

Report Title:	<b>Borough-wide Seasonal Planting – award of new contract</b>
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	No - Part I
Member reporting:	Councillor Stimson, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change, Sustainability and Culture
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 19 December 2019
Responsible Officer(s):	Russell O’Keefe, Director of Place David Scott, Head of Communities
Wards affected:	ALL

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## REPORT SUMMARY (

1. The Council currently has a contract for the supply of seasonally planted and maintained hanging baskets, barrier planters, window boxes, troughs and flower towers across the Borough.
2. The contract also provides for a scheme which offers parishes councils, premises and local businesses hanging baskets at the same advantageous rate as the Council receives; the services provides planted, hung and maintained baskets for the season.
3. This contract needs to be tendered and awarded in time for the contractor to seed and grow-on the plants to sufficient size for the Summer 2020 planting (usually planted-out towards late May / early June). In order to achieve this timetable a delegation is being requested to enable the final award of contract to be made in early to mid-January 2020 once the tender evaluations have been completed, and provided the contract sum is within the base budget provision.
4. The contract document will propose a contract for an up to 5-year period (3 years plus up to 2 years extension).
5. A schedule of the locations and the quantities of current Summer and Winter 2019 planting will be provided to those companies wishing to tender for the contract to ensure their full understanding of the requirements, with a specification setting out operational needs and general conditions of the contract (including specific timings, maintenance and insurance).
6. The new contract planting specification will incorporate a 30% of species that will support biodiversity and the climate change agenda, and 70% seasonal flowering type species to keep a high impact, and so achieve both a positive effect for visual, pollinators and climate impacts.

## 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Delegate authority to the Head of Communities, in consultation with the Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change, Sustainability and Culture, and the Director of Place to award a**

**contract for three years with an option to extend up to a further two years, providing it is within the current base budget for this activity.**

- ii) **And delegate authority to agree the final details of the precise planting mix and specification, based upon the tender proposal returns received.**

## **2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

### **Options**

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Notes the proposed tender for a contract for the revised planting mix to support biodiversity and climate change and encourage pollinators, across the borough, and delegates the award of the final contract as set out in the report recommendation.  <b>This is the recommended option</b>	This will enable a new contract to be awarded in a timely manner that will coordinate with growing on and planting timetables to maintain the various existing planters that enhance the town centres and other key locations. The current net cost of £76,000 will be the limit for the service.
Not approve the report and to and cease the contract	This service provides floral displays that enhances the town centres and other locations and contributes to vibrant communities will cease.

- 2.1 The contract is being put out to tender to ensure value for money is obtained and maintained. It is intended to limit the contract cost to the current base budget value, and the volumes may need to be adjusted to ensure the current contract cost is not increased even by inflation. The planting mix is being revised to increase the numbers and type of plants that are able to improve sustainability for example 'hairy plants' which are better able to absorb pollutants from road traffic.
- 2.2 It is essential to note this is a specialised market with a relatively limited number of companies having the resources, (both personnel and equipment) to carry out the work required across the borough on a regular basis throughout the year to achieve the standards needed to keep the displays long lasting and highly impactful. Suitably experienced contractors do exist and a competitive tender is expected.
- 2.3 The current contractor grows the plants in their own nurseries, removes old planting and replaces with new each season. They are maintained on a regular basis to ensure active growth throughout the seasons. This includes regular water and feed, removing dead and dying foliage in accordance with recognised horticultural practice to maximise the flowering period and floral impact, and ensuring they are in a healthy condition, free of pests and diseases using, where necessary, pesticides approved of for this purpose.

- 2.4 Fresh growing medium, alternative to peat based compost is used where appropriate and where plant quality can be guaranteed, and a polymer used to improve water holding capacity, at manufacturers recommended rate.
- 2.5 Irrigation is programmed to optimise and preserve water resources and ensure no damage or harm is caused to the plant material, meaning that this takes place generally outside normal working hours, and typically in the very early morning for road based planters to avoid traffic disruption.
- 2.6 All waste is appropriately recycled wherever possible, to create additional organic matter for reuse.
- 2.7 Part of the contract is that the contractor should also be also able to remove, replace and replenish containers and plants as needed following vehicle damage or vandalism within an agreed time period from notification. Wherever possible the costs for any planters damaged by vehicles and requiring replanting or replacement are recovered from the insurance of the vehicles involved.

### 3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The current contract has evolved to its existing sites and locations over a period of time. This will form the basis of the tender process to seek a like for like provision in the new contract, and be comparable to the current provision.
- 3.2 The timeframe in which to complete a tender process is constrained by the nursery requirement to grow the new stock, and needs to be coordinated to enable the successful contractor to grow the quantity of plants required for the contract ready for the first planting in late Spring 2020.
- 3.3 There are a number of other timing constraints which the borough imposes through the contract, for example the Ascot area must to be planted and giving a good display of colour and impact ready for Royal Ascot Week.
- 3.4 The contract provides for a number of locations to be added into the base contract requirements from time to time at the same rates if required.

**Table 2: Key Implications**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unmet</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>	<b>Significantly Exceeded</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>
New seasonal planting contract awarded, and new planting in place for May and June 2020 with plants of a suitable species and	29 June 2020	15 June 2020	8 June 2020	1 June 2020	15 June 2020

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unmet</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>	<b>Significantly Exceeded</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>
size for displays					

#### **4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

The contract has changed since the last market test a number of years ago. The revenue budget for this borough wide seasonal planting is made up of the base revenue budget (LR50 cost centre) and is supplemented by funds raised through sponsorship for example from the sponsored roundabout scheme. The annual contract is adjusted to reflect the sponsorship raised each year.

- 4.1 There has been some capital investment (CY22) to add new planters, and in some cases Ward Members budgets have also contributed to the purchase of planters. However the issue is not only the initial purchase costs but the seasonal and ongoing maintenance these new planters then attract.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the current base budget is retained and the contract let up to this as a maximum cost, but be augmented by any additional sponsorship raised over and above the sponsorship income base budget requirement.

**Table 3: Financial Impact of report's recommendations**

<b>REVENUE COSTS</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Additional total	£0	£0	£0
Reduction	£0	£0	£0
Net Impact	£0	£0	£0

<b>CAPITAL COSTS</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Additional total	£0	£0	£0
Reduction	£0	£0	£0
Net Impact	£0	£0	£0

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 A new contract will be required, and the process to enable this has been started. Assistance to complete this tender process and contract is being provided by the corporate procurement team.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 Railing planters are fixed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- 6.2 This contract seeks to replace one that has run for a number of years, under the current local provider. The new contract process will help ensure value for money within the contract and that the successful contractor can demonstrate the capacity to maintain the high impact and long lasting displays, the borough has enjoyed in recent years.

- 6.3 Utilising both the Procurement and Legal resources for support, following the timescale proposed will enable a contract to be let that does not interrupt the seasonal planting change-over from the current winter to the next summer season.

**Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation**

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Uncontrolled risk</b>	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Controlled risk</b>
Unable to secure a contractor to operate the scheme.	Medium	Known contractors within the field and sufficient time for the tender process.	Low
The cost of a new contract tender is significantly higher than the current contract.	high	Specification for the service required, and contractors with a proven track record for this type of work.	

## **7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

- 7.1 Equalities - None
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability – a revised planting species mix has been discussed, and agreed with the Lead Member to reflect a better mix to support biodiversity and the climate change agenda, whilst still maintaining high visual impact.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR - There are no aspects of GDPR in this contract.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The contract does not have any impact on any hard-to-reach groups and or have any requirement for public consultation.

## **9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 9.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediate; the implementation stages are set out in table 5.

**Table 5: Implementation timetable**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
October / November 2019	Drawing up of tender documents
December 2019	Publish contract for tender
January 2020	Tenders returned and evaluated, and successful contractor identified.
End of January 2020	Notification to contractors, and award of contract

## 10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report does not have an appendix.

## 11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This are no background documents for this report.

## 12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
Cllr Stimson	Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change, Sustainability and Culture	27/11/19	27/11/19
Duncan Sharkey	Managing Director	28/11/19	28/11/19
Russell O'Keefe	Executive Director	28/11/19	28/11/19
Ruth Watkins	Deputy Section 151 Officer	28/11/19	28/11/19
Elaine Browne	Head of Law	28/11/19	28/11/19
Nikki Craig	Head of HR, Corporate Projects and ICT	28/11/19	28/11/19
Louisa Dean	Communications	28/11/19	28/11/19
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children's Services	28/11/19	28/11/19
Hilary Hall	Director Adults, Commissioning and Health	28/11/19	28/11/19
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance	28/11/19	28/11/19

## REPORT HISTORY

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>	<b>To Follow item?</b>
Key decision		
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