

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Land and Environmental Services)

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee: 13 June 2007

Subject: Attainment of Charter Mark Accreditation within the Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report advises the Committee of the progress made by numerous sections within the Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services in achieving Charter Mark accreditation.

2. Background

- 2.1** Charter Mark is a government initiative managed by the Cabinet Office to encourage continuous improvement and excellence within public services. It challenges organisations to set and publish standards and thereafter to be accountable to customers for those standards. It also encourages culture change, innovation and service improvement within an organisation and, by achieving Charter Mark, organisations demonstrate that they put their customers first and make service improvements based upon customer needs.
- 2.2** Over 2,500 public sector organisations within the United Kingdom are currently Charter Mark holders, including services provided by Local Government, Courts, Education, Health, Housing Associations, Employment Services, Board of Inland Revenue, Emergency Services, Prisons, Transport Authorities, Museums and Charities.
- 2.3** In 2003 the department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (then Commercial and Technical Services) recognised the benefits to services in having Charter Mark accreditation and a Charter Mark application programme was prepared.

This programme has been amended on several occasions to reflect departmental changes and a copy of the current programme is attached as Appendix A.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** In Autumn 2003 the department embarked upon preparation of a number of services for Charter Mark accreditation. The first two sections identified for assessments (Traffic and Transportation and Leisure Services) undertook detailed self assessments of their service performance against the Charter Mark criteria and began collating examples of evidence required to meet the desired criteria.

Results of the self-assessment exercises indicated that whilst there were some gaps in evidence, it would be possible for the services identified to prepare successful submissions.

- 3.2 Both Traffic and Transportation and Leisure Services achieved Charter Mark accreditation in early 2004 and developed Action Plans to address issues raised during the rigorous assessment process.
- 3.3 Given the department's commitment to the ethos of Charter Mark and the significant service improvements which can result, work continued to prepare other services within the department for Charter Mark Assessment.
- 3.4 The department has recently commenced Year 4 of a 5 year programme and a total of 10 services currently hold Charter Mark accreditation.

These services are:-

- Leisure Services
- Traffic and Transportation
- Waste Services
- Homeless Services
- Property Management
- Grounds Maintenance
- Internal Transport
- Environmental Health
- Events & Halls
- Facilities Management

- 3.5 6 Services are scheduled for assessment during 2007/2008 with a further 4 services making a submission for accreditation in 2008/2009. These services are shown on Appendix A.
- 3.6 Charter Mark accreditation is valid for a 3 year period after which time a full re-assessment must be undertaken. Leisure Services and Traffic and Transportation are presently undergoing reassessment following completion of their 3 year accreditation cycle.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 There are no personnel issues associated with attaining Charter Mark accreditation as service teams prepare their own submissions with guidance and assistance from the departmental strategy team.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of initial assessment for a service is dependant upon the number of days over which the assessment is carried out and there is a further cost for a surveillance visit after 12 months. The average cost for the initial assessment and surveillance visit which covers the full 3 year accreditation cycle is approximately £2,520 (this based upon a 3 day assessment plus surveillance visit).
- 5.2 The costs involved in Charter Mark accreditation are funded from the revenue budgets of the specific services involved in the programme.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There is no requirement for a risk assessment to be carried out in relation to this initiative.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Attainment of Charter Mark accreditation enables services to demonstrate that there are clearly developed and meaningful service standards in place which are regularly reviewed in consultation with customers.

7.2 The process assists services in identifying areas for improvement and highlights examples of best practise. It is considered to be of great benefit to the department and the Council in delivering continuous service improvement reflecting customers' views.

8. Recommendation

8.1 **The Committee is asked to note the success of the department in delivering a successful Charter Mark accreditation programme across a wide range of services**

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Appendix A: HR&ES Charter Mark Programme

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All