

# GROUNDNEWS

Grounds Maintenance, Trees & Parks Services Re-procurement – 10 September 2007, Issue 1

**Welcome to Issue 1 of Groundnews – the newsletter to update you on progress of the proposed re-procurement of the Grounds Maintenance, Trees and Parks Services Contracts for Birmingham City Council.**

## Proposal

Provision of grounds maintenance and associated services for the ten constituencies in Birmingham is currently delivered through a series of partnership contracts, which the Council is proposing to re-let. Currently in place are contracts with a mix of external and internal providers and the Council has recently decided to enter into negotiations with those providers to extend the current contracts for 12 months to March 2009, to allow for the re-procurement exercise to take place.

## Current Provision

The current partnership contracts are broadly comprised of:

- Four area contracts for grass maintenance and horticultural services, covering eight constituencies
- Strategic Parks, Golf Courses and Area Grounds Maintenance (GM) for two constituencies, City Centre Maintenance, Plant Production and Floral Decoration
- Maintenance of Trees.

At present, the contract areas generally follow constituency boundaries, and the intention is that they will be co-terminus in the renewed contracts. The current contracts are a mixture of input and output specification, and the project team is currently considering how the packages in the new contracts will be made up.

## Council Strategy

The Council will consider a report of the Officers in November/December 2007, with a recommended Strategy for letting the new contracts, which are likely to be advertised, in view of their scale and value, through the European Journal. On the current timetable, a decision on a new set of providers will be made by December 2008, so that any changes can take place (contract mobilisation) in the three months to the start of the new season in March 2009, when the renewed contracts would commence.

## Progress to date

The Council Cabinet has taken a decision to develop a Business Case and Procurement Strategy which will meet the ongoing requirements of both the Council and the various customers of its Grounds Maintenance and associated services.

As part of the process leading up to the approval of the procurement strategy, an exercise is underway to consult with stakeholders and purchasers of the service to establish their specific and global requirements of the new contracts.

Simultaneously, a market sounding exercise is being undertaken to gather the views of both the current providers of the service and other suppliers within the market, to help inform the content and scope of the contract requirements. This will help the Council to come to a conclusion about such issues as contract packages, term and scope, and the nature of the client/provider relationship to best meet the needs of customers and providers.

Additional feedback is being sought from other local authorities, as we believe that the issues regarding procurement of these services will be common to most authorities with major landholdings. This presents an excellent opportunity to share common themes and benefit from best practice.

## More Information

Further issues of Groundnews will be issued throughout the project, detailing some of the specific objectives of the Council with regard to meeting customer needs and how these objectives are being met.

If you'd like more information on this project, we will be introducing an intranet page, and also an email address to send any views or comments – so watch this space for details!

