


ST ALBANS CITY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION REGISTER

Portfolio(s) decision relates to:	Sports, Leisure and Heritage	Name of Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Mike Wakely
Name of decision maker:	Richard Shwe	Signature of decision maker:	
Name of relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Public Services	Date of decision:	6 February 2012

Type of decision (please tick)	Key	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Significant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Virement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Scheme of delegation reference under which decision is taken:	Constitution of the Council: (i) Part 3: Section HoS1 (ii) Part 3: Section 6.1.4 (iii) Part 4: Section 7 (d)
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Has this decision drawn upon confidential information? (If yes – please set out what confidential information has been taken into account on a separate sheet)	Yes (sections of the St Albans Grounds Maintenance Contract that are deemed as commercially sensitive)
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DECISION (Note this should be written in the style of a committee minute and should not include confidential information):

To extend the existing:

(a) Grounds Maintenance Contract with John O’Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd until 31 December 2013, on the same terms and financial arrangements as the existing contract, with the exception of minor contractual and specification amendments to achieve budget savings in 2012/13 and 2013/14; and

(b) Highways Agency Agreement with Hertfordshire Highways (excluding Highways Trees Maintenance) until 31 December 2013, on broadly similar terms and financial arrangements as the existing agreement, with the exception of minor contractual and specification amendments requested by Hertfordshire Highways.

In arriving at my decision I have properly and thoroughly taken into account the legal, financial and workforce implications for the Council. My decision is within the Council's policy and budget framework and complies with the regulations and procedures set out in the Constitution. I have explicitly considered the Council's corporate objectives in arriving at my decision. In coming to my decision I have consulted with all relevant parties as appropriate and in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

REASON/S FOR THE DECISION

The current Grounds Maintenance Contract (GMC), with John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd, is for a term of 5 years from 1 January 2007. Under the terms of the GMC the contract period may be extended at the Council's option for a further period of up to two years by notice in writing to the contractor.

As well as meeting the grounds maintenance requirements of the Community Services Department, the current GMC also includes the provision of services for Hertfordshire Highways and the Council's Housing Department. The GMC is based on a specification that includes both frequency and performance maintenance standards, covering the following areas:

- Assisted Garden Maintenance (tenanted Housing properties);
- Cemeteries and Closed Church Yards;
- Highways (hard surface spraying to eradicate weeds and verge maintenance);
- Housing Amenity Land and Council owned Mobile Home Sites; and
- Parks and Open Spaces (including play areas and playing pitches).

At its meeting on 5 October 2010, Cabinet received a report exploring options for the future delivery of grounds maintenance services, and determined to extend the current GMC until 29 February 2012 on the existing contractual terms.

However, it has become clear that there is a desire to maintain the quality and levels of existing provision, so achieving significant savings from a tendering exercise for a contract of similar scope and scale would be extremely difficult. It is therefore now recommended that the Council extends the existing GMC with John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Ltd and the Highways Agency Agreement with Hertfordshire Highways (as it is an integral element of the GMC) for a further 22 months. This would allow the Council time to explore options for delivering larger scale savings through the following options:

- Scope of the Contract

The procurement of a number of the Council's services (e.g. Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance, Markets, Public Conveniences and Refuse) under one contract may offer the opportunity to deliver significant financial benefits due to economies of scale; and

- Shared Services

The procurement of a number of different Councils' or organisations' grounds maintenance services under one contract may offer the opportunity to deliver significant financial benefits due to economies of scale.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

REASONS FOR REJECTING THESE OPTIONS

1. Appointment of another Grounds Maintenance Contractor	This option has been explored, but given the short term nature of the extension it is not considered it would offer the Council any better value and would take significant resource to implement
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CONSULTEES

In making this decision, I have consulted the following people:

Name and Signature	Position	Date of consultation	Outcome of consultation (may cross reference to supplementary/ background sheets)
Cllr Robert Donald	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (Public Services)	2 February 2012	Informed via e-mail that a key decision would be made
Cllr Mike Wakely	Portfolio Holder for Sports, Leisure and Heritage	2 February 2012	Supported extension
Cllr Julian Daly	Portfolio Holder for Resources	2 February 2012	Supported extension
Karen Dragovic	Head of Housing	2 February 2012	Supported extension
Colm O'Callaghan	Chief Financial Officer	2 February 2012	Supported extension
Mike Lovelady	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	2 February 2012	Supported extension

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985

Bibliography	Custodian	File location
St Albans Grounds Maintenance Contract (including Highways Agency Agreement) and Associated Files	Ursula Jones and Richard Shwe	District Council Offices