

Name of Policy/Service/Function. walthamforestnorse Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Tender Submission
Date of Assessment October 2007
Directorate N/A
Names and Roles of the people carrying out the EIA Bid Team: David Evans LBWF and Graham Jermyn NCS
Why is the Equality Impact Assessment being done? To ensure bid submission has considered relevant Equalities issues

1. Introduction and Background

The Council has decided to put its Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Parks Management Services out to tender. A bid for this contract is being submitted by **walthamforestnorse** the “working title” for a joint venture between the LBWF in-house DSOs that currently undertake this work and Norfolk County Services (the trading arm of Norfolk County Council).

Both partners have a range of equalities, HR and employment policies which have been submitted as part of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and approved as meeting the Council’s equality standards.

2. Profile of groups affected as customers and/or staff

The contract is made up universal services affecting everyone who lives, works and visits or travels though the borough. The standard and condition of parks and facilities and equipment are particularly relevant to young people and parents with small children.

Our bid research found that safety issues around broken glass, litter, sex and drugs paraphernalia and personal safety are key concerns for parks users, especially with young children.

The condition of the streets and green spaces, and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces, are all contributors to the fear of crime (as opposed to crime itself) - major public concern especially amongst women, the elderly and vulnerable, and those susceptible to hate crime. The high quality services we intend to provide will address these concerns and provide reassurance to those particularly affected.

Our uniformed presence and objective of our all large on-street and in-park staff cohort acting as “eyes and ears”, provision of picture mobile phones with cameras, and linking with the Police and Council Wardens and Enforcement staff with further contribute to the public reassurance agenda.

From a staff point of view, TUPE rules will apply in the transfer of staff who will move over and enjoy the same conditions as at present. It is a local workforce with a good representation of age, gender and ethnicity and we are committed to this remaining the case in the future which

Both partners have clear anti-discrimination policies as part of their HR and employment policies that cover all the equality issues listed below as far as staff and employment practices are concerned, which were approved as part of our prior PQQ submission.

Age Equality

A high quality public realm has benefits to people of all ages. The specified standard of street cleansing, grounds maintenance and parks management will contribute to that. Mention has been made above of its relevance to specific age groups. We will also be keeping the footways and highways clear of litter and dumps that form trip hazard most dangerous to the less mobile and poorly sighted.

Good sports facilities are particularly important for youth engagement and diversion from anti-social behaviour. They also support the move to encourage young people into sport as part of the health agenda and the build-up to the 2012 Olympics.

Disability equality

The work we will undertake in the cleansing and management of the public realm will improve physical access for people with disabilities in that we will be directly maintaining the infrastructure in parks (playground equipment safety is a key issue for children with disabilities) and reporting repairs needed to footways, highways and parks path defects. We will also be keeping the footways and highways clear of litter and dumps that form trip hazards most dangerous to the less mobile and poorly sighted. Leaf removal will be particularly important as wet leaf accumulations cause a particular hazard to those on crutches or walking with sticks or frames.

Gender equality

The condition of the streets and green spaces, and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces, are all contributors to the fear of crime (as opposed to crime itself) particularly amongst women. The high quality services we intend to provide to tackle this, along with

- uniformed presence
- large on-street and in-park staff cohort acting as “eyes and
- provision of picture mobile phones with cameras, and linking with the Police and Council Wardens and Enforcement staff

will provide additional reassurance to women.

Race equality

There is positive impact for ethnic minorities and new communities as cleaner, safer, more accessible streets and parks with well maintained sports and recreational facilities improve the overall quality and of the neighbourhood. This improves social integration by encouraging all communities share public spaces and recreational facilities. This is particularly relevant for south Waltham Forest in areas of greater density and deprivation, and around transport nodes.

Where race hate graffiti occurs, we will remove small instances as a priority in streets and parks. Where larger instances occur or it is on porous services we will call in the Council's specialist graffiti team.

All our communications with the public will be agreed by the Council's communications unit and will have due regard to languages.

Religion/Beliefs

There is positive impact for ethnic communities as our services improve the quality of neighbourhoods as described above. Faith organisations benefit as part of this process, as streets and parks are cleaner and safer at times of religious festivals and events, or congregations are using those spaces. We will be providing services specifically to a number of such events.

Sexual Orientation

There is positive impact on people of different sexual orientation as cleaner streets and parks improve the quality and safety of the neighbourhood, particularly benefiting gay and lesbian people where there is a higher risk of hate crime. This is often reflected in hate graffiti that we will remove small instances as a priority in streets and parks. Where larger instances occur or it is on porous services we will call in the Council's specialist graffiti team.

3. Equality impact

If appointed to the contract we will be providing highly visible, universal services to all sections of the community. Our proposed service package and approach to delivery impacts positively for minority and vulnerable communities, and the number of people likely to be affected is high. It equally impacts positively on the race, gender and disability equality duties.

Over the course of the contract we would wish to work closely with the Council's equalities unit to monitor and develop our services to ensure they are aligned with the Council's policies and standards (e.g. CRE Equality Levels) and the varying needs and aspirations of Waltham Forest's diverse community.