

Title of Report:	Property Contracts and Contractors in Schools – survey response	Item 5b
Report to be considered by:	Resource Management Select Committee	
Date of Meeting:	18 May 2010	

Purpose of Report: To receive the results of the school satisfaction survey.

Recommended Action: To note the information provided in considering potential areas for improvement.

Resource Management Select Committee Chairman	
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Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It was resolved at the Resource Management Select Committee on the 19 October 2009 that the school satisfaction survey, conducted in the Autumn of 2009, would be recirculated, prior to the renegotiation of the schools buy back contract, when a larger response rate would hopefully be achieved to help form a greater understanding of issues.

2. Survey results

- 2.1 A total of 81 surveys were sent out and 42 were returned. A response rate of 52%.

- 2.2 The full results of the survey are attached at Appendix A. However, this report highlights the following key points (it should be noted that many of these key points were as reported in the earlier survey):

- (1) Poor communication is highlighted as an issue between Property, Education Assets and contractors, and in turn with schools.
- (2) There is in some cases a lack of understanding of the relationship between the Property Service and the Education Assets Team.
- (3) The high costs associated with the use of the Council's Maintenance Contractor (Kier) is a concern for many schools in comparison to quotes received from elsewhere.
- (4) The performance of the contractor is often reported as being poor and not offering good value for money. Contractually promised timescales are reported as not being met as well as a number of delays, despite, in some cases, extensive progress chasing.
- (5) The time taken to receive invoices and the fact they are often paid centrally and not seen by the school concerned, cause difficulties for schools with budgeting.
- (6) Those that did not buy into services considered that they were able to manage their needs themselves and at a lower cost and felt that they would have a greater control. They also indicated that they had work programmes and sufficient expertise in place to ensure statutory requirements can be met.
- (7) Positive comments mostly relate to individual members of staff.

3. Actions being undertaken

- 3.1 It was reported at the meeting in October that the previous survey results largely reflected the issues that arose in the Service Review of Property Services. An action plan was produced in response to the review and the Head of Property and Public Protection is of the view that the action plan also reflects the actions needed

to address the responses to the original survey. The latest action plan is attached at Appendix B to this report.

- 3.2 Some specific investigation is needed by officers in order to respond to the specific problems that have been reported and to ensure measures are set in place to avoid any reoccurrences.
- 3.3 In some cases the problems reported are not recent and accordingly may not reflect the current service provision. However, the information may assist in identifying where improvements have been made and whether they have been effective.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Select Committee is asked to note the information provided in considering potential areas for improvement.

Appendices

Appendix A – Survey results

Appendix B – Latest Action Plan following the Service Review of Property Services

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: West Berkshire Schools

Officers Consulted: Head of Property & Public Protection, Education Assets Manager and Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager