

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Report: Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Procurement – Progress Update

Report Author: Head of Operations

Procurement Reference: CSNPC/GM-SC/2026-27

Date: 15th September 2026

1. Purpose of Report

To update Members on procurement progress and the consultant's findings, endorse continued officer work towards early publication of the Invitation to Tender (ITT), and convene the Working Group to review progress and key aspects alongside that work.

2. Background

The existing Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing contract expires on 30th June 2027. Work is progressing to establish the arrangements that will apply from 1st July 2027.

The two principal delivery options remain:

- Option A – Fully outsourced: Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing delivered under a single external contract.
- Option B – Split delivery: Grounds Maintenance externally procured, with Street Cleansing operated directly by the Parish Council.

No decision has been made on the preferred delivery model. Officers are developing the external procurement and the in-house financial model so that Members can compare cost, service quality, operational requirements and risk on a consistent basis.

3. Procurement Documentation and Specialist Review

Officers have prepared a substantial draft suite covering the Invitation to Tender, Service Specification, Conditions of Contract, pricing and asset schedules, quality evaluation, performance monitoring, mobilisation, TUPE and associated contract and governance documents.

Following the Council's earlier decision to obtain specialist procurement support, a consultant has been instructed and has returned comments on Volume 1 – Invitation to Tender, Volume 2 – Service Specification and Volume 3 – Conditions of Contract.

The consultant has approached the review as a critical friend, recognising the work undertaken and identifying where clarification or amendment would strengthen the procurement. Some comments are questions requiring an operational, commercial or legal decision before the wording can be finalised.

The suite remains in draft. Officers will continue resolving comments and completing the remaining reviews, including evaluation and performance schedules, with a view to publication at the earliest opportunity. The consultant will also support tender evaluation and moderation.

4. Principal Matters Identified by the Consultant

Procurement structure and fleet leasing. The main ITT will comprise Lot 1: combined Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing; and Lot 2: Grounds Maintenance only. The former Optional Schedule 2A and Lot 3 fleet provisions will be removed. Vehicles and equipment for a Council-operated Street Cleansing service will be procured separately.

Service boundaries and responsibilities. The documents need to identify clearly the areas and activities covered by the contract and the interfaces with Swindon Borough Council (SBC). This includes distinguishing reporting, making safe and removal responsibilities for fly-tipping and other incidents, so bidders can price a defined service.

Service standards and schedules. Requirements need to be objective, measurable and consistent between the specification, asset and work schedules, and performance deductions. Matters raised include cutting standards and frequencies, cleansing response times, litter-bin servicing and surrounding areas, operating hours, weekend and bank holiday coverage, and the distinction between core and additional services.

Waste arrangements. The basis of the existing SBC waste transfer/disposal arrangements requires confirmation, including availability to a new contractor, permitted waste streams, delivery locations, operating restrictions, responsibility for charges and the position if the arrangements change or cease.

Pricing and evaluation. The initial term will be five years, with an optional two-year extension. Tender price evaluation will use the five-year sum excluding VAT, with 50% price and 50% quality. Bidders must achieve at least 3 out of 5 on every applicable quality question. Contractual annual adjustments will be linked to CPI. The statutory procurement valuation will cover the maximum seven-year commitment including VAT and options.

Contract wording and consistency. Defined terms, volume numbering, cross-references, mobilisation dates, insurance requirements and service-failure definitions need reconciliation. The review also questions how tendered resource commitments become enforceable obligations and whether the allocation of risks, including termination and weather disruption, could increase prices or deter bidders. Relevant provisions will require legal and commercial consideration.

5. Depot and Mobilisation Risk

The consultant has highlighted depot availability as a significant risk. The draft documents place responsibility for securing facilities on the incoming contractor, with an anticipated mobilisation period of approximately three months before 1st July 2027.

Where a depot is not available, a new contractor may need to identify premises, agree terms, secure necessary permissions and establish an operational facility within that period. This could affect deliverability, tender pricing and the number of suppliers willing to bid, while potentially favouring the incumbent.

External service contractors will be required to provide their own depot and operating facilities. No Council depot is offered to external bidders. Depot readiness and contingency will be assessed through the mobilisation response; Council premises remain relevant only to the in-house business case.

6. Procurement Timetable

The draft timetable needs to be reassessed against the remaining document amendments, specialist reviews, Council decisions and mobilisation requirements. The consultant has raised concern about the tender return period falling across Christmas and New Year and has suggested allowing additional time for suppliers to prepare submissions.

Officers will test mobilisation requirements against depot availability, workforce transfer, fleet lead times and systems readiness, and update the programme accordingly. Given the planned service commencement on 1st July 2027, early ITT publication is a priority. Progress will be reported to the Working Group alongside this work; convening the group should not delay procurement.

7. TUPE and Workforce Information

Specialist employment-law advice has been obtained. Following that advice, a revised Employee Liability Information / Staff Transfer information request has been issued to the incumbent contractor, Idverde. The completed information is awaited.

The request covers employees assigned to the contract, roles and working arrangements, salaries, hours, allowances and overtime, length of service, pensions, holiday and sickness provisions, collective agreements, employment liabilities and the proportion of working time attributable to the Council's contract.

This information is needed to support bidder pricing and the in-house comparison. Workforce assumptions remain provisional pending receipt and review of the return and clarification of the implications for each delivery option.

8. In-House Street Cleansing Business Case

Officers continue to develop the in-house Street Cleansing business case as a transparent comparator against external provision. The model retains anticipated CSNPC employment costs and an indicative Idverde/TUPE comparator using provisional pension assumptions. These are sensitivity comparisons and do not establish the terms or costs of any staff transfer.

Dedicated commercial depot. The model includes rent, business rates, utilities, office and welfare provision, storage and racking, security, vehicle and equipment storage, and initial fit-out.

Existing Council premises. An alternative based around Chapel Street and Southbrook is being considered. Potential rent savings must be assessed alongside refurbishment, welfare, storage, parking, security, existing users, business rates, planning/change-of-use requirements and operating across more than one location.

Fleet and mobilisation. The current model assumes leasing or rental with maintenance provision for the principal vehicles and equipment. Requirements include caged tippers, vans, a compact sweeper, barrows and hand tools, jet-washing/gum-removal equipment, and fleet-management systems. The final requirement remains subject to the agreed service scope and review of the fleet procurement approach.

Mobilisation costs include workforce implementation, any recruitment, fleet commissioning, systems, compliance arrangements, training, uniforms and PPE. The comparison should distinguish recurring costs from initial setup costs and use a consistent appraisal period and service scope.

9. Asset, Service and Pricing Data

Work continues to reconcile maintained areas, service frequencies, bin locations, cleansing routes, grass, hedge and shrub quantities, and other operational assets. Bidders need a single controlled dataset, with clear boundaries and service requirements, to support reliable pricing and fair comparison.

The next stage is to work through the consultant's comments, record the Council's response to each issue, and apply agreed amendments across the affected documents. This will include correcting errors and duplicated or conflicting requirements and checking that the specification, pricing schedules, evaluation and contract obligations align. Policy, commercial and legal decisions should be distinguished from drafting corrections.

10. Current Position

Workstream	Current position
Procurement suite	Drafted; amendments and cross-document checks required.
Consultant review	Comments returned on Volumes 1–3; wider review to continue.
Workforce information	Revised request issued to Idverde; return awaited.
In-house business case	Under development; staffing and depot assumptions provisional.
Assets and pricing	Reconciliation and verification ongoing.
Tender publication	Earliest opportunity, subject to necessary checks and approvals.

11. Working Group and Next Steps

The Working Group should convene to review status and discuss key aspects and updates.

Officers will continue finalising the documents with the consultant for publication at the earliest opportunity.

12. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- **NOTE** progress with the procurement, the consultant's comments on Volumes 1–3 and the further amendments and reviews required before publication.
- **NOTE** that employment/TUPE advice has been obtained, updated workforce information is awaited from Idverde and the in-house business case remains under development.
- **NOTE** the depot, waste, fleet and timetable issues requiring further consideration.
- **APPROVE** convening the Working Group to review status and key aspects alongside ongoing officer work.
- **ENDORSE** officers continuing to finalise and publish the ITT at the earliest opportunity.