

Agenda Item 86.

TITLE	Grass Cutting Delivery Plan for Spring 2019
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 20 th February 2019
WARD	None Specific
LEAD MEMBER	John Halsall, Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries
LEAD OFFICER	Sarah Hollamby, Director of Locality and Customer Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that the Grounds Maintenance Service/Contract with Tivoli is fit for purpose so that residents can enjoy well-maintained open spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities, amenity areas and highway verges across the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee consider the Officers Response to their 12 recommendations agreed by the Executive on 31st January 2019 as detailed in Appendix 1.
2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee consider the actions and mitigations to deliver an appropriate grass-cutting programme in 2019 and beyond as detailed in this Report and Appendices.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was asked to review the contract arrangements for the grounds maintenance service and this was addressed at meetings held in August, September and October 2018. A final report was prepared and considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 21st November 2018 and this made a number of recommendations to the Council's Executive on 31st January. This report updates the OSC about the actions and mitigations undertaken to address its recommendations in order to deliver an effective grass cutting service commencing in March 2019 and then ongoing. This has focussed on working with the contract provider Tivoli to develop an action plan to address those issues which have contributed to a lower standard of service delivery in previous years, and also on identifying additional measures to ensure that the contract is effectively monitored and communicated to customers. A series of scenarios have also been tested to ensure that the measures in place are robust to help secure an effective grass cutting service going forward.

BACKGROUND

The Council's current Grounds Maintenance Contract commenced in 2016 with a new contractor, ISS Facility Services (ISS was subsequently bought out by Tivoli Group, with the handover taking place in June 2018). The contract was awarded after a joint procurement exercise with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). The contract moved away from a traditional prescriptive model (i.e. a defined number of cuts) to an output/outcomes based contract.

The contract commenced on 1 April 2016. There were some issues in this initial year but there was a significant improvement in the service delivered by the contractor in 2017. However, in 2018 further problems arose and the Council received a significant number of complaints and negative coverage in print and social media.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee asked to review the contract arrangements and this was addressed at meetings held on 1 August, 19 September and 17 October. This review considered information about the service sought from residents, community groups and Town and Parish Councils. The committee interviewed a number of key people including the Executive Member, the WBC Client Officers and a representative of the contractor. It also considered evidence from RBWM and Bracknell Forest Borough Council (BFBC).

A final report was prepared and considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 21st November 2018. This made a number of recommendations that were presented to the Council's Executive on 31st January.

Analysis of Issues

The Overview & Scrutiny Review focussed on three main areas. These are detailed below along with a summary of the response to each one:

1. *Were there problems with the structure of the Council's Grounds Maintenance contract?*

Response: Officers have reported that they feel that the Contract is fit for purpose subject to appropriate correctional aspects (addressed below).

2. *Were there problems with the way the Council's contractor was delivering the service?*

Response: Officers have concluded that there were problems in relation to available resources, especially around the ability to react quickly at times of high demand.

These issues have been addressed below.

3. *Were there problems with the way the Council monitored and managed the contract?*

Response: Officers have accepted that this contract would benefit from more comprehensive monitoring. To support this, staff from the Localities Service will conduct additional monitoring to act as an early warning system to understand where any shortfalls are being experienced so that resources can be re-allocated by Tivoli, Countryside Service or through partnerships with Wokingham and Earley Town Councils.

Next Steps & Action Plan

The O&SC recommendations that were agreed by the Council's Executive are set out in Appendix 1 together with a summary of how the OSC recommendations have been addressed. This demonstrates the significant progress that has already been made against the recommendations.

An action plan has been produced by the Council working with the contactor Tivoli (see Appendix 2). The action plan focuses on the measures that will be put in place before the commencement of the next grass cutting session and then throughout this period and in future years. The action plan focusses on identifying the key risks (Appendix 3) that have impacted on the delivery of an effective service and ways these risks can be mitigated. Actions in the action plan include :-

Contractor Actions (Tivoli)

- Early recruitment and training of staff
- New machinery to be commissioned ready for the start of the grass cutting season
- Existing machinery being serviced for the start of the grass cutting season
- Sub-contractor relationships to be developed as a contingency on a rapid response
- A clear communication plan from Tivoli to WBC allowing early warnings on any grass-cutting issues

WBC actions:

- Development of a coherent and dynamic communications plan (Appendix 6) to include early warnings for delays or any other issues to Members, residents and Parish/Town Councils
- Development of a contingency to employ the Countryside Service to carry out work on play areas to supplement Tivoli to prevent extended delays as experienced in 2018
- Development of a contingency to work in partnership with Town Councils to employ their own staff or known third party contractors on appropriate work in their own respective areas

Works to implement the action plan commenced at the beginning of January and to date, there has been good progress against this. For example, Tivoili has confirmed that staff recruitment has commenced and that machinery is starting to be serviced and procured. In addition to the activities contained in the action plan, officers have also put in place ways to more effectively monitor the contract. The Current KPIs (Appendix 4) have been reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose, and a new set of KPI's (Appendix 5) have been produced. The main change proposed focuses on KPI 6 grass cutting. On the basis that we cut approx. 4.4million sqm grass in parks and verges across the Borough, Officers propose to double the threshold for KPI 6 from 24 bona fide complaints per annum to 50 bona fide complaints per annum. The previous KPI was not based on any technical assessment of what would be acceptable or achievable and is considered to be unrealistic. Increasing this to a more achievable and reasonable number will enable the contactor to have a meaningful target but to compensate for this, Officers propose increasing the reliance on achieving this by 200% as a reflection of its importance. This means that if this target is not reached the loss

of payment to the contractor would increase from £800 to £1,600 as opposed to £800 greater reflecting the importance of this element of the service.

Progression of the action plan throughout the grass cutting season will be closely monitored by the Council. The Council's Localities Officers are being trained to identify any issues for early resolution and to ensure that the service is being delivered effectively. In addition, regular liaison and meetings have already been undertaken and will continue to be held between the Council's contract team and the contractor Tivoli to hold them to account and to adhere to the formal complaints process. Also, to ensure there is an auditable complaints and default record.

The review of the grounds maintenance contract has emphasised the need to communicate more effectively with customers. In order to enable this, we have developed a communications plan (Appendix 6) and updated the FAQs (Appendix 7). In order to ensure that the contractor is responsive to address any customer concerns, the process to resolve these has been looked at and revised (see Appendix 8). The process shows the Customer Journey from first contact by a resident either by phone to Customer Delivery or on line, moving through to the Tivoli contact and then feedback to the resident upon resolution. This is the preferred way for residents to contact the Council using Microsoft Dynamics with all complaints being registered against KPI 6 (grass cutting complaints).

Grass Cutting Scenarios and Mitigation in Place

In addition to the above measures, officers have reviewed the previous issues with grass cutting to identify any risks that could impact on effective service delivery even with the successful implementation of the action plan, effective monitoring, and the improved performance framework and communications plan. These risks are those things that the council has less control over, and a number of scenarios associated with these risks which relate to staffing issues, weather/condition problems and machinery issues, have been tested as set out in Appendix 9.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None
List of Background Papers
None

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations

Appendix 2 – Action Plan – spring 2019

Appendix 3 – Risk Matrix

Appendix 4 – Current KPIs

Appendix 5 – Proposed KPIs

Appendix 6 – Communications Plan

Appendix 7 – FAQs

Appendix 8 – The Customer Journey

Appendix 9 - Scenario Testing

Appendix 10 – Path of Performance Monitoring

Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Recommendations

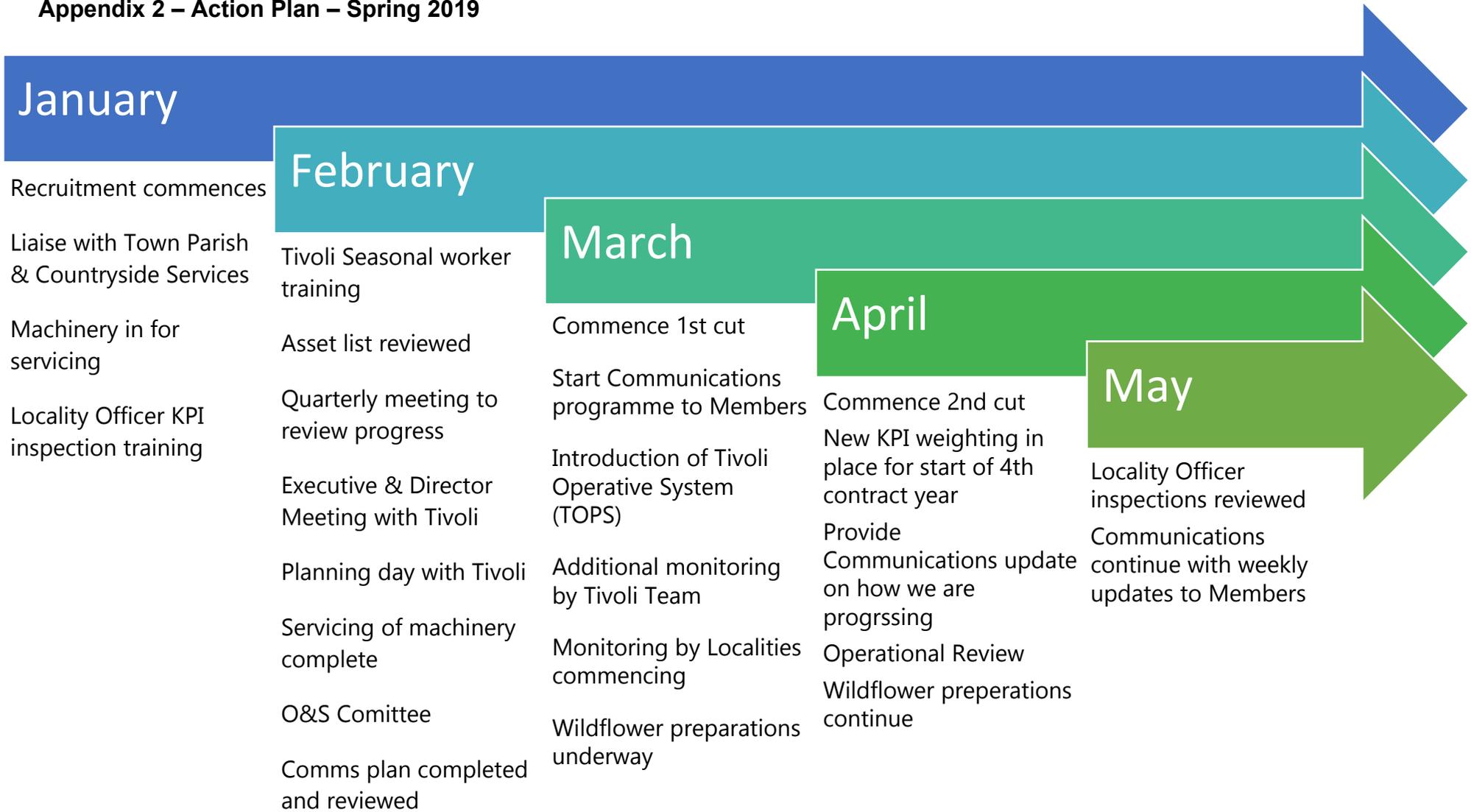
Recommendation	Progress Update
2.1 That the Executive Member and Director of Locality and Customer Services meet with senior management from Tivoli Group to discuss the operation of the grounds maintenance service and to emphasise the Council's expectations for service delivery in 2019.	Arranged for February 2019.
2.2 That the Executive Member and Director of Locality and Customer Services liaise with their counterparts at RBWM to identify areas of common interest and concern and make joint representations to Tivoli Group as necessary.	An initial informal meeting has been held and quarterly meetings will be programmed and will include other mutual Contracts.
2.3 That the Director of Locality and Customer Services review the level of WBC's client monitoring/management resource available for the beginning of the next grass cutting season – March/April 2019.	Regular meetings are set up with relevant staff. Regular monitoring will be ongoing from March onwards and throughout the 2019 grass cutting period See Appendix 10 – Path of Performance monitoring

<p>2.4 That the Director of Locality and Customer Services review the contractual options available to the Council in the event of continuing underperformance by the grounds maintenance contractor.</p>	<p>Complete (see Appendix 10)</p>
<p>2.5 That the Director of Locality and Customer Services explore options for co-location of the grounds maintenance client and contractor teams and review the weighting of Key Performance Indicators in the contract to emphasise the performance standard required for key public-facing elements of the service.</p>	<p>The co-location of Clienting staff will be considered within any redesign of Toutley Depot which is currently being addressed by Property Services</p> <p>The KPIs are set out in Appendix 6 and have been reviewed in Appendix 7 (see below)</p>
<p>2.6 That the implementation of the Localities Service be used to explore opportunities for improved local intelligence and the development of local networks providing feedback on the operation of the grounds maintenance service.</p>	<p>Officer meetings with the Localities Service have commenced. The Localities Officers will monitor grass cutting progress and feedback to the contract manager to address any issues</p>
<p>2.7 That WBC Officers work with the contractor to seek input from appropriate specialist groups, including RSPB and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) in order to inform management plans for biodiversity sites (woodland, copse and thicket) across the Borough.</p>	<p>Officers have met with WBC Biodiversity Officer and will be compiling an Action Plan to review deliverable options. Meetings have also been held with WBC's Countryside Service to discuss their approach to managing these areas.</p>
<p>2.8 That, as part of the 21st Century Council programme, opportunities for using new technology be explored in order to deliver more comprehensive, up to date information on grounds maintenance schedules, routes, performance and customer feedback.</p>	<p>Discussion has been held with the contractor Tivoli who will include this in their presentation to O&S on 20th February 2019. Also, see appendix 4 Updated FAQs and appendix 5 the Customer Journey</p>
<p>2.9 That the Council continue discussions with Town and Parish Councils about the potential for further asset transfers and options for mutual support in relation to the grounds maintenance service, with regular updates to the Borough Parish Liaison Forum.</p>	<p>These discussions are to form part of ongoing meeting being undertaken by the AD Customer & Localities. Peter Baveystock updated the Parish & Town Forum on 4th February on the work being undertaken.</p>

<p>2.10 That the Director of Locality and Customer Services submit a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, at its meeting in February 2019, setting out the arrangements in place to ensure an effective grass cutting service in 2019.</p>	<p>To be addressed by his report.</p>
<p>2.11 That the Director of Locality and Customer Services submit a further report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, at its meeting in October 2019, setting out details of performance issues and lessons learnt during the 2019 grass cutting season.</p>	<p>October 2019</p>
<p>2.12 That the Executive instruct Officers to provide updated guidance on the Council's approach to public consultation, in line with the commitments set out in the Council's Constitution and the relevant legal principles.</p>	<p>It is agreed to update the Council's guidance on consultations in line with the Council's Constitution and statutory requirements.</p> <p>To note - the consultation conducted prior to the development of the Grounds Maintenance contract conformed to the expected standards detailed in the report. The report identifies other consultation activity as evidence for the recommendation.</p>

Appendix 2 – Action Plan – Spring 2019

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Appendix 3 Risk Matrix

Contract Management Risks (Grounds Maintenance)	Issue in 2016	Issue in 2017	Issue in 2018	Likelihood of becoming an issue (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	Risk score
Late start due to staff training not being completed	Yes	No	No	2	4	8 - Medium
Strong early growth due to mild winter and hot spring requiring early start	Yes	No	No	4	3	12 - High
As with 2018 – severe winter conditions in March leading to late start to cutting	No	No	Yes	2	3	6 – Medium
Late start due to lack of recruitment	No	No	Yes	2	4	8 – Medium
Insufficient machinery at season start	Yes	No	Yes	2	4	8 – Medium
Lack of communication between Tivoli and WBC	Yes	No	Yes	2	4	8 – Medium
Lack of Communication between WBC, Members & Residents	Yes	No	Yes	2	4	8 – Medium
Lack of WBC monitoring resource	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	4	8 - Medium

Key Contract Objectives

1. Ensure sufficient staffing available to start first cut by March annually;
2. Ensure sufficient grass cutting equipment available by March annually;
3. Ensure sufficient Locality monitoring staff available as per 1 & 2 above;
4. Ensure comprehensive communications plan has been approved by Executive Member by mid-February annually;
5. Annual review of Contract to include efficiency savings

Assessing Likelihood and impact scoring

Impact level on delivery

Likelihood

1 – Moderate

1 – Unlikely

2 – Significant

2 – Low

3 – Serious

3 – Very likely

4 - Critical

4 – Certain/High

4	Green	Yellow	Red	Red
3	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red
2	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
1	Green	Green	Green	Green
	1	2	3	4

Likelihood

Impact

Appendix 4 – Current KPIs

KPI	Description	Target	Achieved	Year 1	Target	Achieved	Year 2	Target	Achieved	Year 3 Q 1-3
KPI 1	Officer inspection scores	80	82	Pass	80	78	Fail	80	75	TBC - inspections continue through year
KPI 2	Independent inspection scores	80	80	Pass	80	80	Pass	80	-	To be completed
KPI 3	Play area inspections completed and officer inspections	90	90	Pass	90	92	Pass	90	90	TBC - inspections continue through year
KPI 4	Stakeholder/customer satisfaction	80	81	Pass	81	85	Pass	85	71	Failed
KPI 5	Sports user satisfaction	80	77	Fail	80	92	Pass	80		TBC
KPI 6	Justified complaints – grass	24	-	-	24	19	Pass	24	298	Failed
KPI 7	Justified complaints – hedges, copse and shrubs	30	-	-	30	72	Fail	30	165	Failed
KPI 8	Justified complaints – other	37	-	-	37	22	Pass	37	69	Failed
KPI 9	Biodiversity performance (no. of projects)	6	6	Pass	6	6	Pass	6		TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement

MPI 1	Assistance provided in preparing Management Plans	1		-
MPI 2	Support in providing Community Involvement/projects/volunteer (no. hours)	100	100	Pass
MPI 3	Contribution to changing customer perception (hours/occasions)	40/12	12	Pass
MPI 4	Assistance/support in changing management regimes (sites)	4	4	Pass
MPI 5	Identifying opportunities and delivering reduced pesticide use			-
MPI 6	Sports surface quality improvement - investment in pitch renovation			Fail
MPI 7	Staff training, multi-skilling (hours)	1400	2198	Pass
MPI 8	Assistance updating mapping and data (no. of sites)			-
MPI 9	Savings and new income streams achieved (no of examples)	3	3	Pass

1	1	Pass
100	123	Pass
40/12	40	Pass
4	2	Fail
		-
		Pass
1400	1798	Pass
		-
4	4	Pass

1	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
100	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
40/12	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
4	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
1400	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
3	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement
3	-	TBC - Tivoli to prove involvement

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Appendix 5 – Proposed KPIs

KPI No	KPI	Percentage change in Reward/ Penalty	Target Yr 3	Target Yr 4
1.	Average annual Cleaner and Greener inspections score	0%	80%	80%
2.	Average annual independent inspections score	-20%	80%	80%
3.	Play area inspections & maintenance	-22%	90%	90%
4.	Stakeholder/customer satisfaction	-20%	85%	85%
5.	Sports user satisfaction	0%	80%	80%
6.	No. Justified Complaint Grass (no.)	200%	24	50
7.	No. Justified Complaint hedges, copse & shrubs (no.)	0%	30	30
8.	No. Justified Complaint Other (no.)	0%	37	37
9.	Biodiversity performance (no. projects)	0%	6	6
10.	Partnership working & problem solving approach	-17%	80%	80%

Management Performance Indicators linked to KPI no. 10	Weighting Yr 3	Weighting Yr 4	% change in weighting	Target Yr 4
Assistance provided in preparing Management Plans (No. of plans)	15%	15%	0%	1 Plan
Support in providing Community Involvement/Projects/Volunteer hours (No. of hours)	15%	20%	33%	100 hours
Contribution to changing Customer perception – support at meetings, marketing etc. (No. of hours/ occ.)	10%	15%	50%	40 hours / 12 occasions

Assistance/support in Changing Management Regimes (No. of occasions/sites)	15%	10%	-33%	4 sites
Assistance with Sponsorship site development. (Changed from: Identifying opportunities and delivering reduced pesticide use)	5%	5%	0%	4 sites/ occasions
Sports surface quality improvement (Percentage improvement in impact/ball roll test etc.)	15%	15%	0%	As per STRI/ Pitch Strategy
Staff training – multi-skilling, bio diversity, customer perceptions/service understanding etc. (No. of hours)	10%	5%	-50%	1400 hours
No/% maps and/or Bills updated accurately	5%	5%	0%	3 examples
Savings and new income streams achieved	10%	10%	0%	3 examples

Appendix 6 – Communications Plan

Communications, Marketing and Engagement Plan for Grass Cutting 2019

Overall objective

The grass cutting service proactively reacts to emerging issues to prevent escalation and All stakeholders and interested residents are kept informed of grass cutting programme

Background:

Grass cutting has become an issue of significant public concern during some recent summers (2014, 2016 and 2018), when contractors have struggled to keep up with. Among the issues identified have been the need for contractors to react more quickly to emerging issues in order to prevent escalation and discontent and the provision of accurate and timely information to stakeholders and residents during the grass cutting season.

Overview

WBC will provide clear and timely information on grass cutting to residents and stakeholders in order to:

- Ensure residents and stakeholders understand the grass cutting contract including how to report any issues
- Work with Localities officers to provide an early warning system of any localised issue to stakeholders and residents and explain mitigating actions
- Provide regular updates to stakeholders (ward members and town/parish councils) on grass cutting performance

Outcomes - by the end of the grass cutting season:

1. WBC will have increased understanding among residents of the grass cutting contract
2. Identified emerging issues and put mitigation in place before significant public / media problems occur
3. Stakeholders will have been provided the right information at the right time on grass cutting progress
4. Any issues or delays that have arisen have been explained to stakeholders and residents along with mitigating action taken

Stakeholders	
Key influencers Elected members Town and Parish Councils Social media community groups Residents' Groups Local media MPs	Partners and potential partners Tivoli Countryside Services Town and Parish Councils
Target audiences All borough residents, with specific targeting to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas affected by any issues or delays arising during the grass cutting season 	

Key communications messages

- We realise the importance of maintaining public open spaces well and that there have been problems in previous years
- We have put mitigating actions into place to reduce likelihood or problems occurring and impact of them is they do
- We will use localities workers to identify emerging issues and react to them quickly
- Residents and stakeholders can help by reporting genuine issues in the right way

Methods

The primary method of communication will be a weekly update provided to key stakeholders (elected members and town & parish councils) and then placed online.

Other methods:

- Media release
- Updated webpages with FAQ
- Social media
- Standard response prepared for complaints

Activities: Communications plan for grass cutting 2019

Activity	Target stakeholders	Date	Who
Briefing for all members and town and parish councils: notes to be provided to all members to set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations/requirements of service • Improvement measure put in place • Mitigation plans • Reporting mechanism for issues 	Ward member Town and Parish Councils		
Update webpages to include preparations for 2019 and mitigation in place – new FAQ			
Borough News article to acknowledge issues in the past and set out measures put in place for improvement and mitigation	All residents		
Media release and FAQ published ahead of grass cutting season in order to: Explain grass cutting contract (what residents should expect) Set out measures put in place to reduce risk of problems Set out mitigation ready to use if necessary Provide appropriate method for residents to report issues	All residents		
Localities officer to provide early warnings of any emerging local issues	Internal		
Weekly updates to key stakeholders to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts that took place the previous week • Cuts scheduled for the week ahead • Any issues raised and response 	Ward members and town and parish councils	Issued each week from XXX	
Updates placed on WBC website after circulation to stakeholders	All residents	Published each week from xxx	

Social media posts to promote web updates	All residents	Published each week from xxx	
Media releases as required to provide general updates and deal with any specific issues	All residents	Ad hoc releases	

Appendix 7 – FAQs

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[Why has an area been missed?](#)

[The grass has Dandelions and other weeds. The seed float across to my garden. Can you remove or spray the weeds?](#)

[The Quality if the cutting is poor, why is this and will the contractors come back?](#)

[Dog fouling is an issue in long grass areas](#)

[Long grass encourages ticks](#)

[Long grass exacerbates hay fever please will you cut it?](#)

How often is the grass cut? / When will the grass be cut?

- Grass cutting should be carried out within the agreed specification standard
- Grass should be no longer than 125mm (5 inches) and no shorter than 30mm (1 inch) in general grass areas – most urban highway verges and parks where it has not been left for long grass or meadow areas.
- There is no set period of time between cuts, and times may vary according to weather conditions. Difficult conditions can often have a knock on effect when cutting is being carried out and cutting of high volumes of grass can take longer than anticipated. Alternatively prolonged periods of dry weather may make cutting unnecessary.
- We are only able to give a rough guide of 4 weeks between cuts during growing season, which is between April and September.

Why are there designated long grass areas?

- Where suitable, large highway verges in both rural and urban areas will be left to establish into grassland habitats, but with grass cut regularly around the fringes to ensure grass does not encroach onto pathways, roads or obstruct sight lines.
- In parkland and other open spaces where appropriate we will allow margins of grassland to develop instead of cutting right up to the park boundary.
- We will avoid cutting grass right up to the bases of trees and instead allow the grass to grow to prevent possible damage to trees.

What should contractors be doing when they cut the grass?

Our contractors are required to look after grass areas to provide a generally maintained appearance, which includes:

- Carrying out a uniform cut
- Giving due care and attention to grassed perimeter edges and any obstacles e.g. fence posts and trees
- Litter should be cleared from grass areas before cutting, with litter also being collected where grass areas have been cut exposing litter not previously seen.
- Paths and surrounding edges should be free of clippings

Why has the edge been cut but not the middle of the grass and vice versa?

- Grass cutting crews operate in teams of 2 or 3 operators and will usually consist of 1 ride-on mower operator and 1 or 2 strimmer/blower operator/s.
- Due to the speed of the ride-on mower, the strimmer/blower can often be left behind. The distance gap between them can be up to 24 hours. Please wait at least 24 hours before contacting the Council with your concern as the contractors may already be on route.

Do you collect grass cuttings?

No, this is not a service that has ever been provided by the Borough, clippings are left on site to compost down. It is not feasible to carry out this operation as it would be very labour intensive, carries excessive waste costs and is not economically viable.

I think an area has been missed, will they come back?

Generally our contractors will not be able to return to cut a missed patch. We receive numerous requests for the contractors to return. If we authorise all of these requests the normal routes would be severely disrupted causing further delays to the rest of the borough.

Why has an area been missed?

There are many reasons why an area of grass may have been missed. Here are some of these below.

- There are many areas where daffodil and tulip bulbs have been flowering. These areas of grass will be left uncut until 6 weeks after the flowers have finished blooming to ensure they return the following spring. The cutting will be carried out during the next round of cutting after this period of time.
- Where contractors pass areas that appear to be maintained they will not cut the area again. This is because if a resident is taking care of an area they are likely to be upset by our large machinery leaving possible damage or a poor cut to the carefully attended area. If you want the contractors to cut the grass, please do not cut it yourself and leave it to be cut during the next visit.
- We occasionally receive information of rare wildflowers, birds or animals being present in some grass areas. When these reports are received we will cease to cut around the area, for example until the end of nesting season in order to protect the species.
- Some areas of grass may suffer from standing water. If our contractors are unable to access the grass, they will leave the area and return during the next round to try again.
- If you believe an area of Council owned land has been missed, please provide exact details of the area using the nearest property address if possible and we will check the area and raise this with our contractors so it is not missed during the next grass cutting round.

The grass has Dandelions and other weeds. The seeds float across to my garden. Can you remove or spray the weeds?

We are not legally obliged to cut grass to stop weeds. We cannot authorise additional work to manage Dandelion or other weed seeds from dispersing.

The Quality if the cutting is poor, why is this and will the contractors come back?

- Our contractors are instructed to cut to a certain standard. There are some issues that can interfere with that standard.
- Scalping – where there are uneven ground levels a tyre of the mower can dip down causing the blade to scalp over lumps or slopes of uneven ground. This is not intentional and often cannot be helped. The contractors will not be sent back to rectify the damage.
- Tufts or uneven grass – where there is long grass growth, machinery will often will have problems cutting through the amount of grass and may not leave an even cut. You may see tufts or ridges of longer grass. This is due to the wheels of the machine pushing the long grass flat as they pass over. Once pushed flat it is missed by the blades. This cannot be prevented when dealing with long grass and the contractors will not be sent back to rectify the issue.
- Sending the contractors back for such issues disrupts the rounds and may cause further delays between cuts across the Borough.

Dog fouling is an issue in long grass areas

We believe that it is every owner's responsibility to collect their dog's waste and that the benefits of biodiverse areas outweigh the potential increase in dog fouling. It is the dog owner's responsibility to collect all waste regardless of the grass height or environment.

Long grass encourages ticks

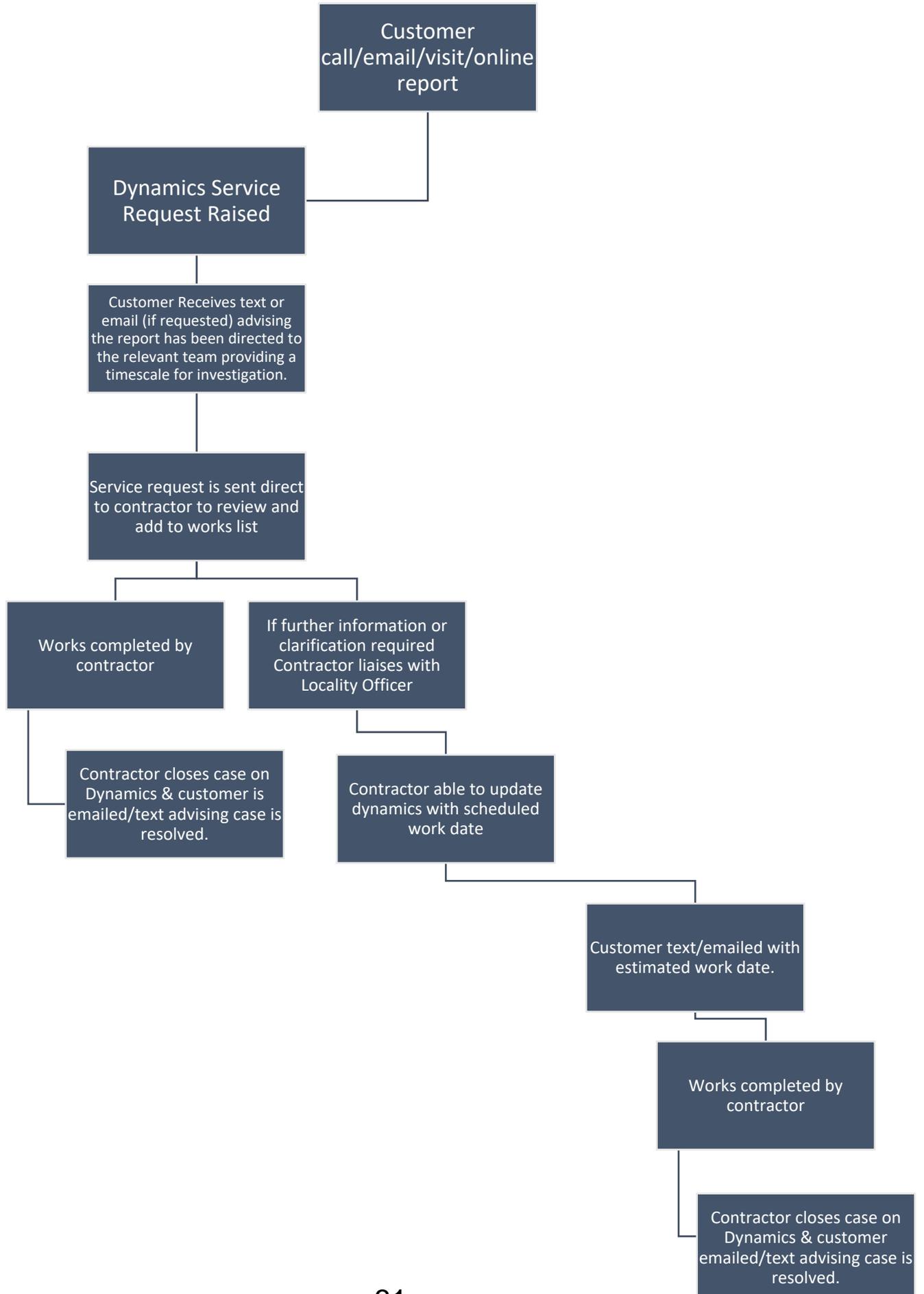
We have sympathy for dog owners and do not seek to reduce the enjoyment of walking your dog. Ticks live in areas of dense vegetation such as grassland and woodland locations, so we encourage those enjoying these environments to take care along with pet owners. Ticks are easily removed and it is important to examine your dog after a walk regardless of whether they have been taken through woodlands or grasslands. Where we have introduced long grass areas we are ensuring that there are still plenty of areas of regularly cut areas for all to enjoy. Top tips to avoid ticks include:

- Keep to footpaths where possible
- Wear long-sleeved tops and trousers when in woodland and grassland areas
- Use insect repellent on exposed skin
- Keep a look-out for ticks after being in a tick environment so any can be removed promptly

Long grass exacerbates hay fever - please will you cut it?

There is no legal obligation to cut the grass for hay fever purposes. We sympathise for hay fever sufferers, however studies show the wider health, wellbeing and ecosystem benefits from allowing grassland areas far outweigh the negative impact on hay fever sufferers. In grassland and meadow areas, we will time cuts of grassland areas when the pollen becomes more dense and less dispersed, this is typically outside the critical period of May, June and July.

Appendix 8 – The Customer Journey



Appendix 9 – Scenario Testing

Scenario 1 - Issues with Staffing

This could include:

- Training issues
- Problems recruiting staff
- Problems retaining staff

Mitigation

- A clear recruitment timeline has been proposed by Tivoli
- Recruitment commencing in January provides ample time to train up operatives
- More embedded trainers are now available at Tivoli to train up and sign off operatives promptly
- A number of seasonal staff from last summer were retained during the winter who will already be inducted
- Sub-contractor relationships formed by Tivoli to assist should any staffing issues arise
- Tivoli are currently reviewing the incentives available to operatives to help retain staff levels
- To maximise the staffing resource during the growing season Tivoli will be introducing time off in lieu for working bank holidays and stringent holiday leave during growing season

Scenario 2 - Issues with Weather/Conditions

This could include:

- Mild winter leading to early growth
- Wet hot weather leading to rapid growth
- Late/extended winter leading to late start
- Wet spring making preventing machinery to access sites

Mitigation

- Communications plan will be in place to keep Members informed (see Appendix 6)
- Tivoli will be prepared and ready to commence cutting in March regardless of conditions
- Resource and machinery in place to deliver a cut every 4 weeks to set clear expectation regardless of weather
- Clear communication regarding why areas have been missed i.e. to prevent damage to grass, bulb areas
- The Localities and Place Clienting teams will work with Tivoli on reporting any missed areas to arrange for a reactive team of operatives available to revisit these sites to carry out works without interrupting the cutting schedule.

Scenario 3 - Issues with machinery

This could include

- Insufficient machinery
- Machinery breakdown

Mitigation

- Assets have been accounted for and will be reviewed prior to grass cutting season
- A clear servicing plan is in place to get machinery to commence cutting at the earliest opportunity
- Training has been set up for operatives to assist with machinery maintenance and prevent breakdowns
- Tivoli have a subcontractor set up and available to assist if required at short notice
- Other parties have been approached to see if they will be available to assist should a breakdown occur including; Countryside Services, Town Councils and our Street Cleansing contractor OCS.
- Should machinery break-down Tivoli will arrange for it to be assessed within 24 hours to determine when it will be back in use and whether alternative machinery needs to be mobilised to prevent a delay in grass cutting.

Appendix 10 – Path of Performance Monitoring

