

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 9 November 2020

Wards: All

Subject: Reference from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Idverde Performance

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration

Lead member: Councillor Natasha Irons, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Contact officer: Rosie Mckeever, Scrutiny Officer, 0208 545 4035

Recommendations:

1. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommends that Cabinet take into account its reference set out in paragraphs 2.8 to 2.18 below when making decisions on the Idverde grounds maintenance service.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. At its meeting on 1 September 2020 the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a performance update on the grounds maintenance service provided by Idverde. The Panel was asked to discuss and comment on the report.
- 1.2. The Panel agreed to make a reference to Cabinet, as set out in paragraphs 2.8 to 2.18 below.

2 DETAILS

2.1. Scrutiny process

- 2.2. The Panel received a detailed report setting out background information, seasonal issues and details of the performance and quality scores.
- 2.3. The Panel heard representations from the Independent Merton Green Spaces forum, John Innes Society and residents. IMGSF commented on the need for better basic horticultural knowledge for staff as well as a more regularly updated performance dashboard. One resident did praise Idverde for their helpfulness and speed when clearing up a public event.
- 2.4. Panel Members asked questions and sought responses to those concerns raised. Responses were provided by the Assistant Director for Public Spaces and the General Manager for Idverde.
- 2.5. Full details of points made in the discussion will be published in the minutes of the meeting.

2.6. Scrutiny response

- 2.7. Panel RESOLVED (eight votes for, none against) to make the following reference to Cabinet:

- 2.8. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Idverde Grounds Maintenance service and to raise issues for consideration by Cabinet.
- 2.9. Panel would welcome the opportunity to undertake further process mapping work on the inspection and reporting methodology within the contract. In order to fully understand how the performance data is created and reported, the Panel requests further information, including but not limited to;
- a) Contract specifications / classification for different types of greens spaces.
 - b) Directory of standards/management plans for different classifications of green spaces
 - c) Findings represented by type
 - d) Types inspected in direct proportion to square meterage of that type within the borough.
 - e) Details on how the average is created
 - f) Ratio of inspections for those 'below standard' to how many are 'random'. Ideally there needs to be a 'random' to 're-inspection' ratio that forces those areas that have 'failed' to be re-inspected within a shorter amount of time.
- 2.10. Additionally, alongside this information, the Panel would like to undertake site visits to a sample of green spaces in Merton, with details of the reporting pro forma used by Client Officers when inspecting.
- 2.11. The Panel recommended that the Council's Tree Strategy is reviewed and updated to include how new trees are established and how all trees are maintained.
- 2.12. The Panel recommends that the Council create an overarching Green Spaces strategy in line with the Council's climate commitment and with a focus on community wellbeing.
- 2.13. The Panel recommends to Cabinet that the Council should consider developing a 'One Stop Shop' web based reporting system to make it easier for our residents to report any issues relating to parks, waste and public spaces in one place and bring an update on this to the Sustainable Communities Panel.
- 2.14. Further to this, a recommendation to display signage in parks informing residents on how to report issues and express their views would enable the Council to be fully aware of the resident experience of our green spaces.
- 2.15. The Panel recommended that a quarterly stakeholder meeting be held, made up of groups included within the independent greenspaces forum and other like-minded organisations.
- 2.16. For both Idverde's Annual Report and the Independent Green Spaces Forum annual report to come to the Sustainable Communities Panel.
- 2.17. The Panel requested quarterly written updates from Officers providing information and feedback on how the recommendations are being met and evidence that the service is improving. This work should also be underpinned by amending the data included within the performance monitoring framework to include both a monthly and quarterly measure.

- 2.18. Additionally the Panel also requested that Idverde return to the Sustainable Communities Panel in one year in order to carry out a review of the progress achieved.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None – Cabinet is required under the council’s constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Invitations to provide submissions to the Panel were sent to a wide range of residents’ associations and local community organisations.

5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Cabinet is required under the council’s constitution to receive, consider and respond to references from overview and scrutiny. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires Cabinet to respond to reports and recommendations made by scrutiny committees within two months of written notice being given.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications as a result of this report.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. These are no crime and disorder implications as a result of this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no risk management and health and safety implications as a result of this report.

10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- None

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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