

Director of Economy, Planning and Place	Ref No: OKD1(17/18)
December 2017	Key Decision: Yes
Grounds Maintenance Contract	Part I
Report by Principal Manager Facilities Management	Electoral Divisions: All

Summary

This report recommends an extension of the corporate grounds maintenance contract to ensure the continuity of all the grounds maintenance services to the corporate estate and schools. This being in accordance with the Bernard Williams Associates Ltd (BWA) review of the Facilities Management structure and subsequent approved recommendations dated May 2017.

Recommendation

That the G. Burley & Sons Ltd framework contract is extended from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The grounds maintenance (GM) contract ensures the landscaping and grounds across the occupied corporate estate (c175 locations) are appropriately maintained. The core tasks are the upkeep of boundary lines including hedges and fences, grass cutting, flower bed and shrub maintenance as well as the removal of invasive plants. In addition the current contract allows for the pollarding or removal of unsafe trees from the corporate and schools estate.
- 1.2 The existing contract commenced for an initial period of 3 years from 1 January 2013 with extensions, subject to performance, for a further four years. An initial extension was approved in December 2015 for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017.
- 1.3 The annual value of the contract is:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Corporate Estate: | £145,000 |
| Schools: | £432,000 |
| Total | £577,000 |

Total value of the proposed contract extension for the 15 month period: c£721k.

It is noted that expenditure is not linear throughout the year due to the seasonal nature of the works. However during the winter months greater attention is given to general clearance and there is normally an increased level of reactive tree work. This, along with an increased duration of the growing season provides a more consistent work flow.

- 1.4 The contract is open to schools and academies as well as other public sector organisations in West and East Sussex and Brighton. There are c120 schools and academies that purchase GM services through this contract. The County Council's Facilities Management (FM) Team generates an income from schools to manage this service of c£48k per annum.
- 1.5 If this work is not carried out, the external grounds areas of our buildings will quickly become overgrown, boundaries will become indistinct and will look unkempt and could become unsafe to building users and the public. There are also management regimes in place to prevent and eradicate the invasive species, Japanese Knotweed.
- 1.6 During 2015/16 decisions were taken in response to financial shortfalls to reduce the scope of many GM activities, the main element was to delete all requirements for box cutting of grassed areas. Areas that required this higher standard of grass cutting for ceremonial purposes, i.e. weddings at Edes House, were separately funded from the service's income streams.
- 1.7 The extension to 31 March 2019 is co-terminus with the main FM engineering term maintenance contract currently with SSE Contracting Ltd. A procurement process, as identified within the BWA Report and subsequently approved structure, has commenced to consider options for a variety of service delivery contract options that could include GM options as part of a more comprehensive facilities management solution.
- 1.8 This GM extension provides continuity of these essential services whilst a more holistic assessment of all the FM term contracts is undertaken. If it is deemed that a separate GM contract is appropriate the existing contract can be further extended until 31 December 2020. Any such extension could include reasonable clauses to ensure integration with any new technical helpdesk or FM electronic data management operating systems.
- 1.9 There are quarterly contract review meetings with Burleys with confirmation received that an extension would be acceptable. Due to the remaining contract period there are limited opportunities and incentives for the contractor to introduce longer term investment. However the implementation by Burleys, on a trial basis, of handheld devices to enable real-time performance monitoring is being progressed.
- 1.10 The contractor will need to renegotiate certain costs relating to any additional costs incurred throughout the duration of the contract extension relating to living and minimum wage obligations. It has agreed to work with the County Council to find the best way that this can be expedited to mutual benefit and at least cost.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is to extend the G. Burley & Sons Ltd framework contract from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2019. This extension period option was included within the original tender. The annual contract value for the corporate estate is c£145k with schools who opt in having a value of £432k. The total annual value is c£577k with the extension period total value being c£721k.

3. Resources

- 3.1 There are no additional or revised resource implications arising from this extension. The Grounds Maintenance Officer will continue to manage the contract for all of the corporate estate and provide a technical support function for those schools and academies that subscribe to the FM Service Level Agreement.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

- 4.1 There has been no consultation with staff to date as no proposals have been made to amend service delivery that will impact on staff. Should this position change during the duration of this contract extension, full consultation with personnel will be implemented before the proposed changes are implemented.
- 4.2 A detailed stakeholder and staff engagement process will be undertaken as part of the wider FM contract procurement activities during 2018.
- 4.3 The Director of Finance, Performance and Procurement has been consulted and supports the proposal.

5. Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 The proactive management of external grounds for all occupied properties forms part of a routine best practice compliance activity. If this work is not carried out, the external grounds areas of our buildings will quickly become overgrown, boundaries will become indistinct and will look unkempt and could become unsafe to building users and the public. This will quickly convey a negative reputational image throughout the occupied corporate estate.
- 5.2 There are also requirements to identify and implement management regimes to eradicate invasive plant species, including Japanese Knotweed that has been identified in several locations.

6. Other Options Considered

- 6.1 The 'do nothing' option is not considered viable for the reasons identified in Paragraphs 1.1, 1.5, 5.1 & 5.2.
- 6.2 Alternative national frameworks were considered as an alternative for this 15 month extension period. However the BWA Ltd review identified that the current GM costs were significantly below both public and private sector

benchmarks, with alternative contracts providing an increased cost base with no evident gain in service quality. With consideration to those staff eligible under TUPE and the resulting disruption for a relatively short contract period an alternative framework is not considered viable.

7. Equality Duty

7.1 No implications are identified as a result of the contract extension.

8. Social Value

8.1 No implications are identified as a result of the contract extension.

9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

9.1 No implications are identified as a result of the contract extension.

10. Human Rights Implications

10.1 No implications are identified as a result of the contract extension.

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Background Papers:

None