

Agenda Item	6
Report No	LA/30/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Lochaber Area Committee

Date: 6 November 2019

Report Title: Grounds Maintenance Season 2019

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Customer and Communities

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council provides a range of amenity services to communities throughout the Highlands. These include maintenance of: open spaces; burial grounds; play facilities; and sports pitches.

This report details performance management information of the Grounds Maintenance Service from April to October 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to:

- (i) scrutinise the performance management information; and
- (ii) agree to review service standards in partnership with other stakeholders during the winter season.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – The budget for Amenities Services in Lochaber is approximately £0.258m. This does not include cemetery maintenance. A traditional service delivery model is in place, with grass-cutting in-sourced in 2017. Service standards and provision have reduced to achieve savings amounting to £402k overall over the past 3 years. A review would consider all the resourcing issues including workforce, plant, materials, income generation and community capacity for sustainable proposals to be developed for Members to consider

- 3.2 Legal – Amenity services are not statutory. However, where they are provided, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability (Scotland) Act 1960 are the principal legislation that needs to be complied with. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 outlines control measures that the Council must take to protect the Health and Safety of its employees and members of the public during maintenance operations. Any changes to current practice will incorporate the appropriate control measures.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – the review will consider equalities impacts and the Fairer Scotland Duty. The review will also consider workforce implications, including groups of staff with relatively low pay. The review would also consider known community involvement and proposals for further involvement.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – any proposed review will consider the implications for the Council's carbon footprint and other environmental impacts, particularly on biodiversity.
- 3.5 Risk – the review will ensure that the Council's exposure to legal and reputational risk is addressed.
- 3.6 Gaelic - There are no known Gaelic implications at this time

4. Maintenance Arrangements

- 4.1 Community Services are 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.
- 4.2 This report details the recorded performance from April to October 2019 and provides feedback of actions taken to manage the service during the period.
- 4.3 Maintenance in some of our more remote areas, such as Acharacle and Strontian, is sub contracted to local contractors. The performance report includes sub-contracted works.

5. Performance Monitoring

- 5.1 The inspection system assesses the quality of grounds maintenance from a customers' perspective, and measures this against the standard of works completed across all types of amenity spaces.
- 5.2 Inspectors assess the standard of service achieved at each site inspected, recording standards as noted below:-

- A** – Completed to Specification
- B** – Predominantly completed
- C** – Remediation work required
- D** – Very poor/unacceptable

A/B inspection results are classed as satisfactory. C/D inspection results are regarded as unsatisfactory and may be as a result of excessive grass clippings, unmaintained edges, or shredded or excessive litter. Unsatisfactory inspections will influence planned maintenance activities and will result in remediation work being carried out as quickly as possible.

5.3 Minor remediation takes place at the next scheduled visit. This allows operatives to keep on programme and maintain most locations to the required specification.

Table 1 records the results of inspections undertaken in relation to the quality of service delivery against the above specification within areas which are currently maintained.

This does not include areas which are not maintained such as slopes over 30 degrees or areas not cut in order to promote biodiversity.

Table 1

LOCHABER Environmental Services KPI			
WARD	INSPECTIONS COMPLETED	NUMBER OF SATISFACTORY INSPECTIONS	% SATISFACTORY
Ward 11 Lochaber	60	58	97%
Ward 21 Lochaber	94	79	84%
Year to Date	154	137	89%

6. Next Season

6.1 Following agreement at the August meeting of the Lochaber Committee, it was agreed to review service standards in consultation with Community Councils and Members during the winter season. It is proposed this will take place after the Community Council elections.

6.2 It is also proposed that the review gathers views and feedback from front-line staff involved in providing the services.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Customer and Communities

Date: 10 October 2019

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