

Decision Maker: ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 16 November 2023

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

Title: IDVERDE ANNUAL CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REPORT
2022/23

Contact Officer: Hannah Jackson, Assistant Director Environment (Carbon Management & Greenspace)
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Chief Officer: Director of Environment and Public Protection

Ward: (All Wards);

1. Reason for decision/report and options

- 1.1 This report reviews idverde's performance of the contract for parks management and grounds maintenance services during 2022/23 through which they provide a fully managed service for parks, countryside sites and greenspaces across the borough.
 - 1.2 An annual contract performance report is required under Contract Procedure Rule 23.2 for contracts with a value that exceeds £500k.
 - 1.3 idverde's Annual Report for this contract during 2022/23 is provided at **Appendix 1**.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Environment & Community Services Policy Development & Scrutiny Committee and Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces are asked to review idverde's performance during 2022/23.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Services provided by idverde affect all residents including vulnerable adults and children. Some of idverde's activities specifically impact these groups, for example the provision of the environmental education programme, oversight and planning of volunteering in greenspace, and the management of playgrounds.
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Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Open Space Strategy 2021 - 2031
 2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority:
 - (4) For residents to live responsibly and prosper in a safe, clean and green environment great for today and a sustainable future.
 - (5) To manage our resources well, providing value for money, and efficient and effective services for Bromley's residents.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Managed within existing revenue budgets
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Parks Management, Grounds Maintenance, Crystal Palace Park
 4. Total current budget for this head: £6.2m
 5. Source of funding: Existing controllable revenue budget 2022/23
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (*current and additional*): 3 FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: N/A
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: Report for noting.
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: This report complies with the requirements of CPR 23.2.
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Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: N/A
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Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: The contract includes obligations that support the Council's obligations in relation to Social Value.
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Impact on the Local Economy

1. Summary of Local Economy Implications: N/A
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Impact on Health and Wellbeing

1. Summary of Health and Wellbeing Implications: Services under this contract support health and wellbeing objectives under the *Open Space Strategy 2021 – 2031*.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users or customers (*current and projected*): All borough residents (circa 330,000), local businesses and people that work in and visit Bromley.
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Ward Councillor Views

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

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 On 20th November 2018, the Executive awarded a contract to idverde for the provision of parks management and grounds maintenance services for a term of 8 years commencing on 1st April 2019, with the option to extend for a further 8 years (**ES18082**).

3.2 The purpose of the contract is the provision of a fully managed service for the management and maintenance of the borough's parks, open spaces, countryside sites and greenspace. The Council is custodian of 28km² of such sites including:

- 121 parks
- 45 heathland, meadow, or woodland sites
- 52 allotments
- 17 cemeteries or closed churchyards

3.3 The range of services provided by idverde are set out in the contract documents, and are broadly categorised as:

- Providing parks management services, including:
 - producing strategies, policies, and operational plans,
 - managing and liaising with stakeholders and managing enquiries and complaints
 - managing events and concessions in parks and open spaces
 - overseeing delegated sports management arrangements
 - managing cemeteries and closed churchyards, including administering burials, memorial safety and managing grave maintenance agreements.
 - setting and delivering countryside, biodiversity, and forestry/woodland management plans
 - delivering an environmental education programme and managing the BEECHE visitor centre
 - delivering community development services
- Delivering a programme of grass maintenance, selecting appropriate management regimes to meet the output-based specification. This includes grass cutting in parks and cemeteries, of circa 1,106 highway verge sites and maintaining sports grounds to the relevant standards.
- Providing a programme of cleansing.
- Delivering weed control and invasive species management programmes.
- Maintaining horticultural assets including managing bedding, shrubs, hedgerows and providing a frequency-based cut back along Public Rights of Way.
- Maintaining playgrounds, including servicing play equipment, undertaking safety inspections, maintaining sandpits, and paddling pool/boating lakes.
- Managing infrastructure through a programme of inspections and surveys and managing and maintaining drainage assets, seats and benches, water bodies and goal posts.

- Providing grounds maintenance services at cemeteries and closed churchyards

3.4 This report summarises idverde’s performance during the period 2022/23 which is Contract Year 4 of the eight-year term.

Contract Management and Governance

3.5 The contract is managed and monitored by the Carbon Management & Greenspace division. Contract performance is scrutinised in accordance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and is managed through the governance model set out in Schedules 4 and 11 of the contract, making use of a Performance Management Framework (PMF).

3.6 The PMF comprises of 12 Key Service Objectives (KSOs), which breakdown to 18 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which were established prior to contract commencement. The framework is designed to incentivise idverde to invest in resources to address under performance rather than incur a Performance Adjusted Value (PAV) deduction. The KSOs are set out in the table below:

KSOs 1-7	These KSOs related to feature quality (and therefore grounds maintenance activities) and are monitored monthly.
KSO 8	KPIs relate to operational delivery, including time sensitive tasks and enquiry management.
KSO 9	KPIs relate to operational reporting.
KSO 10	KPIs relate to the submission of strategic plans and delivery of operational programmes.
KSO 11	KPIs relate to financial performance and administration.
KSO 12	KPIs relate to health and safety and personnel management.

3.7 Performance is reviewed and monitored at a monthly Service Operations Board (SOB) meeting. Additionally, the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) comprises of senior managers from the Council and idverde meeting biannually to oversee the strategic management of the contract.

3.8 Outside of the formal contract governance, and to provide input into the management of open spaces, a non-decision-making Stakeholder Engagement Panel also meet biannually where groups with direct involvement in local open spaces can have their say. Additionally, idverde and council officers regularly engage community stakeholders in service delivery through other panels and forums, including:

- Countryside Consultative Panel
- Bromley Friends Forum, and Forum Partnership meetings
- Leisure Gardens and Allotments Consultative Panel
- Bromley Biodiversity Partnership

Contract Performance

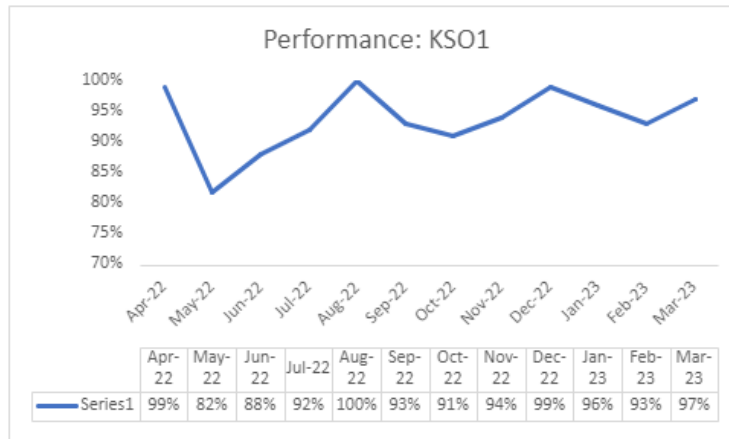
3.9 Performance data for 2022/23 indicated that idverde met the minimum target values for KSOs 1-7 during the contract period.

3.10 KSO1 records performance against the maintenance of highway verges to the specified standards, which includes ensuring that:

- grass is maintained to a length between 25mm and 75mm in length

- grass is kept neat and tidy and in accordance with best horticultural practice
- maintenance activities do not cause stress on the asset or cause the asset to go into premature senescence.

The graph below shows performance against this KSO in 2022/23:

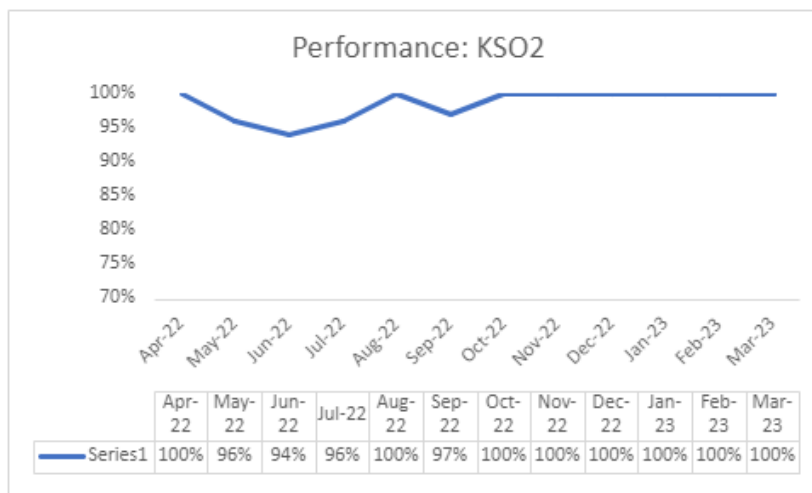


Performance was measured as consistently above the 75% target, but with a notable dip in performance during peak growing season in May 2022, which idverde considered was the impact of a wet start to the season.

3.11 KSO2 monitors performance against the requirement to maintain a programme of floral bedding displays within the required services standards and timescales which includes:

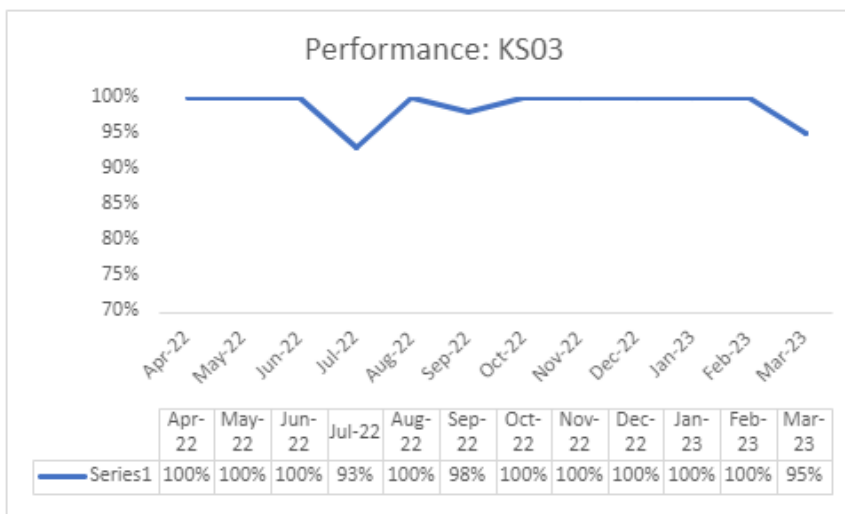
- Planting annual bedding twice yearly in accordance with good horticultural practice.
- To keep beds free from weeds, leaves and litter and to ensure deadheading takes place as appropriate.
- To remove and replace dead or inappropriate plants

The graph below shows performance against KSO2 in 2022/23:

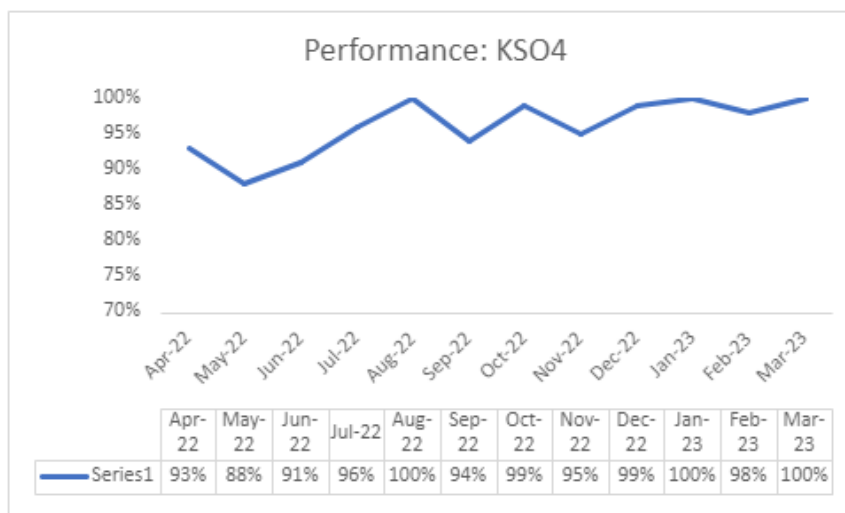


Whilst performance was consistently high and above the 75% target, it was noted that the instances where bedding did not meet the specified standards were during the important summer bedding season.

3.12 KSO3 monitors performance in relation to the maintenance of playground features including soft safety surfaces, sandpits, and the paddling pool within the required standards. The graph below shows performance against this KSO in 2022/23 which was consistently high during this contract year:

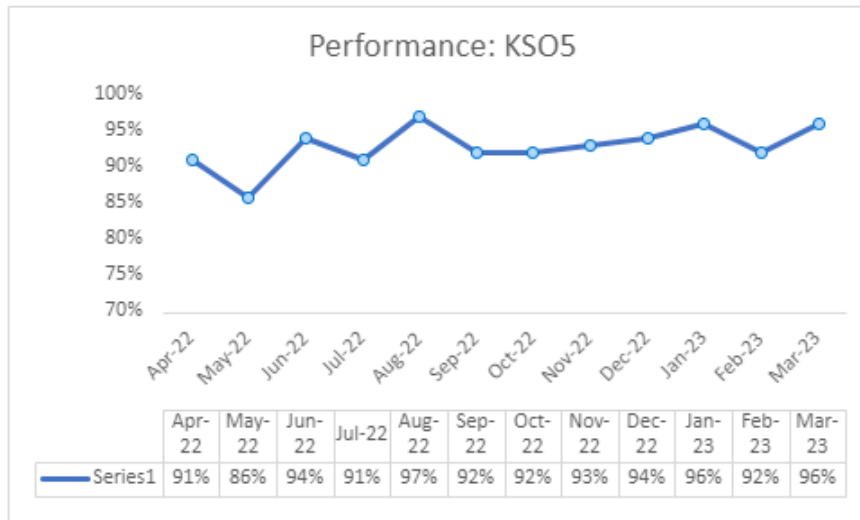


3.13 KSO4 monitors performance against the maintenance of all other grass including that in parks and cemeteries, and areas identified for specific mowing regimes such as bow mowing, gang mowing, maintenance of ecology sites or wildflower meadows, rough grass areas and areas with naturalised bulbs. The graph below shows performance against KSO 4 in 2022/23:

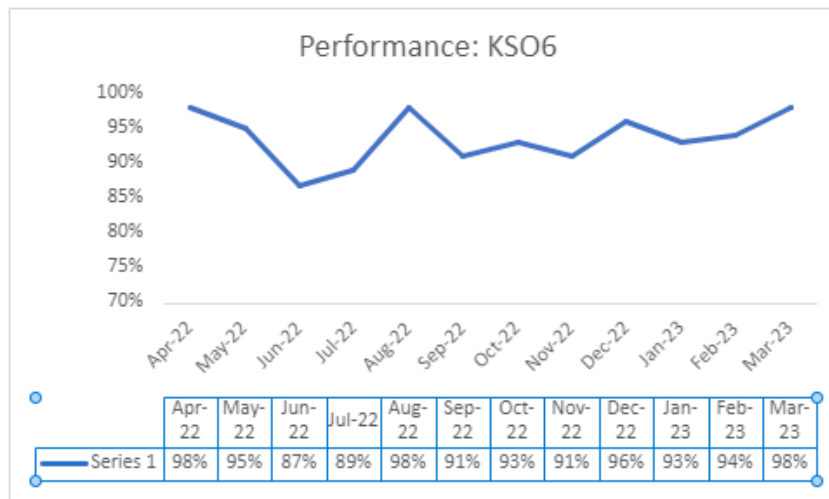


Performance against this KSO follows a similar trend to KSO 1, with performance dipping in May and June 2022, albeit that performance was above the 75% contractual target.

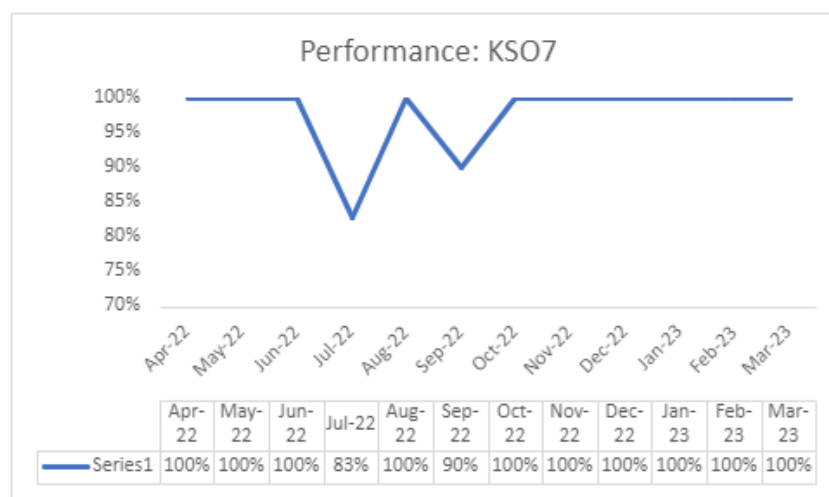
3.14 KSO 5 monitors performance against cleansing operations which require that all sites are maintained to a Grade B or above as identified by the [Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse](#) pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The graph below shows performance against KSO 5 in 2022/23:



3.15 KSO 6 monitors performance against maintenance of horticultural features including rose beds, shrubs, herbaceous borders, and hedge, which idverde are required to maintain in accordance with horticultural best practice. The graph below shows performance for 2022/23 which consistently exceeded the 75% contractual target, with the slightly lower scores in the summer months connected to the hotter weather and resulting drought conditions:



3.16 KSO 7 monitors performance in relation to the provision of hanging baskets and pyramid towers.



Whilst performance did exceed the 75% target, there was a notable dip in August and September, again likely to be connected to the hotter weather and resulting drought conditions.

3.17 KSOs 8 -12 are reported here by exception as all KPIs have a target value of 100% or a pass/fail score. In 2022/23, there were two performance failures recorded:

KSO8	OD2	Flytip	10 reported instances were not completed within the agreed SLA timescale
	OD11	Drainage Assets	6 instances where drainage assets were not maintained to the specified standards/timescales.
	OD14	Graffiti	10 instances were not removed within the agreed SLA timescale.
	OD15	Gate Opening	There were 4 instances where gates were not unlocked

Each instance attracted the application of a Performance Adjusted Value; however, the total number of instances were all within the green RAG status under the PMF and so were not considered a major cause for concern. The number of instances under OD11 has significantly reduced from the 24 recorded in 2021/22 following the appointment of a specialist drainage contractor within idverde's supply chain.

Changes to contract monitoring

3.18 The contract allows for the review of the KSOs and KPIs annually, with any proposed amendments needing to be agreed by both parties through the Strategic Partnership Board. One party cannot unilaterally make changes to the PMF, give the commercial impact such changes may have on either party. Concerns about how representative the data being presented through the PMF was of the standards experienced by residents and stakeholders on the ground were recorded through the Service Operations Board meetings, and an audit of the contract also raised similar concerns and found that there was a risk that performance was not being effectively scrutinised.

3.19 At meetings of the Strategic Partnership Board in November 2022, the Council presented several proposals to make changes to the Performance Management Framework. Whilst not all changes were agreed, it was agreed that the contract monitoring approach would be amended from April 2023 so that:

- 10% of registered assets would be inspected every month, with the inspection programme being made up of:

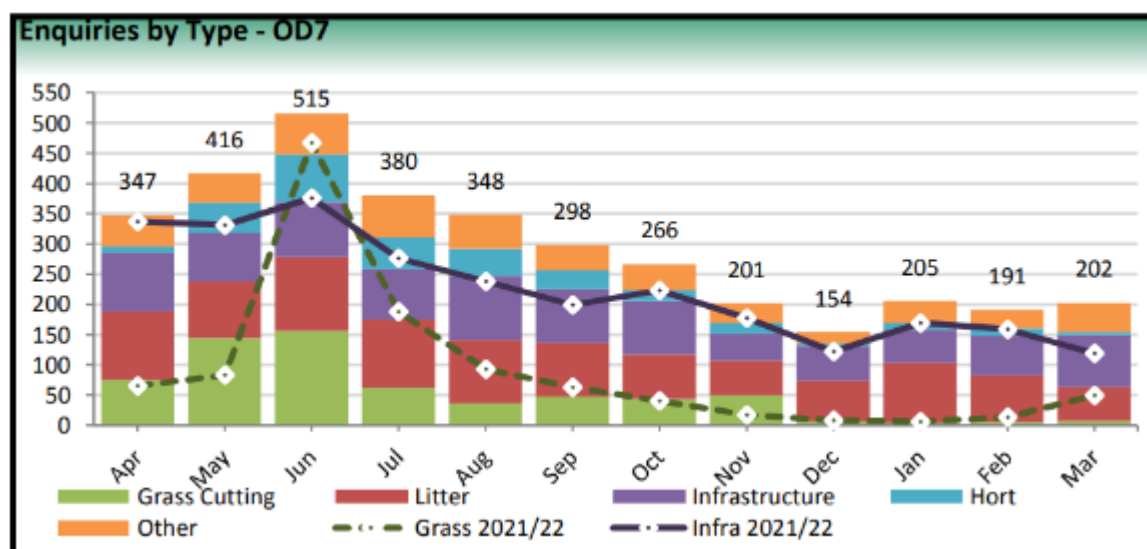
Client Inspections	Target: 3% of assets	148 assets inspected per month
Joint Inspections	Target: 2% of assets	99 assets inspected per month
Service Provider Inspections	Target: 5% of assets	250 assets inspected per month

- The Client inspection programme targets inspections at assets that are seasonally important, for example with a focus on grass during the growing season and playgrounds during school holidays and other periods of high use. Client only inspections were introduced to the monitoring data as they were previously not included in the PMF.
- Joint and Service Provider inspections are apportioned across the KSOs to ensure that all KSOs are monitored every month, with the assets within the KSO categories for inspection randomly generated on a weekly basis during the monitoring period.

3.20 These changes will be reflected in the 2023/24 annual performance report and are designed to improve the quality of performance data and its scrutiny.

Enquiries, complaints, and compliments

3.21 During 2022/23, 3523 enquiries were received, an average of 293 per month with a seasonal peak in May and June following trends recorded in previous years coinciding grass cutting season. Overall, there were fewer enquiries compared to 2021/22 (4,330). 98.5% of enquiries were responded to in accordance with the contractual timeframes. The table below shows the numbers of enquiries received each month, broken down by enquiry type.



3.22 idverde managed 59 complaints and received 29 compliments during contract year 4.

Park User Satisfaction Survey

3.23 It is a requirement of the contract that idverde assess resident satisfaction with the management and maintenance of parks and open spaces through an annual park user satisfaction survey.

3.24 In previous years, a postal survey has been used, with questionnaires sent to 300 randomly selected households in Bromley, however response rates had been low with only 399 responses received in 2022. At their meeting on 22nd November, the Environment & Community

Services Policy Development & Scrutiny Committee requested that the Park User Satisfaction Survey be taken online to increase engagement.

- 3.25 The Park User Satisfaction Survey was hosted on the Council's website between 24/05/2023 – 31/07/2023, with paper copies also made available at the borough's libraries for those who preferred not to complete it online. The survey was advertised weekly via the Council's social media channels, on digital advertising boards in the borough and launched with a press release. The link to the survey was also shared with park stakeholders, including Friends groups.
- 3.26 The full report from the survey is attached at **Appendix 2**. 1024 responses to the survey were submitted with 64% of respondents indicating that they were satisfied with the borough's parks and greenspaces. This is down from 77% of respondents to the postal survey in 2022. Whilst there are several reasons as to why this might be, the analysis provided by Tetra Tech in the Appendix 2 notes that the use of anonymous online surveys tends to result in more negative responses.
- 3.27 Survey results show that respondents are most satisfied with the management of the borough's woodlands (69%), grass (62%) and floral displays (56%). Respondents were most dissatisfied with facilities (47%) and cleanliness (30%), although it is worth noting that the level of dissatisfaction with facilities is lower than recorded in 2022 (57%).
- 3.28 The largest majority of respondents (29%) reported visiting parks daily. The main reasons for visiting parks were exercise and activities with children (26%), closely followed by relaxation and dog walking indicating that parks are being used for a variety of activities.
- 3.29 Cleanliness was the most selected priority for parks, although there was a significant increase in respondents selecting play areas as a priority for 2023.
- 3.30 Respondents this year were also given an opportunity to provide any further comments they wished to make on the borough's parks via a free text box included in the survey. Whilst most of these comments were incident or park specific, the following trends were noted:
- Dissatisfaction with the management of Kelsey Park
 - A desire to see investment in playground equipment and toilets.
 - Complaints that grass is not cut often enough, or respondents asking for more biodiversity/wild areas with grass cuttings left behind.
- 3.31 In April 2023, the Council added £400k to the parks and greenspace revenue budget through the Parks Infrastructure Fund (**FSD23912**), with this money being made available for additional spend on infrastructure repairs and cleansing improvements, noting that these are consistently the areas of priority for park users. The Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund has also supported community led initiatives to improve parks and open spaces, with £252k of this funding having been awarded to playground improvement initiatives to date. The Council has also committed over £2.4m to projects to improve Kelsey Park, and idverde are reviewing the management plan for this park.

Contract achievements and future plans for continual improvement

- 3.32 During contract year 4, through partnership working, the contract has achieved:
- £290k of investment into infrastructure repairs in parks, open spaces and cemeteries

- Extension of the Brilliant Butterflies project, establishing butterfly scrapes in two further sites (Blake Recreation Ground and Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground) with support from the London Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation Trust.
- Completed the first phase of restoration to Scadbury Moated Manor and opened the new bespoke community all-wheeled bike track at Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground, with support from grant funding partners.
- Achieved the Learning Outside the Classroom badge as an independent quality mark for the environmental education service and delivered environmental education to 4290 visitors which is an increase of almost 300 from contract year 3.
- Green Flag awards were achieved at seven Bromley Parks, recognising the rewards of well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom. Thanks to the strong partnerships built with the local Park Friends groups, this was achieved at Biggin Hill Recreation Ground, Chislehurst Recreation Ground, Darrick and Newstead Woods, Hayes Common, Keston Common, Queens Gardens and South Hill Wood.
- Supervised 9181 volunteer hours to benefit Bromley's parks and woodlands which is an increase over of 2000 hours from that recorded in contract year 3. This included inviting those employed as part of the Council's graduate programme to spend a day coppicing at Lilly's Wood.
- Organised a scout tree planting event at Parkfield Recreation Ground, where 39 scout groups with over 400 scouts and their families planted over 500 trees, 420 of which were native woodland tree species donated by the Woodland Trust.
- Completed works to the island and pond at Church House Gardens to improve habitat and conditions.
- Facilitated work between Bromley Biodiversity Partnership and Bromley allotments to deliver free species courses and create an app for plot holders to record sightings so that this data can be used as part of our survey work. idverde have also installed bat boxes in urban parks and provided training to Park Friends to undertake surveys.
- Partnered with Clarion Futures and United Living to improve the canal at Betts Park and the playground at Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground.

3.33 In Contract Year 5 (2023/24), the contract aims to deliver the following benefits:

- Delivery of community led projects to improve parks and open spaces funded through the Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund (with the latest update provided in June 2023 - **ES20276**)
- Trial of biodiversity friendly management regimes in parks and green spaces including the Sustainable Planting trial due to launch in November 2023, and the Nature Friendly Verges Trial which launched in March 2023.
- Completion of works to restore the Croydon Road Recreation Ground bandstand.
- Support the operational transfer of Crystal Palace Park to the Crystal Palace Park Trust in September 2023
- Look at options for marketing vacant pavilions to benefit parks and open spaces.

- Work with partners to undertake projects to improve the health of waterbodies in parks and open spaces.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

- 4.1 The parks management and maintenance contract affects all residents including vulnerable adults and children. idverde are the Council's agent, managing health and safety in parks and greenspaces and advise on equality impacts in relation to service delivery. idverde also manage services that have direct contact with children and vulnerable adults including environmental education, and through their role supporting Park Friends and other community stakeholder's and their initiatives.

5. TRANSFORMATION/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The parks management and grounds maintenance contract support the delivery of the ambitions within the Corporate Strategy: Making Bromley Even Better, with the most direct impact on ambitions:
- (4) For residents to live responsibly and prosper in a safe, clean, and green environment great for today and sustainable for the future; and
 - (5) To manage our resources well, providing value for money and efficient and effective services for Bromley residents.
- 5.2 The parks management and grounds maintenance contract is also key to the delivery of the Council's Open Space Strategy 2021 – 2031.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The final 2022/23 outturn position for Parks and Green Spaces was reported to this Committee on 29th June 2023 (**FSD23040**), with an overspend of £89k against a total service budget for the year of £6.35m. The total value of the core contract payments made to idverde in 2022/23 was £5.4m, with any ad hoc works such as the £290k investment in infrastructure additional to this.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This Committee is requested to review this report on the annual performance of idverde Ltd in relation to its contract for the provision of parks management and grounds maintenance services.
- 7.2 The Council's Constitution, at Part 4 – Rules of Procedure, provides the terms of reference for the Environment and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee as it relates to the Environment and Community Services Portfolio. Under these terms of reference, this Committee is responsible for receiving reports and making recommendations on performance monitoring of services falling within the remit of this portfolio.
- 7.3 Contract Procedure Rule (CPR) 23.2 provides that for all Contracts with a value higher than £500,000, or which are High Risk, an annual report must be submitted to the Portfolio Holder, the responsible Officers having submitted for consideration a formal Gateway Review, covering, as appropriate, the matters identified in the Council's standard Gateway Review Template for consideration as part of Contract Monitoring/Management requirements.

8. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In line with 23.2 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, an annual report must be submitted to the Portfolio Holder for all contracts with a value exceeding £500k.

9. CARBON REDUCTION/SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Social value considerations were built into the evaluation of the tenders for the parks management and greenspace contract at tender, and there are contractual obligations regarding supporting the Council to meet its obligations under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

10. IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- 10.1 The contract for parks management and greenspace supports achieving the objectives of the *Open Space Strategy 2021 – 2031*, including Strategic Objective 3 which refers to health, wellbeing and the community.
- 10.2 Investment in infrastructure is prioritised according to risk with health and safety concerns be forefront to those recommendations.

Non-Applicable Headings:	Personnel Implications, Property Implications, Ward Councillor Views, Impact on Local Economy.
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	ES20276 Platinum Jubilee Parks Fund Update FSD23040 Provisional Outturn 2022/23 ES20287 Variations to the Contract for Parks Management & Grounds Maintenance FSD23012 2023/24 Council Tax ES20225 idverde Annual Contract Performance Report 2021/22 – Contract for the provision of parks management and grounds maintenance ES2006 idverde Annual Performance Report ES18082 Award of Contracts for Waste Disposal, Waste Collection, Street Environment, and Parks Management & Grounds Maintenance (Part 1 and Part 2)