

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee 14 November 2024
SUBJECT:	Greenspace Management Contract Performance Report
LEAD OFFICER:	Oli Handson, Environmental Services & Strategy Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Sue Wallsgrove
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:

‘Improving the wellbeing of Arun’

Overall aims:

- A) Promote and support a multi-agency response to tackle the causes of health inequality in Arun's areas of greatest deprivation
- B) Champion leisure, culture and the Arts in Arun and encourage our community to embrace healthy and active lifestyles
- C) Work with partners to provide advice, support and activities that promote community wellbeing where it will have the greatest impact

How we will achieve this:

- 6) Provide infrastructure that supports wellbeing, e.g. more opportunities for cycling and walking and easily accessible and safe greenspace.

Corporate indicators

CV14 - Improve our green spaces

‘Supporting our environment to support us’

Overall aims:

- A) To consider climate change, sustainability, biodiversity and the environment in everything the Council is responsible for and encourage its community and local businesses to do the same
- B) Protect and enhance our natural environment

How we will achieve this:

- 2) Ensure that climate change and sustainability is at the heart of all Council services

Corporate indicators

CV23 - Achieve six Green Flag awards for Council parks by 2024

CP25 - Contractor achieving performance target for all green space management operations following monitoring (Target 66%)

DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:

To regularly monitor and review the performance of contracts.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

There is an existing budget in place for the Greenspace Management Contract. This report does not have any financial implications

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To provide an overview of the Ground Maintenance Contract and inform Members of the Environment Committee of contract performance during 2023/24 and 2024/25 to date.
- 1.2. The Council's incumbent contractor Tivoli will present slides further detailing their operations both locally and nationally.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Environment Committee:

- 2.1. Note the contents of the report and presentation provided by the Council's incumbent contractor Tivoli.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. This report will provide Members of the Environment Committee with an update in respect of the Council's Greenspace Management Contract over the past eighteen months and will include a presentation from the Council's incumbent contractor Tivoli.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. Following a competitive tender process, Arun District Council awarded its ten-year Greenspace Management Contract (GMC) to ISS Facility Services Landscaping (ISS FSL). The contract commenced on the 1st January 2017.
- 4.2. The contract was novated to a new provider - Tivoli Group Ltd (TGL) whose holding company Amistha Holdings Limited purchased the trade and assets of ISS Facility Services Landscaping in the summer 2018.
- 4.3. The contract is a ten-year contract, with an optional extension of up to 5 years. The annual value of the contract is approximately £1.4 million. The tender delivered a saving to the Council of approximately £250k per annum on the previous contract, therefore contributing to the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy at the time.

5. DETAIL

5.1. Contract Scope

- 5.1.1. The GMC covers approximately 250 hectares (the equivalent of 500 football pitches) of diverse public open space, spread across approximately 500 sites which range from small garage compounds to large Nature Reserves.
- 5.1.2. Grounds maintenance operations include but are not limited to; grass mowing, litter picking, bin emptying, hedge trimming, shrub maintenance, bedding plant supply and maintenance, wildflower meadow maintenance, cemeteries maintenance and grave digging.
- 5.1.3. The contract includes the grounds maintenance, management & marketing of the Council's Outdoor Recreation Service which is styled as 'Tivoli Lifestyle'. It includes bookings for and use of sport facilities e.g. football pitches, bowling greens, tennis courts, par 3 golf, adventure golf etc. These services are accessed by approximately 80,000 customers annually.

5.2. Parks and Greenspaces Service

- 5.2.1. The contract is managed by the Parks and Greenspaces Service. The Parks & Cemeteries Manager (PCM) (James Jones-McFarland) has overall responsibility for liaising with Tivoli over the day to day running of the contract, including agreeing variations to work.
- 5.2.2. Monitoring of contract standards and troubleshooting of all grounds maintenance operations is predominantly led by the PCM supported by the three Parks and Greenspaces Service Officers (PGSO) and one Senior Cemeteries Officer. Officers are responsible for ensuring high standards of grounds maintenance are achieved and work closely with the two Grounds Maintenance Supervisors and Operations Manager at Tivoli.
- 5.2.3. The GMC is divided into six packages of work;
- Package A (Specialised) – includes four Green Flag Award winning parks, town centre ornamental parks in Arundel, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton
 - Package B (Sports) – includes one Green Flag Award winning park, recreation grounds and leisure facilities
 - Package C (Amenity) – includes one Green Flag Award winning park and parks and open spaces within housing estates, greenswards, nature reserves and villages.
 - Package D (Housing) – includes all parks and open spaces associated with council owned housing
 - Package E (Cemeteries) – includes the councils five cemeteries and eight closed churchyards under the councils care

5.3. Contract Management

5.3.1. An audit undertaken by the Council's external auditors at Hampshire County Council in September 2024 for the contract determined that there was a substantial assurance of governance, risk management and control in place for the contract. The highest level of assurance possible from this audit.

5.3.2. The Council has continued to proactively manage and monitor the performance of the GMC, as follows;

- Regular auditing and site monitoring of performance against contract standards.
- Regular site visits with contract supervisors and site based operational staff to plan and review works.
- Operational compliance is regularly reviewed including but not limited to the following; risk assessment, PPE, vehicle and equipment checks, environmental awareness/impact etc.
- Weekly operational meetings between the PCM and Tivoli's Operations Manager. These meetings cover staffing updates, GMC & Lifestyle operational updates, health & safety updates, machinery updates and contract administration.
- Monthly meetings between senior Arun & contractor management.
- An annual Health & Safety compliance review of all contract operations and subsequent report, shared with Arun's Corporate Health & Safety Officer.

5.3.3. Many key staff involved in contract delivery and performance have been undertaking their roles for a considerable time. Almost all Tivoli staff live in the district, which helps promote pride of place in contract delivery.

5.4. Service and contract initiatives

5.4.1. Hive

The Hive is a works management system which is deployed to manage the operational service delivery of the greenspace management contract. The Hive client portal enables PGSOs to access information held within the Hive which is the same as the local management team. All scheduled operational tasks and point of work risk assessments are managed through the hive and operatives are able to interact in a way which provides useful information to PGSOs such as start and finish times notes and observations concerning site safety and confirmation of completed tasks.

5.4.2. Tivoli Reporting Portal

Through this portal PGSOs are able to access management information dashboards which give a view of overall performance against each operational task for each of our near 500 sites. It is hoped that in time the same portal will be made available to the public.

5.4.3. Ford Depot

In recent years Tivoli have invested heavily in there Ford Depot. This has helped Tivoli to grow within the region bringing with it economies of scale which have benefited the Arun contract.

5.5. Key Performance Indicators

5.5.1. CV14 - Improve our green spaces

Tivoli has been a critical partner in supporting the delivery of a number of improvement initiatives in our parks and greenspaces. Typically such initiatives take place during the winter months. In 2023/24 Tivoli supported 21 projects across thirteen parks and greenspaces. We are currently planning various improvement projects for this coming winter. Projects are generally informed by observable need by PGSOs, Community Volunteer Group and Ward Members. Budgets are clearly limited and so the list of improvements is prioritised by the PCM.

5.5.2. CV23 - Achieve six Green Flag awards for Council parks by 2024

By working in close collaboration, the Parks and Greenspaces Service and Tivoli achieved the sixth Green Flag Award in the summer of 2020 which was ahead of the target. All six have been retained since.

5.5.3. CP25 - Contractor achieving performance target for all green space management operations following monitoring (Target 66%)

The targets set within the Councils Corporate Plan (CP) require that the GMC delivers a prescribed level of performance in delivering operational tasks. In 2024 the minimum score following performance monitoring is 66%

GM Operational tasks include, but are not limited to; grass mowing, litter & leaf collection, hedge, shrub and tree whip maintenance etc. Each task is scored out of 40 using a scoring matrix. An overall percentage score for the inspected site is returned once all applicable operational task scores have been inserted.

An average score across all sites returns an overall percentage score for the performance of the contract.

Performance monitoring is undertaken by all PGSOs and is ongoing throughout the year.

At quarterly intervals the performance monitoring figures for the previous 3 months are officially recorded and then discussed at a contract meeting.

Once a year at an Annual Contract Review meeting the results of the previous 12 months is officially recorded and discussed.

2023/24 Performance Monitoring Update

Contract package	Score (April 23 – March 24)
Package A	70.35%
Package B	69.33%
Package C	68.18%
Package D	68.10%
Package E	69.39%
OVERALL SCORE FOR GMC	69.07%

2023/24 provided challenging working conditions with sites often not accessible due to water logging. Prolonged wet weather caused delays on several occasions. However, with a mix of our own performance monitoring and the contractor's willingness to ensure overtime hours were made available Tivoli have been able to meet the contractual requirements more often than not.

289 sites were inspected for performance monitoring in 2023/24. The minimum number of sites to be inspected per year to meet the requirements of the contract is 80.

58 sites failed to reach the 66% contractual minimum score, and action was taken promptly to rectify defects by issuing Remedy Notices.

49 sites met or exceeded 80% (exceptional standards observed beyond expectations).

9 Default Notices were issued to Tivoli during the year. Issues generally related to grass or litter issues which were not remedied within the required time. £250 is deducted from the monthly contract payment for each Default Notice issued and ring fenced in a service improvement fund. The £2250 generated was invested supporting a range of Community Group projects which required Tivoli's input.

2024/25 Performance Monitoring Update

Contract package	Score (April 24 – September 24)
Package A	67.30%
Package B	68.96%
Package C	66.22%
Package D	66.05%
Package E	66.57%
OVERALL SCORE FOR GMC	67.02%

Quarter 1 was the first occasion since the start of the contract in January 2017 where Tivoli failed to meet the minimum contractual minimum performance score of 66% over a quarter period. The average score was 63.94%.

The previous three months had been among the most challenging in the past 30 years. Ground conditions did not enable access to large machinery until the end of April and grass had been growing rapidly since mid-March. This slowed Tivoli considerably. It was quickly recognised that additional resources were necessary. Consequently, Tivoli and Arun staff worked closely to deploy contract contingency resources as early as possible in early April and this lasted until the end of May. Without putting this resource in place, we would have faced a year in which standards would likely have never met the minimum requirements and would have affected public enjoyment of our parks and greenspaces. Scores picked up through June as standards improved.

After a difficult first quarter, April in particular, Tivoli's performance significantly improved during quarter 2. Challenges during this quarter were managing the staffing resource we had available to manage litter and grass mowing operations. In addition, a senior member of the local Tivoli team left the organisation leading to a recruitment process in the middle of the summer holidays. Whilst challenging, Tivoli were able to mitigate this with the remaining local management team who really stepped up to the challenge.

135 sites were inspected for performance monitoring YTD. The minimum number of sites to be inspected per year to meet the requirements of the contract is 80.

38 sites failed to reach the 66% contractual minimum score, and action was taken promptly to rectify defects by issuing Remedy Notices.

11 sites met or exceeded 80% (exceptional standards observed beyond expectations).

1 Default Notice has been issued to Tivoli YTD. £250 is deducted from the monthly contract payment for each Default Notice issued and ring fenced in a service improvement fund. The £250 generated will be invested in supporting a range of Community Group projects which require Tivoli's input.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1. Arun Residents Survey 2023

Satisfaction levels for parks, open spaces and play areas is high with 75% of respondents being either fairly satisfied or very satisfied 90% are satisfied overall with the grounds maintenance service. The closest Local Government Association (LGA) comparison satisfaction with grounds maintenance services for parks and greenspaces 73%, putting the service higher than the national average.

7. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

7.1. N/A

8. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

8.1. None

9. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

9.1. Without continued monitoring of the contract by the Council and continued relations, there would be a higher risk of a contract failure. To mitigate these risks there is regular monitoring of contract performance, alongside operational and strategic meetings. Business continuity plans and operational risks for the contract/service are reviewed regularly through the Council's corporate processes and good governance.

9.2. An external audit has found that there is substantial assurance that systems are in place to manage risk.

10. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

10.1. There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

11.1. None

12. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

12.1. The management of Health Safety is in accordance with the contract specification. Details concerning the management of Health & Safety are covered in the presentation provided by Tivoli.

12.2. An external audit has found that there is substantial assurance that systems are in place to manage health and safety.

13. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

13.1. Tivoli undertake work at a number of sites where the Property & Estates Service is principally responsible for. However, these sites are monitored by PGSOs to ensure the grounds maintenance standards meet the minimum requirements.

14. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

14.1. This report does not impact on those with identified protected characteristics under the Equalities Act.

14.2. Tivoli do support the community in a number of ways typically our Greenspace Community Groups. They provide a significant amount of time voluntarily to deliver projects, gift plants and compost and contribute £2000 per year to the Volunteer and Community Groups budget.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

15.1. This report will not directly impact emissions within the Council. At this time nothing can be done further to create opportunities to actively reduce GMC related emissions, however work is being undertaken by Arun officers and Tivoli management as part of ongoing negotiations concerning a contract extension. A report will be brought before this committee in January with more detail. This will include actions that actively reduce emissions, such as transitioning machinery and fleet to electric, optimising routes to ensure greater fuel efficiency and as well as improving data collection, such as reporting contract specific emissions to the Council at the end of each financial year. It is hoped that a positive partnership between the Council and Tivoli will allow for the reduction of emissions as this will be essential in reaching the 2030 carbon neutral target.

15.2. There are number of other Council Vision objectives which Tivoli has a role in supporting.

- CV24 – plant 3000 trees per year - Tivoli support maintenance of newly planted trees.
- CV27 – Climate Action and Biodiversity Work Plan – Tivoli support the delivery of a number of actions.

16. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

16.1. None

17. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

17.1. None

18. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

18.1. None

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None