

## **Grass Cutting in Urban Areas**

Report of the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste

***Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.***

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Committee notes the County's position in respect of the grass cutting contract within North Devon and a report on performance during this summer is considered at the next meeting of this Committee.

### **1. Summary**

The report advises of the action being taken by the County to manage grass cutting in Urban Areas within North Devon.

### **2. Background/Introduction**

A joint procurement was undertaken for grounds maintenance by Devon County Council, Torridge District Council, North Devon District Council, Barnstaple Town Council and North Devon Homes Ltd in 2013. ISS Facility Services Ltd was awarded the contract following competitive tendering of the work.

### **3. Level of Service**

ISS Facility Services Ltd are contracted to cut urban highway verges four times between April and September each year.

### **4. Contractor Performance**

In the 2013 season only three cuts were made, this was primarily due to the mobilisation of the joint contract being delayed. The last cut of 2013/14 commenced during March 2014 and was completed at the start of June.

To date in the 2014 season the resource provided by the contractor has not been adequate to deliver the required service. The first cut was effectively the fourth cut from 2013/14 and was completed in early June. This was late in the growing season and has resulted in the verges being unkempt and overgrown. In certain locations visibility has been impaired and remedial cutting has been undertaken by the County's highways term maintenance contractor (SWH Ltd). A further four cuts are planned to provide the required 2014/15 service.

### **5. Management Action**

The contractor has been advised of underperformance and has responded by increasing the resource to meet the requirements of the highway element of the contract. Detailed reporting of resource allocation and activity is being presented to Devon County Council weekly. It is anticipated that close monitoring of the contractor will address underperformance.

If underperformance continues then consideration may be given to determining the contract.

## 6. Sustainability Considerations

The cutting of highway verges is essential for the safety of the highway user and contributes to Devon's environmental, social and economic well being.

## 7. Carbon Impact Considerations

None.

## 8. Equality Considerations

None.

## 9. Legal Considerations

The performance of the contractor is defined by terms of contract and due sanction within the terms will be made.

## 10. Risk Management Considerations

Underperformance of the contractor may present a hazard to the highway user due to reduced visibility at certain location. This could leave the County open to claims from third parties should a collision occur.

## 11. Options/Alternatives

Grass cutting may be undertaken by the County's term maintenance contractor or be retendered if the performance of the current contractor does not improve.

## 12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

This report advises of the actions that have been undertaken to address the underperformance of the grass cutting contractor.

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## Electoral Divisions: All in North Devon

### Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Nil		