



Wycombe green space contract re-tender

Purpose

Update report to High Wycombe Town Committee on the contract re-tender for the ground's maintenance contract for the Wycombe area.

For information

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Background

The existing grounds maintenance contract for the Wycombe area commenced in January 2013 initially for 5 years with a two-year extension to December 2019. The contract is managed within Neighbourhood Services and the main contract manager is Andy Sherwood.

The contract was awarded to Quadron Services Ltd who subsequently became Idverde.

The contract is based on an 'output' specification with the contractor responsible for maintaining green spaces to a certain standard rather than using a frequency-based approach. The green spaces contract includes the following services;

- 1) Grass cutting, litter clearance, and maintenance of horticultural features in parks and open spaces;
- 2) Sports pitch maintenance and hire, including changing room and toilet management;
- 3) Grave digging;
- 4) Allotment management.

As a reminder the routine works on the 4 main sites for High Wycombe Town Committee are Booker, Shelley (QE2), Totteridge and All Saints plus Allotments.

The original intention as approved by Wycombe District Council in March 2019 was to re-tender the contract to run from 2020-2024 with an option to extend for 4 years

However, with the formation of the new Unitary authority it was decided to "roll" the existing contract on for a further 2 years to December 2021.

The Wycombe grounds maintenance contract is now legally incapable of further extension.

New Contract

The formation of a new unitary authority in April 2020 has brought with it potential opportunities for future alignment of services across the previous four district areas and there may also be options for integration with some ex-county council functions in the future.

The Council is now looking to procure an initial three-year term contract for the Wycombe area, with the new contract starting from 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2024, with options of two separate extension periods of 12 months each, with a break clause between the initial term and the extensions. This will allow future opportunities to be explored to potentially re-let a much larger green spaces contract across the county and rationalise provision with the existing ex Chiltern & South Bucks grounds contract due to expire in 2024.

This approach, endorsed by the Cabinet Member for Sport and Leisure, provides the new service on a virtual like for like basis to the existing service, with a couple of exceptions. The

current specification includes certain features which make the contract less attractive to the ground's maintenance contract market, namely:

- absence of indexation provision
- Inclusion of "hard" facility management, repair of buildings including changing rooms and toilet blocks.

Retendering will allow the specification to be amended with these items addressed to ensure it appeals widely to specialist grounds maintenance contractors, without them having to price in upfront the risk of inflation uncertainty or core works for which they have little experience of delivering.

As previously requested by the High Wycombe Town Committee, the option for Sunday burials will also be priced in the tender to allow further discussions on this option to take place.

Recent soft market testing has shown that there will be a good level of interest in the contract and with the minor changes made to the specification described above, should be competitively priced to what is paid now.

Next Steps

The council will be starting the procurement exercise by advertising the contract on the procurement portal during week commencing 15th March, receiving competitive tender submissions in June, seeking approval to award in August and appointment of the new contractor in September to allow enough time for mobilisation.

A further update will be provided to the committee prior to September, once committee dates are announced on the outcome of the procurement process and whether there are any changes expected in terms of costs and decisions on future burial provisions.

For further information on the procurement or other grounds maintenance issues the lead officer is Andy Sherwood who many of the committee members will know well.