

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

To: Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

For Decision

19th May 2015

Proposal for Provision of Legal Services

Linkage to Corporate Plan	
Strategic Priority	Transition and Transformation
Objective	Successful implementation of the convergence plan
Lead Officer	Stephen McMaw
Cost: (If applicable)	Proposed SLA based on salary of £28,746 (Plus on costs) and hourly rate for advice from Legal Hub

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (the Council) is required to consider the options available for the future provision of Legal Services.
- 1.2 At the 13th April 2015 Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting, a report was presented to Elected Members regarding potential future delivery options.
- 1.3 The report recommended a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Derry and Strabane District Council. The SLA will involve the Council having an embedded Solicitor at PO1 grade (£28,746 plus on costs). Additional advice from the Legal Hub at Derry and Strabane District Council will be charged at cost price, approximately £70 per hour. Should the Hub require the services of the embedded Solicitor, fees will be charged to the Hub by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for their services.
- 1.4 In response to the recommendation, Elected Members agreed that Belfast City Council be contacted to ascertain if they would be interested in developing a Service Level Agreement with the Council.
- 1.5 Belfast City Council has been approached and has confirmed that the Council is unable to offer a SLA that could match the terms proposed by Derry and Strabane District Council.

1.6 Belfast City Council has a pricing structure for Legal Services as follows:

Level of Advice	Cost
Solicitor	£95 per hour
Divisional Solicitor	£125 per hour
Town Solicitor	£160 per hour

2.0 Cost Comparison

2.1 The four Legacy Councils together spend approximately £80k per annum on legal services. This sum can be approximately broken down to 70% standard activity and 30% specialist advice. The new planning function is likely to require a minimum of 10 hours legal support per month (3 hours preparation and 7 hours per meeting). The following depicts an approximate cost comparison based on the previous annual accumulated spend of £80k, to include the new planning function, between the proposed SLA and the cost matrix provided by Belfast City Council.

2.2 Estimated cost comparisons based on assumption of £80k per annum spend and additional requirements of the planning function.

	Areas of cost	Estimated Cost
SLA	Annual cost of embedded Solicitor	£36,400
	Cost of normal legal activity estimated at 70%	Allowed for within staff salary
	Additional cost of 30% specialist advice	£19,000 based on £75 per hour
	Additional cost of planning function	Approx. 120 hours per annum. Cost allowed for in staff salary
	Total estimated cost	£55,400k per annum
BCC	Annual cost of embedded Solicitor	£0
	Cost of normal legal activity estimated at 70%	£56,000 (70% of £80k at £95 per hour)
	Additional cost of 30% specialist advice	£24,000 (30% of 80k at minimum of £95 per hour)
	Additional cost of planning function	120 hours per annum at £95 per hour equates to £11,400 plus travel of 120 miles x12 meetings x 65 pence equates to £936 per annum
	Total estimated cost	£92,336

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 The annual requirement for legal support services by the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is unknown. The table above assumes a baseline of activity similar to that of the four Legacy Councils and the additional requirements for the planning function.
- 3.2 The table above illustrates a cost differential of 66% between the SLA arrangement and the cost matrix submitted by Belfast City Council.

Recommendation

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council approve the original recommendation to set up a 2-year Service Level Agreement with Derry and Strabane District Council for the provision of Legal Services as detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 attached.