

To: **Executive Director: Delivery**  
**19 MARCH 2020**

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**CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR CONTINENTAL LANDSCAPES LIMITED  
STREET CLEANSING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 Bracknell Forest Council has two contracts with Continental Landscapes Limited (CLL), street cleansing and grounds maintenance.
- 1.2 Both contracts commenced on 1 October 2014, with a seven year contract term which expires on 30 September 2021. Both contracts have extension clauses that allow us to extend for up to seven years. The contractor is entitled to an extension of one year to the Term for each Contract year in which it achieves acceptable performance, subject to a maximum extension of seven years.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To extend the Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance contracts with CLL.**
- 2.2 To extend for five years from 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2026 plus two further extensions to September 2028 of one year each subject to good performance from October 2019 to September 2020 and October 2020 to September 2021.**

**3 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 CLL have consistently provided good performance. As an output style contract joint performance monitoring is carried out by CLL and the Environmental Services team each week.
- 3.3 Excellent working relationship between client team and contractor, leading to good operational understanding and an ability to work flexibly with CLL.
- 3.4 Lack of substantial reason to refuse an extension based on the terms and conditions of the contracts.
- 3.4 Cost of tendering two significant contracts and the associated risk of financial uncertainty if a new contract is tendered.

**4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 Re-tendering both contracts. This would absorb significant officer time and cost to the council when there is no reason to do so.

**5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 As output style contract the emphasis is on standards and monitoring. Each week joint monitoring of both street cleansing and grounds maintenance is carried out. For the street cleansing contract this is done against the Environmental Protection Act

standards as set out in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. The environmental services team officers and CLL staff monitor the standard of an area on a scale of A-D. Grade A and B are considered a pass, grade C or D require remedial work. The table in annex 1 outlines the grading system for street cleaning.

The grounds maintenance work is monitored against the contract specification. The details of the standards worked to are shown in annex 2.

- 5.2 The performance of the two contracts has been good over the last 5 years. Below is a summary chart showing the monitoring results, the results are the percentage of inspections graded A or B, so the proportion that were deemed to be at or above the acceptable standard.

Street cleansing is monitored in three categories; quality of works completed, random monitoring of borough cleanliness and Bracknell town centre, the town centre has been monitored and recorded separately to the rest of the borough since the opening of the Lexicon in 2017. Quality is focused monitoring in areas that have just been cleaned. Random monitoring covers areas of the borough that were not on the most recent cycle. This is done because although there is a schedule for cleaning this is an output contract that requires the whole borough to be kept at a reasonable standard of cleanliness and this is in line with the statutory duties covered in Section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Grounds maintenance is monitored for quality on areas that have recently been maintained and the expected standards outlined in the contract.

Standards of both contracts also align with expectation as laid out within the Highway Maintenance Management Plan.

**Percentage of inspected areas that met or exceeded the expected standard;**

Year	Quarter	Street cleansing random %	Street cleansing quality %	Street cleansing town centre %	Grounds maintenance %
2014/15	Q3	99.9	99.9	NA	NA
	Q4	99.9	99.9	NA	NA
2015/16	Q1	100.0	100.0	NA	NA
	Q2	100.0	100.0	NA	NA
	Q3	99.6	100.0	NA	NA
	Q4	100.0	100.0	NA	NA
2016/17	Q1	99.0	100.0	NA	100.0
	Q2	99.8	98.9	96.4	100.0
	Q3	98.2	98.8	98.1	100.0
	Q4	99.2	98.1	96.8	100.0
2017/18	Q1	100.0	99.3	97.3	100.0
	Q2	100.0	98.0	96.9	100.0
	Q3	91.7	100.0	92.8	100.0
	Q4	100.0	100.0	99.4	100.0
2018/19	Q1	98.8	100.0	100.0	100.0

	<b>Q2</b>	97.5	100.0	96.9	100.0
	<b>Q3</b>	99.1	100.0	96.6	100.0
	<b>Q4</b>	96.3	97.6	86.6	100.0
<b>2019/20</b>	<b>Q1</b>	97.2	100.0	96.2	99.4
	<b>Q2</b>	95.8	99.2	95.9	100.0
	<b>Q3</b>	99.1	100.0	99.4	100.0

- 5.3 CLL having both contracts for street cleansing and grounds maintenance means the council receive a discount for having a joint management team, CLL also only occupy one office space for the two contracts and one workshop space.
- 5.4 The established relationship the environmental services team have with CLL allows flexibility within the contracts to add in and take away elements of work in order to keep contract uplifts to a minimum.
- 5.5 CLL have established local supply links, contacts and relationships with our other contractors which can be a huge benefit, particularly when dealing with an unplanned event such as snowfall.
- 5.6 Both for street cleansing and grounds maintenance CLL have successfully embedded maintenance programmes that deliver the results the council is looking for.
- 5.7 Bracknell Town Centre has undergone extensive improvement during the contract term with CLL, the Lexicon officially opened in September 2017 and since then CLL and the council's Environmental Services team have worked hard to find a balance between the high standards required in the town area and what is realistic. It has been recognised that understanding the level of cleaning required for the new town centre could not be fully understood prior to the regeneration. During installation of the paving, cleaning was restricted to manufacturers recommendations which did not produce acceptable standards to maintain the like-new cleanliness expected. In June 2019 CLL purchased a Tensid machine to assist with the cleansing of the pedestrian areas of the town centre. This has proved fit-for-purpose and has delivered fantastic results with a noticeable improvement in the cleanliness of the town centre paving.
- 5.8 There are number of other stakeholders in the CLL contracts: Parks and Countryside, Highways, Car Parks and Property are all internal council departments that have services provided by CLL through the contracts. Many of the borough's schools are customers of the ground's maintenance contract having bought in during the set up.

Externally Silva Homes also have an interest in the street cleansing contract as they pay for their garage blocks and parking bays to be cleansed.

All of these stakeholders have a good working relationship with CLL. Particularly the CLL school maintenance team who have worked hard to build good relationships with the boroughs' schools and overall provide a good level of service.

CLL and the Client team work very closely with Highways and Car Parks on a day to day basis eliminating the need for a formal structure of feedback. Schools and the Parks and Countryside service have more specific needs and therefore more structured feedback is offered to these services. The agreed format of the feedback

changes over time in accordance with seasonal demand and the stakeholders availability to attend meetings.

Parks and Countryside have met monthly in the main by attendance of the Contract Operational Meetings. More recently this has been split out to a separate meeting between key representatives in order to focus on issues more specifically relevant to the Parks and Countryside Team. Supporting evidence of notes of the most recent meeting can be found at Annex 3. In addition, the Head of Parks and Countryside is an Authorised Officer of the Contracts and therefore attends and contributes to the quarterly contract board meetings.

Schools are supported by a Contracts Officer within Education and Learning. Quarterly meetings are arranged through this Officer with an appointed representative of the Schools. Prior to a quarterly meeting feedback from individual schools is invited. Over recent years the feedback is often so minimal that a decision is made not to go ahead with the meeting. Supporting evidence of the most recent feedback and minutes of previous meeting can be found at Annex 4.

Historically SILVA homes have not committed to a formal structure of feedback. Instead communication has been direct between Client Officers, Customer Services and use of our self-serve reporting system as and when necessary. Specific meetings have been held on occasion but in the main there has been little requirement indicating a satisfactory service. The most recent meeting was held in April 2019 during which the extension of the contracts was raised, at which point the only comment was to request contact at a minimum of 1 year in advance.

- 5.9 It is highly likely that if the recommendation to extend the two contracts is agreed both contract specifications will be reviewed. This may have an impact on contract costs. If everything stayed as it is under the current specification then cost increases would remain as they are, annual price increase using CPI, plus potential uplifts as more areas are adopted. "The contract does give us the flexibility to makes changes and potentially reduce the maintenance standards, subject to Member approval, should this become necessary to reduce costs in future years."

## **6 Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Legal Advice

- 6.1 The length of extension being sought is provided for under the terms of the existing contract.

### Financial Advice

- 6.2 Based on the information provided, until the contract specifications are reviewed, it is not possible to comment on whether any changes to pricing can be contained within the existing budget. Whilst there may be no overall price changes, there is a risk that amending the specification of the contracts could result in an increase in costs.

## Other Consultation Responses

### 6.3 **Stephen Chown – Head of Parks and Countryside**

The CLL contract is a key part of our cost-effective delivery of high-quality parks and open spaces across the borough. I am fully supportive of this contract extension to minimise the risks attached to a re-tender and to enable us to build on a good, established relationship in the future.

### **Gary Cleaver – Senior Engineer (reactive Maintenance), Highways & Transport**

CLL deliver a large proportion of our cyclical highway maintenance activities outlined in our HMMP. It is an efficient service delivered and I support the extension of this contract whilst continuing to implement more efficient ways of working, build on working relationships and improve the service overall.

## Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 Not applicable

## Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 The grounds maintenance and street cleansing contracts are integral to the Borough look and feel. The current service level with CLL has been high since they were initially awarded the contract and risks of not extending have been highlighted within the report.

## Background Papers

Not applicable

## Contact for further information

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## Annex 1

### Cleanliness standards

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Litter</b>	No litter or refuse	Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items	Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations	Heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations
<b>Detritus</b>	No detritus	Predominantly free of detritus except for some light scattering	Widespread distribution of detritus with minor accumulations	Heavily affected by detritus with significant accumulations
<b>Graffiti</b>	The local environment is completely free of graffiti.	Some graffiti is present, but it is minor in extent, and many people passing through the local environment would not notice it.	Graffiti is present to the extent that it would be clearly visible to people passing through the local environment, and visible at 50 metres.	Graffiti is extensive over a large area and is likely to be clearly visible and obtrusive to people passing through the local environment.
<b>Flyposting</b>	The local environment is completely free from flyposting.	Some flyposting is present, but it is minor in nature and it is likely that many people would not notice its presence.	Flyposting is present in the local environment to the extent that it is likely to be clearly visible to people using the area.	Flyposting is extensive throughout much of the local environment and is clearly visible and obtrusive to people passing through.

## Annex 2:

### Grounds maintenance standards

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>All areas of work broken into categories of Grass, Shrub, Hedge and Woodland maintenance.</b>	<b>Good</b> Within specification High Standard	<b>Satisfactory</b> Within Specification Some minor errors, no action required	<b>Poor</b> Contract failure Not within specification, remedial action required within 48 hours	<b>Unacceptable</b> Contract failure Immediate remedial action required

### Specification examples

<b>14 Day Grass</b>	Cut at approximate 14 day intervals, conditions depending, Mar-Sep and cut to average height of 25-50mm. It is anticipated that approximately 15 cuts will take place during the season.
<b>28 Day Grass</b>	Cut at approximate 28 day intervals, Mar-Sep to average height of no more than 50mm after cutting. It is anticipated that approximately 7 cuts will take place during the season.
<b>Grass Banks</b>	Cut 5x per year Apr-Sep using appropriate equipment for the gradient to the embankment.
<b>Rural Verge</b>	To effect two complete cycles of cutting back approx. 1m back from the side of the highway between April – Sept. In addition areas of vegetation that affect highway services access, signage, lighting, and verge encroachment should be cut back on a 3 year cycle.
<b>Strimming</b>	Grass around obstructions during cutting season Mar-Sep. Must protect from damage/injury to trees, traffic and public. Finish should be uniform to adjacent grass area.
<b>Bio Diversity Areas</b>	Areas to be identified as per the Biodiversity Plan. One cut is required in late summer using appropriate equipment and to an approximate finished height of 80-100mm. Arisings to be collected as/where agreed.
<b>Hedges and Shrubs</b>	Cut at frequencies prescribed within the inventory. Frequencies vary from 1 to 5x per year. All clippings and litter must be removed. Method and equipment should be appropriate. Timings should be in accordance with the nesting season. Extent of cutting to be to point of previous cut. Finish should be consistent.
<b>Borders</b>	Varying frequencies as prescribed with the inventory. Pruning to be carried out at time of year appropriate. Weeds to be controlled, contractor may use herbicides or mulch. To be left tidy and free from weeds and litter etc.

<b>Woodlands</b>	Should be inspected to identify areas of work required. Remove litter, fly tips, dens and camps. Pathways should be kept clear and cutting back so as to promote regeneration and promote bio diversity.
<b>Trees</b>	To remove basal growth. Where practicable to keep canopies clear from footpaths and passing pedestrians. To remove dangerous or broken branches where causing a hazard.

### Annex 3:

#### Evidence of stakeholder feedback and communication with Parks and Countryside

##### SC/GM Review with Parks and Countryside – January 16th 2020

###### Street Cleansing:

- **Litter bins routine work** – the Christmas period bin emptying was more successful than in previous years with only three complaints logged by the public: Horseshoe Lake, Shepherds Meadow, Larks Hill CP
- **Car Park litter picking routine work** – the standard of CLL’s litter picking is seen as inconsistent by AW & CS , operatives often leave site before work is completed – litter particularly bad in Wildmoor Heath CP. JPC explained that CLL provide a reactive service and operatives may be contacted by the office during the day and asked to respond immediately. P&C CPs will be monitoring weekly during joint monitoring with CLL
- **Additional work (fly tips)** – CS commented on the high number of fly tips recently
- **FP Sweeping** – CS raised a question regarding the sweeping of non Highway Adopted FPs in Suburban Areas – JPC to seek clarification on whether CLL are responsible for cleansing on these paths

###### Grounds Maintenance:

- **Grass Cutting routine** – no major problems with mowing over the last season other than mown walkways on Cabbage Hill/Frost Folly were not cut as often as they should be – this will be raised in the next GM Ops meeting with CLL – Mowing Season will resume in March 2020 – CS advised the ground conditions on some P&C sites may delay the start of site mowing - Peacock Meadows North – extremely muddy and ongoing work by Railtrack may make access difficult.
- **Shrub/hedge routine maintenance** – AW raised concerns over the Westmorland Park shrub beds and asked for clarification on annual No. of visits – JPC advised that due to the nature of the contract being about output, there are not a prescribed no. of visits that the contractor must adhere to rather just an overall standard that must be maintained. These shrub beds are recorded on the contract as flower beds and therefore they should have a higher standard of maintenance than normal shrub beds. AW reported that plants had died in these shrubs beds due to excessive weed growth – this issue will be raised with CLL in the next GM Ops meeting
- **Heritage Parks and bedding** – no reported problems – sprinkler was used at SHP to assist in watering
- **Green Flag sites** – 6 BFC parks have Green Flag status – judging will



commence June/July 2020

- **Sports pitches** – no reported problems
- **Additional works** – limited to fly tip clearance recently
- **Woodland copse** – AW highlighted an area of ES managed Woodland Copse situated between GH and Crowthorne RD where there is a large amount of dumped waste – CLL will be requested to clear before the mowing season resumes.
- **New P&C Sites-**
  - Cabbage Hill** – BFC may become responsible for an additional area to the SW of the site shortly – AW to advise and provide maps if CLL are required to carry out extra mowing
  - Frost Folly** – New SANG bordering Frost Folly may be handed over to BFC this year – this will effect CLL's mowing route as only a boundary path cut will be required.
  - Broadmoor Meadow** – no update on when this will be handed over to BFC – snagging jobs outstanding for developer to complete before handover – BFC signage has been removed
  - The Parks** – still no handover date – pitches to be reinstated in March
  - TRL Sang** – could be transferred to The Land Trust in the future with P&C asked to manage.

**Date of Next Meeting: 11am Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

#### Annex 4:

#### Evidence of stakeholder feedback and communication with Schools

**Grounds Maintenance Contract Monitoring Meeting  
Held at Gath Hill College, on  
Wednesday, 19th June 2019 at 10.30 am.**

#### Minutes

In attendance	Cliff Mandville David Eagle Emily Bradley Jimmy Conn	Site Manager, Garth Hill College People Department Grounds Maintenance Assistant Continental Landscapes Manager
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Apologies: Jennifer Coupland, Street Cleansing & Grounds Maintenance Manager

#### 1.0 Previous minutes

The previous minutes were agreed as being accurate by the meeting.

#### 2.0 School issues

2.1 Garth Hill College

The school said;

“The team did not cut the grass with in the 14 day schedule this time as they were planting, this is a service failed and as such should be noted as such”.

*In reply, Continental Landscapes apologised. The delay being caused by contract pressures elsewhere in the Borough.*

## 2.2 Meadow Vale Primary

The school said;

“I have no issues with the service we get from Grounds Maintenance and as far as I know all is fine”.

## 2.3 Warfield (All Saints) Primary

The school said;

“Continental landscapes are;

Very infrequent in their visits.

Have had to directly phone Continental to see when they are going to come in.

Cut the field regularly but all other areas are hardly ever looked at.

Remarks; not a very good service”.

*In reply, Continental said they were surprised by the school comments as they have no record of having received telephone calls from the school. They will arrange to meet with the school to discuss the concerns being raised. **Action: Jimmy Conn.***

## 2.4 Whitegrove primary

The school said;

“I have no concerns”.

## 2.5 DBS

DBS checks and safeguarding training of grounds maintenance staff are currently carried out by Garth Hill College. Should schools wish to know the DBS numbers of the school-based landscape staff then please contact via email [Gill.Breeds@continental-landscapes.co.uk](mailto:Gill.Breeds@continental-landscapes.co.uk) .

The Delivery department will shortly provide an updated draft of the annex linked to the SLA for agreement which will become the formal process for DBS checking of school-based landscape staff.

## 2.6 Price increase 2019/20

The Delivery Department advised that the uplift in prices this financial year was 2.4% and they were advising schools upon request what their new costs were.

## 3.0 Any other business

3.1 Continental Landscapes asked whether the council had a site plan for the new Bracknell school Kings Academy Binfield. The council will investigate whether we have a site plan. **Action: David Eagle.**

3.2 Garth Hill College requested a price to refresh their front flowerbeds. **Action: Emily Bradley.**

3.3 Emily Bradley will attend these meetings going forward in place of Jennifer Coupland.

#### **4.0 Date of next meeting**

This will be arranged by the People Department to take place in the Autumn term. **Action: David Eagle.**

#### **Feedback provided from Schools prior to a planned meeting for November 2019 that was cancelled on the basis of limited feedback for comment/resolution:**

##### Pines Primary

We have no issues at the Pines School.

##### Ranelagh School (Site Manager)

We seem to be getting less and less visits from the continental team.

When on site they follow all our procedures and work well, the concern is that less frequent visits means the site is not looking as it should be.

The site team regular blow and collect leaves, weed kill and remove weed growth around the edges of buildings and kerb lines in order to improve the appearance. This week we have our prize giving evening and Christmas fair both events are high profile and the school needs to look as best it can.

Our last visit was on 05-11-19 to remark a couple of pitches , the visit before 23-10-19 again remarking a pitch, before that, was the last grass cut to the field was on 08-10-19.

##### Uplands Primary (Head teacher)

Just to say the team who visit us are always very helpful and friendly, and I am very happy with the service they provide. Please pass on my thanks to them for the great job they do.