

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH

Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleansing Contract Review Working Group **Notes**

19th July 2022 at 6pm – Held physically at The Reading Rooms and virtually via Zoom link

Present:

Cllr J Ballman
Cllr M Lucas – Chair
Cllr D Patey – Online
Cllr J Yeowell – Online

A Briggs - CSNPC Estates – Clerk
A Reeves - CSNPC Manager

Meeting started @ 7pm.

Cllr J Ballman asked Cllr M Lucas whether he would continue to Chair the working group.

Cllr M Lucas Agreed.

Item 1

A Briggs presented the Terms of Reference for the Working Group, drafted in 2021, and asked for comments.

Cllr J Ballman asked for clarification on metrics in place to enable evaluation of the contract and whether they were set by as an industry standard.

The Estates Manager explained the contract specification outlines the standards that should be met with each specific working task. Examples were provided.

It was further advised, that the contract is regularly reviewed through the quality management system (PQMS), as to determine whether the outlined specification is being met by the contractor.

Conversation took place about the grounds team's workload during the current heat wave.

A Reeves explained there was no kite mark for grounds standards. However, there are acknowledged specifications as to what length the grass should be cut etc. These are outlined within the contract documents.



A Reeves spoke on the need for applied penalties for non compliance, and to challenge Idverde on raising the standard in ways, other than just financial.

A Reeves provided an overview of the current contract deliverance and suggested areas that required improvement. Including improvements to shopping precincts, parks and football pitches. It was commented that this detailed work, is one of the key reasons the Working Group was established.

A Briggs outlined 2 key points for consideration with the grading system. The first was to ensure that the specification, as set by Council within the contract, was being met by the contractor. If it wasn't being met, determine why. If the standard was being met, however determined not to be sufficient, then a review should take place to outline what enhancements, or contract specification changes were needed.

The second point was to ensure all reported ad-hoc tasks are completed within the service level agreed time frame, if they are not, penalisations should be considered/imposed for non compliance.

The group held general discussion.

A Reeves commented that consideration to the current economic climate, would need to be taken in to consideration by, with regard to any enhancements or changes that require financial support.

J Ballman spoke about a rewilding project being undertaken by West Swindon Parish Council.

Cllr J Ballman declared a non pecuniary interest in the RSPB.

A Briggs advised the rewilding item would be bought to Sept 22 L&R Committee.

The Group agreed the Terms of Reference as tabled.

Action – A Briggs to schedule ad-hoc spot check inspections, alongside the set PQMS visits.

Action – A Briggs to request Idverde provide job acknowledgement and completion updates.

Item 2

A Briggs presented the notes of the previous meeting held on 18th January 2022 and detailed the action points.

Cllr J Yeowell queried action point 6, relating to fly tip at Mannington Recreation.

A Briggs responded.



Cllr J Ballman asked for clarity on item 4, regarding to responsibilities between SBC & CSNPC, and how they are reported.

A Reeves responded and general discussion was held.

The group were informed that a number of anomalies identified had been raised as part of the SBC Deed review, which is yet to be finalised.

Cllr J Ballman commented that some form of service level agreement could be discussed between SBC and the Parish to pick up any deficiencies or works not being fulfilled.

A Briggs commented on the existing SBC reporting system, which sends an automated response stating the request is a 'CSNPC' responsibility. This had been raised to SBC to be addressed.

A Briggs commented the need for a follow up meeting with B Pinchbeck of SBC.

A Reeves advised a conversation was needed with R Brown of SBC to discuss the process within the Boroughs contact centre.

The group noted the notes of the previous meeting.

Action – A Briggs to contact B Pinchbeck and R Brown of SBC to discuss outstanding matters.

Item 3

A Briggs presented the PQMS data and detailed the individual slides.

Cllr J Ballman asked whether the way in which the data was presented was standard across all Idverde contracts.

A Briggs advised comparable data for other contracts had been requested. However, Idverde needed to anonymise the data before it could be supplied. The request was in process.

A Briggs explained the data would allow a comparable service review, to determine how CSNPC's contract was performing against other IDV delivered contracts nationwide. It was commented that the information would support the overall review. However, the contract should be attaining the minimum standard mark regardless.

Cllr D Patey queried the date displayed on the slides.

It was confirmed the dates were correct.

A Reeves responded on formatting for displaying the data, and presented an example.

A Briggs presented the clients issue log.

A Briggs toggled through various tab options to show members further data and contract information that was available.

A Reeves advised the group that they should consider whether there is enough data present to conduct a review, and / or whether any information is missing that needs to be included.

A Reeves spoke about a recent quotation sought from IDV, detailing what it would cost to employ 2 x new full time cleansing operatives.

It was explained that the quotations were sought, following identification to enhance the existing street cleansing.

Discussions were held on the detail, including matters around change contract notifications, inflation and budgeting.

A Reeves advised of the cost for additional weekend operative cover.

Cllr J Ballman commented that the process of crafting the contract renewal specification based on the evidence gained over the past 2 years of delivery, should commence.

A Reeves advised he was not aware of IDV being subject to local government increases, and went on to provide an explanation.

Item 4

Action – A Briggs to work with IDV contracts manager to ensure minimum contract standard is being met.

Action – A Briggs to regularly review PQMS grading with the Idverde Contract Manager, ensuring processes are in place to hold IDV to account should they fail to meet the minimum standard, as detailed within the contract specification.

Action – A Briggs to identify reasons for lower graded delivery and to provide a report on the findings.

Action – A Briggs to collate data in regard to ad-hoc works being completed in line with agreed service level.

Item 5

A Briggs presented a copy of an example 'Contract Performance Review' report.

A Briggs explained, he intended to produce a similar report, as to present Councillors with a contract review document, evaluating the past 12-18 Months. Commenting he would cherry pick a number of relevant key details from the example provided.

A Briggs highlighted the grading figures from the example document, which showed that this specific contract was consistently performing at a pass level grade 5. It was explained the intricacies of this specific contract wasn't known, as to be able to make a direct comparison to CSNPC's contract spec. However, it did show that other contracts were receiving their minimum standard delivery from IDV consistently.

Cllr J Ballman suggested contacting the Council in question, to seek feedback on their contracted services.

The group were content for A Briggs to commence drafting the associated performance review report.

Action – A Briggs to compile a contract performance review report. To be presented to a future L&R Committee meeting.

Action – A Briggs to make contact with the Council offices of the example document, as to request feedback on the service they are receiving through their third party contractor.

Item 6

A Briggs presented and detailed information, regarding high level contract specification information.

An example was provided in regard to hedge row cutting. It was explained that the contract is set to 1 x hedge cut per annum. Therefore, consideration is needed when taking grading in to account.

If the hedge row had been cut in autumn of 2021. However, the grading took place in summer 2022. The grading must be marked against the specification of 1 cut per annum and not on the aspiration. This would allow for an accurate reflection on whether the existing contract specification was sufficient ,or whether it should be considered for enhancement (i.e. 2 cuts per annum).

The group are reminded that the specification was a direct match from the services assumed by SBC with the initial Street Smart Contract.

The Group acknowledged the explanation.

Cllr J Yeowell queried whether the size of the litter bin would determine the cost of the collection.

A Briggs confirmed the cost for collection was universal for all bins, irrespective of size.

A Briggs discussed a number of contract enhancements that could be considered as part of the contract review. These included additional operatives & weekend cover.

A Briggs provided the costs for weekend working operatives.

A Briggs spoke at length on the clarification of responsibility of road side sweeping. It was explained that this remained a statutory responsibility for Swindon Borough Council. However, they had not been delivering the service for sometime.

Discussion on the matter was held. It was suggested that SBC should be contacted about the matter, and be requested to reinstate the service. Which would allow the parish to consider repurposing the resource to other enhancements of the street cleansing, such as mechanical sweepers.

Detailed discussion on mechanical and manual sweepers, including indicative costings.

A Briggs advised he had requested the cost breakdown from Idverde in regard to the charge for bi-annual roadside sweeping.

A Reeves commented about both the current position, and determining how to tackle issues being faced. Along with the need to think longer term and imbed sufficient provision within future budget setting to accommodate.

Action – A Briggs to contact B Pinchbeck, to request discussion on obligations of roadside sweeping.

Action – Officers to be tasked with reviewing short term solutions to resolve persistent cleansing issues.

Item 7

The group were informed that the dispute regarding responsibility of tree maintenance on leased land, was still in progress with SBC.

A Reeves advised he was meeting with K Sherratt in the near future to discuss an array of matters, one of which was the outstanding matter of trees.

A Briggs advised that meetings had been held with A Smith from Idverde to seek costings for these trees, as to compile necessary information such as site mapping and tree condition surveys. This information would follow in due course.

Discussion was held on the matter.

A Reeves commented at length about rising inflationary costs, and the knock on effect this will have when it comes to consideration for budget setting for the 23/24 financial year.



Further that the council needs to be forward thinking and strategic in its approach to leasehold management of all its assets.

A Briggs commented that as the Allotments are freehold land, the Parish are responsible for their condition and ongoing maintenance.

A Reeves commented that a large percentage of trees planted with funding along Akers way, have failed.

Cllr M Lucas commented on the lack of rain which may be a contributing factor.

Cllr M Lucas commented that along the river bank of Akers way, would make an ideal location for wild flowers.

Conversation was held about an extraction licence to use water from the mains hydrants.

Action – A Briggs to determine what maintenance has been carried out by Idverde, and what follow up action is in place to replenish the failed stick.

Item 8

A reeves referred to the options appraisal report that was prepared in 2019, created prior to the instruction of Idverde. He explained that the current term for the Idverde contract was 3 years with an additional 2 added on. It was confirmed that CSNPC are now in year 3 of the contract and therefore, must start the process for appraising what options are available post contract.

A Reeves provided a process overview in regard to contract extension and the option appraisal.

Cllr J Ballman commented that there must be a serious material reason (breach of contract) raised, for the contract not to be extended in to the further 2 years.

Action – A Reeves to commence options appraisal process.

Meeting finished at 7.30pm.