

**TITLE OF REPORT: ITEM REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
7 JUNE 2016 – GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT**

The following is an extract from the Draft Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 June 2016.

16. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

The Service Manager – Grounds Maintenance presented the report entitled Grounds Maintenance Contract Procurement.

He advised that the current contract gave the opportunity to review and extend the contract or go out to the open market. The recommendation was to extend the contract with John O’Conner for a period of ten years with a break clause at year five.

He drew attention to Appendix A of the report which detailed the analysis regarding the type of work undertaken as part of the contract which was included as part of the process overseen by a Project Board.

NHDC had significant partners in North Hertfordshire Highways and North Herts Homes.

Members asked several questions including how long had NHDC worked with John O’Conner and why there were so many inspections carried out.

The Service Manager – Grounds Maintenance advised that NHDC had worked with John O’Conner since 2004, at which time NHDC was their largest customer, however they have expanded over the years and now service several District Councils and Housing Associations.

In regard to inspections, the contract generates income, which meets the costs of three officers. Each Officer undertakes 5 inspections per day that are formerly recorded and this level of inspection is achievable and therefore ensures continuity, enables accurate statistical information to be gathered and helped maintain the close working relationship. If the number of inspections was reduced the level of detailed information available would drop and it would be more difficult to react to issues. Subsequently this would negatively impact upon the quality of service received by residents

The Head of Leisure and Environmental Services reminded Members that the value of green spaces to residents was very high. The system of inspection was considered to be fair and equitable by John O’Conner and enabled NHDC to provide a high quality service.

The Service Manager – Grounds Maintenance informed Members that the team also administered approximately 400 burials per year, dealt with issues around traveller communities, and were responsible for splash parks and play grounds as well as issuing land licences and looking after allotments, rivers and culverts, whilst having the smallest grounds maintenance team in any district or borough within Hertfordshire.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the recommendations in the report entitled Grounds Maintenance Contract Procurement be supported.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comment of the report entitled Grounds Maintenance Contract Procurement prior to consideration by Cabinet.

[NOTE: The report to which this referral relates is Item 18 on this agenda.]