

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**NEIGHBOURHOOD, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES
CABINET MEMBER**

ANALYTICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to extend the current contract for analytical and scientific services for a further 12 months.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are as follows:
- The role of the Public and Agricultural Analyst
 - Current arrangements
 - Recent sampling activities

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire Council has a duty to enforce legislation relating to the composition and labelling of food, animal feeding stuffs and fertilisers. This ensures that at every stage of the human food chain, products are safe, meet any minimum prescribed standards are properly described and labelled in accordance with the statutory information.
- 2.2 To ensure food and agriculture samples are properly analysed and reported upon, a public analyst and an agricultural analyst must legally be appointed. There are strict qualification requirements attached to these posts. Consequently, not every analytical laboratory can carry out these roles.
- 2.3 Following an EU competitive tendering exercise in 2006, West Yorkshire Analytical Services, a part of the West Yorkshire Joint Trading Standards Services, were appointed analysts for the council. The contract was for three years with an option to extend for a further twelve months. The three year period ends on 31 May 2009.
- 2.4 Annual sampling plans are drawn up in conjunction with the Public Analyst and the authority also participates in regional and national sampling. Sampling can take place at any point in the supply chain

and includes imported products and ingredients, from farms and manufacturers and also at retail level.

2.5 Examples of samples taken in the last twelve months are:

- Animal Feed - heavy metals, mycotoxins, PCBs and dioxins
- Fresh fruit and vegetables - organic claims and nitrate and pesticide levels
- School meals - compliance with nutritional standards
- Frozen ready meals - salt/sodium levels
- Bacon - water content
- Vegetarian products - Omega 3 claims
- Health supplements - description and claims
- Fish - heavy metals and claims e.g. wild
- Herbs and spices - irradiation
- Takeaway meals - allergens

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 There are two options for consideration:

- i) Option 1 – to renew the existing contract for a further 12 months.
- ii) Option 2 – to re tender the contract this year.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Option 1 would enable us to continue as we are for a further 12 months. The service provided by West Yorkshire Analytical Services has been very good and an excellent working relationship has been established.

4.2 Option 2 will have to be undertaken either this year or next year. Putting the contract out through the EU tendering process is time consuming and in view of current workloads we would prefer to defer this until 2010.

4.3 Option 1 is, for the above reasons, the recommended option.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

There is a discrete budget of £34,500 approximately for scientific services. This covers the cost of sampling equipment/materials, purchasing of samples and the cost of analysis. Sampling programmes are designed to come within the allocated budget. There would appear to be no financial advantage in going out to tender this year.

5.2 Other Implications

There are no staffing, property or IT implications associated with this report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 There are no significant implications associated with this report except to say that "food fraud" can have financial implications for honest businesses and also put consumers at serious risk.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 All parties are content to extend the existing contract for a further 12 month period. The council's procurement section have no issues with a contract extension.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the proposal to appoint staff employed by West Yorkshire Analytical Services as Public and Agricultural Analysts until 31 May 2010.

SERVICE DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

The Angel
Brigg
North Lincolnshire
Author: M Osborne
Date: 2.4.09

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Scientific Services Contract