

OXFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

22 March 2013

Oxfordshire Green Schools

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for a five-month extension to the current Oxfordshire Green Schools education service contract provided by the Groundwork Trust.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire Environment and Waste Partnership (OEWPP) let a joint contract for environmental education in September 2011. The contract was awarded to Groundwork Thames Valley (now the Groundwork Trust), which delivers the Oxfordshire Green Schools programme across the county. The programme aims to raise understanding of sustainable waste and energy management practices for school children aged 4 to 16 years. The contract is for two years, plus an optional two year extension. The initial two year agreement is due to end on 24 October 2013.
- 2.2 OEWPP received a report and presentation on the first year's performance of the contract in October 2012, where it was reported that over 100 different schools had been visited through a combination of the lighter touch one day workshops, roadshows and the through the more in-depth hub school programme.
- 2.3 The programme continues to perform well. A second Oxfordshire Green Schools conference is being planned for October 2013, with funding again being sought from corporate sponsors. Difficulty in recruiting hub schools has been overcome, with the target of recruiting 20 hub schools recently met.
- 2.4 A five-month contract extension to 31 March 2014 is recommended as this will ensure continuity through most of the remaining school year and will also align the contract termination date with the end of the financial year. The extension would be on the same terms and conditions as the existing agreement.
- 2.5 Longer term options beyond the proposed 31 March 2014 contract end date can then be considered by OWP at its October 2013 meeting. Here a decision can be made to either:
- Extend the contract further (for up to a further 19 months; 2 years in total)
 - To re-tender the service
 - To consider other service delivery options (which could include an in-house delivery option).
- 2.6 Reaching a longer term decision in October 2013 would align with the budget setting process for 2014/15.

3 Financial, Risk and Staff Implications

- 3.1 Oxfordshire Waste Partnership provides £80,100 of revenue funding per annum for waste education. Oxfordshire County Council provides an additional £30,000 per year for energy education. Revenue funding is in place for the remainder of 2012/13 and has also been included within the OWP 2013/14 budget, which was agreed by the OWP joint committee on 26th October 2012.

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3.2 The Oxfordshire Green Schools Programme has been successful in gaining corporate funding to grow the programme. In year one funding was awarded by Viridor Waste Management to make improvements to the Green Schools bus and towards the Green Schools conference and competition. Npower and Thames Water also provided funding for the conference and competition. In all, £14,000 of external funding was obtained over the first year of the contract. Funding applications are currently being developed for this year's Green Schools Conference and also for the installation of some larger scale on-site composters for schools.

4 Areas Affected

4.1 The Oxfordshire Green Schools programme operates countywide.

5 Effect on Strategic Policies

5.1 The Environmental Education Service supports a number of aims within the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy by promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling. The service also delivers lessons and activities on litter, supporting OWP's local environmental quality agenda.

5.2 The service particularly supports Policy 3 - The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership will help householders and individuals to reduce and manage their wastes through the provision of advice and appropriate services.

5.3 In addition, the service contributes to the Schools Carbon Reduction Strategy overarching outcome that "schools are able to measure, understand and take action to reduce their overall carbon footprint". Specifically it addresses outcome 6: "schools use their own carbon footprint to integrate energy efficiency and climate change into the curriculum" through the lessons on energy efficiency, where energy comes from and general climate change messages.

6 Options or Alternatives

6.1 N/a

7 Recommendations

7.1 That the progress of the Oxfordshire Green Schools programme is noted and that the Groundwork Trust is asked to agree a five month extension to the current contract, taking the agreement through to 31 March 2014.

8 Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 i. To promote waste reduction and energy efficiency initiatives to Oxfordshire schools and communities; helping everyone reduce waste and energy usage.

ii. To work together through the provision of co-ordinated services to maximise the efficient use of resources within Oxfordshire.

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Background Papers: OEWP Agenda item J2, 26 Oct 2013 "Oxfordshire Green Schools end of year report: Groundwork Trust".