

## The Highland Council

Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee – 31 May 2016

Agenda Item	8
Report No	BSAC/08/16

### Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report – early season update

#### Report by Director of Community Services

##### Summary

This report details performance management information of the Grounds Maintenance Services for April & May 2016.

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

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Members will recall that local Committees now have certain powers with respect to Grounds Maintenance within the context of the overall strategy and budget, which are set by Community Services.

1.2 In summary Grounds Maintenance includes:

- the maintenance of grass, flower and shrub beds;
- pruning vegetation and trees; and
- weed-killing in public open spaces, sports areas, burial grounds and play areas.

1.3 This report (and future reports) will detail Service performance in these tasks.

## 2. Maintenance Arrangements

2.1 Maintenance provision is carried out by in-house staff and private sector partners according to the details in **Appendix 1**.

2.3 The in-house team is responsible for the maintenance of open space assets listed in 1.2 above (further details of these are contained in **Appendix 1**).

## 3. Supervision

3.1. The basis for supervision of the activities whether contracted or not is against a specification which is contained either in the contract (with the private sector) or in a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which is essentially a contract with the In-house team.

3.2. Grass cutting amenity standards are attached as **Appendix 2**.

- 3.3 Primary responsibility for monitoring the quality of works lies with the in-house team and contractors by way of self-assessment.
- 3.4 The management of performance, administration and validation of works are carried out by a small HQ based team comprising of three individuals (for all of Highland).
- 3.5 The team also manages recovery of calculated losses as a result of non-compliance, and undertake planned, focused/reactionary and random inspections. Re-inspections are undertaken following the issue of a Breached Standard notice.
- 3.6 Where performance or inspection failure is recorded, a formal notice (Remedial or Default) is issued to the service provider, whether in-house or external.
- 3.7 After a Remedial Notice has been issued, remedy is required within 7 calendar days. Failure to return the site to the required standard results in an escalation of the original notice.
- 3.8 To encourage prompt action, the Authority's Representative has the discretion to withdraw the Remedial Notice if the site is returned to standard within 48 hours of issue.
- 3.9 Failure to complete remedial action within 7 days results in loss of monthly payment for the specified location, incurs re-inspection cost and a Default notice being issued
- 3.10 In all Highland for the 2015 season 100% of the notices issued were completed, of which, 81% were within 7 days. Re-inspection costs and site values were applied and recovered as compensatory works. For the 2016 season calculated losses will be agreed at the monthly contracts meeting and deducted directly from monthly contract value.

#### 4. **1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Performance**

- 4.1 Performance in Badenoch & Strathspey should be measured against the baseline figures of :
  - Maintained Area = 495,030 square meters
  - Annual Tasks = 11,279
- 4.2 In summary:
  - validation results showing Breached Standards information for Badenoch & Strathspey are shown as **Appendix 3**;
  - for this season to date the number of Breached Standards by the grass-cutting Contractor is high (inspection pass rate below 50%); and
  - for this season to date the number of Breached Standards by the In-house team undertaking other SLA work is low (inspection pass rate over 80%).

## 5. Validation

- 5.1 Community Services actively prioritise resource allocation to high profile areas, play areas and burial grounds maintenance.
- 5.2 To identify key issues and deploy resources in a cost efficient manner, the contracts team is focussed on and aiming to carry out validation checks at all burial grounds over the summer season.
- 5.3 This will result in a high number of breached standards notices being issued; these will be prioritised and programmed for action.
- 5.4 For Contracted Grass Cutting:
- the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Validation inspections recorded 38% pass rate.
- 5.5 Due to report being mid-quarter the figure includes notices currently live and within 7 days of issue.
- 5.6 However, this low initial Inspection Pass Rate is due to early season rapid grass growth, combined with new season start-up problems with the contractor (for example machinery breakdowns and staffing issues). This is being actively addressed by the contracts monitoring team.
- 5.7 Failure to complete remedial action within 7 days results in loss of monthly payment for the specified location, incurs re-inspection cost and a Default notice being issued (reference 3.9 above).
- 5.8 For In-House Grounds SLA works:
- the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Validation inspections recorded 83% pass rate
- 5.9 This is due to the necessity to prioritise resources, requiring focus on high priority activities such as Burial Interments, weed-killing, and responding to requests (for example house clearances and special events.)
- 5.10 Full details of the validation results for all Highland are attached as **Appendix 4**.

### Recommendations

Members are invited to note:

- the performance management and remedial action information provided on the grounds maintenance service; and
- the management action taken to address the performance issues identified.

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Date: 19 May 2016  
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## Appendix 1

### Maintenance Arrangements in Badenoch & Strathspey (2016-17)

PROVIDER	Delivered By	SERVICE	Detail	VALUE (£)
THC CW Badenoch & Strathspey (Ward 21)	In-house staff	Includes the following: Burial interments, cemetery maintenance not including grass-cutting (for example raising sunken ground, maintenance of paths, fences, walls, pest control.), preparation of foundations for headstone memorials. Maintenance of depot sites, winter maintenance of all grass areas, weed-killing, maintenance of play areas and street furniture, bedding plants (reduced this year), shrub beds, hedge and tree pruning. Maintenance of Kingussie Tennis courts. Maintenance of war memorial sites. Also: House clearances for Housing Services and delivering aspects of other services (for example emptying dog bins for Waste Services, operating footway gritters for Roads Services, filling salt bins, covering holidays for refuse loaders and litter pickers, operating landfill sites for Waste Services). Requests relating to special events.	All locations listed as In-house: 35,995sqm summer (495,030sqm winter)	Details from the operational manager Richard Porteous
	ISS (private sector)	All grass cutting across Badenoch & Strathspey– burial grounds, village greens, football pitches and kick-about areas, play areas, schools and housing estates, grass at the edge of footpaths, etc.	All locations listed as sub-contracted grass cutting: 460,995sqm	£93,520

## Appendix 2

### Grass Cutting Amenity Standards

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

### Appendix 3

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Validation Inspections: Badenoch & Strathspey

Badenoch & Strathspey Wards 21	Grounds Maintenance		
	Contracted Grass	Retained Grass	In-house SLA non Grass cutting
<b>Asset Quantity (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	460,995	0	35,995
Total No. of Inspections.	13	0	6
Pass Inspections.	5	0	5
Fail Inspections.	8	0	1
Pass Rate (%)	38%	-	83%
Remedial Notices issued	8	0	1
Default Notices issued	0	0	0
Notices addressed within time	1	0	0
% Notices addressed within time	13%	-	0%

## Appendix 4

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Validation Inspections: All Highland (Wards 1-22)

Operator	ACTION							
	Total No. of Inspections.	Pass	Fail	Pass Rate (%)	Remedial Notices	Default Notices	*Notices completed within time	*% within time
Grounds Contracted Grass Cutting (ISS)	167	118	49	71%	48	1	31	63%
Grounds Contracted Grass Cutting (Golders)	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	-
Grounds Contracted Grass Cutting (In-House Team)	4	0	4	0%	4	0	0	0%
Grounds Retained Grass Cutting (In-House Team)	9	8	1	89%	1	0	0	0%
Grounds SLA Work ( In-House, and Community Co)	51	12	39	24%	37	2	7	18%

\*Due to report being mid-quarter **Appendix 4** includes notices currently live and within 7 days of issue.