

Connaught Environmental Ltd. (CEL) Grounds Maintenance Contract Update

	Key Element of Connaught Offer Document	Update on progress
1	Up to date scheduling of work and programming work specified in contract	<p>The contract specification has been broken down into the individual requirements for example parks and open spaces, urban verges etc. and a site list is compiled.</p> <p>This site list is then utilised to produce the route and rounds lists, these are continually reviewed to minimise travelling and non-productive time and to avoid known areas of congestion, (a specific example would be the rescheduling of the urban verge cut to allow for the rescheduled bin collections).</p> <p>These rounds sheets are then completed by the operatives dedicated to this aspect of the contract specification and utilised by the contract supervisory staff for audit purposes a summary is provided to Rochford District Council (RDC).</p>
2	'CONNTROL' Asset Management System	<p>Initial rosters have been established for the parks and open spaces and urban verge maintenance operations, the completion of winter works are input as individual projects to minimise the duplication of data input. Past experience has proven this is the most efficient process for roster establishment.</p> <p>Training has been provided to the Contracts Manager Contract Supervisor and Office Administrator from CEL and liaison is currently being undertaken to provide RDC External Works Administrators with CONNTROL training.</p>
3	Training and multi skilling of all staff and NVQ training	All staff have received induction training in all aspects of the service requirements – this was completed over a two day period with internal CEL induction undertaken during day one and machinery training and specification requirements covered during day two.

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		<p>Supplier training was provided to all 'ride on' machinery operatives during the first two weeks from contract start.</p> <p>Tool box talks are delivered every fortnight to reinforce a specific aspect of health and safety or operational requirements. Staff rotation is further utilised to increase the multi-skills levels of all staff.</p> <p>All TUPE staff have now completed NVQ2 training; NVQ2 training for all new staff is currently being programmed for 2009. All staff working on the Districts highways have attended and successfully completed a Chapter 8 (Highway Safety) refresher training course.</p> <p>Further supplier training is programmed for 2009 for the contract fitter which will then be cascaded to all operatives utilising this equipment.</p>
4	Green recycling or composting of grass cuttings (where collected)	<p>Tonnages reported monthly. Arrangements in place for recycling/composting within the parks and open spaces, specifically:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green waste recycling: all waste generated from works within the District is chipped and composted and re-used as mulch in the Districts parks, open spaces and a limited number of housing schemes. • Grass arisings: the specification outlines 'cut and fly' operations for much of the District, where arisings are collected; these are composted and re-used by the Districts allotment holders and at Brooklands Park.

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5	Introduction of electric Megavans	Two Megavans were introduced as part of the compliment of vehicles required to perform the contract. The vehicles are very effective and meet the demands of the service. These vehicles have proved extremely well suited for use in the Districts cemeteries and for the provision of pavilion cleaning operations.
6	Increasing usage of sports facilities	<p>Sports facilities, namely football: owing to the limited timescales involved, due to the contract start date, a database of existing clubs was utilised for lettings for the forthcoming season, with plans to utilise the local press e.g. Rochford District matters and the Echo, if the required take up was not sufficient from the existing clubs. This resulted in 51 local clubs applying for the use of the sports facilities. To date the number of bookings received has been positive. The details of this years booking will be used as the base data for future bookings of these facilities over the life of the contract.</p> <p>The method utilised did unfortunately result in a small number of established clubs not receiving their preferred pitches for the 2008/09 season, a preferential booking arrangement will be offered to the clubs affected for the 2009/10 season.</p>
7	Improving services year on year	During the dormant season Connaught have been improving standards particularly to shrub and rose beds and hedges. Officers and Connaught jointly agree the priority areas for improvement, a good example of joint working being the works undertaken to the Barling play area.

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8	Monitoring staff output and quality of work	<p>Staff output is monitored by the Contract management team; this is done per task per site.</p> <p>The Council's Parks and Open Spaces Officer monitors a percentage of the work undertaken. The staffing levels on contract allow for one contract supervisor, one site manager and one senior contract manager these being the key staff utilised for site inspections, both independently and jointly with RDC.</p> <p>A dedicated contract administrator is also in post to undertake the office based and reporting elements allowing the contract management staff to spend the majority of working day undertaking the inspection/auditing elements of their roles.</p>
9	Burial arrangements – staff suitably attired	<p>The requirement for staff to be suitably attired and to behave to high standards has been achieved.</p> <p>All burials have taken place as agreed. The rotation of staff was initially utilised to expand the skills base of the contract staff in relation to cemetery duties.</p> <p>The use of protective clothing is also being trialled in the cemeteries, for grave digging operations, in order to keep the issued uniform as clean as possible, so the operatives are presentable during services.</p>

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10	High standards in cemetery maintenance	<p>The standard of cemetery maintenance is high and has been achieved by the establishment of a specific works programme for each of the two cemeteries and the further training of additional staff in the safe operation and maintenance of the 360° digger, 'ride on' machinery and duties specific to the cemeteries. Training in the maintenance of shrub areas has been provided on the NVQ2 course and via on site practical training, a dedicated vehicle has been assigned to the cemetery maintenance crews.</p> <p>The resources utilised for the maintenance of both Hall Road and Rayleigh cemeteries have been combined to form a dedicated maintenance team with joint working encouraged to continue to improve standards.</p> <p>Issues were raised with regard to the standards at Hall Road cemetery, during the early months of the contract; these issues were taken extremely seriously and resulted in the operative responsible for maintenance operations at Hall Road being replaced. Maintenance standards within the cemeteries are audited bi-weekly by the contract management team and the works programme altered if required.</p>
11	Play area and equipment inspections and maintenance	<p>The inspection of play areas are governed by the ROSPA guidelines.</p> <p>There are two trained operatives responsible for the provision of this service, with future training course planned to allow greater flexibility in the delivery of this contract requirement.</p> <p>Inspection and maintenance of play areas is provided to RDC for both its own facilities and for the RHA.</p>

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		<p>The inspection of play areas is to a set weekly schedule with inspections completed by CEL, reports are submitted to RDC weekly unless an urgent repair is identified, in such an instance the play area would be temporarily closed and the equipment made safe until a full repair is affected.</p> <p>The use of a dedicated email address and free phone number are available to members of the public to report any issues or concerns directly to CEL.</p> <p>CEL are continually working to establish accounts with local suppliers to reduce the lead in times required for replacement parts, on the whole this has proved successful however, replacements for specific suppliers, i.e. Kompan Ltd. etc., are providing more difficult to source locally.</p> <p>Daily meetings are held between CEL and RDC to continually monitor the play area inspection programme and there is regular communication between CEL and the play groups which utilise the Districts pavilions namely Fairview and Ashingdon.</p> <p>At the commencement of the contract a concern about the removal of graffiti from children's play equipment was referred to the Executive by the West Area Committee. Noting that the new grounds maintenance contract provided for significant improvements to the arrangements for graffiti removal, the Executive requested that the Council's Review Committee be asked to review the working of the graffiti removal policy once the new the new arrangements had become embedded.</p>

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		Under the contract, the removal of any sexist, racist and offensive graffiti is required within 24 hours of being reported and all other graffiti should be removed within 3 days. The operation of these arrangements are monitored by our own officers and by CEL who also compile a monthly report. It is confirmed that our service standards are being met.
12	Topographical survey	Twenty-two locations out of thirty-seven have been surveyed and the information given to the Council.

	Key Element of Connaught Presentation to Contracts Sub-Committee	Update on progress
1	Joint branding of vehicles and uniforms	The joint branding was agreed prior to the contract commencing in order that the vehicles and uniforms would be available as soon as the contract commenced.
2	Removal of grass from pathways	<p>Each grass mowing team is complimented with staff to remove by blowing grass from footpaths back on to grass areas. At the beginning of the season with the high levels of grass some grass found its way back on to the footpaths and complaints were made by residents. Connaught took these complaints seriously and addressed the issue to avoid further occurrence.</p> <p>The resource allocated to grass cutting operations is continually reviewed during the cutting season and amended as required, the number of complaints were low during the 2008 cutting season. The appointment of charge hands to the grass cutting gangs will be implemented for the 2009 season with a financial incentive offered based on complaint targets being met.</p>

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3	Vehicles and equipment replaced every three years	The investment budgets provided by CEL identify a life span of three years for the majority of vehicles plant and equipment, the exception being Tractors as these have a much longer lifespan. The officers will monitor the replacement programme in due course.
4	Full-time administrator dedicated to contract	<p>Ad administrative post was created by CEL at the beginning of the contract. The post deals with day-to-day issues, enquiries from the public. The post is dedicated to Rochford.</p> <p>The centralisation of non-contract specific administrator functions has been implemented to allow the contract based administrator more time to deal with contract specific issues.</p>
5	Recycle or compost cut grass (where collected)	Grass arisings: the specific outlines 'cut and fly' operations for much of the District, where arisings are collected these are composted and reused by the Districts allotment holders and at Brooklands Park.
6	Additional staffing if grass long at commencement of contract	The resource allocated to grass cutting operations is reviewed prior to the commencement of the cutting season and amended as required, the appointment of charge hands to the grass cutting gangs will be implemented for the 2009 season with a financial incentive offered based on complaint targets being met. As the contract is now approaching the first anniversary should the grass growth increase during the early part of 2009 direct liaison with RDC would be implemented to allow for grass cutting operations to commence earlier in the season to minimise areas of long grass within the District.

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7	Horticulturally trained team leaders	<p>All TUPE staff have now completed NVQ2 training, NVQ2 training for and all new staff is currently being programmed for 2009, therefore all Horticultural teams will include a formally trained member of staff.</p> <p>This training will be additionally supported by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use of tool box talks to refresh previous training.• The contract management team will provide on site practical demonstrations and guidance.• The production of a pruning guide.• Examples given on site and via photographs of the expected standards.