

ANGUS COUNCIL

CONTRACT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 29 MAY 2001

MEARNS & ANGUS SERVICES LTD - UPDATE

REPORT BY CONTRACT SERVICES MANAGER

ABSTRACT seeks approval for the continued use of Mearns and Angus Services Ltd for the provision of short-term casual labour in the Ground Maintenance and Cleansing sections of Contract Services and for the provision of specific specialist training services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approve the use of Mearns and Angus Services Ltd for the provision of short-term casual labour in the Ground Maintenance and Cleansing sections of Contract Services and that the Contract Services Manager be instructed to negotiate with them for the provision of specific specialist training services as outlined in this report.

2. BACKGROUND

Within Contract Services there is, in general, a need to have suitable persons available to provide short-term cover. This is particularly relevant within the Ground Maintenance and Cleansing sections of the Department.

Such cover is required for a number of reasons:

- to provide cover during absenteeism (sickness and leave)
- to provide cover when an employee leaves - there is an inevitable delay between the time it is known an individual is leaving and a replacement being appointed
- to provide cover during peaks in workload

Report 1145/99 approved the use of Mearns and Angus Services Ltd.

The department's training audit for last year highlighted a number of specialist training needs. After careful analysis Mearns and Angus Services Ltd was identified as being most suitable to meet the department's requirements both from a qualitative and value-for-money perspective. A number of training packages was produced and customised by Mearns and Angus Services Ltd to meet the specific training needs identified particularly by Contract Services' Ground Maintenance section.

3. CURRENT POSITION

Over the last year personnel and equipment from Mearns and Angus Services Ltd have been successfully provided to Contract Services. These included watering machinery to reduce dust problems at Lochhead, agricultural equipment and haulage tractors for project work, and perhaps most beneficially, the provision of six persons for approximately four weeks during March. These people assisted with the backlog of work that arose due to the end of year work programme and the severe weather experienced in February/March this year.

Personnel were made available to the department more or less the day following the request to Mearns and Angus Services Ltd. Though some minor problems were encountered, mainly in administration functions, these were resolved satisfactorily after discussions with Mearns and Angus Services Ltd and relevant procedures and processes have now been put in place to the satisfaction of both parties.

Mearns and Angus Services Ltd started training ground maintenance employees in June 2000 with CITB Training and Assessment for Digger and Dumper operators. To date some 126 employees have received specialist training from Mearns and Angus Services Ltd over 37 training days.

A significant amount of this training was delivered through the Lantra Awards system, which provides nationally recognised certification. The advantage of this approach can be seen in the example where Mearns and Angus Services Ltd, in consultation with Contract Services, developed specific courses to provide both training and certification of competence for small machinery. This approach was a milestone as it was the first occasion that a course developed by a provider, on what is referred to as "course approval", resulted in certificates of competence being awarded rather than certificates of attendance.

The use of Mearns and Angus Services Ltd provided an opportunity to work in partnership with a local company and make use of locally based labour to enhance the services provided by the department. In addition the training courses now provided by Mearns and Angus Services Ltd have been customised to reflect the specific needs of Contract Services thus ensuring that our employees are suitably qualified to meet all necessary statutory requirements and, very importantly, the needs of our customers.

As this has been the first year of this partnership approach it is considered beneficial to continue for at least another year in order that the operation can be comprehensively evaluated.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no overall financial implications arising from this report, as all training and certification costs will be met from existing departmental budget resources.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

6. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Law and Administration and the Acting Director of Personnel have been consulted on the contents of this report.

7. CONCLUSION

The continued use of Mearns and Angus Services Ltd will ensure that a supply of immediately available suitably experienced personnel and equipment is available to Contract Services to provide short-term cover as required. Similarly, the continued use of Mearns and Angus Services Ltd to provide customised specialist training will ensure that the quality and consistency of the training provided will be maintained.

M P Graham
Contract Services Manager
9 May 2001

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.