

TITLE	Review of the Grounds Maintenance Service
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 21 November 2018
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Overview and Scrutiny is one of the checks and balances which ensure that the Council and its partners make and implement effective decisions. It is a key element in the decision making process which ensures transparency and accountability.

The grounds maintenance service aims to improve quality of life by maintaining quality parks, play areas and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity across the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) consider the final draft of the Overview and Scrutiny report on the Grounds Maintenance Service and approve the final version for submission to the Executive in January 2019;
- b) comment on the process used to carry out the Scrutiny review and any implications for the future work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

At its meetings on 1 August, 19 September and 17 October 2018, the Committee considered evidence relating to the performance of the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract. In order to provide additional evidence for the Committee, Officers published a Call for Evidence via print and social media.

Having considered the written and verbal evidence, the Committee is now asked to confirm its final report for submission to the Executive in January 2019.

Background

At its meeting on 1 August 2018, the Committee commenced a review of the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract. The Committee agree the following Terms of Reference for the review:

- a) To understand the key terms of the Council's grounds maintenance contract with Tivoli Group Ltd (who took over this year, having bought out ISS Facilities Services).
- b) To understand the operation of the joint management arrangements between Tivoli, WBC and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- c) In relation to grass cutting, to understand the delivery of the service in terms of frequencies, timings, local priorities, complaints handling and communication with stakeholders.
- d) To understand how the grounds maintenance service works with key partners such as Town and Parish Councils and local community groups.
- e) To consider performance management of the grounds maintenance contract in relation to performance indicators, targets, penalties, monitoring, financial control and reporting to Members.
- f) To consider the financial elements of the grounds maintenance contract within the context of the financial challenges facing the Council.
- g) To understand how other Council's deliver grounds maintenance services and consider examples of best practice.
- h) To consider the potential for service improvements, improved communications and partnership working within the context of the challenges facing the Council.

The Committee considered written and verbal evidence on the grounds maintenance service at its meetings on 19 September and 17 October 2018, following which a report was prepared for the Committee's consideration (attached).

Following approval by the Committee the report will be submitted to the Council's Executive on 31 January 2019.

The Committee has also agreed to monitor progress relating to the service by receiving further reports at its meetings in February and October 2019.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NA	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NA	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NA	NA	NA

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

To be considered as part of the discussions.

Cross-Council Implications

Overview and Scrutiny impacts on all Council services and the work of key partners.

List of Background Papers

Reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 1 August, 19 September and 17 October 2018.

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