

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**5 JULY 2018**

REPORT TITLE	GRASS CUTTING AND WEED CLEARANCE PROGRAMME
REPORT OF	MARY WORRALL, SENIOR MANAGER – PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE

REPORT SUMMARY

The report presents some initial information on weed control and the mowing of highway verges for Members of the Committee in their consideration of issues related to the requisition for this meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members are requested to note and consider the content of this report alongside the requisition for this meeting.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

Following receipt of a requisition for a special meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee from three members of the Conservative Group, *'to discuss the Council's problems with the grass cutting and weed clearance programme resulting in areas of our Borough resembling uncared for and derelict wasteland'*, a special meeting has been arranged, following consultation with the Chair and Party spokespersons.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Weed control:

A new contract for hard surface highway weed control started in May 2018. Both Spot and Schedule Monitoring are in place. The contractor is working to a schedule and reports progress each day using a table template. This information is going to be placed on the council's website grass cutting and grounds maintenance page so that members of the public can identify where the contractor has got to. The glyphosate herbicide leads to signs of weed dying ten to fourteen days after application. If an area is missed, or the spray applied has not taken due to rain, the contractor is required to re-treat the area.

There were some initial mobilisation issues which are being resolved through Contract Mobilisation/Monitoring meetings. The Terms of the Contract are that the contractor will not be paid for phase one (the May/June round) until after end of June and this is dependent on evidence of phase one (May/June) being satisfactorily completed, with evidence of weed death 10/14 days after application.

Unfortunately due to very wet ground conditions in April and early May spraying was delayed whilst weeds grew strongly.

Mowing of highway verges:

The grass cutting of highway verges is currently scheduled to take place as follows:

Urban verges are cut every three weeks from mid-March to October, except during May to June when the cut occurs every four weeks due to work load from extra growth. The longer period between cuts in May and June is a reflection of the extra time it takes to complete the 'round' at this time of year, due to the fast grass growth at that time of the year. A small number of urban verge areas are cut four times a year.

Rural verges are cut once a year (mid-July to mid-August, subject to flowering conditions and weather conditions. Semi-rural verges and rural verges at road junctions and along established rural road pedestrian pathways are cut four times a year between March and October, to keep view lines clear and enable the paths to be used.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

Not applicable

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Not applicable

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Not applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date