



BRECKLAND COUNCIL

DELEGATED DECISION RECORD

This records a key or other decision taken by an Executive Member or the Cabinet in accordance with the Council's scheme of Delegations (as set out in Section D of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution).

Unless the Leader and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission certify that the matter is so urgent that the normal five-day scrutiny delay on action should not apply, then this decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of five working days after the publication of the decision, unless called in under the call-in procedures as set out in Section D of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

Portfolio/Cabinet	Cabinet
Report Title (& Reference No.)	Growth in Resources for the Grounds Maintenance Element of the Environmental Services Contract
Summary Background	To advise Members of the additional workload within the Grounds Maintenance operation due to growth in open space land, to offer options for reacting to this growth, and to make a recommendation for action going forward
Author/Contact Officer	Roger Wilkin (Environmental Services Manager)
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards;
Urgent?	No
Key Decision?	No
In Forward Plan?	Yes
Date Decision Taken	Tuesday, 30 November 2010
Date Published	Thursday, 2 December 2010
Call-In Expiry	Thursday, 9 December 2010
Exempt Information?	No
Decision (Action Agreed)	1) That the payment of an additional £55,300 in the Gross Annual Service Charge of the contract, as budgeted, to meet additional resource demands of the Grounds Maintenance element of the Environmental Services contract for 2011/12, be released.

	<p>2) A clear policy to be developed in partnership with Town and Parish Councils so that the transfer of land adopted under Section 106 Agreements can be transferred to Town and Parish Councils.</p>
<p>Reasons(s)</p>	<p>Whilst not a statutory duty, the grounds maintenance of the Council's parks and open spaces was one of the Council's higher profile services. Service provision was already fairly rudimentary, and it was anticipated that any reduction in service standards would be perceived as unacceptable by residents and visitors.</p> <p>A reduction in service standards could lead to an increase in littering, fly-tipping etc if certain areas were perceived as unkempt – thus adding additional cost to other service areas.</p> <p>The Grounds Maintenance service was a key tool in delivering aspects of the Council's Environment Strategy, particularly in relation to encouraging bio-diversity. It also had strong links to other key agendas such as health, well-being and community safety. Any reduction in service standards might have a consequential negative impact upon these agenda areas.</p> <p>Option 2 did come in well within the existing budget, and substantially negated the need for very visible reductions in service quality. It had been accepted that option 1 was not viable as it required growth in the budget. Equally, options 3 and 4 required such significant service reductions that the sense of community pride could begin to diminish in the absence of some viable alternative mechanism for ensuring the quality of the local environment across the district.</p>
<p>Options</p>	<p>Option 1</p> <p>This option would give a high level of assurance that the maintenance of public open spaces would be fully compliant with the current contract specification and performance indicators in their entirety, and at least until a further 5% growth of contracted areas was achieved. This option consisted of 2 additional full time operatives, an additional vehicle, trailer, mower and associated gardening plant/equipment. This option required an annual contract uplift of £66, 200 in the year 2011-12, which was £6,200 above the budgeted amount.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>This option consisted of 1 full time operative, vehicle, trailer, mower and associated gardening plant/equipment. A further additional operative was employed during the mowing season only, i.e. April to November. This ensured</p>

	<p>that the grass maintenance element of the service was compliant with current specification and performance indicators; at least until a further 5% growth of contracted areas was achieved. However, an allowance within the specification/performance would need to be made with regard to other elements of the specification such as hedge and shrub bed maintenance. This option required an annual contract uplift of £55,300 in the year 2011-12, which was £4,700 below the budgeted amount.</p> <p>Option 3</p> <p>This option consisted of employing 1 full time operative. This would provide minimal benefit to the grass maintenance as there was no additional plant allowed for, but would assist with winter maintenance and additional works. Current specification/performance would have to be adjusted. This would mean grass maintenance regime rising from 3 weekly cuts to 4/5 weekly cuts. This was likely to have a noticeable negative impact on the visual amenity and customer satisfaction in many neighbourhoods and during periods of sustained growth. This option required an annual contract uplift of £21,800.00 in the year 2011-12, which was £38,200 below the budgeted amount.</p> <p>Option 4</p> <p>This option was to maintain the status quo in terms of resources (operatives and plant). Current specification/performance on all elements of the service would have to be re-negotiated with Serco to allow for a reduction in the service. For example, grass maintenance regime reducing from a 3 weekly cycle of cuts to a 4/5 weekly cycle of cuts. This was likely to have a significant impact on the visual amenity of many neighbourhoods, and an associated negative impact upon customer satisfaction during periods of sustained growth. There were no financial cost implications for this option, unless additional responsive action was sanctioned as a result of high levels of customer dissatisfaction, and it therefore represented and overall saving of £60,000 of the existing budgeted amount.</p>
<p>Further Information</p>	<p>GM Growth report 20oct10</p> <p>Pro forma B Grounds Maint Growth 19oct10</p> <p>GM Growth report risk statement oct10</p>

