address particular challenges at their own premises. On completion of the programme, in addition to having conducted an environmental assessment of their company, candidates gain accreditation with IEMA (the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment). The programme is useful both personally and professionally for candidates as it not only helps them look at ways of improving the environmental performance of their company but also its economic performance by reducing overheads and ensuring legislative compliance. It also provides these participating companies with an edge in public sector tendering where the achievement of environmental standards scores marks on the tender award criteria.

The contract awarded to Mabbetts was for the delivery of the 2009/10 programme, with an option to extend for an additional two phases subject to satisfactory performance. The programme is presently in the final phase of delivery, feedback from the candidates has been extremely positive. They confirm that they have seen benefits in their companies' improved environmental performance and have identified cost savings which they are in the process of realising. The programme's mentoring concluded in August 2010 and final reports on the short- and long-term outcomes for each participating company will be presented at an awards ceremony in the City Hall on 8 September, 2011.

To date, there have been a number of enquiries regarding the next phase of the programme. It is proposed that (a) following an evaluation (b) subject to satisfactory performance and (c) following a review of the charges and the currency of the BITES programme itself, approval will be sought by the Development Department to undertake BITES in 2011 and to extend the current contract. In line with Council procedure, relevant approvals will be sought from Legal Services and the Procurement Unit.

## **Resource Implications**

### **Financial**

The cost per phase of delivery of the programme is £40,000.

The Waste Management Service contributes £10,000 per phase while participating companies contribute £3,000 approximately. The Economic Initiatives Service contributes in the region of £27,000.

An application to the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's European Programmes branch has been made to receive up to 50% match funding for the BITES programme.

### **Human Resources**

The Waste Management Service presents on the waste module, which amounts to approximately one working day.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that, subject to the conditions above, the Committee grants approval to continue to contribute to BITES for 12 businesses for a further 12 months, subject to maximising resources from other sources.

## **Decision Tracking**

If the recommendation is accepted, the Head of Waste Management will work with Economic Initiatives to deliver BITES.