

Meeting of:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 12 March 2026</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Grass Cutting Contract (2026 to 2029)
Purpose of Report:	To agree to award the grass cutting contract for 2026 to 2029 with an option to extend for a further 12 months
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services
Responsible Officer:	Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Head of Legal Services Director of Finance Operational Manager - Engineering
Policy Framework:	This report is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report seeks approval to award the Grass Cutting Contract for 2026–2029, with a possible one-year extension, following the completion of a compliant procurement exercise conducted through the Ardal Procurement Framework.</li> <li>• Historically, grass cutting contracts have run for three years with one-year possible extensions. This contract expired in 2025, and we currently have no contracts in place for the upcoming season.</li> <li>• The contract will ensure continuation of essential grounds maintenance activities that support safe, accessible, and well-maintained public green spaces across the Council area. All financial information, tender scoring detail, and commercially sensitive matters are contained within the Part II report.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendation**

1. That the contents of the report be noted and be considered in connection with the Part II report later in the agenda.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

1. To allow Cabinet to consider the Part I and Part II information together prior to confirming the contract award.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for maintaining a wide and diverse portfolio of grassed areas and open spaces across the Vale of Glamorgan. These include formal parks, housing land, school grounds (where applicable), highway verges, rural visibility splays, recreation grounds, sports fields and a range of smaller incidental public spaces. Regular grass-cutting forms a core operational activity within Neighbourhood Services and is vital to maintaining safe, attractive, and accessible public environments.
- 1.2 Historically, the Council has delivered grounds maintenance through externally procured contracts, with the cutting regime being set at 9 full cuts per season which is the Authority's preferred and optimal standard. To allow for costs comparisons, in addition to the standard 9 cut regime, tenderers were also requested to provide costs for fewer cuts (4/6 per season per growing season) to assess options based on financial and resource implications.
- 1.3 It is to be noted that due to warmer than average springs and autumns the grass growing season now stretches from early to mid-March until mid to late November.
- 1.4 There is no provision for collection of grass cuttings within this contract.
- 1.5 The previous grass cutting contract concluded at the end of the 2025 season, and to ensure continuity of service into the 2026 season and beyond, a new procurement exercise was required.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 Tenders were evaluated using a price/quality model, with additional consideration for social and community benefits.
- 2.2 The evaluation identified Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd as the most economically advantageous tenderer. The company demonstrated strong technical capability, experience with large-scale Local Authority grounds contracts, and robust proposals for environmental management, staff training, equipment quality, and community engagement.

- 2.3 The contract is proposed for three years with a possible one-year extension, matching the Council's strategic planning cycle.
- 2.4 Quality monitoring will be built into the contract, including periodic inspections, performance measures, and customer feedback mechanisms.
- 2.5 All financial details and tender scoring are presented separately in the Part II report to protect commercial confidentiality.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1 Long-term: Ensures consistent maintenance of public green spaces, supporting environmental quality and public well-being.
- 3.2 Prevention: Regular maintenance prevents overgrowth, litter traps, visibility hazards, and complaints.
- 3.3 Integration: Supports the Council's Corporate Plan objectives relating to public health, biodiversity, and community pride.
- 3.4 Collaboration: Delivered through partnership with an external contractor and engagement with community groups, sports clubs, and residents.
- 3.5 Involvement: Feedback from communities and seasonal service reviews inform operational planning

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1 The contract supports the Council's biodiversity commitments by incorporating reduced-cut zones, wildflower areas, and environmentally sensitive working practices.
- 4.2 Contractors are required to minimise carbon emissions through efficient routing, modern equipment, and reduced waste disposal.
- 4.3 Annual reporting on carbon impact and biodiversity measures will support the Council's Project Zero targets.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1 The proposed contract will be financed from within the Neighbourhood Services revenue budget. The approved budget for grass cutting within the service for 2026/27 is £339,000 plus the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) contribution percentage increase based on the chosen cutting regime.

- 5.2 Once in place, the contract provides cost certainty over the full period of the contract.
- 5.3 Financial considerations and value-for-money assessment are detailed in the Part II report.

#### **Employment**

- 5.4 There are no employment implications associated to this report.

#### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.5 Procurement was undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the requirements of the Ardal Framework.
- 5.6 The Council must ensure fair access to maintained green spaces in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.7 The Council retains statutory responsibility for maintaining safe public spaces.

#### **6. Background Papers**

None.