

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)
Within Budget				
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.
Invest to Save				
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 Green Apple Award 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)
Within Budget				
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 nd 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.	
4. Further investment in Billy Goat sweepers x2.				
	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
5. Invest in weed spraying attachment for large mechanical sweepers to reduce weeds in channels				
	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
Additional Budget				
6. Invest in blowers to help with leaf clearance or to blow small amounts of detritus off footways and on to verges.				
	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)
Within Budget				
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 st phase sites agreed with Net. Mgt involve TM and Exc. Contractor. The areas are difficult to access and include night work – commenced 9 th March 2013. There are 5 other sites in 1 st phase. 2 nd phase are within estates and developments with multiple shrub bed sites with very little TM required – Woodlathes, Dinnington works to commence 16 th 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.
Invest to Save				
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
Within Budget				
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.
Additional Budget				
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
Within Budget				
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