

## Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)

### Recommendation Monitoring: Grass Cutting Inquiry (2005)

| Recommendation   | Update  | Status         |
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| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b></p> <p><b>That the senior project officer, the project manager and project boards do not disband until the project board is satisfied that the contract or new service arrangements are established and running satisfactorily, in order to provide a co-ordinating body dealing with issues, risks and contingencies up to, and beyond, the start of the contract or the establishment of new service delivery arrangements.</b></p> | <p>A grounds Maintenance Contract Review Board has been established and will continue to operate until any future contracts are awarded, set up and operating.</p>  | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 2</b></p> <p><b>That CMT discuss the monitoring arrangements for this contract to ensure that there is agreement on where this function should lie.</b></p>   | <p>The responsibility for monitoring the Grounds Maintenance Contract has been clearly defined and agreed. Streetscene Services monitor the highways grass verges, shrub beds on behalf of Highways Services.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 3</b></p> <p><b>That projects involved in procuring services ensure that specifications and any proposed variations are costed simultaneously to prevent the need for the re-submission of tenders.</b></p>  | <p>Each ALMO is responsible for monitoring all services within their respective areas.</p> <p>City Services accepted the recommendation and will ensure that the approach is adopted in the future Grounds Maintenance Contract specification.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p>  |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 4</b></p> <p><b>That any future Streetscene Grounds Maintenance contracts are awarded well ahead of the growing season, so as to ensure the Contractor has sufficient time to mobilise.</b></p>  | <p>City Services supports the recommendation and will ensure that the approach is adopted in all future contracts.</p>   | <p>Rough cut, sight line, 'In Bloom' routes and motorway junction work is currently out to tender. The procurement timetable will ensure contract award 3 months ahead of grass cutting season.</p>                     |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 5</b></p> <p><b>That risk assessments for seasonal contracts should identify a cut off point by which time the contract should be awarded for the effective delivery of the service. Where this is unachievable, the award should be deferred.</b></p> | <p>City Services accepts the recommendation and will ensure that in future an evaluation of timelines of the award process is included in the risk management matrix.</p>  | <p>The Project Board has established a risk register for both the interim contract and extending the review date of existing contract. The principle will be used when the main Grounds Maintenance is re-tendered.</p> |

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| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 6</b></p> <p><b>That a mechanism is established to identify high and low risk projects and to formalise the necessary reporting of issues to CMT.</b></p>  | <p>City Services accepts this recommendation.</p>  | <p>The process has been agreed with CPU and high risk issues have been reported to CMT e.g. the decision to extend the contract review date.</p>   |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 7</b></p> <p><b>We recommend that training takes place or information is disseminated to ensure that the term ‘letter of intent’ and other specialist procurement terminology is used correctly</b></p>  | <p>City Services accepts this recommendation.</p>  | <p>Representatives from CPU are now key members of the Grounds Maintenance Contract Review Board and the Grounds Maintenance Contract Review Team to ensure procedures are adhered to and terminology is understood.</p>   |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 8</b></p> <p><b>That the Corporate Procurement Unit develop and establish the improvement measures identified as part of the review of the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance project, particularly regarding the roles and responsibilities and project management tools in place, the reporting process, the remit of the project board, costing the specification and the time</b></p> | <p>City Services supports this recommendation.</p> | <p>Representatives from CPU are now key members of the Grounds Maintenance Contract Review Board and the Grounds Maintenance Contract Review Team to ensure procedures are adhered to and terminology is understood.</p> <p>All Board and Review Team minutes are recorded as well as Client/Contractor Operational and performance review meetings.</p> |

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| <p>allocated to the stages of procurement. We also recommend procedures are introduced to ensure all meetings throughout the process are minuted.</p>  |   |  |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 9</b></p> <p>That as part of the project management process for high profile or high risk contracts or new service delivery arrangements adequate contingency plans are put in place.</p>   | <p>City Services supports this recommendation and will ensure that the approach is adopted in all future contracts.</p>   | <p>The risk assessment process has been used to identify the issue with the interim contract.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 10</b></p> <p>That where a high profile project is experiencing any difficulties or risks that might influence the awarding of a contract or the delivery of new service arrangements, the relevant Executive Board Member is briefed by the chair of the project board at the earliest possible stage. To complement this we recommend that guidelines are drawn up outlining the appropriate stages</p> | <p>The Executive Member has a regular (4 weekly) briefing session with Streetscene Officers and an update about the grounds maintenance contract is given there. In addition the Executive Member is kept informed and involved with any major issues relating to the Grounds Maintenance Contract.</p> | <p>The Grounds Maintenance Contract was also subject to Scrutiny Board enquiry in 2006.</p>                      |

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| <p>at which Members should be briefed.</p>   |  |  |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 11</b></p> <p>That the current risk assessment methodology is reviewed to ensure that issues identified in this inquiry are incorporated and to ensure that a rolling risk register is always adopted for projects.</p>   | <p>The corporate risk assessment and risk register methodology is adhered to.</p>  | <p>Ongoing</p>   |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 12</b></p> <p>That the risk assessment process ensures that the option of a phased approach to a contract is considered.</p>  | <p>City Services accepts the recommendation.</p>   | <p>The current risk register reflects this e.g. Interim Contract demonstrates phased approach.</p> |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 13</b></p> <p>That work continues on the database held by Parks and Countryside to ensure that data is up to date and correctly attributed. We also recommend that where a similar contract is let in the future issues around data are resolved and checked before the specification is agreed and is given to the</p> | <p>Streetscene Services has now transferred all of the grounds maintenance information from Parks &amp; Countryside onto its own independent GIS system.</p> | <p>This system is now maintained and updated by Streetscene Services.</p>                          |

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| <p><b>Contractor / service deliverer in a usable form.</b></p>  |  |  |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 14</b></p> <p><b>We recommend that City Services and Parks and Countryside work alongside Ward Members in identifying privately owned land erroneously on the cutting schedule and that the owners are contacted to take over maintenance. We also recommend that this exercise also identifies land which should be on the schedule and is currently not being cut.</b></p> | <p>Streetscene Services has now transferred all of the grounds maintenance information from Parks &amp; Countryside onto its own independent GIS system.</p> | <p>This system is now maintained and updated by Streetscene Services.</p>  |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 15</b></p> <p><b>We recommend that City Services establishes what is required for the 'In Bloom' routes and ensures that appropriate arrangements are made for next year.</b></p>  | <p>The 'In Bloom' routes have been maintained by a sub contractor for the past 2 seasons.</p>  | <p>The 'In Bloom' work has been varied out of the main contract and currently out to tender as part of an interim contract. The specification for In Bloom work has been enhanced.</p> |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 16</b></p> <p><b>That City Services, as the monitoring department,</b></p>   | <p>City Services continues to provide the Contract Administration function for the</p>   | <p>City Services provides the Contract Administration function for the main</p>  |

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| <p><b>continues to closely monitor the performance of the Contractor particularly with regard to shrub maintenance and verge maintenance and any contingencies being developed by both the Council and the Contractor for the start of the next cutting season.</b></p>   | <p>Grounds Maintenance Contract.</p>  | <p>contract and will also provide it for the interim contract. Service monitoring remains with the ALMO's and Streetscene.</p> <p>See Recommendation 2.</p>   |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 17</b></p> <p><b>That City Services (in consultation with the Executive Board Member) consider the possibility of a winter cut this year and an earlier Spring cut next year and that where appropriate this is included within the budget discussions, whilst ensuring that the specification has been fully met.</b></p> | <p>The principle of additional winter cuts has been agreed and included in budgets i.e. Highways Services and ALMO's.</p> | <p>The delivery of the additional cuts is decided year on year in consultation with the ALMO's, Highways Services and the Contractor. Seasonal variations determine the most appropriate timing and frequency of the additional cuts.</p> |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 18</b></p> <p><b>That induction arrangements are regarded as a priority when handing over a service to a new delivering body, internally or externally to the Council.</b></p>   | <p>City Services accepts this recommendation and will ensure that it is fully implemented in future contracts.</p>        | <p>Ongoing</p>  |
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| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 19</b></p> <p><b>That City Services review the arrangements around weed control to ensure that any issues are resolved for next year.</b></p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 20</b></p> <p><b>That City Services develop and arrangement with the Contractor to allow direct access for Ward Members to the service provider, whilst continuing the appropriate performance monitoring.</b></p> | <p>The management of the weed spraying contract remains with Parks &amp; Countryside.</p>  | <p>A new contract was awarded in June 2007 and City Services have been kept updated.</p>   |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 20</b></p> <p><b>That City Services develop and arrangement with the Contractor to allow direct access for Ward Members to the service provider, whilst continuing the appropriate performance monitoring.</b></p>  | <p>City Services are the Contract Administrators for the Grounds Maintenance Contract and continue to provide an effective interface between Elected Members and the contractor.</p> | <p>This arrangement appears to work effectively. The Contractor is actively encouraged to attend council/public meetings along with City Services Officers to provide information.</p> |