

The Highland Council
Caithness & Sutherland Area Committee
16 September 2015

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	CS/26/15

Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

This report details performance management information of the Grounds Maintenance Services from April to mid-August 2015.

Members are invited to note the management actions taken to deliver contracted and SLA grounds maintenance operations.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation to City/Area Committees gives the Caithness & Sutherland Area Committee the power:

"to approve local levels of service for grounds maintenance within the strategy and budget allocated by Community Services Committee."

1.2 Community Services is responsible for a wide range of horticultural related activities, including the maintenance of grass, flower and shrub beds, pruning vegetation and trees, weedkilling in public open spaces, sports areas, burial grounds and play areas.

1.3 This report details the recorded performance from April to mid-August 2015 and provides feedback of actions taken to manage the service during the period.

2. Maintenance Arrangements

2.1 Report CS/19/14 'Grounds Maintenance Programme' was presented to the Caithness and Sutherland Committee on 27th May 2014. The report detailed arrangements for the delivery of the Grounds Maintenance Service and the resources available

2.2 In Caithness and Sutherland the in-house DLO maintain tendered and retained grass cutting.

2.3 The DLO are responsible for all non-contracted grass cutting and maintenance of open space assets listed in 1.2 above.

3. Contract Supervision & Performance

- 3.1. The basis for all SLA or contract inspections is to determine if the site management, including contracted services, is sufficient to maintain the service standard of the Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- 3.2. The first point of contact for all operational issues, customer or member enquiries/complaints and service requests is the respective Community Works Officer then escalated to the Assistant Area Manager where no satisfactory outcome or response is proved. The DLO undertakes assessment of works delivered by in-house or contracted service delivery teams.
- 3.3. The role of monitoring and validation of all works has been assigned to Community Services contracts team consisting of a Performance Coordinator and two Contract Supervisors. They undertake planned, focused and reactionary inspections; covering all grounds maintenance disciplines. Re-inspections are undertaken following the issue of a Breached Standard notice.
- 3.4. Where performance or inspection failure is recorded, a breached standards, (informal, remedial or default), notice is issued to the service provider, whether internal (DLO) or external contractor.
- 3.5. Failure to return the site to the required standard within the notice period results in an escalation of the original notice issued.
- 3.6. A follow up inspection will be made on or after the notified completion date and if there has been insufficient improvement then a Default Notice will be issued to the DLO manager or the contractor respectively.
- 3.7. For the grass cutting activities and other grounds maintenance work the number of inspections and resulting breached standard notices issued to the in-house DLO during April to mid-August 2015 are shown below:

Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Caithness & Sutherland All tasks - All service providers					Wards 1 to 5
Table 40	Performance Monitoring		Breached Standard Notices		
April 2015 - Mar 2016	Validation Inspections	Pass Rate	Issued	No. complete d within Notice Period	% complete d within Notice Period
April	24	42%	14	14	100%
May	0	-	0	0	-
June	1	0%	1	0	0%
July	0	-	0	0	-
August	46	89%	5	0	0%
Year to Date	71	72%	20	14	70%

- 3.8 Overall 70% of all breached standards were rectified within the notice period. Compared with the maintained area of 2,098 million square metres and the 32,505 annual tasks undertaken, the number of breached standards is low. The level of performance differs across the two sub-areas and between service providers, as presented in **Appendix C**.

4. Management Summary and Actions

- 4.1 The monitoring and arrangements for recording performance is migrating to the area teams who will work closely with the Community Service Contracts team over the remainder of the growing season to ensure consistency.
- 4.2 Members will note limited formal contract monitoring data for retained DLO works. Unfortunately conflicting service priorities has resulted in a greater reliance on customer reports through the CRM Lagan system to alert the service to any quality concerns. This has been a relatively successful approach; however, discussions are underway on how the existing arrangements can be enhanced to provide a more comprehensive recording mechanism.
- 4.3 Although fewer inspections have been carried out than would have been preferred, the DLO resources (labour and machines) are similar to last year, and the local perception of our grass cutting operations has been largely positive, with very few complaints. This is despite an exceptionally poor summer, with a lot of cool and wet weather.

5. Implications

- 5.1 There may well be resource implications of achieving performance improvements and this will need to be carefully examined going forward.
- 5.2 There are no legal, equality, climate/carbon clever, risk, Gaelic or rural implications arising from this report

Recommendations

Members are invited to:-

- (i) scrutinise the performance management and remedial action information provided on the grounds maintenance service set out in this report ;
- (ii) note the management action taken to address the performance issues identified and;
- (iii) agree to review required service standards at future Ward Business Meetings.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 19 August 2015

Author: Campbell Stewart, Area Community Services Manager,
Caithness & Sutherland

Appendix A - Grass Cutting Maintained Areas and Annual Tasks

Caithness & Sutherland						
Area Maintained		Square Metres	Contracted		In House	
	Grass	1,902,754	0	0%	1,902,754	100%
	Planted	29,808	0	0%	29,808	100%
	Hard landscape	166079	35	0.01	166044	99.99%
	Total	2,098,641	35	0.01	2,098,606	99.99%
Forecast Tasks Annually		Number	Contracted		In House	
Grass	Growing Season	10,519		0%	10,519	100%
	Dormant Season	2,798		0%	2,798	100%
Planted	Growing Season	1,701	0	0%	1,701	100%
	Dormant Season	765	0	0%	765	100%
Hard landscape	Growing Season	10,314	0	0%	10,314	100%
	Dormant Season	6,408	35	0.01%	6,373	99.99%
Total		32,505	35	0.01%	32,473	99.99%

Appendix B - Grass Cutting Amenity Standards

Grass Type	Minimum Height of Grass (after cutting)	Maximum Height of Grass (prior to cutting)	Evident Clippings Acceptable	Action if Excessive Clippings
Lawn	15mm	25mm	None	<i>N/A - Collected at Each Cut</i>
High Amenity	25mm	60mm	Minimal	Remove
General Amenity	35mm	100mm	Some, Evenly Dispersed	Spread thinly or Remove
Low Amenity	75mm	150mm	Moderate, Dispersed	Spread
Rough or Verge	100mm	250mm	Significant, Scattered	<i>N/A – Not an Amenity Grade</i>

Appendix C – Performance Analysis (Note that at the time of writing, the August Inspections are within prescribed time frame, so may be resolved within the Notice Period)

Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Caithness Contracted Grass Cutting (Lot 1) - DLO					Wards 2 to 4
Table 41	Performance Monitoring		Breached Standard Notices		
April 2015 - Mar 2016	Validation Inspections	Pass Rate	Issued	No. completed within Notice Period	% completed within Notice Period
April	21	33%	14	14	100%
May	0	-	0	0	-
June	1	0%	1	0	0%
July	0	-	0	0	-
August	13	85%	2	0	0%
Year to Date	35	51%	17	14	82%

Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Sutherland Contracted Grass Cutting (Lot 2) - DLO					Wards 1 + 5
Table 42	Performance Monitoring		Breached Standard Notices		
April 2015 - Mar 2016	Validation Inspections	Pass Rate	Issued	No. completed within Notice Period	% completed within Notice Period
April	3	100%	0	0	-
May	0	-	0	0	-
June	0	-	0	0	-
July	0	-	0	0	-
August	9	100%	0	0	-
Year to Date	12	100%	0	0	-

Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Caithness & Sutherland Retained Grass Cutting - DLO	Wards 1 to 5
No formal Inspections completed	

Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Caithness & Sutherland SLA Work <u>excl.</u> grass cutting - DLO				Wards 1 to 5	
Table 46	Performance Monitoring		Breached Standard Notices		
April 2015 - Mar 2016	Validation Inspections	Pass Rate	Issued	No. completed within Notice Period	% completed within Notice Period
April	0	-	0	0	-
May	0	-	0	0	-
June	0	-	0	0	-
July	0	-	0	0	-
August	24	88%	3	0	0%
Year to Date	24	88%	3	0	0%

Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Caithness SLA Work <u>excl.</u> grass cutting - DLO				Wards 2 to 4	
Table 47	Performance Monitoring		Breached Standard Notices		
April 2015 - Mar 2016	Validation Inspections	Pass Rate	Issued	No. completed within Notice Period	% completed within Notice Period
April	0	-	0	0	-
May	0	-	0	0	-
June	0	-	0	0	-
July	0	-	0	0	-
August	15	80%	3	0	0%
Year to Date	15	80%	3	0	0%

Grounds Maintenance Performance Report Sutherland SLA Work <u>excl.</u> grass cutting - DLO					Wards 1 + 5
Table 48	Performance Monitoring		Breached Standard Notices		
April 2015 - Mar 2016	Validation Inspections	Pass Rate	Issued	No. completed within Notice Period	% completed within Notice Period
April	0	-	0	0	-
May	0	-	0	0	-
June	0	-	0	0	-
July	0	-	0	0	-
August	9	100%	0	0	-
Year to Date	9	0%	0	0	-