

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO : LEISURE COMMITTEE - 21ST SEPTEMBER 1999

SUBJECT : GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CLIENT REPORT

FROM HEAD OF LEISURE AND AMENITIES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update members of the current situation regarding the Grounds Maintenance Contract.
- 1.2 To inform members of the performance of Glendale Grounds Management following last Committee and the subsequent meeting with Leisure Spokespersons.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A series of reports have been submitted to Leisure Committee since 1st April 1998 relating to the Grounds Maintenance Contract.
- 2.2 A review of the past three reports highlights the increased concern of your officers over Glendale's ability to achieve the required standards. This view has been echoed by members and culminated in serious questions being raised over their performance at a meeting with Spokespersons.
- 2.3 Since this discussion, a number of actions have been taken by Glendale and your officers to remedy the situation and bring the contract back within acceptable standards as detailed in the report which follows.

3. ARBORICULTURE

- 3.1 The performance of Glendale Countryside Management, responsible for arboricultural works had been questioned earlier in the year and concerns over safety procedures and response times were raised. Actions were in hand to resolve this at the time of the last Committee meeting and an improvement in the situation was reported.
- 3.2 Officers are pleased to report that this increased level of performance has been maintained and arboricultural works are currently achieving the required standards. There remain some minor concerns over response times to non-urgent works, and low cost benefit works, but these have been identified and measures to rectify are in hand.

4. BEDDING AND ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE

- 4.1 The situation reported in July with respect to the difficulties achieving deadlines for bedding was resolved and all bedding was planted soon after the agreed deadlines. The plants generally established well with watering and routine maintenance being achieved to standard in the majority of cases.
- 4.2 The contractors support and efforts in ensuring the district was well presented for the Britain

in Bloom judging is noted with thanks and standards since then have been maintained. A reduced frequency, from 4 occasions down to 2 per month, has been agreed for hand weeding and via your officers' monitoring, appears to be achieving an adequate standard.

- 4.3 Shrub bed and hedge maintenance, however, remains below an acceptable standard and further concerns have been raised with the contractor. A significant payment has been retained against this work, but securing adequate trained staff to undertake the task remains a problem. Headway has been made on a number of priority sites and further works are currently underway. Plans to undertake extensive works this winter to prevent a reoccurrence of these problems are being drawn up and your officers have made it clear that this situation must be resolved.
- 4.4 Path sweeping and edging works have improved in the majority of areas following the appointment of a new sub-contractor. Your officers are assured this situation will continue and will monitor accordingly.

5. GRASS CUTTING

- 5.1 Following last Committee, the appointment of a new supervisor and due to a period of dry weather, the grass cutting returned to an acceptable standard within schedule. Due attention has now been paid to edges and obstacles and the district has been presented to an improved standard. The current rain spells have provided welcome refreshment to the browning sward which has greened the whole area up. Officers remain confident this will continue to be maintained to standard.

6. LITTER AND CLEANING

- 6.1 A number of new staff and operational configurations have been tested in this area in order to cope with peak demands. Whilst an adequate service is delivered for the majority of the time, occasional events continue to cause problems. A number of frequencies have been increased in this area and close monitoring and cooperation with the contractor has ensured minimal disruptions to the public.
- 6.2 Further improvements are currently being sought, although the overall standard is good.

7. FINE TURF AND SPORTS AREAS

- 7.1 This year's EWBA National Bowls Championships went extremely well with universal praise for the quality of the greens and professionalism of the green keeping and casual staff. Our thanks to the contractors for their assistance with this event are noted. Other bowls tournaments have gone similarly well and the greens are in a good position to provide high quality play through to the end of the season and the European Croquet which follows.
- 7.2 The golf course continues to improve and is currently achieving a very high standard of presentation. A number of compliments have been received and our thanks for their support are again due to the contractor. Continued vandalism to the irrigation system at Newbold Comyn remains an expensive concern and measures are being taken to minimise this.
- 7.3 Sports pitches are currently well prepared for the start of the football season and apart from some difficulties being experienced with the external supply of some new posts for St Mary's Lands, all pitches will be ready on time. Renovation works for cricket

are being planned and officers are confident the change from summer to winter games will go well.

- 7.4 Your officers' vigilance in monitoring the lower profile bowling green at Abbey Fields has paid dividends. Allied to the improved specification, the standard of this green continues to improve.

8. KEY ISSUES

- 8.1 The grounds maintenance contract indirectly supports the current Key Issue Strategies.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Across the contract a significant improvement has been noted since the major concerns were raised with the contractor. Certain areas, notably shrub beds, continue to provide disappointing results and your officers are working with the contractor to effect improvements.

- 9.2 As with previous problems, the partnership approach to jointly solving problems continues to work effectively, although in certain areas the timescale for improvements to be realised has been slow.

- 9.3 The contractor is thanked for their efforts to improve and the high standards achieved in many areas. Officers will continue to closely monitor the situation and continuously seek improvements wherever possible.

10. ACTION REQUIRED

- 10.1 Members are asked to note the report.

CHRIS CHARMAN
Contract Manager

Background papers : Previous reports to Leisure Committee

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Areas Affected : All