

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Portfolio Holder
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CONSIDERATE CONTRACTOR SCHEME

Purpose

1. To explore the possibilities of creating a joint considerate contractors scheme with Cambridge City Council.
2. This is a key decision because
 - it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.
 - it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in the District.
 - it increases financial commitments (revenue and / or capital) in future years above existing budgetary approvals.

Background

3. South Cambridgeshire District Council does not have its own Considerate Contractors Scheme (CCS). When development at Arbury Park commenced, Cambridge City Council was approached by contractors working on the site about the possibility of joining the CCS at the City. Unfortunately as Arbury Park was outside the city boundary it was not possible to include them in the scheme.
4. Officers at the City council discussed the possibility of extending the scheme to developments within South Cambridgeshire but at the time there was limited budget and resources to implement the changes needed. With the creation of the New Communities team, resources have been allocated to set up a scheme, which can be implemented at the fringe sites currently planned on the edge of Cambridge in partnership with Cambridge City Council.
5. A joint scheme would be beneficial to the development of sites, such as at the southern fringe, as they cover land in both districts and it would be beneficial to the local planning authorities and new residents to have contractors working to the same rules and procedures in both areas.

Considerations

The National Scheme

6. This is a non-profit making, independent organisation founded by the industry to improve its image, solely funded by its registrations. The scheme covers all construction activity in the UK and is open to construction companies of all types and size and for every construction activity.
7. The scheme commits members to meeting a code of considerate practice (attached at appendix 1), which has responsibilities listed under the following headings:

1. Considerate
2. Environment
3. Cleanliness
4. Good Neighbour
5. Respectful
6. Safe
7. Responsible
8. Accountable

8. Sites are visited to check compliance with the scheme. The number of visits a site will receive depends on its value and or duration. Signs are also provided so that passers by can comment on the scheme if they wish.

9. The scheme is voluntary and fees are charged for each project at the following rates:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Project value up to £100,000 | £100+vat |
| 2. Project value from £100,000 - £500,000 | £200 +vat |
| 3. Project value from £500,000 - £5,000,000 | £400+vat |
| 4. Project value over £5,000,000 | £600+vat |

10. The national scheme had 6500 projects eligible for its prestigious national awards in April 2008.

Cambridge City Scheme

11. The scheme is designed to promote greater awareness, higher standards of care and to encourage contractors to take pride in their public image. Members of the scheme are asked to give a commitment over and above the legal minimum requirements. They commit themselves to the code of good practice set out in the schemes leaflet (attached at appendix 2) which has responsibilities listed under the following headings:

1. Considerate
2. Quiet
3. Clean
4. Responsible
5. Tidy
6. Safe
7. Accountable
8. Recycling and Sustainability (introduced January 2007)

12. Regular inspections are made to the sites participating in the scheme and the public are encouraged to advise the project officer of actions, which deserve praise or those not conforming to the code of good practice. Signs are provided to be displayed at the development site so that people know who to contact.

13. An annual awards ceremony takes place to award certificates of excellence and commendation. Ridgeons and the Chamber of Commerce support and donate prizes to the awards. The event attracts useful publicity and prestige for member contractors.

14. The scheme is voluntary with registration fees varying according to the turnover of the company. Rates at July 2007 were:

1. Turnover under £500,000	£200+vat
2. Turnover £501,000 - £1,000,000	£400+vat
3. Turnover £1,000,000+	£650+vat

15. This is an annual fee for the company and they can register a number of different projects within the year. There are currently 22 companies signed up to the scheme in Cambridge City. The scheme is subsidised by the city council, as registrations alone do not cover the cost of running the scheme.

Options

16. There are two options available:

1. Do nothing and continue to rely on contractors signing up to the national scheme, leaving Cambridge City to continue running their own local scheme.
2. Develop a joint local scheme with Cambridge City Council.

Implications

17. If we follow option one above we do not address the contractor issues that have been highlighted in the scrutiny task and finish group review of Arbury Park (report to scrutiny committee 2nd October 2008). Contractors are left to join the national scheme if they wish or to develop sites, only conforming to the minimal legal requirements. A number of the house builders currently working in South Cambs have projects registered on the national scheme yet there are still complaints from the public about their behaviour. This raises concerns that perhaps the national scheme is not able to make enough visits to sites or the value of those projects do not meet the visiting requirements.

18. Option two would strengthen the local scheme, provide benefits to local contractors who currently want to join the scheme in our area and benefit the joint developments on the edge of Cambridge where contractors may be developing land in both districts. It would also have the following advantages:

1. Improved standards for projects and activities.
2. Additional prestige and publicity with awards.
3. A straightforward, practical code for people to follow.
4. Informative literature pack.
5. The advice and expertise of the Cambridge City Council Considerate Contractors Scheme Inspectors.
6. Improved relationships with the general public.

19. We could in S106 negotiations with developers, negotiate with them to join this scheme in order to provide the public with some accountability for developments near to them. This would increase the number of contractors on the scheme, which would in turn increase turnover increasing the chances of making the scheme self-financing. The City council CCS officer is a dedicated resource who makes regular visits to registered schemes. This could help resolve the issues we currently have with the public complaints about contractor behaviour and site appearances.

20. Financial	SCDC would need to contribute to the cost of running the scheme. An indicative amount has been suggested of £8,000 - £10,000 based on current running costs. Total budget expenditure for 2008/9 is £34,800 for the current city based scheme.
Legal	A legally binding contract would need to be drawn up between the two authorities setting out the terms, conditions, expectations and outcomes of the partnership.
Staffing	SCDC staff resources are available to help set up the scheme which will be administered and managed by officers at the City Council.
Risk Management	The council is at risk if it does nothing. It should be learning the lessons from past developments to improve conditions for the future.
Equal Opportunities	The CCS complies with equal opportunities legislation. A partnership will allow for more contractors to access the scheme and more of the general public to be involved in monitoring the scheme.

Consultations

21. This report has been developed in consultation with officers from the Cambridge City Council Considerate Contractors Scheme and SCDC's building control team who are in agreement that a joint venture would be of benefit to both authorities.

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

22.	Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future
	A joint CCS would be an excellent example of partnership working to benefit residents in South Cambs. There would be improved standards for projects and better relationships with the general public.
	Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community
	A shared approach represents best value as the CCS scheme in Cambridge is already up and running efficiently. It would deliver a better service for all residents with more accountability through regular site visits, which at the moment are beyond the council's resources.
	Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work
	With contractors following the code of good practice set out in the CCS the quality of life for residents living in or on development sites will be enhanced through considerate, quiet, clean, tidy and safe sites.

Conclusions/Summary

23. It would benefit the residents of SCDC if the council developed a joint CCS with the City Council. It would give the council more control over contractor behaviour and would allow the public to have a direct contact for issues affecting them arising from development in their area. Local contractors would have the prestige and publicity associated with awards and it would lead to more considerate developments in the future.

Recommendations

24. The Portfolio holder is recommended to agree:
1. Officers at both SCDC and Cambridge City begin working on a joint Considerate Contractors scheme.
 2. £8,000 - £12,000 from the 2008 planning delivery grant be allocated to fund this joint scheme.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Considerate Constructors Scheme – www.ccscheme.org.uk
- Cambridge City Council Considerate Contractor Scheme - <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/planning/building-control/considerate-contractor-scheme/>
- Report of the Arbury Park Task and Finish Group – October 2008

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