

**REPORT OF Finance Manager and S.151 Officer**

**To: Full Council**

**Subject: Grounds Maintenance – Capital**

**Date: 13 December 2021**

**Reference:**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

For Members to approve the addition to the Council's capital program vehicles and equipment pertaining to bringing back in house the grounds maintenance function.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Council's grounds maintenance contract with its existing provider Tivoli expires on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Members have previously agreed that the grounds maintenance contract should be bought back in-house. In order to deliver the service from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 it is necessary to purchase capital items.

**2. REPORT**

The Council's capital program is approved annually at Full Council; it was last approved on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 along with the Council's annual revenue budgets and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The current approved capital program does not include items associated with the delivery of an in-house grounds' maintenance service.

By way of context an analysis of the current service has identified over 550 items within the current contract totalling over 750,000 square metres to be maintained. These items include small verges, lawns to hostels, 5 cemeteries, 5 closed cemeteries, 4 main sports pitches, 2 cricket pitches, car parks, office and business premises, Parks and Open spaces.

Due to lead in times associated with the procurement of the required items it is not practical to wait until the capital program is updated and formally approved at Full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022. Consequently approval is sought from Full Council to add the items listed below to the Council's capital program.

|                                      |                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Equipment (Strimmers, chainsaws etc) | £ 7,650         |
| Hand tools                           | £ 780           |
| Machinery (ride on Mowers x 4)       | £ 97,600        |
| Transit Vans x 2 and trailers        | £ 67,000        |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>£173,030</b> |

Going forward the grounds maintenance budgets will include an annual contribution to reserve to replenish the above items as they become due for renewal.

**3. IMPLICATIONS**

Legal Implications

No specific legal implications

Financial Implications

Outlined in the report



#### Human Resources Implications

There are Tupe implications associated with bringing the service in-house but these are separate to the purpose of this report.

#### Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

Taking the grounds maintenance service in-house will provide potential to develop biodiversity on our own assets, conserving and enhancing our natural environment.

However in the first instance it is vitally important that the service is ready to deliver on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

#### Equality/Diversity

Not applicable

#### Risk Management

Without suitable equipment the grounds maintenance contract cannot be delivered safely.

#### Compliance with Policies and Strategies

This report is in compliance with the Council's Constitution

#### Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

Not applicable

#### Climate Change

Over the course of the next few years the Council may seek to align its grounds maintenance operations in line with the approved Carbon Plan. This will include the increase of habitats for wildlife in the green spaces which we maintain. by rewilding, by planting trees and shrubs and by sowing wildflower areas. Bringing in the service in house will allow the Council to develop the service within its net zero ambitions.

When tendering for the equipment necessary to provide this service, suppliers will be required to submit alternative battery powered machines. It is the intention from the start of the contract to use a mix of petrol / electric battery power handheld equipment, such as strimmer's, leaf blowers and hedge trimmers.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Due to lead in times on equipment and vehicle procurement an "in-year" addition to the Council' approved capital program is required.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members approve that

- £173k is added to the Council's approved capital program for Grounds Maintenance and Vehicles as detailed within the report.

