

Decision Maker: ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICES PDS COMMITTEE

Date: 13th November 2019

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: ARBORICULTURE - GLENDALE CONTRACT SCRUTINY REPORT

Contact Officer: Hugh Chapman, Arboricultural Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Colin Brand – Director of Environment & Public Protection

Ward: (All Wards)

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This annual report outlines the performance of the Arboricultural Services contract which delivers the day-to-day arboricultural operations across the Council's administrative area since contract commencement on 1st April 2019.
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2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That PDS Committee reviews and comments on the content of the report.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Arboricultural Services are used by all residents, including vulnerable adults and children. Protection is not their primary purpose but adjustments are made, as required, to ensure services are as accessible as possible and all users are safe.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council Quality Environment Safe Bromley Healthy Bromley
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Tree Maintenance & Tree Planting & Maintenance
 4. Total current budget for this head: £768,820
 5. Source of funding: Existing controllable revenue budget for 2019/20
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 5 FTEs
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement : The Highways Act 1980 imposed on the London Borough of Bromley a duty of care to maintain all trees on the street in a safe condition, which includes routine maintenance.
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Borough wide impact on businesses, residents and service users.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

Aims of the Service – Arboricultural Services

- 1.1. The primary purpose of the Arboricultural Maintenance contract is to maintain the Council's tree stock across the borough, which includes street trees, school trees, trees in woodlands and trees in conservation sites. The Council takes direct responsibility for inspecting trees to identify those requiring any remedial work, removal or replacement under the requirements of contract resources. The borough has the largest number of street and park trees in London, and is also home to two thirds of London's woodlands; this is particularly valued by Bromley's residents, visitors and Council Members.
- 1.2. The existing contract supports the Council's 2016-2020 arboricultural strategy, which sets out to ensure trees are planted, preserved and managed in accordance with good arboricultural practice, with regard to their contribution to amenity and the urban landscape, for both current and future generations.
- 1.3. A key aim of the service is to maintain a general presumption against the removal of trees, allowing felling only in accordance with good arboricultural practice, and to ensure that adequate and appropriate replacement planting takes place where planting is desirable, aesthetically necessary and sustainable.

Public Perception of Arboriculture in the borough

- 1.4. The extent of the area managed, the diverse range of sites (i.e. urban to rural), the difficulties in managing the behaviours of users of the public areas and the rise of instant exception reporting, are consistent pressures that are managed to ensure that standards are maintained through the budgeted resources available.
- 1.5. Nationally, there have been recent examples of poor arboricultural management by Local Authorities at a strategic level which has drawn significant public attention to this service area. The Council aims to maintain and publicise high standards of arboricultural management via the implementation of the tree management strategy as available on the council's website.
- 1.6. Significant public and political attention has been drawn to the benefits of trees in recent years leading to the development of enhanced tree planting targets both at a local and national level. The Council takes a long term 'tree time' view on these targets. Planting a tree is of little value if the tree fails to establish. The approach taken to address this is through the implementation of the 'right tree for the right place' philosophy and through the commitment of the Council's Service Provider, Glendale, to maintain these young trees until established.

Current Position – Performance Standards

- 1.7. Contract performance is managed through a governance model set out in the contract documentation known as the Performance Management Framework (PMF), which comprises of a series of Key Performance Indicators set at contract commencement. These indicators are reviewed on a monthly, bi-annual and annual basis to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and any proposed changes are made through a Change Control Notice procedure.
- 1.8. In addition to the client's monitoring system and partnership inspections the Service Provider is also responsible for self-monitoring to ensure the standards set out in the contract specification are adhered to. Access to the Service Provider's contract management system (software system called Glendale Live) is provided to members of the client Arboriculture Team and the Performance Management and Business Support Team to view real-time data and access before and after date-stamped photographic evidence of completed works.

1.9. Throughout the contract mobilisation phase (e.g. first year of the contract), the Council is working in partnership with both its ICT Service Provider, BT, and Glendale, on the integration of IT systems to facilitate the extraction of the data required under the contract in order to monitor the contractor's performance (e.g. PMF). This data is derived from the quantitative and qualitative monitoring being undertaken by the service. This information is reviewed and reported on a monthly basis by Performance Management and Business Support officers and Contract Management officers.

Ad-Hoc and Routine Works

1.10. These works constitute the majority of the service provided by the Service Provider, originating primarily from cyclical tree surveying, the species specific management of basal growth, subsidence mitigation pruning and public enquiries. This information is represented in Figure 1 indicating a variation in the volume of works completed by comparing the period since the current contract commencement (e.g. 1st April to 1st November 2019) with the same period during the previous two years). The volume of works raised during the first seven months of the contract with Glendale has seen a significant increase (approx. 3500 works requests), compared with the volumes requested during 2018 (approx. 1900) and 2017 (2900). Seasonal variations can be impacted by weather conditions (e.g. severe strong winds) and are the main contributory factor to the variations in work requests. Through the application of the council's proactive tree management strategy officers endeavour to limit the volume of potential ad-hoc works and reduce potential risk to the council associated to insurance claims.

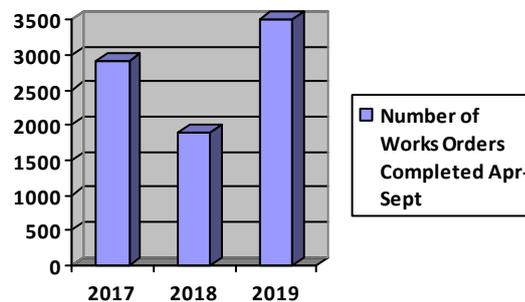


Figure 1

Monitoring of Completion of Works (April-July 2019)

3.11 As set out in the contract documentation the primary Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for all routine and ad-hoc arboricultural works, is the measure of works completed within the designated time frame on the basis of the councils risk based priority system. The PMF (paragraphs 3.7 & 3.8) monitors and records the monthly values and where performance is not achieved a Performance Adjusted Value (PAV) is applied. A PAV is an estimate of the costs incurred by the Council implementing and managing the service in order to return the performance to the expected level. Under this KPI the performance over the first four months of the contract has been within the Service Level Agreement (SLA) as set out in the contract documentation. Figure 2 illustrates this measure. Data for the period August to September 2019 is pending further quality monitoring and verification.

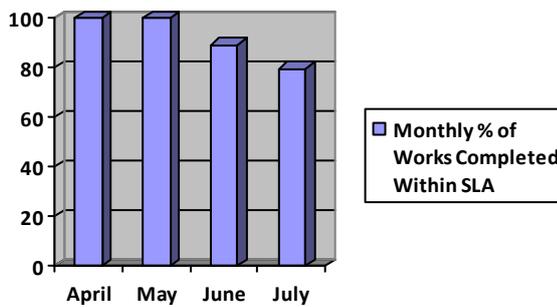


Figure 2

3.12 A Performance Adjusted Value (PAV) has been applied during this period for failure to notify the Service Manager of damage to property while undertaking arboricultural works on behalf of the Council. A standard charge of £300 was applied as set out in the PMF.

3.13 The remaining Key Performance Indicators set out within the contract documentation have been met since contract commencement and documented as part of the routine contract governance processes.

Emergency Call Out

3.14. Typically arising from severe weather events, emergency works are received by the Service Provider, Glendale, by the Council's Contact Service Centre and assigned by the Service Provider to a team to make the situation safe.

3.15. For all works set as Emergency Call Out, the Service Provider will respond by attending the given location or site to make any reported situation safe within one hour during normal working time (8.30am to 5.30pm) and two hours at any other time. These targets are monitored on a monthly basis as part of the governance model (PMF). The illustration in Figure 3 indicates the increasing volume of hours worked to complete Emergency Call-Outs during the period April to September 2019.

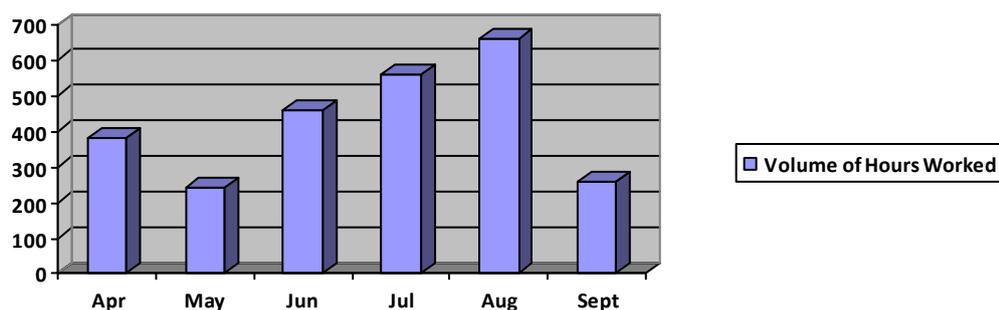


Figure 3

Tree Planting

3.16. The annual tree planting season is carried out between the months of November and March each year. This programme comprises of the replacement of street and park trees where felling has occurred, or where contributions have been made for new provision.

3.17. Arrangements have been made for the planting of 400 trees in Phase one of the 2019/20 planting programme. Preparations are in progress to further order planting of Phase 2 which will

be issued to the Service Provider at the beginning of January, comprising of approximately 100 trees.

Client Management Team

- 3.18. At contract commencement there were significant client staff resourcing issues within the Arboriculture Team of the Environment and Public Protection Department. The interim service manager has since been successfully appointed to the role of the Service Manager and has been in post since June 2019.
- 3.19. At the time of writing this report (following a poor response from the first external advertisement of vacant posts held during the summer and failure to appoint agency staff) a second recruitment exercise has been undertaken during October 2019 through dedicated trade journals. Interviews were held and a job offer made to one successful candidate who has accepted the role. The second vacant post of arboriculture officer will now be re-advertised as a development role (apprentice level), with on the job technical training and funding for an arboriculture qualification provided as part of the role.
- 3.20. The contractor has had no change of management over the term of the contract and has a full complement of operational staff.

Review of Contract Purpose

- 3.21. The council have an ongoing requirement for Arboricultural Services. The scope of this service is only anticipated to grow as current trees age and new trees are planted. The contract is based on a schedule of rates and future demands on the service can be met providing adequate funding is available.

4. COMMISSIONING & PROCUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Executive awarded the contract in November 2018 (Report No. ES18077) for an initial 8 year period with the contract commencing on 1st April 2019, with an option to extend the contract for a further two 4 year periods. Options for the future provision of these services, including a possible contract extension, will be considered in 2024.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Within the 2019/20 revenue budget for Tree Maintenance and recharges to other departments there is a sum of £533,830 available for the Arboricultural Services Contract with Glendale. The table below provides a breakdown of the budgets and projected spend for each service area as follows;

Revenue 2019/20 Service Area	Budget £
Tree Maintenance – Parks & Green Spaces	102,190
Amenity/Environment – Tree Planting & Maintenance	431,640
Total Revenue	533,830

- 5.2 The current high volume of ad-hoc and routine works may have a financial impact on the revenue budget for the Glendale contract. However, as mentioned in this report there are staffing vacancies and the underutilised staffing budget, this financial year, should be sufficient

to offset any contract pressures. At this time the financial risk of these pressures cannot be determined and the contract should be closely monitored throughout 2019/20.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The activities in this report reflect the Council’s existing policy as set out in the [Environment and Community Services Portfolio Plan 2019/20](#) and [Building a Better Bromley 2016-18](#).

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel, Procurement
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Environment Portfolio Plan ES18035 Building a Better Bromley (2016-18) Council’s Tree Management Strategy Report Nos: ES18077 Award of Contract for Arboricultural Services; ES17088 Environment Services Commissioning Programme Update; ES17002 Environmental Services Procurement Strategy