

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 October 2016
Subject:	Grounds Maintenance Update
Report of:	Richard Kirk, Interim Head of Community Services
Corporate Lead:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Cllr J R Mason, Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

This report provides update and information on grounds maintenance service carried out by Ubico Ltd. on behalf of Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the update in respect of the performance of the grounds maintenance service.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To meet the requirements of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by measuring, monitoring and reporting the performance of the contract.

Resource Implications:

None for this report.

Legal Implications:

The Council transferred grounds maintenance to Ubico Ltd. on 1 April 2015. This arrangement is subject to a legal contract between the Council and Ubico Ltd.

Risk Management Implications:

None for this report.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Monitoring and update reports will be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee annually.

Environmental Implications:

None for this report.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The delivery of Council's grounds maintenance service was transferred to Ubico Ltd. on 1 April 2015 along with waste and recycling, street cleansing and other services.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 Currently Ubico maintains a total of 299 sites on behalf of the Council including Tewkesbury and Bishop's Cleeve cemeteries. The majority of these sites are Council owned land; Ubico also delivers nine private contracts generating an income of approximately £10,000 for the Council. Out of these sites, 30 sites are maintained once every two weeks and 269 are maintained once every three weeks during the grass growing season.

2.2 Ubico carries out tree inspection on behalf of the Council. The legacy tree database system (Uniform) was very inefficient therefore, in December 2015, the Council and Ubico implemented handheld devices using GPS technology to carry out tree inspections. Between December 2015 and March 2016, 570 tree inspections were carried out and six high risks trees were identified. As a result of this, four high risk trees were removed and two were pollarded.

3.0 EQUIPMENT AND STAFFING

3.1 Ubico uses tractor movers for the two week grass cutting cycle and triple and rotary movers for the three week cycle. Following the Executive Committee's decision on 4 September 2013 to approve capital expenditure of £61,000 to replace equipment for the delivery of the grounds maintenance service, a procurement exercise was carried out and new equipment was purchased in March 2016 with a total cost of £56,289.

3.2 There are seven full-time staff, two seasonal full-time temporary staff and one supervisor dedicated to the provision of grounds maintenance services in Tewkesbury Borough.

4.0 BUDGET AND VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 The grounds maintenance budget (including overheads) for 2016/17 is £426,705. There was an underspending of £9,160 during the first quarter of 2016/17. This underspending is not likely to continue because of seasonal demands on grounds maintenance services and resources needed to reflect that as referenced in Paragraph 3.2.

4.2 Compared to other local authorities, grounds maintenance costs in the Borough are very low. In April 2014 the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) produced an independent review of depot services for Tewkesbury Borough Council. Their comments on ground maintenance spending were as follows:

".....Grounds maintenance costs are also low. The total cost of the service is given as £453,226. This equates to a per household cost of £12.20 which is very low. The average from the Performance Networks Open Spaces and Horticultural Services group is £42 and the lowest is £14. The wide range of costs per household for this service (£14 to £84) reflects the wide range of different facilities different authorities maintain. Those with a number of formal parks inevitably face higher costs than those with less formal land to maintain. Without further information it is difficult to know whether Tewkesbury would be expected to have high or low costs but even if it is the latter, the actual costs are very low."

5.0 RISK ASSESSMENT, HEALTH & SAFETY AND AUDIT

5.1 Ubico has compiled a "best practice" list of risk assessments and safe practices at work across all clients for whom they complete grounds maintenance activities. All of the risk

assessments and safe systems of work were assessed by the Council as being satisfactory. Ubico has created a post of Quality Assurance Manager to oversee health and safety risk assessments and health and safety performance and compliance.

5.2 An independent audit of Ubico will be carried out by Go Shared Services during October 2016. This audit will cover following areas:

1. Management H&S Responsibility
2. Risk Assessment
3. Training
4. Accident/Incident reporting & investigation
5. Communication of safety information
6. First Aid
7. Manual Handling
8. DSE
9. Stress
10. Work equipment and machinery
11. COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)
12. Expectant mothers
13. Working at Height
14. Lone Working
15. Occupational Road Risk (ORR)
16. Violence at Work
17. Premises Management
18. Control of Contractors
19. Active and Reactive monitoring
20. Legionella
21. Asbestos
22. Permits to work
23. Fire

5.3 Findings from this audit will be made available to all stakeholders and relevant matters will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6.0 REPORTED PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS

6.1 Since the introduction of electronic reporting facility ('Report It') on the Council's website, there has been a significant reduction in the telephone calls to customer services. During the first quarter of 2016/17, Ubico has dealt with 275 'Report It' issues on grounds maintenance; these are not complaints but reported issues on general grass cutting and ground maintenance, requests for information, complements and general enquiries.

6.2 There were two official complaints made regarding grounds maintenance, one was resolved and the other is a new complaint awaiting a resolution.

7.0 CONTRACT MONITORING

7.1 Since February 2016, the Licensing and Systems Officer has been responsible for monitoring grounds maintenance aspect of the contract between the Council and Ubico Ltd.

7.2 The contract does not specify Key Performance Indicators (KIPs) on the grounds maintenance service. This is currently being addressed and, going forward, clear and measurable KPIs will be established. Any recommendations from Internal Audit will be implemented along with any recommendations and KPIs which emerge following the audit of Ubico by Go Shared Services.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 None

9.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

9.1 Council Plan 2016-20; Tree Safety Management Policy

10.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

10.1 None

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

11.1 None arising from this report

12.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

12.1 Reduce carbon impacts to ensure adaptation to climate change is considered; increase biodiversity on council green space; improve the physical quality of residential neighbourhoods; green spaces and relevant land is kept clean and free of litter.

13.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

13.1 Protecting the health and safety of the public and the staff and continuous improvement by minimising accidents/incidents.

13.2 The health and safety arrangements of the service will be scrutinised as part of the contract monitoring arrangements on an ongoing basis.

14.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

14.1 None

Background Papers: None

Contact Officer: Richard Kirk, Interim Head of Community Services
01684 272259 Richard.Kirk@teWKesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: None