



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Occupational Health and Employee Counselling Contracts
Date:	18 June 2010
Reporting Officer:	Julie Thompson, Director of Finance and Resources

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that both the Occupational Health and Employee Counselling contracts provide essential services to the Council for the following reasons:

- The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the health and safety of its employees and the health and wellbeing of our workforce is an important element of that.
- Both Occupational Health and Employee Counselling are vital to effective management of the Council's attendance levels.

Occupational Health Contract

Following a public tendering exercise the contract for the provision of an Occupational Health Physician Services was awarded to Blackwell Associates. This contract was awarded for 18 months (July 2007 to November 2008) with an option to extend for a further 12 months and was subsequently extended to November 2009. The contract is currently being renewed on a monthly basis.

Employee Counselling Contract

Following a public tendering exercise the contract for the provision of an Employee Counselling Service was awarded to Apeideo Associates. This contract was awarded for a two year period (June 2007 to June 2009) with an option to extend for a further 12 months and was subsequently extended to June 2010.

The Committee's approval is needed to commence a procurement exercise for both of these contracts.

Key Issues

The Council implemented a new Attendance Policy in January 2010 and it is important that the implications of this new policy are taken into account in both contract specifications. It is therefore essential that a full and thorough review of both contract specifications is undertaken to ensure that the best possible value for money services are contracted.

Now that the new Attendance Policy is bedding in, work has started in this regard between the Finance and Resources Department and user departments. The Committee is therefore requested to grant an extension of no longer than six months

(under the current terms and conditions) to complete the reviews of the contract specifications and the related procurement exercises.

Tenders would be evaluated using pre determined criteria including both cost and quality and in liaison with the Procurement Unit. It would be proposed that the contracts would be for two years, with the option of extension of a further year, depending on performance/ requirements.

Resource Implications

The current contracts are valued annually at £60k for Occupational Health and £120k for Employee Counselling and provision for this is included in revenue budgets. Regularly testing the market via competitive tendering ensures that we obtain the best possible value for money and standards of service from our external suppliers.

Decision Required

Members are asked to:

- Agree to extend the current Occupational Health and Employee Counselling contracts for a maximum of six months.
- Approve the commencement of tendering exercises for the Occupational Health and Employee Counselling service contracts and delegate authority under the Scheme of Delegation to the Director of Finance and Resources to approve the tenders.