


Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	
Date:	<b>24 NOVEMBER 2014</b>	
Report Title:	<b>REVIEW OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE GRASS CUTTING IN FENLAND</b>	

## Cover sheet:

### 1 Purpose

To provide information to the Panel regarding grass cutting across Fenland's open spaces, including works taking place in our Cemeteries, and lessons learned in the past regarding quality of service.

### 2 Aims and Objectives of the Review

- To examine the frequency of the grass cutting throughout Fenland.
- To consider customer feedback received in relation to grass cutting, in particular grass cutting in cemeteries.
- To examine the current approach of TLG's Performance Quality Monitoring System (PQMS) in order to assess the standard of the work undertaken and the effectiveness of the PQMS.
- To consider lessons learnt in relation to grass cutting and cemetery maintenance to ensure they are built into future service improvements.
- To consider how customer issues are reported, communicated and managed to ensure a high level of satisfaction.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Cllr Peter Murphy, Portfolio Holder for Environment
<b>Report Originator</b>	Phil Hughes <a href="mailto:phughes@fenland.gov.uk">phughes@fenland.gov.uk</a> 01354 622520
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Richard Cassidy <a href="mailto:richardcassidy@fenland.gov.uk">richardcassidy@fenland.gov.uk</a> 01354 622317

# **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

## **Review of Grounds Maintenance Grass Cutting in Fenland**

### **1 Introduction**

Fenland District Council is responsible for providing a broad range of grounds maintenance services in and around the Fenland market towns and surrounding villages. The Council works with a partner, The Landscape Group (TLG), to complete a variety of open spaces work including grass cutting.

The delivery of the grounds maintenance work within Fenland forms a key aspect of the Environment corporate priority and plays a significant role in meeting members' expectations for the maintenance and improvement of the environment and street scene.

An effective service ensures that our open spaces are welcoming, pleasant, community focussed spaces and that Fenland maintains its reputation in relation to Green Flag accredited parks, in addition to supporting community groups' participation in the Anglia In Bloom competition.

### **2 Background**

Members are keen to ensure that the grounds maintenance contract continues to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. Recent concerns raised in relation to the grass cutting element of the contract mean that a review of this aspect of the service is timely and will ensure that the service is best positioned for the coming period.

#### **2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Review**

- To examine the frequency of the grass cutting throughout Fenland.
- To consider customer feedback received in relation to grass cutting, in particular grass cutting in cemeteries.
- To examine the current approach of TLG's Performance Quality Monitoring System (PQMS) in order to assess the standard of the work undertaken and the effectiveness of the PQMS.
- To consider lessons learnt in relation to grass cutting and cemetery maintenance to ensure they are built into future service improvements.

- To consider how customer issues are reported, communicated and managed to ensure a high level of satisfaction.

The review will take into account costs and potential efficiencies and make recommendations against the above points.

## **2.2 Approaches to evidence gathering**

The following approaches will be used to gather evidence for this review:

- Assessment of contract performance against requirements.
- Consideration of the grass cutting rounds and their frequency.
- Customer feedback gathered from existing feedback mechanisms.
- Benchmarking grass cutting frequencies with other district councils.

### **3 Overview of Grounds Maintenance in Fenland**

FDC has a contract in place with The Landscape Group to carry out grass cutting across FDC owned and managed open spaces. Previously the Council used Continental Landscapes as the grounds maintenance contractor. The overall impression is that the current contract is running better than the previous contract, with improved mechanisms of customer feedback and an improved relationship with the contractor supporting this improvement.

The overall contract value is £655,000, with £505,000 for FDC works, £39,600 for County Council highways works and £110,630 carried out on behalf of Roddons Housing Association. In addition, the Council expects to spend £40,600 on extra works outside of the contract – for instance damaged tree works or replacement of fencing.

With regard to amenity grass cutting in Fenland, there are 1,079,567 metres<sup>2</sup> of grass cut every round. Cemetery grass accounts for another 194,402 metres<sup>2</sup> of grass cut every round. These two aspects of the grounds maintenance contract cost FDC in excess of £215,000 p.a.

Whilst grass cutting is an important aspect of the contract, the works that the contract covers are extensive including:

- Grass cutting
- Shrub bed maintenance (55,238 metres<sup>2</sup>)
- Rose bed maintenance (1,676 metres<sup>2</sup>)
- Seasonal and carpet bedding work (1,786 metres<sup>2</sup>)
- Hanging basket & tiered planter work
- Hedge maintenance (46,910 metres<sup>2</sup>)
- Maintenance of hard surfaces (272,938 metres<sup>2</sup>)
- Preparation and maintenance of 6 football pitches
- Maintenance of an all-weather tennis court area
- Maintenance of a small astro turf and multi-use games area
- Weekly inspections of 54 play areas including BMX and skate parks
- Cemetery maintenance including grass operations, litter and leaf collection, sweeping of hard surfaces and grave works

Maps of the grounds maintenance works are available on request and will be available at Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Due to the number of pages that each town's grounds maintenance covers it is not practical to include these documents in this report.

To accomplish contract works TLG employees a team of up to a maximum 32 staff and two supervisors at any time. The work is seasonal, with the highest number of staff being employed throughout the summer months to work on grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance and seasonal bedding work.

The contract is split into a bill of quantities that details how much each operation costs per meter squared / per grave / per hanging basket etc. and the number of each items that require attention. This gives a total cost for the entire contract.

The quality of work and the manner of how it is carried out is determined by the specification. The specification for grass cutting may be found in Appendix IX.

All works are mapped using the Council's mapping system, ensuring that the Council has accurate information with regard to payments made to TLG and TLG are aware of what they are cutting and where. This ensures that TLG are paid appropriately for works completed. TLG are paid every month based on works that they have completed.

The contract is set out in this manner following an Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report in 2004 that identified significant areas of concern. One key area of change that this report highlighted was a requirement to change the contract specification for grass cutting from an outcome based specification to an output specification. The current contract follows this recommendation by specifying a frequency for grass cutting and it works well.

### **3.1 How do we know how well the contract is performing?**

The 2004 Overview and Scrutiny report also highlighted concerns regarding contract monitoring. The current contract improves on the previous contract and has several different methods to monitor contract performance including:

- TLG Performance Quality Management System monitoring
- Member feedback on behalf of local residents
- Open Spaces Team assessment
- Street Scene support and assessment

- Customer feedback to both TLG and FDC
- Customer surveys on a quarterly basis to obtain customer feedback regarding open spaces

Information regarding these monitoring routes are outlined in more detail later in this report.

## 4 What we have found

### 4.1 This report offers information regarding several aspects of the Council's grass cutting operation:

1. An assessment of FDC's current grass cutting specification when compared with other organisations specifications.
2. An assessment of customer feedback, including:
  - Requests for service in the past 19 months received by the Environment and Leisure support team with regard to grass cutting and grounds maintenance overall.
  - An assessment of 3C's customer feedback with regard to grass cutting in Fenland.
  - An assessment of customer comments, complaints and compliments received directly by TLG and the actions taken and learning gathered as a result of this information.
  - Consideration of levels of customer satisfaction with FDC's open spaces.
3. An assessment and information regarding TLG's Performance Quality Management System (PQMS), quality management system.

Much of the data from this research is contained in more detail in the Appendices to this report.

#### 4.2 An assessment of FDC's current grass cutting specification when compared with other organisations specifications

Appendix V highlights the differences in grass cutting regimes between Fenland and some other similar Councils and is summarised in the table below:

Council	In house or contractor?	Amenity grass cuts p.a	Time between amenity grass cuts	Cemeteries grass cuts p.a.	Are clippings collected?
Fenland	TLG	16	2 weeks	18	No
Bassetlaw	In-house	14	2 weeks	14	In main park & on high amenity sports pitches
Babergh	TLG	10	3	Town / Parish Council responsibility	No
Breckland	Serco	Number necessary to maintain a 75mm length	N/A – based on grass length, not number of cuts	Number necessary to maintain a 75mm length	No, with the exception of 3 sites of special scientific interest
Kettering	In-house	When required  Parks cut every 2 weeks	N/A – based on grass length, not number of cuts	When required	No.  Collected only in local crematorium and sheltered housing schemes
Newark and Sherwood	Contractor	Number necessary to maintain a 75mm length	N/A – based on grass length, not number of cuts	When required	No.  With the exception of fine turf.



There are two alternative ways of managing grass cutting:

- A specific number of cuts throughout the grass cutting season.
- Maintaining grass height below a certain level.

The information fed back from the Councils who responded to our survey highlights the two alternative methods of managing the grass.

By keeping grass cut to a certain level a contractor or in-house team is able to take a view about the number of cuts necessary. Some years when it is dry, they may be able to reduce costs by reducing cutting frequency and employ fewer seasonal summer workers. There is the added risk that in a good, warm and damp summer (such as 2014) grass will grow very well, meaning that additional cuts above those budgeted for are necessary. FDC's previous experience of this scheme highlighted that this approach did not work in Fenland and the Council moved to a frequency based approach.

Working within a specific number of cuts framework gives both the Council and the contractor certainty regarding resources required to carry out the works. It also gives customers the certainty of when grass will next be cut. TLG provides this information on their web page – see here: <http://www.thelandscapergroup.co.uk/fenland/maintenance-rounds>

With regards to the number of cuts that FDC contracts TLG to carry out, research shows that the level of service, 16 cuts for amenity grass and 18 cuts in cemeteries, is at the top end of specifications, with more cuts per year than comparator authorities.

The grass in Fenland receives 16 cuts per year, over a 32 week growing season equates to a cut every two weeks. The detail regarding the specification for cutting grass in Fenland may be found in Appendix IX.

This style of contract does mean that during unusual weather conditions grass will grow slightly longer than preferred if the cutting frequency is affected. FDC and TLG have worked with the Portfolio Holder to develop a wet weather action plan to mitigate these issues.

Other local authorities have informed us that due to increasing financial pressure they are reducing the number of grass cuts per year in order to reduce costs. Others are also transferring responsibility for grass maintenance to Parish and Town Councils.

#### **4.2.1 Moving some managed areas back to a more natural state**

Our investigations have also revealed that some Councils are moving areas that were previously cut as amenity grass back to either grassland, or even a 'wilderness' type area. This change reduces the Council's costs of maintaining the area and also fits in with the current issues regarding maintenance of the bee population and pollination.

#### **4.2.2 County Council Highways Verges**

FDC is paid by Cambridgeshire County Council to cut highways grass mainly inside the town boundaries in Fenland, with a few rural areas in our villages. In order to keep the towns looking as good as possible, FDC cuts the highways grass 16 times p.a., whilst only receiving payment for just 3 cuts of grass from the County Council.

#### **4.2.3 Wet Weather Action Plan**

In 2012 the UK experienced the wettest summer on record. This meant that contractors across the country could not cut the grass effectively as it was so wet. This was what happened in Fenland, leading to grass growing to a significant length and many complaints from the local community and members. Fenland and TLG have learnt from this experience. The Council has developed, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, a wet weather action plan with TLG (see Appendix VI) to ensure that should similar weather occur again, priority areas are tackled with additional resources to ensure that standards are recovered swiftly following the rain.

### **4.3 An Assessment of Customer Feedback**

Feedback, including requests for service and 3C's comments, have been considered as part of the research into grass cutting in Fenland. Considering the very public and obvious nature of the grass in Fenland's open spaces, and the size of the grass cutting operation, feedback is relatively limited.

There are three channels of comment or complaint;

1. Complaints about the contractor; all addressed by FDC with TLG management
2. Complaints of a simple nature regarding the works; for a fast response to the customer, TLG replies directly, reporting these to FDC on a monthly basis.
3. Complex questions regarding grounds maintenance – handled by FDC open spaces team.

FDC's contract manager monitors the contract performance closely and meets weekly with the TLG supervisor to assess customer comment trends.

#### **4.3.1 Community Information on Grass Cutting**

In order to be responsive to customer's needs, TLG provides an online page allowing residents to see when the last cut took place and when future cuts are due. Information is updated weekly on grass cutting operations for the week. This system is a good method of keeping our local community informed of when grass areas are being cut and also helps to reduce the number of calls to the contact centre or TLG with regards to grass cutting.

Whilst considering the current web pages it is clear that the web link to the TLG grass cutting regime could be made more prominent on the FDC open spaces web page, and should also feature on any revised FDC home page. As part of the ongoing development of the Council's web pages and as part of the Council's Channel Shift project these improvements are being planned.

### **4.4 TLG – Customer comments**

The design of the contract with TLG allows many customer comments to be received directly by TLG, improving customer responsiveness. The FDC web page directs customers to a TLG contact number to report issues with open spaces in Fenland. A summary of the comments recorded may be found in Appendix VIII. With such a large and varied contract, works will not always be completed to everyone in the community's

satisfaction. The results in the Appendix highlight this – however, on the whole it would appear that, following inspection, the majority of works have been completed to the specification of the contract (10 of 15 comments in 2014, 8 of 13 comments in 2013). It is also clear from the data in the Appendix that TLG is taking prompt action with regards to complaints and where the work is not up to the specification required, action is being taken to address this.

An analysis of the data received by TLG over the past two years does not highlight any pattern that provides learning to influence future work. One common repeated issue is customers complaining about a section of grass that is owned by someone else and not part of the contract. TLG and FDC work closely together to establish who is responsible for land in the area and resolve customer queries promptly.

#### **4.5 FDC – Customer comments**

The Council receives either service requests for work regarding open spaces, or 3C's comments, compliments or complaints regarding open spaces work. These are highlighted in Appendices I – IV. Of the service requests that FDC receives, it is clear that tree issues form the majority of feedback, with grass feedback the third most common.

An ongoing analysis of customer comments has led to service redesign in the following areas:

##### **4.5.1 Wet Weather**

The main issue, causing significant customer dissatisfaction which has faced the Council with regards to grass cutting recently was the summer of 2012. This was the wettest summer on record causing grass to grow rapidly, with the condition of the ground meaning that cutting the grass was not possible every two weeks. Member's feedback on behalf of the community and complaints received directly by the Council about grass length exceeded expected levels.

The Council and TLG have learnt from this experience and have developed a wet weather action plan (Appendix VI) with the Portfolio Holder in case similar weather occurs in the future.

#### **4.5.2 Other areas of learning**

Whilst the research information highlights that the grass cutting specification in Fenland is at a high level, with more cuts taking place over the growing season than other comparative Councils, customers continue to highlight certain aspects of the service.

Of the feedback regarding grass cutting, the comments / complaints generally fall into two sections – grass too long or cemeteries complaints regarding either grass length or grass clippings on memorials.

#### **4.5.3 Ownership of grassed areas**

With regard to grass being highlighted as too long, many of the comments focus on land that FDC does not have responsibility for and these queries will be handled at the initial contact by checking open spaces plans on Fenland Maps. This gives a faster response to customers and reduce the Council's costs in officer time.

#### **4.5.4 Long grass reported prior to cutting**

Another issue that is highlighted is long grass complaints. Having assessed the TLG customer contact data (Appendix VIII) and the Council's own 3C's data it is shows that when a customer highlights long grass it is often prior to a cut, when grass would be at its longest. This is a limitation of the frequency based contract; it is not possible for the contractor to address every area of grass in the District that may grow quickly towards the end of a two week period, this being weather dependant.

#### **4.5.5 Grass clippings on memorials following a cut of wet grass**

Cemetery grass length appears to be another matter. The contract specification is clear; following grass cutting, the contractor will blow grass clippings off memorials and pathways. The contractor is carrying out this aspect of the contract, but when the grass is wet, clippings will stick to memorials and the blowers will not remove the grass. To have grass on a loved one's memorial may be upsetting and lead to the perception that the grass is being cut without the care it requires.

To ensure that customers are aware that wet grass cannot be removed from memorials, clear signage is being added to all cemetery notice boards highlighting how grass is cut and then blown – with wet grass being an issue. Additionally in the next season TLG will be issued with 'wet weather cutting' boards to attach to the base of the noticeboards

highlighting that grass was cut during wet weather that may have led to grass sticking to memorials.

#### **4.5.6 Cremation Plots**

Grass around cremation plots is another area that receives regular customer feedback. Cremation plots are very small, so no mowing can take place and strimming grass keeps the areas within specification. Unfortunately customers leave items for loved ones on the memorials making strimming very difficult. In Whittlesey Cemetery several cremation plot areas are already edged with a wooden boarder and then covered in stone chippings. This creates a pleasant effect and also prevents grass growth around the cremation plots. Officers are currently investigating adding this to the other open cemeteries cremation plots.

#### **4.5.7 Cut and Collect of grass clippings in cemeteries**

Consideration has been given to collecting grass clippings in Fenland's open cemeteries. As this operation is much more time consuming than cutting and leaving clippings as they fall the cost is considerably higher. To cut and collect throughout Fenland's cemeteries an increase in cost of approximately £70,000 would be incurred.

#### **4.5.8 Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

Independent of other feedback to the Council, customers are asked, on a quarterly basis, how they view Fenland's open spaces. In 2013/14 the satisfaction rate was 87% (282 of 324 asked). Satisfaction figures for 2014 / 2015 will be available in January 2015.

#### **4.5.9 Green Flag and Anglia in Bloom Awards**

In addition to customer feedback, the Open Spaces in Fenland are assessed in the Anglia in Bloom competition and two parks in Wisbech are assessed for the Green Flag Awards. 2014 has been Fenland's most successful year for Anglia in Bloom with over 30 awards being gained, including Wisbech winning a Gold Award and St. Peter's Church Gardens being recognised as the best park in East Anglia for its size. This recognition reflects the work that FDC's Open Spaces and StreetScene Teams, TLG and local community volunteers have put into the open spaces in Fenland.

#### **4.5.10 A broader approach to supporting customers in Fenland**

Whilst the Open Spaces team possesses a high degree of knowledge with regards to horticulture, the majority of customer comments made reflect issues that need limited horticulture knowledge. The Council has recognised that this is the case and to be more responsive to customers in May 2014 Staff Committee agreed to replace a horticultural officer role with a streetscene officer. This ensures that the Council gives Saturday cover from a StreetScene officer, allowing improved co-ordination of the cleansing team ensuring better a more responsive service to issues such as full litter bins and open spaces issues across Fenland.

#### 4.6 TLG’s Performance Quality Monitoring System (PQMS); assessing the standard of the work undertaken and the effectiveness of the PQMS system

TLG’s PQMS results are featured in Appendix VII, with details of how the scheme is administered in Appendix IX.

The PQMS uses a rating system similar to the Keep Britain Tidy scheme:

Rating	Rating Description	Score	Status
Fail	The feature is out of specification	1 - 2	RED
Broadly compliant	The feature is largely in specification but slightly below contract standard	3	AMBER
Pass	The feature achieved or exceeded contract specification in all aspects	4 - 7	GREEN

The Council requires features to reach a pass standard whereby they are at the contract specification. This is the case in the majority of the inspections undertaken in the past two years. The dashboards in Appendix VII show that the results for each town and ‘others’ are all green.

In the past two years over 1,000 assessments of randomly selected aspects of the contract have taken place, resulting in an 84% (858 inspections) pass rate. Those inspections rating features as broadly compliant made up 14% (142 inspections) of the total, with inspections highlighting performance below contract specification at just 2% (22 inspections). Those items below specification are rectified to the specification with the Open Spaces Manager being made aware of the changes implemented.

#### 4.7 Learning from PQMS;

The PQMS data may be viewed as valid as it is transparent and does highlight aspects of the contract that are not reaching specification.

Those features that failed to meet specification have been highlighted as part of the contract performance review process with TLG. Monthly performance discussions take place with FDC’s Open Spaces Manager.



## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

- The grass cutting specification in Fenland is at a higher standard than comparator Councils.
- The contract in place with TLG is robust and well managed. The grass cutting operation across Fenland is considerable and is carried out to the specification that the Council requires. Regular joint meetings between TLG and the Council's contract manager ensure that standards are maintained and monitored.
- Customer feedback from many different sources, as well as officer and contractor inspections, is used to ensure that the contract specification is met and learning is applied to improve the service for local people when possible.

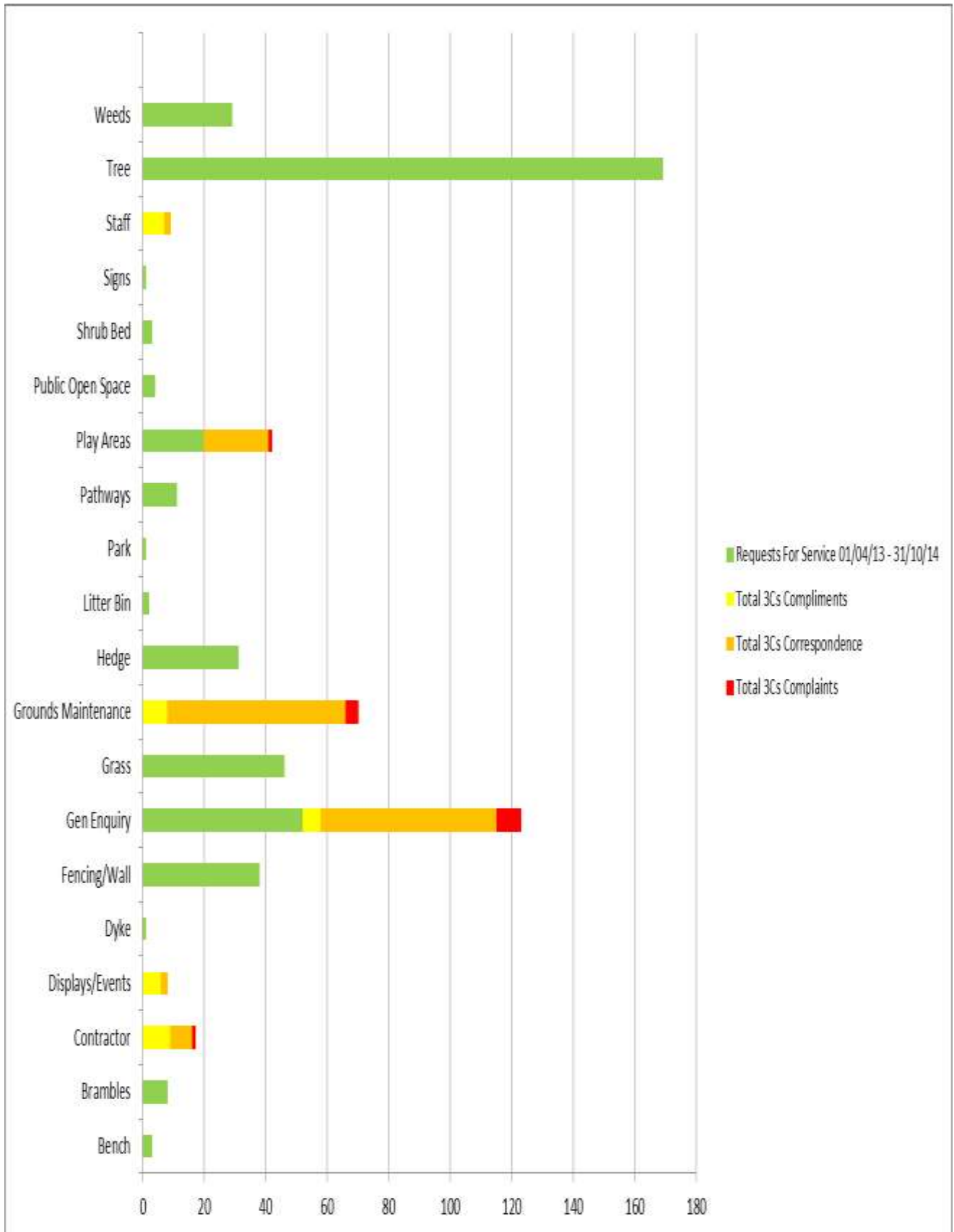
## 6 Appendix I

### 19 Month assessment of requests for service and 3C's activity for Grounds Maintenance

<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>	Requests For Service 01/04/13 - 31/10/14	Total 3Cs Compliments	Total 3Cs Correspondence	Total 3Cs Complaints	Total
Bench	3				3
Brambles	8				8
Contractor		9	7	1	17
Displays/Events		6	2	0	8
Dyke	1				1
Fencing/Wall	38				38
Gen Enquiry	52	6	57	8	123
Grass	46				46
Grounds Maintenance		8	58	4	70
Hedge	31				31
Litter Bin	2				2
Park	1				1
Pathways	11				11
Play Areas	20	0	21	1	42
Public Open Space	4				4
Shrub Bed	3				3
Signs	1				1
Staff		7	2	0	9
Tree	169				169
Weeds	29				29
<b>Total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>616</b>

## 7 Appendix II

Appendix I data regarding requests for service and 3C's represented in a chart



## 8 Appendix III

Analysis of 3C's customer contacts 2013 & 2014 (customer names removed for data protection)

	Received	3Cs	Narrative summary of 3C's
<b>2013-2014</b>			
EL 102	10/05/13	Compliment	An excellent job has been done with the grass cutting, well done (milner rd) - no cuttings left
EL 140	28/05/13	Correspondence	Issues with grass cutting at Furrowfields open space, rubbish under shrubbery overhanging his fence and street light issues
EL 153	07/06/13	Correspondence	Grass in West End Park very long and there is a festival there at the weekend - asking for emergency cut tomorrow (Note this work had already been planned prior to comment)
EL 154	28/05/13	Correspondence	Via Cllr Murphy - concerns with overgrown grass in Boundary Drive, March
EL 197	09/07/13	Correspondence	Would like to know why grass has been left to grow up to knees on play park at Abbey Estate near Cedar Avenue, Doddington - unpleasant to walk across and children cannot play football any longer (NB: CUSTOMER SUBSEQUENTLY ADVISED THIS IS PARISH LAND, NOT FDC)
EL 202	09/07/13	Correspondence	Cremation plots grass maintenance query at St Wendredas
EL 632	12/11/13	Correspondence	Newton PC not happy with the FDC contractors responsible for the cutting of grass, leaving a lot of mess etc. parish council meeting - did FDC arrange a meeting?
<b>2014-15</b>			
EL17	12/04/2014	Correspondence	Cemetery grass needs to be cut
EL73	23/04/2014	Correspondence	Not happy with grass outside Guildenburgh Close, Whittlesey
EL118	02/05/2014	Correspondence	Photo provided of poor grass cutting at Victory Avenue, Whittlesey
EL176	19/05/2014	Correspondence	Via Cllr Murphy - Grass cutting in Whittlesey cemetery (comment on Twitter about "heartbreaking state")
EL177	11/05/2014	Correspondence	Via Cllr Murphy - Grass cutting in Manor Field, Whittlesey - grass not gathered up after cutting
EL178	16/05/2014	Correspondence	Via Cllr Murphy - Grass cutting in Whittlesey - grass is cut but not gathered and scatters leaving a mess everywhere
EL188	20/05/2014	Correspondence	Green off Bramble Close, why is it left out of grass cutting when FDC responsibility?
EL189	22/05/2014	<b>Complaint</b>	Complaint re length of grass at Chatteris cemetery around the children's plots
EL197	30/05/2014	<b>Complaint</b>	State of Chatteris Cemetery - grass, bushes and trees overgrown, blocked drains, etc
EL230	09/06/2014	Comment	Many thanks Phil for a really comprehensive report on grass cutting in Whittlesey - will be made available to all town councillors for use in general enquiries; also thanks to Cllr Murphy for time and effort in this
EL236	15/06/2014	Correspondence	Has received complaints that grass not cut at Eastwood Cemetery - schedule shows should have been done
EL294	16/06/2014	<b>Complaint</b>	Appalled at the state of Eastwood Cemetery, overgrown grass, sunken graves, ornaments/vases left at edge of graves
EL304	17/06/2014	Correspondence	Grass cutting outside property (Badgeney Road, March) - not cut for considerable time and needs adding to contract
EL437	22/07/2014	<b>Complaint</b>	Grass not been cut for months in Leafere Way, Leverington, young son fell over in stinging nettles
EL465	26/07/2014	Correspondence	The grass is very high as you enter cricketers close
EL499	01/08/2014	Comment	Wife's plot is constantly covered in grass cuttings
EL500	08/08/2014	Compliment	Thank the grass team for the excellent work they are doing around his bungalow. He described in detail how the team sweep and blew off the grass from the paths and moved his doormat to make sure it was all cutting were removed, They also moved his wheelie bins to strim and then retied them to his fence. He was over the moon and felt he had to let the team know.
EL524	08/08/2014	Compliment	Called TLG office to thank the team who cut the grass last week, He was very impressed and happy with the finish.
EL585	04/09/2014	<b>Complaint</b>	Very unhappy about the constant grass that TLG deposit on several graves that he maintains.

## 9 Appendix IV

### Assessment of grass cutting request for service narratives

Received	RFS No.	Summary of service request
10/05/2013	99589	Grass bording walkway between Mount Drive & Money Bank needs cutting
15/05/2013	99721	grass around spinney playground waterlees rd wisbech & grass at oasis centre wisbech extremely long. looks like a tip,very difficult to pick up dog poo.Not been cut in weeks.
31/05/2013	100116	The crew came in today to cut the grass that was very long but have left a mess and some places have not been cut, also the grass cutting has been left all over the place.
31/05/2013	100115	Please could your department come & cut the open space grass in Woodgate Road, next to the fish & chip shop? It is becoming extremely overgrown again. You were cutting it on a regular basis during the winter months, but not now.
03/06/2013	100143	the council operative that comes to cut the grass on the central green in Edwards Way used to also cut the grass along the verge that runs the entire length of the road beside the field. However, on the last 2-3 occasions this area has been left uncut and is now looking overgrown and very untidy. Please could cutting of this verge be resumed?
04/06/2013	100207	Customer has phoned re grass cutting in Station Avenue. Says she has lived there for 2 years and verges on her side of road and opposite have never been cut. Yesterday her husband cut outside their property. Today men turned up to cut verges opposite but did not even look at their side of road. I cannot see who is supposed to cut on Fenland Maps, grounds maintenance. They are a Roddons tenant. Roddons appear to be responsible for some areas down Pentelow Close. Can we advise customer if their verge should be cut by our contractors. I advised customer to ask Roddons too as you were not available on phone.
05/06/2013	100225	Footpath between Ollard Avenue and Coldhorn Crescent is very overgrown and the grass needs cutting
12/06/2013	100469	The amenity land which I understand you own at the rear of my property is rarely cut. I cut it or pay to have it cut on a regular basis. Either cut it, give me a works order or sign the land over to me.
20/06/2013	100685	Contractors have been out and cut opposite her property but she is still waiting for the grass area around her property to be done. It is 6' high - lots of dandelions and it is seeding.
24/06/2013	100794	A1101 at the traffic lights, Sutton road/dowgate road, grass is very long and trees overhanging the traffic light, infact the light is completely blocked when leaving wisbech
24/06/2013	100790	Grass in Church Road, Gorefield has not been cut all year.
26/06/2013	99240	Re green space off Bramble Close in Whittlesey that has always been cut by FDC. Contractors who cut the grass on New Road always used to cut New Road and then move onto Bramble Close green. She wanted to make us aware they are not doing this now. They are missing the green off when cutting, and this is only being done a couple of times a year. She also advised there is a tree on the green that has fallen down and needs to be removed. She believes contractors are not completing the work and wanted you to be aware.
26/06/2013	100884	The junction of Black Drove and the A47. The grass is so high that when joining the A47 from Black Drove (between Thorney Toll & Guyhirn) it is impossible to check for traffic without encroaching the A47. Thank you.
01/07/2013	101047	Green area in front of bungalows between cox's garage and entrance to St Marys Close, the grass is about 4ft high - needs cutting asap
01/07/2013	101043	The grass verges have not been cut in Murrow for a couple of months and are now starting to be a hazzard as well as being very long
09/07/2013	101391	Part of Woodmans Way footpath leading FROM Bridge Lane to Eaton Estate, Wimblington needs grass cutting but also hedge trimming.
24/07/2013	101906	Grass verge on L/H side of St Johns Chase really needs cutting - its overgrowing the footpath
25/07/2013	101920	Grass needs cutting back along footpath just south of river from West End Park leading to bypass in March - Grass is over 5ft high
31/07/2013	102042	Patch of land outside 1 Knights Close - has not had grass verge cut, all surrounding area has been
31/07/2013	102052	The BMX track (Wigstones Road march) the park just over the bridge is overgrown and people are treading in dog foulings because the grass is so overgrown please can someone sort this out as soon as possible.
31/07/2013	102051	The grass overgrown and It looks a disgrace to the village (Parson Drove) the grass is 5ft tall and It needs to be sorted straight away, a local resident phoned to complain about this and advised that that it probably belongs to roddons so this request has been past to them but said I'd still notify the council.
06/08/2013	102210	Please return a call to Mrs Woods regarding grass cuttings in alleyway between Landau Way & Marsh Close. This has not been done for considerable time now and the grass is getting long.
08/08/2013	102290	Grass in cremation part (Mount Pleasant) in urgent need of a cut
08/08/2013	102285	The public footpath in Doddington starting at Child's Lane heading toward Manor Farm, which then in turn comes out/ends at Brickmakers Arms Lane is severely overgrown. We have tried to negotiate this path a few times this week taking sticks and cutters to make a way through. However it is so severely overgrown with nettles and brambles it is impossible to pass through. Please can this information be passed on to the relevant department. This is a frequently used path as it takes you away from the main road yet it is impossible to now pass through.
11/09/2013	103307	Grass verge still not been cut (West Delph)
23/09/2013	103590	Over the last 2 years, your landscapers have not cut my front garden grass area despite having been told in writing that they should do so as Roddons pays your council the ground rent from our rents to do this maintenance.
01/10/2013	103856	Mrs Clay has been on the phone to advise that outside her house the grass cutters have left a pile of grass (been cut but just the grass bits that get thrown out the lawn mower) they have left a pile of grass outside her house and she is afraid the wind may blow this into her garden.
06/11/2013	104819	Regarding the stretch of grass verge along West Delph - has been mowed but some missed and not strimmed
24/03/2014	108975	There is a strip of grass outside my front/side boundary wall to the road that is owned by Fenland District Council, this has never been cut by the council, so I have been cutting this myself, due to illness I will no longer be able to do this, so would appreciate it if you could cut it in the future.
27/03/2014	109100	The cutting of the green and the grass verges in Tithre road. When they cut the grass the cuttings are not removed and left to blow over the paths,front gardens and in some cases onto cars. If there are any cans or bottles on the green these are churned up and left on an area where children play and yesterday after the grass had been cut I retrieved a glass bottle and 2 cans from the road. The green looks awful after they have been, surely the grass could be collected and recycled to use as compost? You say we want Fenland to look attractive well get your contractors to clear up after they have finished.
30/04/2014	109845	Grass to the front of this property and number 11 very overgrown and looking scruffy (Carpenters Way)
19/05/2014	110265	The public footpath that runs from Manor Farm off Childs Lane, Doddington to Brickmakers Arms Lane, Wimblington is virtually impassable again.
19/05/2014	110273	The open grass area in front of bungalows at Rings End is very long, has not been cut this season
28/05/2014	110521	Could we cut the grass at the top of Peterhouse Crescent opposite the Braza and next to the signal box
11/06/2014	110873	On Tithre Road - grass has been cut again but not strimmed - Has been missed before and the large posts need cutting around
08/07/2014	111758	Large grass area in front of this property (Goodens Lane) used to be cut by contractors but now has stopped? Please can this be looked into and cut regularly
08/07/2014	111772	River embankment very overgrown (Ramsey Mereside)
14/07/2014	111918	Overgrown grass that is outside a piece of land opposite my property. The land is located on Low Road, Elm and the grass is growing outside the perimeter fence of the said land. It is now around 4-5ft high and is a real eye-sore.
24/07/2014	112325	grass verge in Mansell Road at the bottom has been missed again
01/08/2014	112582	Public footpath opposite Summer Lodge in Church Lane (Tydd St Giles) almost completely overgrown. There is no discernible difference between the field and the footpath, the footpath is overgrown with nettles, thistles and grass.
06/08/2014	112716	Customer chasing up verge cutting from 292 Creek Road to the railway line which our highways officer has advised is maintained by yourselves.
11/09/2014	113744	Edge of the path the grass is growing over the path so paths now smaller, trees in the park roots pushing the path up so very uneven. Would like to know if there are plans to repair/improve this area please? (Chestnut Crescent, March)
16/09/2014	113954	Would you kindly arrange for the grass to be cut on the public right of way (public footpath) that runs from Front Road, Murrow (ordnance survey ref TF 3815 0725) to Ravens Farm.
13/10/2014	114752	Re grass that belongs to the Green outside the front of our house. has not been cut and it looks awful. Even though the grass in front of next door (which is up for sale and has no one living there) which is all the same as our green, gets cut??
27/10/2014	115174	Mr Baker called regarding the small grassed area which runs along the front of his and his neighbours property (Otogo Close, Whittlesey). Why do FDC no longer cut it (stopped about 6 months ago).

## 10 Appendix V

Comparison of other similar Council's grass cutting regime and arrangements

Other similar councils were contacted to determine their current grass cutting arrangements. These Councils included:

Carlisle, Breckland, Amber Valley, Kettering, Newark and Sherwood, North Lincs, Boston, Bassetlaw, Babergh and North East Derbyshire

The following table highlights the returns and a comparison with Fenland's grass cutting arrangements.

Council	In house or contractor?	Amenity grass cuts p.a	Time between amenity grass cuts	Cemeteries grass cuts p.a.	Are clippings collected?
Fenland	TLG	16	2 weeks	18	No
Bassetlaw	In-house	14	2 weeks	14	In main park & on high amenity sports pitches
Babergh	TLG	Indicative 10	3	Carried out by Parish and Town Councils	No
Breckland	Serco	Number necessary to maintain a 75mm length	N/A – based on grass length, not number of cuts	Number necessary to maintain a 75mm length	No, with the exception of 3 sites of special scientific interest
Kettering	In-house	When required  Parks cut every 2 weeks	N/A – based on grass length, not number of cuts	When required	No.  Collected only in local crematorium and sheltered housing schemes
Newark and Sherwood	Contractor	Number necessary to maintain a 75mm length	Based on grass length, not number of cuts	When required	No.  With the exception of fine turf.

## 11 Appendix VI

### **The Landscape Group Wet Weather Plan for Fenland District Council**

#### **Introduction**

Following a number of difficult wet years such as 2012, The Landscape Group (TLG) and Fenland District Council (FDC) plan operational tasks for the key areas of the contract to mitigate the effects of any future extremes in weather conditions.

This report has been compiled by TLG in consultation FDC's Open Spaces Manager to both identify trigger points where service is affected which will result in extraordinary actions needing to be taken to maintain service levels and key priority areas for the District Council and its stakeholders.

#### **Key Features**

##### **Grass Cutting and Shrub Bed Maintenance**

A proportion of the complaints generated and levels of dissatisfaction were grass related. The complaints were in general relating to the length of grass on the amenity cut and the cemetery grass cut, these were as a result of the time it took the mowing teams to get around the route.

There are also some complaints about the rows of grass left on the surface; these are the result of arising collecting to a greater extent when grass is long and wet.

TLG allowed an additional 10% human resource headroom in its tender between contract headcount requirement (based on area and frequencies) and actual running headcount. This is to allow for any pinch points during the season for example staff sickness and other absences.

The purpose of this wet weather plan is to have a number of agreed actions that would help deal with any extreme conditions that may occur.

#### Requirement

**TLG source additional machines and have the ability to put operators on the mowers as and when required.**

#### **Action**

- TLG has 3 x machines now available for the purposes of standby.
- 1no John Deere compact tractor with a 62 inch rotary mowing deck.
- 1no New Holland TN75 with a set of triple cylinders mowers giving cut width of 2.14m
- 1no 48 inch Kubota GR23- sit on rotary mowing machine.

Requirement

**The application of Herbicide around obstacles on rounds and kerbs in cemeteries.**

**Action**

TLG will apply and use systemic and residual herbicide. This will reduce the number of occasions the operatives have to strim between the kerbs thus reducing the mess that the grass/weeds put on the headstones.

Requirement

**Increased workforce supervision, to maximise output.**

**Action**

The appointed contract supervisor will manage the day to day works program. He will continue to find lost time and deal with any problem areas missed. Closer control means overtime can be called in sooner as issues are identified.

Requirement

**Reduce downtime due to spares being delayed.**

**Action**

TLG and FDC workshop to keep a useful stock of belts, blades and other items to better maintain the fleet of mowers.

Requirement

**FDC and TLG to formally identify Priority Areas and non-essential works to ensure that key service areas are addressed when output outstrips capability and FDC are fully aware of non-completed works.**

**Action**

An agreed list of priority areas compiled monthly and may include:-

- Essential burial services



- Play area Inspections
- Cemetery maintenance, including bin emptying
- Key Parks and Gardens maintenance
- Sports pitches
- EPGS grass areas

Requirement

**Improve communication between parties to identify threats to service levels ASAP and to take joint action.**

**Action**

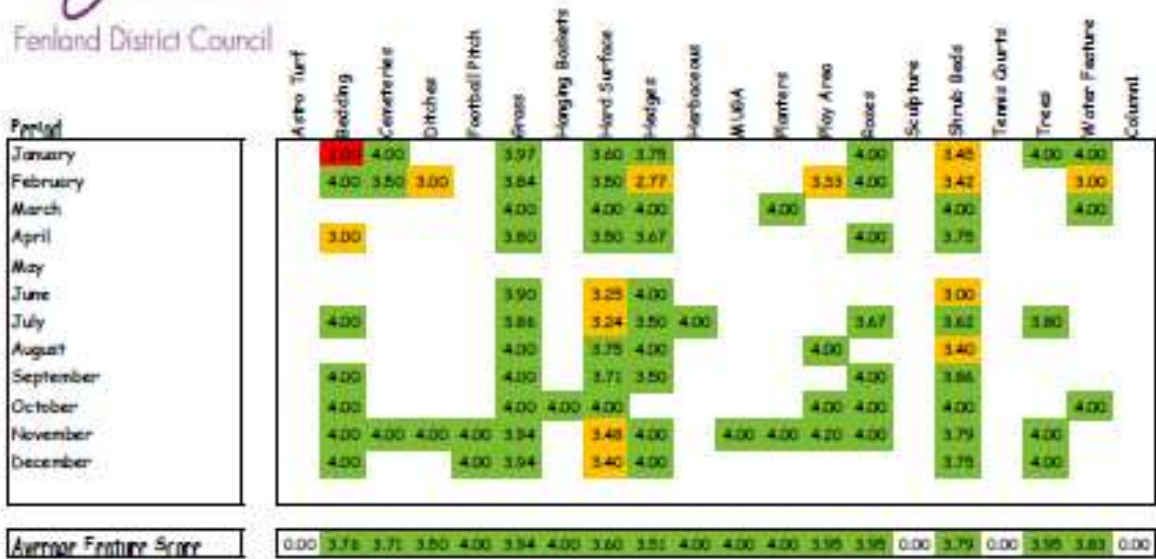
Regular meetings at all levels of seniority throughout both organisations, these should be planned and as inclement weather dictates.

# 12 Appendix VIIa

## TLG PQMS Results 2013

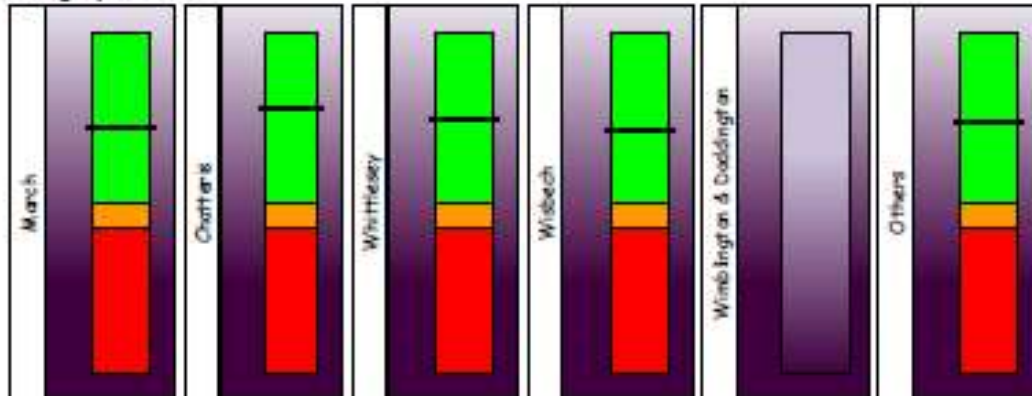


### Fenland Grounds Maintenance Performance & Quality Monitoring



<b>Average Feature Score</b>	0.00	3.78	3.71	3.50	4.00	3.94	4.00	3.60	3.51	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.95	3.95	0.00	3.79	0.00	3.95	3.83	0.00
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#### Scoring by Ward.



Features Inspected =	543
Features Passed =	431
Amber Features =	90
Features Failed =	22
Pass Rate =	95%

Current Limit of Accuracy	2.0%
Current Pass Range	93.1% TO 97.2%

Samples required per period for a 95% confidence (+/- 5%) given the current pass rate.	74
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# 13 Appendix VIIb

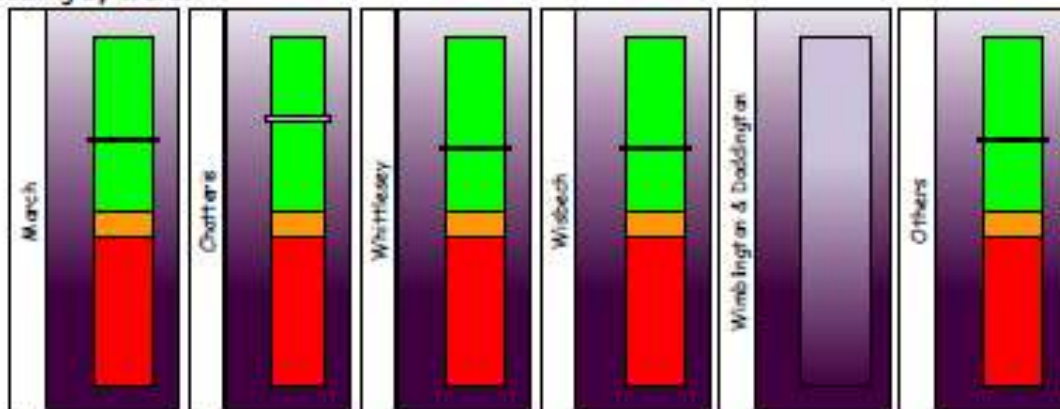
TLG PQMS results 2014 (to date)



## Fenland Grounds Maintenance Performance & Quality Monitoring



### Scoring by Ward.



Features Inspected =	484
Features Passed =	427
Amber Features =	52
Features Failed =	5
Pass Rate =	99%

Current Limit of Accuracy
1.0%
Current Pass Range
97.8% TO 99.9%

Samples required per period for a 95% confidence (+/- 5%) given the current pass rate.
18

## 14 Appendix VIIC

### Analysis of amber and red grass features

Sample Date	Location	Site	
01 January 2013	WISBECH	Somers Court	4
01 January 2013	WHITTLESEY	Snoots Road	4
01 January 2013	WHITTLESEY	Ashline Grove	4
01 January 2013	WHITTLESEY	Newlands Road	4
01 January 2013	WISBECH	Tinkers Drove	3
01 January 2013	MARCH	Kirk Ogden Close	4
01 January 2013	WHITTLESEY	St Marys Court	4
01 January 2013	WISBECH	Gloucester Court	4
01 January 2013	WISBECH	Golding Place	4
02 February 2013	MARCH	Eastwood Cemetery	4
02 February 2013	MARCH	The Avenue Recreation Ground	4
02 February 2013	MARCH	Robingoodfellows Lane Recreation Ground	4
02 February 2013	MARCH	Heron Walk	4
02 February 2013	MARCH	Fairfax Way	4
02 February 2013	WIMBLINGTON	Pond Close	4
02 February 2013	CHATTERIS	Dock Road	1
02 February 2013	MARCH	Ellingham Avenue	3
02 February 2013	WISBECH	Barton Road	3
02 February 2013	LEVERINGTON	Seafield Road	4
02 February 2013	MANEA	Rutland Way	4
02 February 2013	MARCH	Peas Hill Road	4
02 February 2013	WISBECH	Holmes Drive	4
03 April 2013	CHATTERIS	Wenny Road	4
03 April 2013	WHITTLESEY	Eastrea Road	3
03 April 2013	WHITTLESEY	Park Lane	3
03 April 2013	WISBECH	Tinkers Drove	3
03 April 2013	WISBECH	Waterlees Road	4
30 June 2013	DODDINGTON	Harvest Close	3
30 June 2013	MARCH	George Campbell Leisure Centre	3
30 June 2013	WISBECH	Lime Avenue	3
30 June 2013	WISBECH	Coldhorn Crescent	4
02 July 2013	MARCH	Library Car Park	4
02 July 2013	WIMBLINGTON	Norman Way	3
02 July 2013	WIMBLINGTON	Meadow Way	4
02 July 2013	MARCH	Hundred Road	4
02 July 2013	MARCH	Olivers way	4
02 July 2013	WHITTLESEY	Crescent Close	4
03 July 2013	CHATTERIS	Hunters Close	4
03 July 2013	CHATTERIS	Gibside Avenue	4
03 July 2013	WHITTLESEY	Quinion Close	4
03 July 2013	WISBECH	Peatlings Lane	3
03 July 2013	DODDINGTON	Ancaster Way	3
03 July 2013	MARCH	Gimbert Square	3
03 July 2013	WISBECH	Onyx Court	4
04 July 2013	CHATTERIS	Quaker Way	4
31 July 2013	CHATTERIS	Wenny Road	4
31 July 2013	WHITTLESEY	Station Road	3
31 July 2013	ELM	All Saints Close	4

## 15 Appendix VIIC

### Analysis of amber and red grass features

Sample Date	Location	Site	
31 July 2013	LEVERINGTON	Seafield Road	4
02 August 2013	CHATTERIS	The Elms	4
02 August 2013	CHATTERIS	Furrowfields Car Park	4
02 August 2013	MARCH	North Drive Recreation Ground	4
01 September 2013	MARCH	Hurst Avenue	4
02 September 2013	WIMBLINGTON	Meadow Way	4
04 September 2013	MARCH	Upwell Road	4
01 November 2013	CHATTERIS	Larham Way	3
01 November 2013	WHITTLESEY	Station Road Recreation Ground	3
01 November 2013	CHATTERIS	West Street	3
01 November 2013	CHATTERIS	Harold Heading Close	4
05 November 2013	MARCH	Morton Avenue	4
05 November 2013	WISBECH	Burcroft Road	4
05 November 2013	WISBECH	Freedom Bridge Roundabout	4
05 November 2013	WISBECH	Barton Road Recreation Ground	4
05 November 2013	CHATTERIS	Fairway	4
05 November 2013	COATES	March Road	4
05 November 2013	WHITTLESEY	Glenfields	4
05 November 2013	WISBECH	Clayton Close	4
05 November 2013	WISBECH	Hawkins Drive	4
05 November 2013	WISBECH	Golding Place	4
05 November 2013	WISBECH	Sefton Avenue	4
02 December 2013	MARCH	Church Gardens	3
02 December 2013	MARCH	Russell/Peyton Avenue	4
02 December 2013	NEWTON	St James Churchyard	3
02 December 2013	CHATTERIS	Fairway	4
02 December 2013	MARCH	Asplin Avenue	4
02 December 2013	MARCH	East Drive	4
02 December 2013	WISBECH	Clayton Close	4
02 December 2013	WISBECH	Clayton Close	4
02 January 2014	CHATTERIS	Quaker Way	4
02 January 2014	COATES	Nobles Close	4
02 January 2014	MARCH	Town End Pits	4
02 January 2014	MARCH	West End	4
02 January 2014	WISBECH	Waterlees Road	4
02 January 2014	CHATTERIS	Wenny Road	4
02 January 2014	WISBECH	Waterlees Road	4
02 January 2014	NEWTON	Colvile Road	4
02 January 2014	WISBECH	Somers Court	4
02 January 2014	WISBECH	Borough Close	4
05 February 2014	MARCH	Springfield Avenue	3
05 February 2014	MARCH	West End	4
05 February 2014	WISBECH	Boleness Road	3
05 February 2014	CHATTERIS	Larham Way	4
05 February 2014	MANEA	Williams Way	4
05 February 2014	WHITTLESEY	Station Road	4
05 February 2014	CHATTERIS	Bridge Street	4
05 February 2014	CHATTERIS	Fen View	4
05 February 2014	CHATTERIS	Fairway	4
05 February 2014	WHITTLESEY	ST MARYS HOUSE	4
05 February 2014	WISBECH	Coldhorn Crescent	4
05 February 2014	WISBECH	Kinderley Road	4
03 March 2014	CHATTERIS	Farriers Gate	4
03 March 2014	DODDINGTON	Ancaster Way	4
03 March 2014	MARCH	Robingoodfellows Lane Recreation Ground	4
03 March 2014	MARCH	West End Park	4
03 March 2014	LEVERINGTON	ROMAN COURT	4
02 April 2014	CHATTERIS	Gibside Avenue	4
07 May 2014	MARCH	Cherrywood Green	3
07 May 2014	MARCH	Elwyn Court	3
07 May 2014	MARCH	Grounds Avenue Garages	3
03 June 2014	WISBECH	Oakley Close	3

## 16 Appendix VIIIa

### TLG – customer feedback regarding grass cutting 2014

Date	Location	Town	Description	Actions
20 August 2014	Sefton Avenue	Wisbech	grass on headstone.	Manager inspected and cleaned off, team informed of customer concerns
03 June 2014	Eastwood Cem	March	Grass not cut low enough and looks a mess	Grass inspected by AG and during next cut main areas were collected
03 June 2014	Walsoken Cem	Wisbech	Grass not cut - like a field	Site inspected by AG - no issue with length
03 June 2014	Wimblington	Wimblington	damaged headstone	AG attended site to meet CW. AG investigated with little joy but has agreed to repair.
01 August 2014	24 Wake Road	March	Mr Goult is experiencing vandalism from people	FDC aware cc'd into email
02 June 2014	4 WMD, Wisbech	Wisbech	Back garden not cut	AG had previously quoted for this as an extra. Awaiting order. Now complete and on GM contract
05 June 2014	Bramble close, Whittlesey	Whittlesey	Overgrown needs a cut	Highlighted to AB at FDC. Not on contract. TLG since cut and site is tidy.
06 June 2014	West End, March	March	Getting long - like a meadow	Grass inspected and cut on next programmed visit
07 June 2014	Cherry Road, Wisbech	Wisbech	Back gardens not cut	AG inspected site. All areas cut at same time.
09 June 2014	The Greens Coates	Coates	Unhappy with finish due to volume of arsing	AG previously aware of issue and recut was complete
11 June 2014	Wakelyn Road, Whittlesey	Whittlesey	Grass not collected and looks unsightly	KM inspected on routine visits but no issues
11 June 2014	Larham way, Chatteris	Chatteris	Very long grass	AG inspected site. Long grass due to construction works. TLG returned once area was no longer on contract.
11 June 2014	Tithe Road, Chatteris	Chatteris	strimming missed	KM addressed with team
14 June 2014	The Baulk Whittlesey	Whittlesey	strimming missed	KM addressed with team
04 July 2014	Dolby Close Wimblington	Wimblington	nettles overhanging footpath	Inspected Not TLG/FDC issue.
04 July 2014	54 Burrowmoor Road	March	There is a strip of grass outside 52,54,56 and 58 burrowmoor road next to the path.	Passed back to FDC
14 July 2014	Bush Lane	Wisbech	Long grass and suggested poor finish	cut on target date. inspected site following cut, not issue?
15 July 2014	30 Riverdown	March	Grass has not been cut or has been done in bits and well overgrown	KM to inspect and arrange cut as required.
22 July 2014	Leafere Way Leverington	Wisbech	Long grass	inspection complete. No issue, just due a cut. KM boundary long.
23 July 2014	Mount Pleasant Cemetery Wisbech	Wisbech	The whole place need a tidy	Ongoing maintenance being complete.
31 July 2014	2 Swan Close	March	4ft grass	not on contract, customer advised
08 August 2014	Benwick in bloom	Benwick	Missed strimming	KM resolved issue
18 August 2014	8 Third Avenue	Wisbech	Customer advised that verges at 1st, 2nd and 3rd are not affected by gas mains renewal/repairs	Noted
12 September 2014	32 Nene Parade	March	St Wendredas church grass, graveyard was cut earlier this week but not the church area, can we please	Complete
18 September 2014	Barton Road football ground.	Wisbech	Grass cut as 16 could it be recut and shorter.	TLG cut and collect and then FDC paid for extra cuts.
03 October 2014	65 Whitemill Road	Chatteris	Stone chip	TLG called back to investigate
23 October 2014	8 East Close	March	Grass cut but is owned by him.	Shows on TLG plan. AG to discuss with BO /Roddosn
29 October 2014	Beechwood	Wisbech	Mr Mcluskie who lives opposite the Oasis Centre in Wisbech called to thank TLG on the grass cutting	passed to team.

## 17 Appendix VIIIb

### TLG – customer feedback regarding grass cutting 2014

Date	Location	Town	Description	Actions	Completed Date
06 March 2013	14 Norfolk Street	Wimblington	grass area not maintained.	On contract as shrub bed winter visit complete. Spray	06 March 2013
11 March 2013	31 Station Avenue	Murrow	Not all grass cut	All contracted grass cut FDC made aware and Roddons	11 March 2014
14 March 2013	54 Glendon Garder	Wisbech	opposite this property running down side of bungal	Not on contract Customer informed.	14 March 2013
23 April 2013	The Chase	March	Verge not cut. Excessively long.	TLG supervisor visited and it had been cut? Monitor	23 April 2013
20 May 2013	Cherryholt Road	March	Grass not cut.	Inspected by superviosr mowers not at location yet.	20 May 2013
20 May 2013	Eastfield Road	Wisbech	Grass is begining to get long	Not out of spec. Grass cut in line with normal list.	20 May 2013
20 May 2013	Ollard Ave	Wisbech	Grass not being cut yet.	Not out of spec. Grass cut in line with normal list.	20 May 2013
20 May 2013	Waterlees Road	Wisbech	Strimming missed.	Supervisor inspected and team returned to site.	20 May 2013
01 May 2013	14 Oxbow Crescen	March	land adjacent to West End Park which fronts 14 Oxb	Supervisor inspected and team returned to site.	01 May 2013
07 May 2013	2a Grounds Avenue	March	area of grass between 2a and 86 grounds aven	Supervisor inspected and team returned to site.	07 May 2013
09 May 2013	15 St Andrews Plac	Whittlesey	grass not cut at all.	Not on TLG contract. FDC aware and TLG asked to retur	09 May 2013
28 May 2013	7 Boundary Drive	March	Boundary Drive is a U shape and piece of end in the	Supervisor inspected and team returned to site. Plans	28 May 2013
29 May 2013	118 Upwell Road	March	GRASS VERGE SPLIT IN TWO - WE HAVE CUT ONE SID	Road Wasn't finished grass was caught on same day	29 May 2013
29 May 2013	56 Glendon Garder	Wisbech	LARGE GRASSED AREA ON LEFT HAND SIDE GOING IN	Supervisor inspected and plans updated.	29 May 2013
30 May 2013	Magazine Lane	Wisbech	grass not cut	last of the bulbs.	30 May 2013
10 June 2013	West Barn	Tydd St Giles	Bridleway - Fen Lane on RHS of Broad Drove West, T	CCC informed Not TLG	
30 July 2013	7 Henford Gardens	March	grass area between entrance & exit of Community E	Not on TLG contract cust informed	30 July 2013
02 July 2013	1 Knights Close	Doddington	Verge area outside property has been missed. All th	Supervisor inspected and plans updated.	02 July 2013
09 August 2013	1a Otago Road	Whittlesey	grass not between cremation plots	Caught on next visit. Very small patch where pot was.	20 August 2013

## **18 Appendix IX**

### Grass Maintenance Specification

#### 2.1 General

2.1.2 Grass maintenance will be carried out when soil conditions are suitable. The Contractor shall be financially responsible for making good any damage or defect caused by working when conditions are unsuitable.

2.1.3 The Contractor shall carry out suitable cultural techniques to maintain a vigorous healthy safe sward substantially free of pest, disease and weeds.

2.1.4 The Contractor shall inspect all areas before commencing grass cutting and shall remove and dispose of all litter, stones, branches and other debris that may cause personal injury or damage to machinery, equipment and installations. Under no circumstances should litter or rubbish be shredded as a result of grass cutting operations. The Contractor shall report all incidents of exceptional fly tipping and abandoned cars to the Supervising Officer who will arrange their removal.

2.1.5 Once grass cutting has commenced on an area, it shall be completed without delay. Grass cutting machines shall be appropriate for the size of the area being maintained and the standards of finish specified. Inaccessible margins, corners, base of obstructions and the like shall be maintained to the same standard by other suitable equipment at the same time.

2.1.6 Areas defined as grassed shall include other vegetation such as clover, weeds etc. and other such ground cover of a non-woody nature. These shall be treated as if they were the same as the surrounding grass and cut to the same standard.

2.1.7 Many grass areas have naturalised bulbs, during the spring season, the Contractor shall avoid cutting these. Where bulbs appear, the immediate area around the bulbs shall not be cut for a minimum of six weeks after flowering has finished and the foliage has commenced to die back. The cutting back of the foliage can commence from the 1st June. The area shall then be cut, the arisings collected and disposed of, and the area managed to the same standard as surrounding areas.

2.1.8 Where the amount or form of the deposited grass clippings or cuttings e.g. cylinder



or rotary main swathes, or where the grass has grown beyond specified heights and is detrimental to the turf or use of an area, these shall be collected and removed on the same day as the cutting occurs at the contractors own expense.

2.1.9 Where cuttings are deposited on paths, roads, footpaths or adjacent to building entrances they shall be swept off the surfaces by the Contractor at the time of cutting, at no additional cost and the contractor should ensure that these areas are left in a clean and tidy condition at all times.

2.1.10 All growth on margins, banks and around obstructions in grass areas or abutting walls, fences etc. and grass overhanging edges of flower beds, shrubberies, paths and the like shall be maintained by suitable equipment to the same standard of the adjoining grass and at the time of the grass cutting, including all boundary lines. Strimmers shall not be used around trees under any circumstances.

2.1.11 Where it is found that damage has been caused to any tree by the contractors operations, grass cutting machinery or strimming machines, then the Contractor will replace the tree at his own expense. Where any movable obstruction can be moved such as a tree branch, bench or any other such obstruction, then they should be moved to facilitate the grass cutting operations and then replaced.

2.1.12 At all times grass must be cut back to the hedge, fence, dyke or any other boundary line by the use of mowing or strimming machine at the time of the grass cutting operation. This will include cutting back nettles, brambles and herbage. The practice of allowing boundary lines to establish by the means of not cutting back to the boundary will not be accepted at any time. If found the contractor will reinstate boundary lines at his own expense.

2.1.13 Where the grass abuts a horizontal hard surface or planted bed and the overhang of grass exceeds 50mm, the Contractor shall cut back the grass to the edge of the hard surface or bed without forming a channel, cutting straight lines or smooth curves as appropriate, all arisings from the operation shall be collected and removed from site.

2.1.14 Herbicides may be used to control growth for a maximum band width of 70 mm around obstructions and where grass abuts wall, fences etc but only with prior written approval of the Supervising Officer. Where young trees are planted within Amenity Grass areas a maximum radius width of 300mm will be permitted. No

herbicides shall be used on Fine turf areas and Spring/Summer Flowering Meadows. The Contractor shall be responsible for the efficiency of the treatment using an appropriate sized hood and any damage caused by drift will be repaired at the contractors own expense.

2.1.15 Where arisings are specified to be removed these shall be collected, removed and disposed of by composting/recycling as practicable by the Contractor at their expense.

2.1.16 Blades/Cutters to all equipment shall be sharp and properly set to cut the grass cleanly and evenly. Flail mowers and rotaries to be set to cut at an even height throughout the width of the cut.

2.1.17 During any inclement weather where the contractor has driven across grass areas and caused any damage, the Contractor will repair/reinstate the grass area to the Supervising Officers satisfaction. Tractors (or other equipment when used for grass maintenance) shall be fitted with grassland tyres.

2.1.19 Minimum and maximum height of grass before and after cutting will be expressed in mm. The height of cut or minimum height is determined to be the height of the cutting blade of the appropriate machine above a true level hard surface. In determining the height of cut the equipment will be clean and free from mud and build up of cuttings

2.1.20 In normal weather conditions the Contractor shall be required to maintain the standards specified. Variations may arise in adverse conditions. The Contractor shall advise the Supervising Officer within 8 hours of any delays, giving the cause and remedial action proposed.

2.1.21 If inclement weather prevents the specified grass cutting being carried out or if carried out would create damage to the surface of grass areas, i.e. cause divots, ruts, puddling or scalping in dry or wet weather, the Contractor shall cease operations and immediately notify the Supervising Officer of his/her action and advise of revised methods and programme. The Contractor will be fully responsible for repairs to grass areas where through his operations damage to the grass sward has occurred, and will reinstate at his own expense.

2.1.22 After any period when cutting operations have ceased or been suspended the Contractor shall commence the cutting cycle from where he left off and shall take all necessary action to restore areas to the required specified standards within a timescale agreed by the supervising officer and the contractors representative and at no extra expense to the Council, including the collection of excessive amounts of arisings as detailed in 2.1.8 and disposed by the contractor at his own expense.

2.1.23 All of the following standards shall be deemed to include the cutting of “bents” when applicable, with suitable equipment and at no extra expense to the Council.

2.1.24 Absence of grass growth – Where in the opinion of the Supervising officer, weather conditions result in the cessation of grass growth, he/she will direct the Contractor to cease the cutting of grass to all sites, or any part of any site. Staff who were engaged in the grass cutting operations will be redirected to carrying out other operations as directed by the Supervising Officer at no other extra cost. Whole or part circuits/cycles of grass cutting not completed/suspended will be undertaken at other times of the year as directed by the Supervising Officer.

## 2.6 Grass Spec 5 - Amenity Grass

2.6.1 Grass Cutting - Areas to be maintained with cylinder or rotary mowing machines fitted with a mulching deck / blade and set to give an even finish free from ribbing, the height after cutting must be between 20mm and 40mm or as directed by the Supervising Officer. The frequency of grass cutting shall commence from the 14th of March or as directed by the Supervising Officer, and then continue every 14 days through to the last cut starting on the second Monday in October. Total number of grass cuts will be sixteen. At all times grass must be cut back to the hedge, fence, dyke or any other boundary line by the use of mowing or strimming machine at the time of the grass cutting operation. This will include cutting back nettles, brambles and herbage.

2.6.2 Grass Spec 5 – Amenity Grass Cutting (Highways) - Areas to be maintained with cylinder or rotary mowing machines fitted with a mulching deck/blade and set to give an even finish free from ribbing, the height after cutting must be between 20mm and 40mm or as directed by the Supervising Officer. The frequency of grass cutting shall commence from the 14th of March or as directed by the Supervising Officer, and then continue every 16 days through to the last cut in mid October. Total number of grass cuts will be fourteen. At all times grass must be cut back to the hedge, fence, dyke

or any other boundary line by the use of mowing or strimming machine at the time of the grass cutting operation. This will include cutting back nettles, brambles and herbage.

## **Cemetery Grass cutting**

### General Conditions

19.2.1 Within the Councils cemeteries the Contractor will be responsible for grass cutting within the following burial areas;

- a) Traditional burial / grave areas with varying ratios of head and kerb stones
- b) Lawn burial areas, generally where only headstones are allowed
- c) Interment areas for ashes
- d) Fine turf areas
- e) Grassland areas (Interment of Ashes)

19.2.2 In all Cemeteries the Contractor must ensure at all times that special attention is made to avoid any damage to any memorials, kerb surrounds, vases etc, ensuring no clippings are left on memorials, where grass is found to be on memorials, the Contractor will take immediate steps to clean down and remove debris. The Contractor will at all times ensure that he carries out operations with due respect to visitors within the Cemetery.

19.2.3 Where any damage to any memorial, vase, flowers etc that is made by the Contractor, then this must be reported immediately to the Supervising Officer by phone and also followed up with a written report including photographs of the damage on the same day or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

19.2.4 Where any damage is considered by the Supervising Officer to be the responsibility of the Contractor, then the repair or replacement will be at the Contractors own expense. Where possible the Contractor will consult with the families, relatives or other representatives of the deceased person whose memorial has been damaged prior to any remedial work. The standard of any replacement/repair work will not be to a higher standard than like for like. The intention here is to recognise the extreme sensitivity of bereaved parties in the face of any damage to memorials. The Supervising Officers decision will be final in the handling of all such situations.

### 19.3 Cemetery Amenity Grass

19.3.1 Areas to be maintained with cylinder or rotary mowing machines, where a rotary

machine is used then it should be fitted with a mulching deck/blade and set to give an even finish free from ribbing, the height after cutting must be between 20mm and 40mm or as directed by the Supervising Officer.

19.3.2 The frequency of grass cutting shall commence from the 1st of March or as directed by the Supervising Officer, and then continue every 14 days through to the end of October  
Total number of grass cuts will be eighteen.

19.3.3 At all times grass must be cut back to the hedge, fence, dyke or any other boundary line by the use of mowing or strimming machine at the time of the grass cutting operation.

19.4.5 Control of unwanted vegetation - In all areas of the Cemeteries and at all times the Contractor will ensure that all weed species, such as, Brambles, Ivy, Elders, Buddleias tree self sets etc., growing within the kerbed surrounds or from headstones/ memorials, pathways, within grass areas or adjacent buildings shall be removed by cultural methods, where possible and where this operation does not cause damage to the kerbed surrounds, the roots should also be removed, pre and post emergent herbicides may subsequently be used to prevent regrowth but only with the prior approval of the Supervising Officer. The Contractor should allow for these operations within his rates for grass cutting.