

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Grounds Maintenance Contract Review – Response to Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE)

KLOE 1 – Grounds Maintenance Contract

The report states that the Grounds Maintenance contract was let from March 2016 to September 2026 with a possible five year extension.

Please provide more details on the key terms of the Grounds Maintenance contract, including the terms of the outcome/output specification.

The contract specification is attached with the Quality Standards for Grass cutting, Shrub and Hedge Maintenance.

Please explain how the contract is structured to deliver a more flexible approach to grass cutting.

The contract is structured to allow flexibility to the service through not having a one size fits all approach. The Contract Sum has been agreed to cover all aspects of grounds maintenance to Wokingham Borough Council areas. For example as opposed to having 8 cuts per year across all grass areas we can cut it when it is required. Through dry periods where grass cutting isn't appropriate, we can shift the resource available to different work or increase grass cutting when this is required. Whilst the service provider may not be able to cut all areas on a fortnightly basis during the growing season, they can make the decision whether to put more resource into the contract to achieve the Quality Standards expected or be penalised for not achieving this.

Over the course of the contract we know that Wokingham Borough will change and grow over this time and that we will need a contract that can be managed to reflect this. The current contract will allow us to take on management of new areas and transfer assets to parish and towns.

In relation to the 2014 public consultation, please provide a summary of the consultation process and a copy of the consultation outcomes report/decision sheet which sets out the rationale for moving to an outcome/output specification.

See attached consultation report.

Please explain how the £40k performance bonus is awarded and how it is linked to the performance management of the contract.

The performance bonus is broken down between the various KPIs & MPIs which have a particular weighting to them. If a KPI is achieved, e.g. Play area inspections completed to standard for the contract year, the Service Provider will receive an incentive payment. If performance of a KPI has deteriorated, the Service Provider will not receive the incentive payment and will be asked to "pay back" the KPI value into the service. E.g. if

sports user satisfaction falls in comparison to the previous year, the Service Provider would need to invest the sum into sports facilities or maintenance.

Please explain how the contract is structured to enable input variations to ensure that the agreed outputs/outcomes are met.

Whilst we have agreed the output to be achieved, we expect the service provider to have a clear understanding of the resource required and put together a schedule of an input basis in order to achieve this. Moving forwards we will work with Tivoli to agree an annual/seasonal programme of work, aspects of which could be made available to the public.

KLOE 2 – Stakeholder Engagement

The report outlines six priorities for the development of the contract:

- Working in partnership with a problem-solving approach; *Support from Tivoli for pitch management at Laurel Park where an agronomist was made available free of charge to provide recommendations for onward maintenance and advise the football club of how we can keep this sustainable.*
- Providing sustainable and minimal costs for operational activity and offering flexibility to maintenance regimes; *We have been able to shift resource to introduce long grass regimes and take on management of new sites using our existing resource.*
- Improving customer and user satisfaction; *Our supervisors are able to update residents direct using our CRM Dynamics system and work with us to meet residents and stakeholders to resolve issues raised. This is something we would like to work to improve using technology which should be made available as part of the 21st Century Council Programme.*
- Improving the service for priority identified areas over the course of the contract, by adjusting existing resources; *Through the flexibility of the contract we have been able to assign a dedicated play area grass cutting team. Over the course of the contract this is something that needs to be looked into in more detail to make sure that how we go about assigning resource is communicated to the public.*
- Improving biodiversity-based maintenance regimes; *We have introduced a number of long grass and wildflower areas which we intend to increase over the course of the contract provided we can do this in a way which is effectively communicated.*
- Achieving savings and generate new income streams over the course of the contract. *We are currently reviewing how income streams are generated with a focus on the resource within the contract available.*

KLOE 3 – Market Engagement

The report refers to the joint tender process with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and the substantial variation in the specification for each borough.

Please explain the contract specification variations between WBC and RBWM.
We do not hold a copy of the RBWM specification to outline this.

Please provide details of any working relationship between the two boroughs in relation to the management of the grounds maintenance contracts.

There has been a shared Tivoli Contract Manager in place for both RBWM & WBC with both Council's having dedicated Supervisors.

Please provide details of any feedback on the operation of the grounds maintenance contract at RBWM including the level of complaints received in May/June 2018.

Verbal feedback to follow.

KLOE 4 – Scope of Tendered Services

The report refers to the customer relationship management of the contract using the CRM Dynamics system to action and respond to resident reports.

Please provide more details of the operation of the CRM Dynamics system, including involvement of the contractor and examples of responses provided to residents.

Our contractors have a dedicated Dashboard of reports received direct from our Customer Services Team. This should specify details of the report and its location. There is scope for our contractors to provide the following details:

- *Investigation date*
- *Whether investigation was postponed*
- *Investigation outcome*
 - *No work required*
 - *Work Scheduled*
 - *Work completed*
 - *Postponed*
- *Date work scheduled*
- *Date work completed*

Depending on the customer's request, they may receive a text or email with an automated response.

KLOE 5 – Performance Management

The report refers to 10 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and 9 Management Performance Indicators (MPIs).

Please provide performance management data for each of the KPIs and MPIs for 2016/17, 2017/18 and the first quarter of 2018/19.

See previous report – further information to be supplied.

The report gives details of areas where there has been good performance including partnership working, community engagement, staff training and biodiversity.

Please provide evidence of good performance in these areas.

Partnership Working – attendance at onsite meetings with football clubs, resident groups and Parish/Town clerks.

Community engagement – Bulb donation and planting at St Crispins School with the Wokingham Rotary club, tree & shrub planting for community projects.

Staff training – 400 hours staff training including Tree inspection training, first aid and chainsaw training amongst others.

Biodiversity – assistance with long grass regime and attendance with resident groups.

The report also states that improvement has been required for justified complaints and sports surfacing, with some KPIs out of scope or under development.

Please explain the process for delivering improvements in relation to justified complaints and sports surfacing.

This can vary from one location to another by working in partnership with Tivoli and relevant stakeholders to deliver improvements.

Please explain the reference to KPIs out of scope or under development.

KPIs out of scope have primarily been down to IT support not yet being in place either for CRM Dynamics in the first year or GIS mapping access which is currently being upgraded.

Please provide details of benchmarking undertaken in relation to the service and lessons learnt from best practice in other parts of the country.

As part of the tender process a consultant was brought in to assist with the writing of the contract and a shadow bid was carried out to gauge whether the Quality Standards within the Specification were achievable for the budget available. The move to output based contract models is relatively new, but we are consistently seeing a change in perception and policy in relation to biodiversity which includes; National Pollinator Strategy, UK Biodiversity Action Plan, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Duty for Public Authorities.

KLOE 6 – Contract Performance, Customer Feedback and Complaints

The report states that, in the current contract year, there has been a failure in service delivery relating to grass cutting which has resulted in a number of complaints registered on the CRM Dynamics system.

Please explain the process for identifying the failure in service delivery and the steps taken to address this issue with the contractor.

The main method of identifying a failure in service is using the CRM Dynamics System where we can record customer reports which have not been responded to within an agreed timescale. Aside from this residents may also contact the council directly to chase reports already logged. Once these are highlighted Council Officers liaise with contract supervisors to resolve the issue or obtain further information to update the resident. Any trends in these reports are raised at monthly contract meetings.

Please provide details of the number, type and geographical location of complaints received in the first quarter of 2018/19 compared to 2016/17 and 2017/18.

<i>Quarter 1 Justified Complaints</i>	<i>16/17</i>	<i>17/18</i>	<i>18/19</i>
<i>Grass</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>258</i>
<i>Hedge Copse, shrub</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>25</i>

Please explain how the service issues were communicated to residents, Town and Parish Councils, community groups and other stakeholders. *We have worked with our Communications team to get information out to the public. With good relationships already in place with community groups, we have been able to use this method to keep interested parties updated. There is scope to improve our communication with residents by making more information available online such as grass cutting dates.*

KLOE 7 – Next Steps

The report states WBC is currently reviewing the available resources on this contract to make sure that they are appropriate to deliver the required standard.

Please explain how the Council is working with the contractor and the level of additional resources identified in order to achieve the agreed standards.

Tivoli have arranged for some pieces of work such as tractor work and rotorvating to be sub-contracted out to approved suppliers, to make more staff available for grass cutting. By reviewing the current KPIs we can amend the weighting of these to shift the focus on to areas where we would like to see an improvement such as grass cutting.

The report identifies further areas where WBC is seeking to work with the contractor:

- Looking at introducing some online grass cutting information to provide residents with clear expectations; *The raw data is available to provide residents with a window for when to expect their grass to be cut.*
- Improve customer engagement using the CRM Dynamics system, keeping residents updated on the progress of their reports; *Further support and training is required for Tivoli so residents can be advised how their report is progressing.*
- Agree the resource and machinery level for the current contract to make sure that the service provided is sustainable; *This is ongoing as additions/changes to long grass areas will impact on this which will need to be agreed prior to grass cutting commencing in 2019.*
- Work to introduce more areas of long grass and wildflowers at appropriate locations. *Basic maps have been created by Council Officers to outline proposed long grass areas. Proposed wildflower sites for this contract year have been agreed.*

Please give details of progress in each of these areas.

Please explain how the Council's 21st Century Council programme is being utilised to deliver improvements in communication, engagement, complaints handling and the overall customer experience.

With improvements in technology available to contractors, Council Officers and residents it should be easier to log where issues have been highlighted, prevent duplicated reports and provide clear responses to residents helping to manage expectations and improve the customer experience.

Please explain how the development of Locality services will deliver improved engagement and performance management of the contract.

With the development of Locality Services this should provide more people “on the ground” to monitor the contract and get feedback from the local community to help shape their local spaces.

Please explain the consultation process to be used for service changes such as the introduction of additional long grass areas.

The consultation “Maintaining our open green spaces” consisted of an online survey See attached.