Have your say on a new parks and street scene contract for North Somerset

Consultation over the proposed contracts to deliver parks and grounds maintenance, tree surgery and street cleansing in North Somerset is to take place from Monday 16 April and last for six weeks.

The council has to make savings of £47 million over four years, meaning that for every £3 we spend now we will only have £2 by 2015.

As part of the budget reduction proposals our parks and street cleansing services we have to save £735,000 over the same four year period (this represents around a 30% saving).

We have carried out a review on how to deliver these savings whilst trying to minimise their impact on residents and the following proposal is now being considered.

The proposal

Previously we operated separate and highly specialised contracts for street cleansing, tree surgery and parks horticulture work.

The proposal is to combine grounds, trees and street cleansing into one contract.

This will help to make the contract:

- more efficient by reducing overheads
- create economies of scale
- attract the best rates from potential contractors – as it’s a bigger contract covering all the different work areas
- avoid duplicating tasks and better working together

The contract – how it will work

- We will be focusing on the basics and getting them right
- We will continue to maintain core services so we will continue to cut the grass and our trees will still be managed to keep risk of harm to residents and their property to a minimum
- We will safeguard our parks and street scene infrastructure for the future
- We will continue to meet Environmental Protection Act standards
- We will also continue to maintain our high level of street cleansing in our town centres and busier areas such as Weston-super-Mare seafront.
- We will act on a needs basis rather than just routinely carrying out tasks
• More inspections will be carried out and we will be more responsive to the public’s needs or requests
• A single co-ordinated contract will avoid duplication or inefficiencies.

Contracts like these are successfully operating elsewhere, such as in Wokingham.

**Flexibility and partner involvement**

The contract will be flexible, allowing partners to join us and request additional services.

For example a town or parish council (or other community organisation) may want to pay for extra services in their area – this may be a litter pick after an event or to have street cleansing more often. The contract will be adaptable to allow this “opt in” facility.

**What changes will you see?**

We will be more focused and responsive as we won’t be able to do as much as we currently do, due to the financial situation.

We won’t be able to continue with the specialist parks horticultural work such as flower beds and hanging baskets.

But we are continuing to work with communities and partners across the district for them to become more involved in this type of work and activity.

We will still be carefully managing and looking after our parks and open spaces for the future – we will be safeguarding the infrastructure for better times, when we may be able to return to planting flowering beds etc.

Areas and roads will be maintained and cleaned but at different frequencies and dependent on need.

**Timescales**

The new street scene contract will come into effect on 1 April 2013, following a competitive tendering process.

From 16 April, the council would like to hear the public’s views on the proposed contract approach. The consultation period ends on 25 May 2012.

Feedback can be made online at [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/streetscene2012](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/streetscene2012)