

Bringing the Tree Surgery Team back in house.

Southampton City Council (SCC)

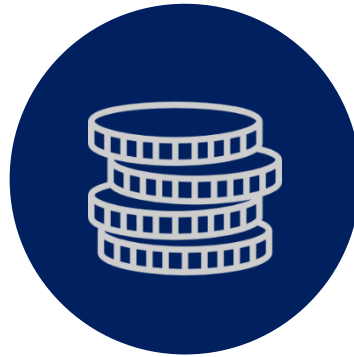


Sarah Kiss & (Mr) Loren (Lozz) Scott



Why?

A brief history of the tree surgery contract in Southampton....



Tipping points

Large & increasing
value of works not
done

Long list of awkward
sites left too long

Poor work site control –
e.g. on highways

Fraudulent claims for
payment

Repeated failures to
provide evidence of
qualifications

Growing frustration at
poor
communication/results

But the final straw...



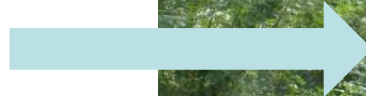
Unfinished works

Signed off as complete and payment claimed

**Specification: Fell to near
ground level**

Signing off emergency works not completed

This burn cavity on an oak
on a bank,
over a busy path
in a park...



Decision Time



- Looked at options
- Joined county (Hampshire) supply framework
- Emergency measures in place to manage emergency and urgent work only
- Called in the County auditors
- Audited over 200 jobs to assess scale of problem

Factors in favour of in house

**City centre yard
from which to
work**

**Direct
employment**

**Internal
communication
should be
better**

**Fleet service to
manage
vehicles**

**Labour party in
control of SCC**

**Management
very arb-aware
and supportive**

Factors against bringing in house

Very little support in practical terms

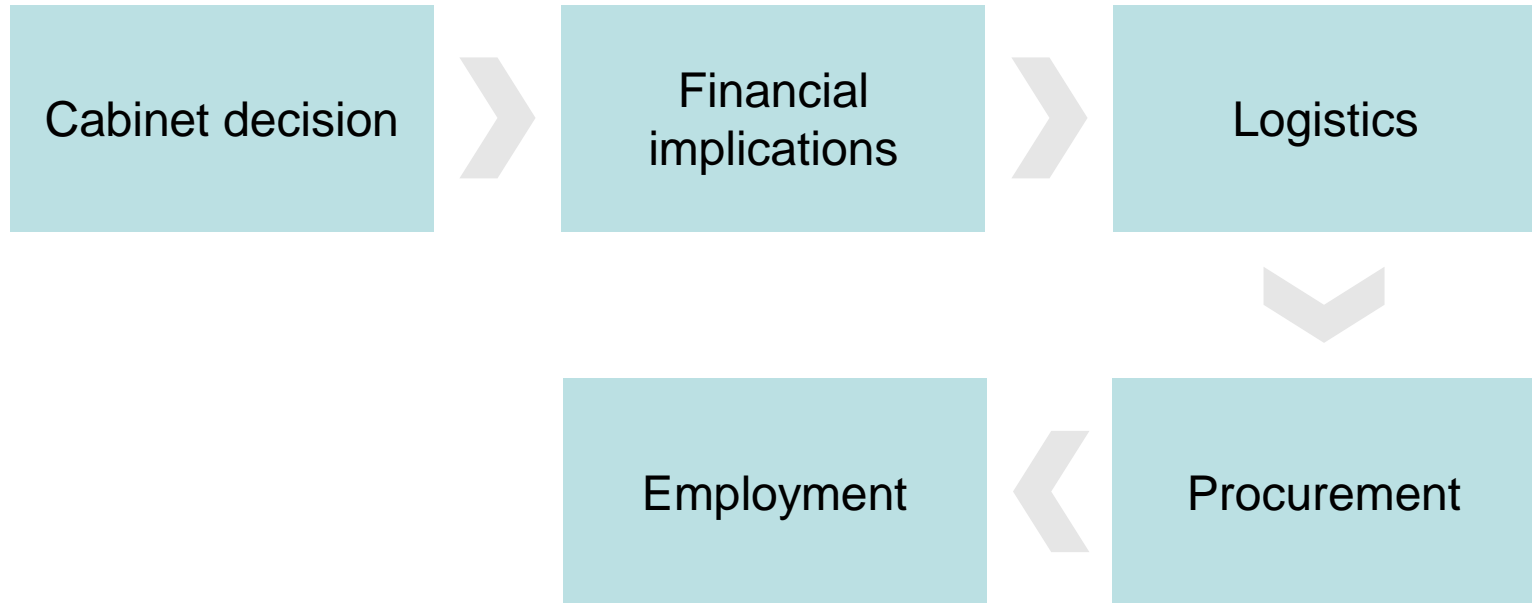
Recent restructure = redundancies

Capital expenditure in current climate

Lack of capacity in team to manage process

‘Swimming against the tide’

Process in brief...



Pitfalls



- Decision process
- No additional resource
- Huge amount of work
- Procurement
- TUPE
- Procurement
- Getting timings to match
- Procurement

Proposal



- Set up new team of 10: 3 x 3 + supervisor
- Catch up backlog year 1
- Maintain/build internal relationships
- Yr 2 start 'external' trading (non-domestic)
- Share skills between inspectors/surgeons

The Story one year on.....

Started Oct
2016 with two
teams

Workshop

Procurement
= no trucks

Third team
started Feb
2017

Better working
relationships

Points to note

- Challenge of recruiting good team
- Starting with a varied skill base – huge training input
- Costs easily escalate – e.g. traffic management, grading levels
- Co-ordination of larger sites
- Out of hours



Upside

91% more tree work done by value

- 2016-17 average of £23.4K per month (previously £15K average)
- Year to date (7 months) £200, 385
- On track for £343K delivered this year
- Met an optimistic £100K income target

Improving skill set within team

- Moved one tree surgeon to tree officer role
- Opportunities for others to develop

Still on the upside

- Bringing other skills **in house** – stump grinding/planting
- Registering for Arb Association **approved contractor**
- Greater **sense of ownership** of the job
- Much better **public response**
- Setting **higher standards** of working practice

Adaptable to any challenge

Case study: Cobden pine





Was it worth it?

Hell, yeah.

Thank you