

## IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate  
Street, ROTHERHAM.  
S60 2TH

Date: Wednesday, 15th October, 2014

Time: 1.30 p.m.

### A G E N D A

1. To determine whether the following items should be considered under the categories suggested in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended March 2006) of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item(s) the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions from members of the public and the press
6. Communications
7. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th September 2014 (Pages 1 - 8)
8. Sheffield City Region  
*presentation at the meeting*
9. Grounds Maintenance - Scrutiny Review - Update (Pages 9 - 19)
10. Date and time of the next meeting - Wednesday 26th November 2014 at 1.30 pm

#### **Improving Places Select Commission: membership: -**

Councillors Andrews, Atkin, Cowles, Foden, Finnie, Gilding, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Read (Chairman), Roche, Sims (Vice-Chairman) and Wallis.

Co-opted members:- Mrs L Sheard, Mr. P. Cahill and Mr. B. Walker.

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION  
16th September, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Cowles, Gilding, N. Hamilton, Sims and Wallis.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Atkin, Copnell, Gosling and Roche.

**19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**20. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present at the meeting.

**21. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications to report.

**22. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23RD JULY, 2014**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, held on 23rd July, 2014, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:-

Minute No. 13 (Private Rented Housing – Selective Licensing

“Resolved:- (2) That the Select Commission agreed that there was a need for action with regard to private sector rented properties in the areas identified by officers.

(3) That where there was legal advice that the Local Authority had to pursue a voluntary scheme that be the first course of action, however, should that fail the Select Commission would wish to see the Council move to a mandatory scheme as quickly as possible.”

**23. SCRUTINY REVIEW - SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Consideration was given to a report of the above Scrutiny Review, Chaired by Councillor Wallis which set out the findings and recommendations of the above Scrutiny Review.

The 4 main aims of the Review had been:-

- To analyse the impact of changes to local government finance – particularly business rates

- To analyse how the Council could create the right conditions for growth in the private sector
- To influence the development of the growth plan for Rotherham which in turn fed into the City Region growth plan
- To develop a whole Council approach to increase business rates in Rotherham

The recommendations that emerged from the review findings had been broken down into those that could be implemented quickly and those that were more strategic in nature. The latter focussed very much on structural responses within the Council and also working in a more multi-disciplinary manner including interaction with partners.

Deborah Fellowes, Policy Manager, gave the following powerpoint presentation:-

#### Background: The Challenges

- Changes to local government finance especially business rates
- Changes to the structure of the local economy
- Future reductions in ERDF
- Dependence on a small number of big players (including the Council itself)

#### Evidence

- Focus on a whole Council approach by looking at
  - Asset Management
  - Planning
  - Transportation
  - Housing
  - Economic Development/RIDO
  - Also Chamber and Private Sector

#### RMBC: The Key Actor

- “The one constant”
- Land supply
- Networks and partnerships
- Potential investor
- Catalyst for generating the right investment
- Role in skills development

#### Towards a new Strategy?

- Council needs to generate income via business rates and Council Tax
- Creation of jobs for local people – targeting deprived communities
- Land supply is crucial
- Where is the next Dearne Valley?
- Council was key in driving forward the economy

#### Council's Role

- More flexible approach – less bureaucracy
- Need to invest resources and take risks
- Area based regeneration approaches with mixed land use proposals
- Combined growth approach for all departments
- Multi-functional force approach
- “wear a big” hat – tell people

#### The broader context

- Need to influence City Region to reflect Rotherham's priorities
- Need to create business friendly offer
- Signs of upturn and timing is right for Council to intervene
- Do nothing no longer an option
- Further reduction in ERDF in 2015

#### Impact on local people

- Transport, education and housing were key
- Rotherham had poor results with 16-19 year olds – this needed to be tackled monitoring apprenticeships?
- Adult skills and lifelong learning was lacking direction and leadership
- Mandate for outlying town centres to be regenerated

#### Partnership

- Reduction in resources for all partners
- Need clear objectives and targets in growth plans – Rotherham and Sheffield City Region
- Greater clarity about role within Sheffield City Region
- More collaboration less duplication
- Joint promotion of Rotherham
- Dialogue with businesses

The review had made 12 recommendations:-

#### **Early Implementation:**

1. The Economic Development Team within the Council should ensure that the emerging Growth Plan was focused around two key objectives – income generation and employment creation.
2. Targets and outcomes should be developed for the plan that were smart – suggestions include number of businesses accessing services, the number of young people accessing apprenticeships, the number of new entrants to post compulsory education and the number of over 16s gaining accredited qualifications.
3. The Economic Development Team should ensure that the growth plan was jointly owned by local partners
4. They should also ensure that it was communicated effectively to partners and stakeholders, as part of an ongoing campaign to “talk up”

Rotherham and its achievements. These stakeholders should include the Sheffield City Region structures and the private sector.

5. The Council should identify, in the first instance, its top ten development sites and focus on these in its policies and plans. Within this the identification and delivery of a strategically important site should be the number 1 priority for Rotherham to remain competitive.
6. The Council should consider prioritising all town centres and giving a policy mandate for this to happen.
7. The Council should consider how Elected Members could input to the development of Council Policy, particularly with regard to economic growth, by utilising the wide range of talent and expertise that exists within this pool. Elected Members can further assist with the promotion of Rotherham.

#### Longer Term Strategy

8. The Council should aim to establish a multi-disciplinary “Task Force” with the key purpose of providing a co-ordinated holistic approach to generating investment and economic growth in Rotherham, for the benefit of its local businesses, communities and residents. The focus should be on working both internally, and in partnership with the private sector in Rotherham, to include a range of projects in terms of size and value. The external business support process should be led by RIDO as a recognised brand within Rotherham.
9. The Task Force should include Planning, Asset Management, Housing, Transport, Education and potentially Health partners. These functions would be included on the basis of a unique drivers approach for each project. In line with recommendation 7 above, specific councillors (with specific expertise) and Ward Members should be included in this approach. This model could be adapted for individual projects, with bespoke task groups set up for larger projects including provision for specific expertise to be co-opted. (diagram to be developed)
10. This Task Force should be responsible for ensuring that the strategy should identify land supply i.e. the next Dearne Valley and link into work on the Local Plan, and also the following issues:
  - Use of capital and borrowing to develop sites and premises
  - The approach to the development of this land – some sites for area based regeneration initiatives
11. The Council should consider how to develop a business friendly culture amongst all its staff – skills development and training issues and also the possibility of setting growth targets for employees where appropriate. A key element of this would be to raise awareness within

the Council of the changes to business rates and the importance of them in terms of generating income for the Council.

12. The Scrutiny function in the Council should consider looking further at the following issues;

- The development of aspirational housing and associated services/communities in Rotherham
- Work with schools and training providers/colleges around the 16+ skills agenda to establish stronger links with employers and to engender an enterprising and aspirational culture.

Resolved:- (1) That the findings and recommendations of the report be endorsed.

(2) That the report be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Cabinet.

#### **24. COUNCIL HOUSING - RENT COLLECTION AND ARREARS RECOVERY POLICY**

Paul Elliott, Business and Commercial Programme Manager, presented the proposed Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Policy and associated processes which had been refreshed given the challenges faced to maximise income recovery to the Housing Revenue Account in light of the ongoing Welfare Reform agenda.

The Government's ongoing Welfare Reform, including the introduction of Under Occupancy Criteria, was having a direct impact on the number of active arrears cases being managed by the Housing Income Team. The number of tenants affected had remained relatively stable since April, 2013, at approximately 3,300 tenants of which 2,500 were in arrears. During the first 12 months of the Welfare changes, there had been limited intervention by the Income Team due to the low level of arrears that existed. However, if unaddressed over time this would become a significant issue for both tenants and the Council's finances.

The report set out details of the recovery process which started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of non-clearance when a reminder letter was sent to the tenant. The letter was only triggered when a balance exceeded £30 to ensure the process was cost effective and equitable. A second reminder was sent on the 4<sup>th</sup> week when arrears exceeded £45. If the debt remained outstanding and no contact had been made, a visit to the tenant would be made to establish their personal circumstances and arrange to clear the balance by instalments. If balances remained outstanding after 5 weeks and/or the agreement was breached, consideration would be given to the serving of a Notice of Intention to Seek Possession which was the first step prior to litigation. Before considering litigation, it was the view that commencing action below £300 was disproportionate to the debt. In the case of younger tenants, there would be a referral to Rush House and other appropriate agencies.

The proposed changes to the Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Policy were set out in full in the report submitted.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Brighton and Edinburgh Councils had stated that they would not evict a tenant if the individual's circumstances were solely due to the Under-Occupancy penalty. Rotherham's approach was to be fair and equitable to all its tenants and not single out 1 particular group. The impetus was to stop the debt and provide the support to prevent arrears. Arrears needed to be targeted at £250 or below as it was felt at that point tenants could still recover from debt in the short term
- The average cost of eviction was £8-9,000. It included the costs of re-letting property, bringing the property up to a re-lettable standard and, generally, the actual debt itself
- Local intelligence showed that there was an increase in the "working poor". There was a large number of tenants in arrears who were working and not in receipt of benefits but were still struggling to pay their rent
- The Authority waited until the debt was proportionate as entering a case into Court Proceedings added a further £3-4,000 to a debt
- To date no eviction proceedings against anyone due to Under Occupancy arrears have been taken but if the arrears continued to raise it was inevitable that that position would change
- At the current time there was no other assistance other than downsizing
- The Authority had the temporary measure of Discretionary Housing funding but there was no indication if there would be further funding after 31st March, 2015
- In Rotherham there were 3,349 tenants subject to the Under Occupancy charge of which 2,145 were in some form of arrears at a cost of £425,000. These were tenants who had never fallen into arrears before
- Tenants were offered inclusion on the downsizing register, however, there was not the amount of stock required in some areas
- Although it was included in the Tenancy Agreement historically it had never been the practice of the Authority to request the payment of 1 week's rent in advance. This had now been activated and once the

tenant had moved into the property the week's advance rent was credited to the rent account

- A tenant who was subject to potential eviction and had dependent children would be referred to a CYPS Support Worker for additional support. There were also a Tenancy Support Officer, Money Advice Officers and Employment Solutions Officers for all tenants facing potential eviction who could provide support with regard to applying for Housing Benefit etc.
- The key to a sustainable tenancy was the sign up interview. At that interview the Allocations Officer would conduct an income and expenditure assessment with the prospective tenant to establish if they had sufficient income to afford the weekly rent. There were also credit checks so it was understood the level of potential debt the tenant may have
- Currently there were still tenants being allocated properties that would be subject to the Under Occupancy charge based on whether they could afford the tenancy in view of the sign up interview (see above). The right to refuse prospective tenants who were unable to demonstrate they could afford to pay the rent would come into force as from 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2014
- The final decision on the ending of a tenancy was made by a Judge. In the more complicated cases that may involve someone with mental health issues or children, a case conference would be convened to make the final decision as to whether the tenancy was terminated or not. The standard process would be to seek possession through the serving of a Notice to Seek Possession and would probably take 12-18 months dependent upon the number of times i was entered into Court, any payments made etc.

Resolved:- (a) That the report be noted.

(2) That officers continue to work pro-actively with prospective tenants.

## **25. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE - SCRUTINY REVIEW - UPDATE**

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the Select Commission.

## **26. PROPOSED RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PARKING**

Martin Beard, Parking Services Manager, submitted the proposed response to the Government's consultation on various issues regarding parking.



The Government had stated that it wanted to make it easier for local residents and firms to challenge unfair, disproportionate or unreasonable parking policies. This could include the provision of parking, parking charges and the use of yellow lines.

The Government was proposing to introduce a requirement that in response to a petition from local residents and/or businesses, local authorities must review their specific parking policy in a specified location and produce a report for consideration and decision by Councillors in an appropriate public Council meeting. This approach combined direct democracy (the right to petition and call a review) with representative democracy. The Policy would initially be introduced through statutory guidance and consideration given to legislation.

The proposed response was attached as an appendix to the report submitted.

It was noted that the Authority already had policies in place for dealing with any challenges.

Resolved:- That the proposed consultation response be noted.

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Improving Places select Commission</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

**5. Summary**

The report provides an update to members on progress against the (Grounds Maintenance) Action Plan from October 2012, discusses problems encountered in the 2014 grass-cutting season and the measures taken to mitigate them.

**6. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the report is noted.

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## 7. Proposals and Details

An action plan for Grounds Maintenance was developed in late 2012 following Scrutiny and Operational reviews of the service and reported to **Improving Places Select Commission** at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013; a copy of the plan is attached with updated comments.

**Grass-cutting** - The Grounds Maintenance service has sustained reductions in resources over successive years and the baseline service for grass-cutting has changed as follows:

Year	Frequency	No. of cuts/season
2010/11	2 weekly	15
2011/12	3 weekly	10
2012/13	3 weekly (April – June), then 5 weekly	8
2013/14	5 weekly	5

Since 2011/12, the Grounds Maintenance budget has reduced by about 50%; the number of staff employed during the grass-cutting season has reduced from 104 in 2011/12 to 71 in 2014/15; the number of ride-on mowers deployed fell from 18 to 13 over the same period.

Ride-on mowers are provided under a contract which has another year to run. In 2011 all of the ride-ons were cylinder mowers, which produce the best quality of cut **when the grass is short**; when the grass is long (as in this year) the cut is very poor. This year, in anticipation of the effect of the reduced frequency of cutting, we have moved to a mix of machinery as follows:

- 2 Flail mowers** – capable of cutting long grass leaving short cuttings
- 5 Rotary mowers** – capable of cutting long grass, but leave long cuttings
- 6 Cylinder mowers** – best quality on short grass, but poor on long grass

The 2014 grass-cutting season has been one of the most difficult for many years due to the impact of the weather (mild winter and a warm, wet spring); as a result growing conditions for grass have been extremely good. This, along with the much reduced frequency of cutting has seen many areas with growth in excess of 12"-15" before the grass was cut, and this made it difficult to achieve a good quality finish.

As the grass-cutting regime has reduced in frequency, there has been a shift from **requests** to **complaints** (see table below). The most significant change happened between 12/13 when 32% of contacts were requests and 13/14 when 77% were complaints.

	Complaints	Requests	Total
<b>2011/12</b>	192	422	<b>614</b>
<b>2012/13</b>	359	774	<b>1133</b>
<b>2013/14</b>	826	243	<b>1069</b>
<b>2014/15</b>	355 in April/May	26 in April/May	<b>381 in April/May</b>

In the first quarter of 2013/14, the period when most contacts are made, the only services which exceeded the count for grass-cutting were refuse collection and street cleansing (always the two highest); reports about potholes and street lights were at about the same level (as grass-cutting) when they have historically been higher.

In response to these difficult growing conditions we deployed an additional 5 ride-on mowers - 2 cylinder mowers, 2 rotary mowers and 1 flail mower which were brought in to increase the cutting frequency and improve quality over a 6-week period during June/July. The funding for this was provided from one-off (non-recurrent) savings achieved in other areas of Streetpride.

Additional HRA funding (up to £289k/year) has now been secured for 2014/15 and 2015/16 which has targeted additional resources on to 'housing land' including aged person complexes (bungalow sites). This funding has enabled us to release some of the additional resources which were being deployed onto bungalow sites (as a result of environmental improvements – gates, fences etc.) and use them to increase frequency of grass-cutting elsewhere. The impact of this additional funding is as follows:

- We have established two dedicated teams to maintain bungalow sites enabling grass-cutting to be done every two weeks;
- The additional ride-on mowers have been retained, and the frequency of general grass-cutting (e.g. open spaces and highway verges) increased to approximately once every 3 weeks;
- The grass-cutting season has been extended to 17<sup>th</sup> October, an additional 4 weeks;
- A pre-season cut has been scheduled for March next year.

This funding has been applied since w/c 4<sup>th</sup> August.

As a result of the actions taken, the quality of grass-cutting now meets the required standard right across the borough, and the number of complaints has reduced significantly.

As we have not spent all of the (2014/15) available funding, discussions are taking place with NAS to consider proposals to undertake further work around the bungalow sites. This work could include edging back, self-set removal, hedge-cutting and shrub bed pruning/removal. This additional work would only extend to 30 locations this year, over a 4-week period in Cotober/November).

**Weed-treatment** – The other element of the Grounds Maintenance service which has attracted the most criticism is weed-treatment. Prior to 2012 all adopted highways and footpaths were treated twice each year; budget savings agreed by Members for 2012/13 onwards reduced this to once a year. Weed-treatment is scheduled for completion by the end of August.

Integrating the activity within Grounds Maintenance (it was previously part of Street Cleansing) has enabled us to plan some additional 'hot spot'

treatments between now and the end of the year with follow-up 'grubbing-out' works to remove detritus planned for early next year.

Additionally, this year we have successfully trialled using a mechanical sweeper, working with a lengthsman, to remove detritus and dead weeds. There is no specific budget for this work (costs are about £1,200 per week), and it therefore has to be targeted to make sure that we get the most value from it when funds become available.

## **8. Finance**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Grounds Maintenance, and more specifically grass-cutting, is a weather dependent service. If growing conditions are unfavourable, even the additional resources being deployed may not always achieve the desired standards.

The additional funding from HRA is only agreed for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years; beyond that time Members will have to reaffirm that the funding will continue.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Grounds Maintenance is integral to meeting Corporate Priority 4: ***All areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained.***

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Improving Places Select Commission 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013 - Scrutiny Review of Grounds Maintenance

**Contact Name:** David Burton, Director of Streetpride  
**Tel:** 01709 822906  
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**Streetpride: Leisure & Community Services**  
**Review of Grounds Maintenance and Weed Treatment Operations October / November 2012**

**ACTION PLAN**

**Key Issues**

**2a. Grass cutting:** What's changed? 2010/11 cut every 2 wks; 2011/12 cut every 3 wks; 2012/13 cut every 3 wks (Apr-Jul) then every 5 wks (Aug – Oct); (2013/14 cut every 5 wks) except in parks and recreation grounds which is still every 2 weeks

Action	Responsibility	Date	Comment	Progress (August 2014)
<b>Within Budget</b>				
1. Review seasonal staff adjusted hours - proposed standardised to a 37 hour week.	RRJ / SH	Jan 2013	This is now supported by GM management with consideration of covering the scheduled grass cutting affected by inclement weather – seasonal staff to have Contracts that reflect this.	Standard working week for permanent and seasonal staff now consolidated at 37 hours. Restrictions on staff taking leave during the key months of May and June are in place.
2. Reduce the impact of leave and sickness by adapting process for seasonal recruitment	RRJ / SH	Mar 2013	Method of recruitment agreed – expressions of interest from staff employed last year with short fall from Agency provider	Recruitment progress for seasonal staff has been streamlined.
3. Selective reduction in the areas that are 'fully maintained'.	RRJ / RM / PG	Jan 2013	Working party set up to identify large areas of green spaces land that can have the grounds maintenance relaxed and modified – margins and desire lines. The sites that will receive relaxed maintenance and the sites with increased maintenance are to be shown on drawings and presented to Cabinet	28 sites are now managed through a reduced maintenance regime.

			Members and Ward Members	
4. Broaden skills of remaining full time staff in order to cover leave / sickness etc.	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	Ongoing	GM staff are to be upskilled to fill gaps created through retirement. Skills gaps of Full Time GM staff identified and training planned.	Additional staff have been trained in use of key equipment. With additional HRA funding there will be a need for further training in early 2015.
5. Trial burning in of football pitch lines with chemical to save time and resource when doing initial markings at the start of the football season.	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	May 2013	This action is to be trialled at sites across the borough including Barkers Park.	Trial proved successful and is now adopted as standard practice.
6. Explore potential to change to flail head mowers from rotary mowers on pedestrian machines to help cut long grass on the five week grass cutting cycle.	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	Jan 2013	Pedestrian movers with flail heads to be trialled through the grass cutting season as recommended by SGM.	Configuration of ride-on fleet has been changed to incorporate 7 Flail or Rotary mowers.
7. Continue to develop structured approach to the use of volunteers.	RRJ / MH	Ongoing	The number of volunteers assisting with street cleansing and grounds maintenance continues to increase with support from Streetpride staff.	'Love my Streets' scheme is being developed and trialled in a number of areas. Proposals are being drawn up to better coordinate volunteer work.
8. Explore opportunities to introduce 'cut and remove' by third party (e.g. farmer for hay crop).	RRJ / RM / AL	Mar 2013	Staff to make contact with local farmers. In addition there is a piece of plant within our group we are going to trial which bails the cropped long grass. The bails may then be passed on to local farmers.	We have been unable to identify any farmers to work with on this initiative.
<b>Invest to Save</b>				
9. Purchase specialised grounds maintenance equipment at the end of the current contract (2015). This proposal would require a maintenance contract and the level of investment would be high in the first year.	RRJ / RM	Nov 2015	RJ has had a meeting to discuss with colleagues in CTU and from Oct 13 work will start as there would be a	Some additional equipment has been funded from one-off savings within Streetpride's budgets.

			long lead in time for specialised equipment. A maintenance contract would also be needed	
10. Wild flower planting on selected central reservations to reduce maintenance costs.	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	Ongoing	Works have commenced – weed kill, bulb planting and Seed Contractor engaged. Programme of works agreed with external Contractor to deliver the project – next phase early April 2013.	Successfully implemented, and received a large number of positive comments. We have also been advised that The Council has won a <b>Green Apple Award</b> for this initiative

**2b. Weed killing:** What's changed? 2010/11 – 2 treatments per year; 2011/12 – 1 treatment per year; 2012/13 – 1 treatment per year; (2013/14 – 1 treatment per year); Large Mechanical sweeper removed from schedule Aug. 2012

Action	Responsibility	Date	Comment	Progress (August 2014)
<b>Within Budget</b>				
1. Explore efficiencies created by integrating operation with grounds maintenance schedules	RRJ / SAH / SH	Jan 2013	A report has been prepared with Ops Staff for the consideration of Senior Managers. Programme agreed and Transfer of budget agreed	In place and has provided some limited additional capacity to undertake a 2 <sup>nd</sup> treatment at known hotspots.
2. Waste Management Service to support / accelerate grubbing out	SAH	Dec 2012	The staff availability and the logistics of the operation have caused issues. The next tranche in March will give a further opportunity to grub sites and street clean areas. We did not have any operatives in the March tranche. We were originally offered operatives, but they all decided to take leave rather than undertake Street Cleansing duties.	Complete however, from this year changes to the arrangements for collection of green garden waste means that staff will no longer be available for this work.
3. Store weed kill in a dedicated container at Hellaby to	SAH	Jan	The recently prepared report	Complete



save time on current travel to store at Kiveton Park.		2013	will see weed kill stored across the borough in depots – Oaks, Barbers, Kiveton , Hellaby and Ulley.	
<b>4. Further investment in Billy Goat sweepers x2.</b>				
	SAH	Feb 2013	These are now with the operational managers. If used to remove detritus from footway backs, and where safe to do so carriageway channels there should be a reduction in detritus and therefore weeds. In the West I intend to include the billygoat in the trial cleansing area from February. The trial period will not now continue until 6 May due to the specialist cleansing review taking longer to complete that originally predicted	Complete
<b>5. Invest in weed spraying attachment for large mechanical sweepers to reduce weeds in channels</b>	SAH	Mar 2013	There is no such attachment. This was investigated some years ago and it was found that to fit such a thing would require specially built sweepers however 4no new quad bikes purchased to reduce costs give more flexibility in Parkway and A57 operations.	Complete
<b>Additional Budget</b>				
<b>6. Invest in blowers to help with leaf clearance or to blow small amounts of detritus off footways and on to verges.</b>	SAH	Mar 2013	These small pieces of equipment are leased currently at a competitive rate when maintenance is included.	On going. Proposal to be reconsidered by SC Managers as funding may now be available.

**2c. Shrub/Flower Beds & Hedges:** What's changed? Reduced resource means this schedule is too large to be completed in any one year.

Action	Responsibility	Date	Comment	Progress (August 2014)
<b>Within Budget</b>				
1. End of year removal of certain shrub beds and replace with grass seed. Establish list for potential removal should further funding become available.	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	Mar 2013	Monies made available - £40,000 – to remove shrub beds and soil and seed. List of 1 <sup>st</sup> phase sites agreed with Net. Mgt involve TM and Exc. Contractor. The areas are difficult to access and include night work – commenced 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2013. There are 5 other sites in 1 <sup>st</sup> phase. 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase are within estates and developments with multiple shrub bed sites with very little TM required – Woodlathes, Dinnington works to commence 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2013. All monies available will be expended – w/c 21/01/13.	Various sites have had the shrubbery removed and areas prepared, soiled and seeded.  HRA funding is being sought for the removal of shrub beds from Housing sites.
2. Shrub bed areas prioritised for action based on customer contacts and individual street scene issues.	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	Jan 2013	The lists of sites are areas that are very difficult to maintain – roundabout at Catcliffe, Roundabout outside the new town Centre Leisure Centre plus sites which attract a high volume of calls from local residents.	Priority list drawn up for implementation as funds become available.
3. Waste Management Service to support / accelerate programme of shrub removal / reduction.	RRJ	Dec 2012	Not required on this project, but will be used to grub out weed killing sites and street cleansing sites.	From this year changes to the arrangements for collection of green garden waste means that staff will no longer be available for this work.
4. Establish a long term programme of works to remove	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	Mar	The next phase of removals	See 2c(1) above

shrub beds that are overgrown and can't be maintained on a regular basis.		2013	will be drawn up should further investment be secured	
5. Review flower beds in parks with view to reducing number / size.	RRJ / PG	Jan 2013	Meetings to take place this month	Ongoing
6. Explore potential for 'guerrilla' gardening in shrub beds and other areas	RRJ / MH		Investigation carried out into the subject by MH. A briefing note is to be prepared with recommendations for Senior Managers to consider including possible areas / sites for trials identified.	No further progress on this partly due to savings being taken in respect of the Officer Post that would support this work and to a lack of groups / individuals coming forward.
<b>Invest to Save</b>				
7. Mechanical removal of shrub beds to achieve an efficient method of operation at a rate of approximately £10 per m2 and replacement with soil and seed to allow for easier maintenance. An evaluation of the condition of the shrub beds needed to establish which areas can be removed and which remain because they are beneficial to the neighbourhood and therefore need increased maintenance.	RRJ / Ops Mgrs	Mar 2013	See 2c Action 1. for comment	See 2c(1) above

**2d. Rural Verges:** What's changed? 300 miles of verges previously cut on two occasions during the summer growing season (April to October), now cut over a 32 week period (May to June and October to March).

Action	Responsibility	Date	Comment	Progress
<b>Within Budget</b>				
1. Evaluation of operation to establish if alternative method could be employed. Traffic Management experts being consulted.	RRJ	Jan 2013	Agreed to manage the rural verge grass cutting differently with operation taking place during the grass cutting season.	Revised arrangements for verge cutting are in place.
<b>Additional Budget</b>				
1. Equipment is leased for 32 week to deliver the rural cuts.	RRJ	Mar 2013	The cost of reverting back to the rural verges being cut	Complete

			April – October includes plant hire and operatives. £28k additional cost	
2. Explore cost of reinstating part or whole of summer cutting schedule.	RRJ	Jan 2013	The costs have been investigated and this item has been restored to correct time of year for the operation.	Complete

**2e. Management and Administration:** What's changed? Reduction in management and supervisory staff

Action	Responsibility	Date	Comment	Progress
<b>Within Budget</b>				
1. Identification of support from admin team at Hellaby.	RRJ	Dec 2012	Procedures have been considered and support provided by staff at Hellaby redefined.	Complete
2. Review of Connect scripts.	RRJ / NB	Jan 2013	Several meetings have taken place with relevant staff from Connect and various other staff affected by changes. The process is still being worked on with a hope a script that reduces the number of call backs required by Streetpride staff can be brought in before April 2013. More meetings with Connect reps in March 2013	Scripts have been amended with some success but further work needs to be done
3. Review staff structure to increase management/supervisory resilience.	SH / RRJ / SAH	Jan 2013	Affects on budgets and the pressures on the service cause continual review of current practises and staff.	Complete