

## **25/8/2011 - Amey staff due to return to county council employment**

Further progress on the transition arrangements for the highways employees who are being brought back 'in-house' next year to work for Cumbria County Council from the contractor Amey have been made, which means the majority of the staff will transfer back to the county council in April 2012. The rest of the work will be delivered through framework contracts.

At the last meeting of Cumbria County Council's Cabinet (July 28), members agreed that a wider range of highways services should be included in the transition back to the council. These include staff who deliver day-to-day surface road works, grounds maintenance, street lighting maintenance, fleet management and maintenance, running the Windermere Ferry and Jubilee Bridge in Barrow.

The decision means the highways maintenance carried out in Cumbria will be done directly by Cumbria County Council staff, while the council maintains the flexibility to outsource large or specialist works to third party contractors via framework contracts.

The latest step follows Cabinet's decision in January 2011 not to extend the county council's contract with Amey, which has operated since 2005, but instead allow it to come to its natural end on 31 March 2012. This decision was followed by another one in February 2011 which confirmed that core services including repairing pot holes and other reactive maintenance, gritting roads, and drainage and gully maintenance would be done in-house.

Now, following a further round of operational analysis, members have decided to extend the reach of in-house services. The county council believes that by delivering routine services in-house it will give the council more direct control over its work.

Cumbria County Council is working closely in partnership with Amey to make the necessary arrangements for the transferral of the relevant staff under TUPE regulations. Joint staff engagement events are being planned after the summer holidays to give as much clarity as possible on how the transition will work and who will be eligible for transfer.

Amey may also continue to have a role in highways maintenance design in the county by becoming one of a number of companies competing to deliver the council's framework contracts for larger specialist works.

Cllr Tony Markley, Cumbria County Council's Cabinet member responsible for highways, said:

"We are working closely in partnership with Amey to manage this transition and minimise any uncertainty staff may have in terms of what will happen next year when the contract ends.

"We have already laid out the broad rationale for bringing services back in house, and that is to have more direct control and flexibility over the work our teams do.

"The latest Cabinet decision extends that rationale to a broader range of service areas, while still maintaining the ability to contract out large jobs and specialist tasks to private sector contractors. For us, that's the best of both worlds."

Stephen Munro, Business Director at Amey, said:

"Our aim is to work closely with the council to ensure the transfer of employees from Amey to Cumbria County Council happens as smoothly as possible without impacting on the quality of service we provide or the employees affected.

"We're extremely proud of the work we've done across the region during our 7 year contract, working in partnership throughout with Cumbria County Council, to make significant improvements to the highway network for the benefit of local communities. We hope to leave a legacy of professional, highly skilled and experienced staff with the council to take this work forward in the future."

ENDS

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