

RURAL ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE - SURVEY RESULTS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For members to note and comment on the results from the survey carried out, following a review of the service on the grass cutting service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Members note and comment on the performance of the grass cutting service within the grounds maintenance team as shown in Appendix A.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES/BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2008 the standard of work being carried out by the councils in house EMT (Environmental Maintenance Team) was below an acceptable standard with the service receiving numerous complaints and criticism and clearly seen as one that was failing
- 3.2 As a result a new management structure was put into place that year which effectively brought waste management and environmental maintenance together under the same line management team who have since that time actively worked towards bringing the standards of ground maintenance up whilst ensuring high quality and fully integrated waste services.
- 3.3 At that time the maintenance of all the grassed areas and open spaces in Melton was carried out by both Melton Borough Councils EMT as well as Leicestershire County Councils Highway Grass Cutting Teams.
- 3.4 There was little logic in regards to the way the grassed areas / verges and open spaces had been divided up, and as a result the responsibility for adjacent grassed areas was not infrequently split between the councils EMT and LCC teams.
- 3.5 This further compounded the poor public perception of the towns ground maintenance in general as cutting schedules and methods (number and type of cuts) differed between EMT and LCC , which all too often resulted in an inconsistent , patchy and uncoordinated appearance of many adjacent sites due to the different management regimes
- 3.6 In 2009 , for that cutting season and following a number of meetings between EMT and LCC ground maintenance management a new way of joint working was established.
- 3.7 In essence the total areas cut by each party were established, and the time taken and resource requirement to cut different types of sites i.e. highway verges / recreational

grassed areas / green corridors between residential areas etc. was assessed and measured

- 3.8 The town was then divided up into whole lots according to total areas to be cut as well as the resources requirement of each, so whole areas would then be managed by either LCC or EMT (albeit one whole area being managed differently to another whole area). This was expected to result in a far more consistent vista for the public who would no longer see both long and shorter grass on what to them appeared to be the same site.
- 3.9 An additional benefit of this new way of working has allowed us to increase our cut and collect cutting regimes in our Priority Neighbourhood Areas (as we were able to take these on in their entirety following the new apportionment of areas), contributing to the clean green safe agenda, increasing local ownership, pride and in general creating an improved environment
- 3.10 This new way of working has proven to be a great success. Complaints have in general all but ceased, and the closer working arrangements have resulted in good and on going communication, problem solving, service development and improvement.
- 3.11 At the end of the 2008 cutting season (actually in the winter of 2008/9) a survey was carried out to see if the new way of working had improved the public's perception of the service. This was repeated in 2009/10 and the results are attached as Appendix A
- 3.12 The survey, a postal questionnaire, concentrated on areas that had hopefully benefitted from the new working arrangements, being areas where previously both EMT and LCC had worked independently according to their own schedules which had before 2008 resulted in complaints of inconsistency and alleged unfinished works.
- 3.13 The survey results from both 2009 and 2010 (the same residents being surveyed both times for consistency and valid comparison purposes) indicate considerable improvement in public opinion and perception and would appear to indicate a successful and well received joint working arrangement between ourselves and LCC highways.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct policy or corporate implications as a direct result of this report

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The division of work between LCC and EMT has purposely been done so as to avoid any financial or resource implication with an equal apportionment of sites based not only on total area but also on an allowance for the different resources and time taken to maintain different types of open spaces and sites.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

- 6.1 There are no changes to legal implications or powers as a direct result of this report

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no direct community safety implications as a direct result of this report

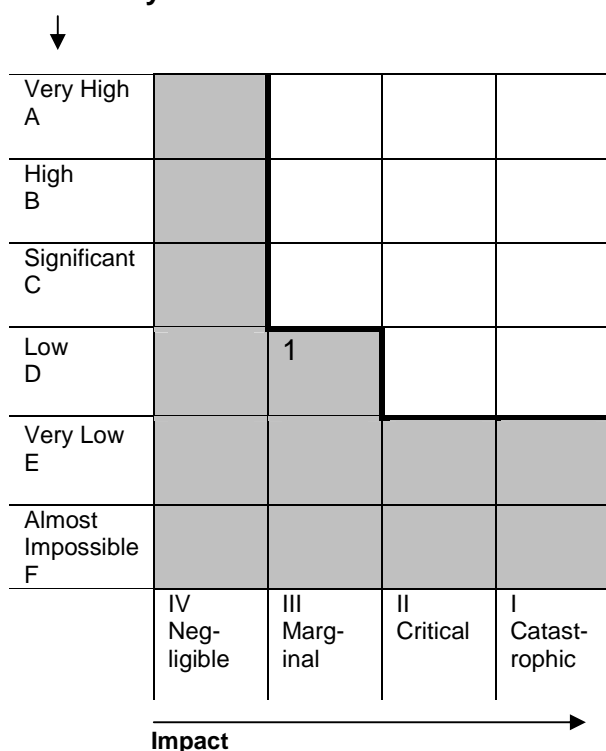
8.0 **EQUALITIES**

8.1 There are no direct Equalities implications as a direct result of this report

9.0 **RISKS**

9.1

Probability



Risk No.	Description
1	Joint working arrangements cease
2	
3	
4	
5	

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no direct policy or corporate implications as a direct result of this report

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 This report is in part to inform members of the joint working arrangements as well as detailing the survey work carried out to determine the public's view of the initiative, this does therefore form a method of consultation carried out and detailed within the report and report appendix A

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 Wards Warwick / Craven / Dorian and Sysonby are those mainly affected by the new working arrangements

Contact Officer: Raman Selvon

Date: 20/May/2011

Appendices: Appendix A Grass cutting service results

Background Papers: None

Reference: X : Committees/REEA/08.06.11 –.HR Grounds Maintenance Performance