

Cabinet Agenda

Monday, 3 October 2022 at 6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3UY

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		Page No.
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declaration of Interests	
3.	Minutes of Last Meeting	1 - 6
4.	Notification of Additional Urgent Items	7 - 10
5.	Urgent Items	
6.	Castleham Industrial Units roof refurbishment <i>Amy Terry - Estates Manager</i>	11 - 14
7.	Agreeing the delivery model for Grounds Maintenance Services from November 2023 <i>Cameron Morley – Waste and Cleansing Services Manager</i>	15 - 74
8.	Exclusion of the Public To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items of business listed below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of “exempt” information as defined in the paragraphs of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 referred to in the relevant report.	

9.	Castleham Industrial Units roof refurbishment - Part 2 <i>Amy Terry - Estates Manager</i>	75 - 78
10.	Agreeing the delivery model for Grounds Maintenance Services from November 2023 - Part 2 <i>Cameron Morley - Waste and Cleansing Services Manager</i>	79 - 94

Agenda Item 3 Public Document Pack CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present: Councillors Barnett (Chair), Batsford, Evans, Haffenden, Hilton, Rogers, Roark and Willis

In attendance: Jane Hartnell Managing Director, Kit Wheeler Chief Finance Officer, Mary Kilner Chief Legal Officer

449. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness received from Councillor Roark

450. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

451. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st August 2022 be approved as a true record.

The Chair moved Item 8a to be the first item heard

452. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT - 2021-22

Cllr Roark was not present for this item

Cllr Patmore asked a question regarding the report. The reserves in November 2021 were forecast as £5.5million but were now standing at in excess of £9million. Do all the loans to PWLB have repayment penalty?

Cllr Rankin asked a question regarding Loans and the way they are presented in reports and for them to include the minimum revenue provision?

The Chief Finance Officer explained that MRP (minimum revenue provision) is an allocated amount that we must set aside as part of our accounting. The external advisors are reviewing our MRP policy. Regarding repayment options on loans generally there is a penalty, but each loan will need to be checked individually.

The Finance portfolio holder Cllr Willis explained that these reports need to show in a clear way the real cost of borrowing. Lots of work 'is happening to make the reports more accessible.'

A question was asked regarding the financing cost and net revenue stream percentage. The Chief Finance Officer answered that 17 percent is unlikely to be

CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2022

achieved more regularly going forward, so you're probably up at the 30%, good or bad. It will depend on your approach to risk.

The Chair highlighted the quality of the financial management approach that the Council has taken over the last two financial years.

Cllr Willis proposed approval of the recommendation. Cllr Batsford seconded the recommendation.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. To consider the report – no recommendations are being made to amend the current Treasury Management Strategy as a result of this review.

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that Members are fully aware of the activities undertaken in the last financial year, that Codes of Practice have been complied with and that the Council's strategy has been effective in 2021-22.

Under the Code adopted the Full Council are required to consider the report and any recommendations made. There will be a further report forthcoming on Treasury Management covering a review of the current financial year i.e the mid-year review.

453. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Chief Finance Officer explained that this report sets out a clear position of the Council. Meetings have been had with LGA to help make clear the financial strategy of the Council. We are in consultation with our advisors, they are going to help us review and potentially amend where necessary any of our provisions and our calculations. They will also look at our borrowing to date.

The report explains where the Council will be in a short space of time if issues are not addressed quickly. One of the areas that is causing us the greatest concern is the housing and homelessness issue and we've set up a task force to identify any potential savings and any efficiencies that that can be made. Unfortunately for us as fast as we're working to find those savings, there are costs that are still increasing.

Cllr. Patmore's question regarding the reserves was answered by the Chief Finance Officer. The accounts have not been signed off from 2019-2020 yet and that has given some time for movement. Some spending that was planned was not completed due to covid. A lot of previous forecasts have become actual.

The Finance portfolio holder explained that the threat of recession and inflation means that we may meet even bigger challenges than we've already factored into this report.

It was requested for some training for Councillors to help them review finance reports and make decisions. It was discussed that by maximising income the Council should not conflict with its anti-poverty commitments. The Chief Finance Officer explained that there are separate discussions around fees and charges and there'll be a

CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2022

separate paper on it. Councillors asked when there will be an update from the Housing Task Force. The Managing Director answered that this will be discussed at the next Housing Task Force meeting and will update when this can be brought forward.

Cllr Patmore asked a question regarding the position the Council is in regarding energy costs. The Chief Finance Officer explained the council is on a fixed energy contract for a year.

The Chair explained that the Council has to respond to the cost of living crisis but also deliver a service to residents. There are now weekly financial planning meetings and also budget planning over a longer span than one financial year.

Cllr Willis proposed approval of the recommendation and Cllr Rogers seconded the recommendation.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That Cabinet agree:

- 1) Officers continue with detailed work to bring forward business case options to the Executive designed to address the deficit by curbing unplanned cost increases, reduce core costs and/or increase income.**
- 2) Officers report monthly to the Executive on progress with developing and implementing the business cases, savings achieved/identified to date and the latest financial position.**
- 3) Officers provide regular updates to the Executive on all the other management action points listed in this report.**
- 4) An urgent review of all fees and charges be undertaken with the aim of implementing them as soon as legally possible (allowing for any statutory consultation periods).**
- 5) The Council request that the LGA (Local Government Association) organise a finance peer challenge in early Spring 2023.**
- 6) A review of the capital programme is completed to ensure it is affordable and commencement of new capital schemes which require borrowing is restricted until the strategy to address the financial deficit has been determined. (*exceptions to include schemes that demonstrate reduction in revenue costs, or where schemes are fully externally funded).**
- 7) A further, more detailed Medium Term Financial Strategy be brought to the October Cabinet meeting setting out more detail of the strategy to address the budget deficit, including scenario planning, as well as in-year and other budget savings where these have been identified.**

Reasons for Recommendations

CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Hastings Borough Council, like many other councils, is currently facing some of the biggest financial challenges and pressures in recent years, possibly ever.

The ability to deliver key services to the most vulnerable is becoming increasingly hard to do. Static funding from Central Government, coupled with high cost of inflation on all services, rising homelessness and temporary accommodation costs, and tighter restrictions on how Councils can fund capital expenditure is providing a perfect storm.

Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, it is a statutory requirement that Councils set a balanced revenue budget.

A major overhaul of the funding mechanism for local authorities has continuously been postponed and when combined with a regular one-year spending reviews, continues to provide considerable uncertainty on funding in future years.

The previous Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities committed to providing a two-year financial settlement for 2023/24 onwards, however until the new Prime Minister and Cabinet is in place, uncertainty remains as to whether this commitment will be realised.

Whilst a two-year financial settlement would be better for planning purposes than previous one year settlement figures, it does little to provide long term assurance and planning opportunities for Local Government finance teams across the country and Hastings is no different.

The Council needs to be able to match its available resources to its priorities across the medium term and to maintain sufficient reserves and capacity to deal with potentially large and unexpected events, in addition to fluctuations in income and expenditure levels.

We have seen in recent years what impact Covid-19 had on our ability to deliver services and the wider economy, so we must be prudent to guard against similar unexpected and impactful local and even global events outside of our control. It is therefore imperative that attention is drawn to the current and future financial position of Hastings Borough Council and that Members act immediately on the recommendations as outlined in this report.

Failure to do so will result in a worsening financial position and likely issuing of a Section 114 notice in the forthcoming months.

454. CABINET APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Cllr Roark was present for this item

The Chief Legal Officer explained this is to make appointments of members to committees, partnerships and working groups to which Cabinet appoints. Councillor

CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Paul Barnett and Councillor Maya Evans to be appointed to the Personnel Consultative Group.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. To appoint members to committees and working groups as set out in Appendix A

Reasons:

Members are required to serve on the committees, working groups, partnerships and representative bodies to which Cabinet appoints. Chairs and Vice Chairs are required for the committees that report to Cabinet.

455. NOTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

456. URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

457. BYE LAWS FOR PLEASURE GROUNDS, PUBLIC WALKS AND OPEN SPACES

Cllr Roark was not present for this item

Councillor Barnett invited questions regarding this item from Councillors present.

Councillor Carr asked for confirmation that passing the byelaws does not imply that we're voting through the cycle path?

Councillor O'Callaghan requested confirmation that a cycle path vote will go to Full Council? Also asked is how would you go about designating the cycle path?

Councillor Patmore asked if Cabinet would debate a proposed Cycle Path if the bye laws pass as Cabinet had already debated and agreed a path in 2016?

Councillor Barnett answered that any proposed cycle path will be debated by Cabinet and then may go forward to Full Council. He explained that Cabinet is not bound by a decision made in 2016. Any proposal for any designated cycle path anywhere in Hastings will require a fresh Cabinet report. Where the proposal is in any way controversial then it will also be a report that Cabinet make a recommendation to Full Council for a final decision. The time scale for the new report about Alexandra Park is as soon as possible.

The Chief Legal Officer explained the byelaws need to be updated as the original set were written in 1965. They were badly worded and they didn't cover, detail or regulate all the activities that would need to be covered. These new byelaws are detailed and updated and have been approved by the Secretary of State

CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Councillor Hilton explained the byelaws were outdated and as previously clarified the byelaws have been separated from agreeing a cycle path.

Cllr Hilton proposed approval of the recommendation. Cllr Batsford seconded the recommendation.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. Cabinet considers the following report for presentation to an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 14th September 2022 to adopt the byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces and the revocation of existing byelaws stated in Section 1 of this report.

Reasons:

1. The current byelaws for parks and open spaces are out of date. The proposed new single set of byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces will supersede the old byelaws which will be revoked by Full Council.
2. The proposed byelaws have been approved by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities following public consultation and due legal process required to adopt new byelaws.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.20 pm)

Agenda Item 4

To Councillor Patmore
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION RULES
KEY DECISIONS
RULE 26.20 –general exceptions.**

NOTICE is hereby given under Rule 26 of the Access to Information Rules contained in the Council's Constitution that the following key decision will be taken at Cabinet on 3 October 2022: -

Cabinet			
<u>Decision</u>	<u>Consultation and Timetable</u>	<u>Working Papers and files</u>	<u>Responsible Officer / Portfolio Holder</u>
Castleham Industrial Units roof refurbishment Report following tendering exercise	Cabinet 3 October Full Council 12 October		Amy Terry, Estates Manager Councillor Paul Barnett

Signed: 
Mary Kilner - Chief Legal Officer

Dated: 12 September 2022

Note:

Rule 26.20 General Exception

If a matter which is likely to be a key decision has not been included in the forward plan, then subject to Rule 26.21 (special urgency), the decision may still be taken if:

- (a) the decision must be taken by such a date that it is impracticable to defer the decision until it has been included in the next forward plan and until the start of the first month to which the next forward plan relates;
- (b) the Chief Legal Officer has informed the chair of a relevant overview and scrutiny committee, or if there is no such person, each member of that committee in writing, by notice, of the matter to which the decision is to be made; and
- (c) the Chief Legal Officer has made copies of that notice available to the public at the offices of the Council; and

(d) at least five clear days have elapsed since the Chief Legal Officer complied with (b) and (c).

Where such a decision is taken collectively, it must be taken in public.

To Councillor Patmore
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION RULES
KEY DECISIONS
RULE 26.20 –general exceptions.**

NOTICE is hereby given under Rule 26 of the Access to Information Rules contained in the Council's Constitution that the following key decision will be taken at Cabinet on: -

Cabinet			
<u>Decision</u>	<u>Consultation and Timetable</u>	<u>Working Papers and files</u>	<u>Responsible Officer / Portfolio Holder</u>
Agreeing the delivery model for Grounds Maintenance from November '23	CAP – 20/09/22 Cabinet – 03/10/22 Full Council – 12/10/22	Part 1 & 2 Cabinet Papers Appendix A - D	Cameron Morley/ Cllr Julia Hilton

Signed 
Mary Kilner - Chief Legal Officer

Dated 14/09/2022

Note:

Rule 26.20 General Exception

If a matter which is likely to be a key decision has not been included in the forward plan, then subject to Rule 26.21 (special urgency), the decision may still be taken if:

- (a) the decision must be taken by such a date that it is impracticable to defer the decision until it has been included in the next forward plan and until the start of the first month to which the next forward plan relates;
- (b) the Chief Legal Officer has informed the chair of a relevant overview and scrutiny committee, or if there is no such person, each member of that committee in writing, by notice, of the matter to which the decision is to be made; and
- (c) the Chief Legal Officer has made copies of that notice available to the public at the offices of the Council; and
- (d) at least five clear days have elapsed since the Chief Legal Officer complied with (b) and (c).

Where such a decision is taken collectively, it must be taken in public.

Agenda Item 6



Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 3 October 2022

Report Title: Castleham Industrial Units roof refurbishment

Report By: Amy Terry
Estates Manager

Purpose of Report

To seek an increase in the capital budget allocation for this project following the return of tenders which exceed the revised budget.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. The Capital programme budget is increased from £250,000 to £325,000.**

Reasons for Recommendations

Costs have increased since the budget was set.

Background

1. In May 2022 our consultants, SHW, produced an initial cost estimate for works to numbers 6 to 10 Castleham Road to include over roofing (with a similar uninsulated system to numbers 1 to 5), gutter lining, preliminaries, contingency, and fees. This identified a total project cost of £250,000 and the capital programme budget was increased accordingly.
2. It was subsequently agreed to include gutter lining of the remaining units in the block (numbers 1 to 5 Castleham Road). This was proposed to “complete” the works to this block as during periods of heavy rain the units are still susceptible to flooding.
3. A tendering exercise was carried out through East Sussex Procurement Hub (ESPH). The returns have now been analysed and due to the proposed system being insulated, the inclusion of the additional works to the gutters and rapid inflationary rises the total project cost, including fees, is currently estimated to be £322,700.40. Further details are included in the Part 2 report.

Conclusion

4. It is recommended that the capital programme budget is increased to £325,000 so that a contractor can be appointed to carry out the works.
5. The works to refurbish the roof are essential as the buildings have widespread damp issues owing to water ingress. This will both help to avoid future loss of income and improve the environmental credentials of the units.

Timetable of Next Steps

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Budget increase agreed and contractor appointed	Cabinet & Full Council approval	Cabinet 3 October Full Council 12 October	Estates Manager to submit reports to Cabinet & Full Council Legal to complete construction contract
Works	Instruction issued Mobilisation period	October October to December	ESPH/Legal/SHW Contractor

	Start on site	December	Contractor
	Completion	Approx. 16-week contract period	SHW/Contractor
		Note assumes the weather remains favourable	

Wards Affected

Hollington

Implications

Relevant project tools applied? Yes/No

Have you checked this report for plain English and readability? Yes/No

Climate change implications considered? Yes/No

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	N
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues	Y
Economic/Financial Implications	Y
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	N
Anti-Poverty	N

Additional Information

Report to Cabinet and Full Council – Budget Update – June 2022.

Officer to Contact

Officer Name Amy Terry
Officer Email Address aterry@hastings.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 7



Report To:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	3rd October 2022
Report Title:	Agreeing the delivery model for Grounds Maintenance Services from November 2023.
Report By:	Cameron Morley - Waste & Cleansing Services Manager
Key Decision:	Yes
Classification:	Public (Part 1)

Purpose of Report

To agree the delivery model of Grounds Maintenance services from November 2023.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet approve this report for consideration at Full Council with the following recommendations:

- (i) To in-source the grounds maintenance service from November 2023, adding the service to Hastings Direct Services Organisation (HDSO).
- (ii) To authorise the Waste & Cleansing Services Manager to progress the new Ground Maintenance service from November 2023, including the appointment of support staff, the procurement of any equipment and establishment of budgets as outlined in this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

The current grounds maintenance contract with IdVerde comes to an end in November 2023. To ensure that there is no service disruption, Hastings Borough Council (HBC) will require a new supplier to carry out the work from that point forward.

With the assistance of an external grounds maintenance consultant, a review of the current GM service has been undertaken, and a full pricing exercise completed to establish the market rate of carrying out the council's GM service either as an in-house (via HDSO) or outsourced (via a contractor) operation. The outcome of that exercise, coupled with HBC's own soft market testing has demonstrated that the current service, if tendered right now, would be unaffordable.

With this in mind, an in-house proposal has been developed to provide a simplified service that covers HBC statutory and health and safety (H&S) responsibilities, while remaining affordable and continuing to offer some flexibility. It is recommended that this service be implemented from November 2023.

The Council's statutory duty to ensure the service offers Best Value is an important consideration in this matter. The S.151 Officer and Chief Legal Officer are persuaded that the evidence from the extensive market testing, and information provided by the consultants

about the local market and procurement exercises undertaken in our geographic area both demonstrate that the approach offers best economic and social value.

INTRODUCTION

1. Throughout the Borough of Hastings, green spaces are viewed by many as an essential escape from the urban environment of the town, offering a lifeline for those who want a place to unwind, exercise or just spend time with friends and family. The importance of these green spaces cannot be overstated, with untold benefits to both physical and mental wellbeing, as well as being an attractive tourism offer to potential visitors to the town, while supporting biodiversity, habitat creation and providing climate resilience.
2. As part of this, grounds maintenance (GM) plays an integral role in the use and maintenance of these green spaces. The purpose of this report is to outline the methods available to carry out this function, with a view to deciding which would be most appropriate for Hastings following the completion for the current GM contract in 2023.

BACKGROUND TO GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PROJECT

3. The provision of a GM service enables HBC to maintain the council's green spaces and assets. It also helps the council to meet its statutory and legal obligations, as well as being an essential part in meeting the council's agendas relating to climate change, biodiversity, economic development, regeneration, and public health and wellbeing.
4. Currently, HBC is responsible for the maintenance of 690 Hectares of green space, including, Local Nature Reserves, Country Parks, Playing Fields/Pitches, Public Parks and the Cemetery and Crematorium grounds. HBC has three nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and one internationally designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
5. Since 2012, the maintenance of these areas has been outsourced under a partnership contract arrangement with Rother District Council and Optivo, allowing for shared resources such as management and equipment across the partnership area. Information relating to the current contract value is included in part 2 of this report.
6. The current contract with IdVerde was extended for a year and is due to expire in November 2023. This contract does have the option to extend for a further year. Under the terms of the contract, HBC is required to give at least 12 months' notice to contractor of our future intentions, hence a decision on the future of the contracting arrangement is required before November 2022.
7. As with other contracted services, this has given the council the opportunity to review the current delivery method and establish and agree whether an alternative model might be advantageous – specifically whether the service should be taken in-house and added to the council's establish Direct Services Organisation (HDSO), which currently operates street cleansing and building cleaning.
8. Central to the establishment of a new GM supplier, is the council's commitment to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies, increase community engagement and address relevant skills and education gaps and thinking differently on how we want to manage our green spaces into the future.

9. With this in mind, a number of business analysis methods have been used to provide evidence for the options outlined within this report, including initial options analysis and soft market testing, which led to the appointment of a specialist consultant (WCL) in March 2022.
10. WCL have spent the last few months engaging with key stakeholders; and in consultation with the Parks and Open Spaces Manager and the Lead Councillor for Climate Change and Environment, have rationalised the current GM specification and provided a costing for a service that would bring it in-line with current needs and meet future service aspirations.
11. Upon review, this proposal, in light of HBC's current financial situation, would be unaffordable. With this in mind, WCL have provided an alternative simplified option which would meet HBC's statutory and H&S responsibilities, while continuing to offer some flexibility to achieve the future aspirations for the service.
12. Within this report and its associated appendices is an overview of the proposal, including a description, rationale and recommendation, along with the associated costs.

DELIVERY MODELS

13. In terms of service delivery methodologies, there are two main options available to HBC, contracted and in-house. The contracted service would be via an appointed contractor, chosen through the normal procurement routes, and the in-house service could be added to HDSO.
14. The GM service in Hastings has been a contracted service for many years. By continuing with this service delivery model, HBC could essentially maintain the status quo, continuing to utilise the current client structure, relying on established processes, and avoiding much of the additional work required to set up the service as a DSO.
15. Over the past year, HBC, with the assistance of the East Sussex Procurement Hub (ESPH) and WCL have carried out soft market testing as well as an independent pricing exercise to establish what the likely cost would be if the council went out to the market now. The results indicate that the service would end up costing between 40% and 70% more than is currently being spent. Equally a considerable level of risk associated with market fluctuations was identified. For more information on the state of the market, please see **Appendix D**.
16. The alternative is to bring the service in-house and operate it as part of HDSO. As has been demonstrated by the current street cleansing and building cleaning services, HDSO has given the council the desired freedom and flexibility to make changes and adapt to changing priorities and challenges as they occur, while providing a high-quality service within budget. For GM, this is a particularly important element to the new service, as in the coming years it is likely that the service will evolve as a result of local and national targets relating to climate change and greater emphasis on sustainable management of land to address the UK and global biodiversity crisis.
17. This flexibility however comes at a cost. In August 2022, a new service was proposed that would provide the resources required to meet the council's future aspirations relating to GM, climate change and associated projects. At double the current cost, this proposal was deemed unaffordable.

18. With this in mind, WCL were tasked with producing a simplified service proposal that would be within current budgets and meet the statutory and H&S responsibilities of HBC. What follows is an overview of that proposal.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PROPOSAL

19. As outlined in paragraph 13, there are two main options available to HBC for the delivery of GM services in future, either contracted or in-house. Both options when looking at the initial service proposal are unaffordable to HBC. With that in mind a different service provision has to be considered. Given current market limitations, and the reduced options available for making profit of the revised proposal, it is believed that very few, if any, of the current suppliers will be interested or able to operate a service within Hastings. To this end, the following proposal is a simplified service operated primarily in-house.
20. **Appendix A, B and C** include details of the indicative service that could be achieved within available budgets. As can be seen, the new service focuses on HBC's statutory and H&S responsibilities such as grave digging, grass cutting, litter picking and bin emptying. The new service prioritises sustainable planting over floral bedding, reduces the amount of high amenity mowing to encourage biodiversity and removes the general use of herbicides for weed suppression.
21. As a considerable amount of the start-up costs relate to capital investment, the proposal includes the purchase of second hand equipment, and sub-contracting certain activities where equipment would be used for a limited period of time throughout the year.
22. This model also introduces the opportunity to make greater use of community support and to work with establishments such as Groundworks and Plumpton College to support future careers in GM and similar subjects, while continuing to build in-house skills and local knowledge of our green spaces, all leading towards achieving the vision of Hastings as a Garden Town.
23. Bringing the service in-house also creates the potential for synergies between the established DSO and GM service - particularly surrounding litter picking and bin emptying – while improving the resilience of HDSO, both in terms of staffing and resources e.g. by creating a pool of staff and vehicles that can be used across both services as priorities dictate, thus reducing HBC's reliance on temporary agency staff.
24. Under this operational model, all IdVerde staff contracted to work in Hastings would transfer (TUPE) to HBC in November 2023. Each individual will have the same rights as any HBC staff member, which includes access to LGPS, recognition of long service and access to the Staff Discount scheme. This delivery model will require additional resources from central council teams such as HR, contact centre, parks & open spaces, IT, estates, finance and legal. These teams are already under pressure to meet the needs of the current level of service with their limited resources and are already dealing with further demands created by government financial support payments. Due to the council's financial situation these services will also need to look at making savings and reducing resources during the next two years. The additional costs for these teams to meet the needs of an in-house service will need to be included in the model and are shown in part 2 of this report.
25. While the proposal is a simplified service, it is believed that under HBC's current financial situation, it is the best possible option to meet our current needs, while introducing the potential to adjust the service in the future in-line with internal and external pressures, which may include increasing service provision if budgetary pressures ease.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

26. There are policy implications arising from these proposals, and they are outlined below under the appropriate headings.

Equalities or community cohesiveness

27. Parks and open spaces are places that are for everyone, often located in the heart of communities providing accessible spaces where people of all backgrounds can come together and enjoy these important spaces. Simultaneously they play integral part of the town's tourism offer, providing a place for recreation, and as well as encouraging health and wellbeing. The GM contract plays an essential role in making this happen. In all cases, customers expect the parks and open spaces to be well maintained.
28. Without an appropriate GM service, these open spaces will fall into disrepair, fail to meet our statutory obligations and could become a haven for anti-social behaviour. To this end, it is essential that HBC establishes a replacement GM service to operate from November 2023.

Crime and Fear of Crime

29. Having an appropriate method in place to manage parks and open spaces ensures that they are accessible to all, deterring criminal activities, and helping customers to feel safe while visiting them.

Risk Management

30. There are a number of different risks associated with the way we deliver GM. If parks and open spaces are poorly maintained there could be a considerable impact on the reputation of the council as well as elevating service costs and possibly introducing an additional H&S risk to customers if the service isn't operated appropriately.

Environmental Issues

31. The new service aims to assist HBC in achieving its climate change objectives, while introducing a more sustainable GM service with less reliance on mechanical management methods. The purpose of these adjustments is to reduce the overall carbon impact of the service e.g. in the medium term (until electric alternatives are available) less mowing results in less fossil fuel use.
32. The service also provides an opportunity to invest in the future sustainable management of land, parks and open spaces by supporting educational establishments in the training students with the green skills required in the future.
33. The new service has also removed the general use of chemicals for weed suppression, thus eliminating any future damage that may be caused to either humans or animals by herbicides such as glyphosate, as well as supporting the restoration of soil.

Organisational Consequences

34. As with any other front-line service used by a high number of customers, getting GM right is essential. Failing to do so not only gives a negative impression of the service to customers, but it could also result in harm to the public, particularly if HBC fails to meet its H&S responsibilities, all of which could damage the reputation of HBC.

35. Lastly, HBC's current financial situation is at a critical juncture as outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan. Excessive amounts of additional cost could have a major impact on the council's ability to fulfil its main functions, leading to a forced evaluation of service provision to identify areas that could be discontinued.

Local People's views

How HBC manages its parks and open spaces is closely monitored and scrutinised by a variety of stakeholders, including local residents, visitors to the town and friends' groups. Each individual expects HBC to operate a service that will benefit customers, while simultaneously caring for the natural environment. Failing to do this, could not only result in increased complaints, but also call into question HBC's ability to operate the service, potentially damaging its reputation.

URGENCY

36. As noted in the introduction, the current GM contract comes to an end in November 2023. While the contract does have the option to extend for a further year, this is not advised. Under the terms of the contract, HBC is required to provide no less than 12 months' notice of their intentions, whether to extend or bring the contract to an end. In addition to this, even with a year to procure and mobilise a new service, the timeframes are extremely short, with some elements of the service likely to be implemented after the launch date. With this in mind, an urgent decision is required to establish what the delivery model will be from November 2023.

TIMETABLE OF NEXT STEPS

37. **Table 1.1** provides a list of future activities relating to GM services.

Table 1.1 – Grounds Maintenance Timetable, November 2021- June 2022.

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
CAP Approval	Allows for decision at Cabinet	20/09/2022	Cameron Morley
Cabinet Approval	Allows for decision at Full Council	03/10/2022	Cameron Morley
Full Council	Allows approval to appoint contractor or move to in-house provision.	12/10/2022	Cameron Morley
IdVerde Notification	Formal Notification of future intentions	November 2022	Terry Drinkwater/ Legal
In-House route	Appointment of support staff, Procurement of plant and equipment, Refurbishment of Depot facilities, Staff Engagement, TUPE, back office functions, launch	November 2023	Terry Drinkwater/ Cameron Morley/ ESPH

Wards Affected

All

Reading Ease Score: 14.7

Have you used relevant project tools?: Yes

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Y
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	Y
Economic/Financial Implications	N – Included in part 2
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	Y
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	N
Legal	Y – For contract renewal.

Additional Information

Appendix A - Resourcing and Overview on delivering a base level service

Appendix B – (Part 1) Service Detail

Appendix C – Methodology of Delivery

Appendix D - The Current State of the Grounds Maintenance Market

Officer to Contact

Officer: Cameron Morley | Waste & Cleansing Services Manager

Email: cmorley@hastings.gov.uk

Tel: 01424 783316

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In House Grounds Maintenance Service Delivery for Hastings Borough Council

**Part A – Resourcing and Overview
on delivering a base level service –
INDICATIVE OPTION**

Resourcing and Overview Method Statement (Part A)

A1 Introduction

This document (Part A) outlines a high-level method statement and operational model detailing how Grounds Maintenance Services could be resourced to operate and deliver a reduced Grounds Maintenance Service through a Hastings Borough Council DSO (HDSO) in accordance with the Council's current financial situation.

The model proposed is based on the meeting and actions agreed on 23rd August 2022 between Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and Waste Consulting LLP (WCL).

The outcome of this meeting was for WCL to generate a Grounds Maintenance Service which will meet statutory and duty of care requirements, and an operating model which best meets the current financial position of the Councils.

The basis of this in-house delivery proposal is to provide a base in-house service as opposed to an outsourced contract model, and is built on a principle of a "mixed economy"; using a mix of in-house resources and commercial providers to undertake certain elements of the operation where this is more economically advantageous to the Council than delivering the service or function themselves.

A1.1 Methodology

The proposed delivery model is based on the principles agreed with HBC Officers on 23 August 2022, which followed a discussion held by Elected Members and Officers on the way forward based on the figures shown in the draft cabinet report submitted in August 2022 which were unaffordable in the current climate.

It details and costs how a limited, 'base', Grounds Maintenance service could be managed and delivered by an in-house DSO using a "mixed economy" principal, where works could be delivered by in-house labour with the use of contracted and external resources where necessary. The proposal is submitted in three parts, these being:

- High-level details of service resources - labour, plant and equipment (this document, Part A)
- Detail on how the service could be delivered, the implications of the delivery model and the costings of the service (Part B)
- Resource Deployment and Operations (Part C)
- Market overview - showing the current state of the Grounds Maintenance industry (Part D)

The methodology shows what 'Core' and 'Statutory' works can be delivered directly and where works may be subject to competition and procurement.

A2 Staffing Resource

A2.1 Introduction

The staffing resource employed on the in-house service delivery is based on the following delivery model to meet the Council's Statutory functions and its Duty of Care requirements. It will also address significant 'Aesthetic' and 'Usability' issues in specific, key areas.

A2.3 Operational Front Line Staff

The in-house proposal uses a model consisting of teams and individuals operating on a task/function-based method of operation.

These teams deliver the following works:

- Statutory Requirements (action team)
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and grave digging
- General Grass Cutting and Activities across the Borough
- Maintenance of Shrubs and Hedges on a reduced frequency across the Borough
- Parks Maintenance and key Seafront sites.

The approach to this, on a functional rather than geographic basis, reflects the compact size of the Borough and allows teams to carry out the full range of operations in one visit or scheduled cycle of operations.

A2.4 Staffing Numbers

Grounds Maintenance services, being an activity with a high degree of seasonality, needs to have a sufficient workforce to deliver the "peaks and troughs" of the work while also providing adequate cover for training, sickness, leave and other unplanned absences. This still applies even in a workforce delivering a limited, core service.

The initial, proposed staffing numbers for the in-house service are as follows:

- Supervisor -1
- Team Leaders – 4
- Skilled Operatives - 6
- Semi-Skilled – 7

Unlike the previous proposal submitted there is no allowance for the following :

- Apprentices – 0 (to be recruited once service is established)
- Seasonal Labour Support – none allowed for at present.

These staffing levels allow for a base service and can be adjusted once the Council has made the strategic decision on what its Parks and Open Spaces service will consist of in terms of functions and assets in November 2023, when this service is proposed to start.

In determining the staffing resource necessary, an assumption has been made that, for example, staff engaged to cut grass would be used to support other activities when grass

cutting is not required; either in summer during periods of less growth or during the winter period. These activities would include hedge cutting, shrub bed maintenance and providing support to other teams to cover training, sickness and holiday.

There has been no allowance made for seasonal support, the scheduling of operations and equipment provided will be sufficient to provide this base service delivery.

A2.5 Staff Terms and Conditions (including Pay)

The proposal has been prepared without the benefit of TUPE information from the incumbent contractor.

It is the Council's Policy that staff are assimilated into the Council's pay structure and terms and conditions, including Sickness and Annual Leave entitlements. Taking the view that the Private Sector staff are currently most likely to be employed on different terms and conditions, these would typically include:

- Working hours of normally 40 hours per week
- Minimal Sick Pay entitlement normally five days' pay then SSP
- Minimal 'Nest type' pension (3% employee and 3% employer is the norm)
- An annual leave entitlement of 20 days plus Bank Holidays
- Overtime available as required.

By moving staff to HBC conditions, including a 37-hour working week and additional sick and leave entitlement would leave, if not addressed, a shortfall of approximately 51 hours per week based on the proposed staffing structure. This is equivalent to approximately 1.4 members of staff per week. This has been allowed for in the proposal

It is proposed that staff both TUPE'd (and subsequently recruited) are employed on varied terms and conditions to meet the needs of the service.

These being:

- Continuation of an 'annualised hours' method of working (42hrs in the summer and 29 in the winter)
- A 'cap' on the amount of leave to be taken in busy times
- An increased amount of "core" working hours in the day to reduce the need for overtime payments. Core working hours are those hours where no overtime payment is made, for example core working hours for his service, could be 6.30 to 18.30 and 8 – 12 pm on a Saturday. This is common practice in the commercial sector. Note, this does not mean 12 hour shifts just times where a standard working day is undertaken between these times.

Or:

- Continuation of terms and levels of pay with an adjustment in hours to 37 hours per week or

- As an alternative, extra allowance to work a 40 hour week equating to £35 (excluding employers' NI and pension contributions) per person per week (c.£31k p.a. before oncost).

This would be a decision for the Council to make should in-house delivery be the preferred way forward, for the purposes of providing the Council with an indicative service cost the maximum costs have been allowed for of 37 hours and 2 additional staff members to make up the difference in hours lost (c.£40k p.a.).

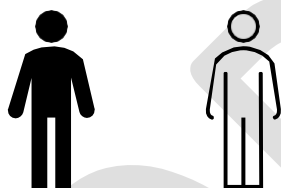
A2.6 Functions

Working on the basis of an industry standard and accepted productivity levels, the numbers of staff in each team has been allocated, recognising the need for flexibility in a seasonal service.

Colour Key

	Intensive Cyclic Activity
	Monthly, weekly or reduced visits required
	No Activity
1	Number indicates the number of visits per month

A2.6.1 Sportsground Team



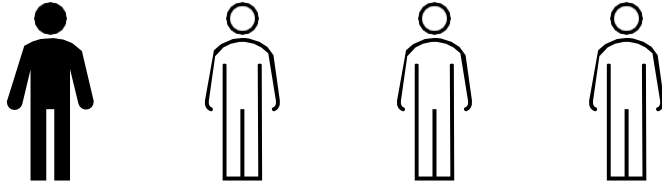
It is recognised that the provision of Sportsgrounds is not a statutory requirement, however political/public pressure may mean that the Council may wish to retain some of its sports facilities, subject to a review of usage and/or consolidation. Sports Provision may offer the Council the greatest potential to form a number of partnerships to retain facilities but working with the local community.

An indicative number of visits per month is shown below:

Function	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Bowling Greens	8	8	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	12	8	4
Cricket Squares	4	4	8	16	16	20	20	20	16	12	4	3
Football Maintenance	8	8	8	8	8	4	4	8	8	8	8	8
Tennis Court Maintenance	4	4	4	4	10	10	10	10	10	4	4	4
Basketball Court Maintenance	4	4	4	4	10	10	10	10	10	10	4	4

Putting Green Maintenance	4	4	8	12	12	12	12	12	12	4	4	4
MUGA Maintenance	4	4	4	4	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

A2.6.2 Grass Cutting Team



Grass cutting is the main operation undertaken in Parks and Open Spaces, which, when not carried out is most noticeable. In our experience a reduced grass cutting frequency is one policy, due to public pressure, most often reversed.

Adopting the principle of grass cutting that at one point during April/May and September/October there will be a “flush” of growth and, more than likely, a “dry spell” then the adoption of a frequency of cutting the majority of Open Spaces on a three weekly cycle (15 working days) with the initial cut as low a height as can be achieved. Choice of equipment is crucial to this delivery method, with flail and rotary grass cutting decks the best options to be able to cope with a possible increased length of grass.

There will be some areas in Parks and some Ornamental areas such as the seaside gardens, where this base, restricted regime is not a standard which will meet the requirements of the site, or the aesthetics of a town which during the summer months is focussed on tourism. Therefore, an increased frequency of cutting will be required on these areas. Use of high productivity grass cutting machinery as opposed to a traditional use of pedestrian mowers will be required to deliver this with an emphasis on ride-on machines.

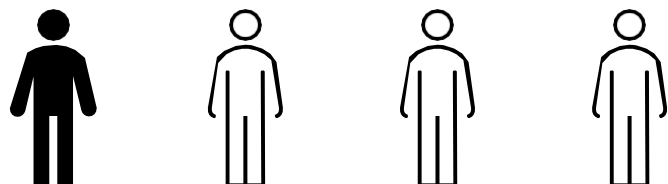
Other areas which are large areas of pure grass cutting, such as the Hills, with a reduction in the frequency of the grass cutting regime, an external grass cutting contractor may be the most economical option, and as such this has not been included in the grass cutting requirements, just shown as a potential sub contracted cost.

An indicative regime is set out below (including number of visits)

Function	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Ornamental Grass Cutting	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	0
General Amenity	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	0
Amenity	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0
Sports Pitches	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0
Environmental Cuts			1				1			1		
Miscellaneous and other				1			1			1		

As Hastings is a compact Borough it is envisaged that ride on machines can travel independently without the need for transportation, reducing the need for extra vehicles. This team will also be utilised for hedge and shrub bed maintenance when grass cutting is not undertaken and will provide general grass cutting support for Cemeteries and the main parks when required.

A2.6.3 Seafront, Town Centre and Alexandra Park



This four-person team will be based in Alexandra Park and maintain a permanent presence of two staff in the park and two maintaining the seafront sites.

The team will undertake grass cutting, litter collection, rose and shrub bed maintenance and general works throughout the park and seafront, where necessary they will be supported by the grass cutting team.

The indicative works frequency plan shown below indicates the level of minimum activity required to deliver a base service to the Key Park and Town Centre sites.

Function	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Ornamental Grass Cutting			1	4	4	4	4	4	2	3		
Amenity Grass			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
Footpath Sweeping and Clearing	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	1
Shrub Border Maintenance	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	0
Rose Bed Maintenance	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	0
Asset and Facility Checks	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Litter Picking Support	8	8	8	12	20	20	20	20	12	12	12	20
Bandstand Maintenance	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	1	1

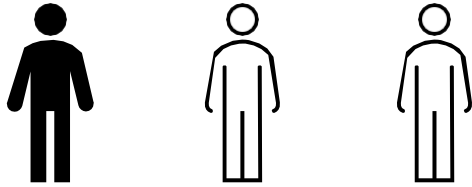
A2.6.5 Action Team

The Action team will undertake a mix of activities which are both routine and non-routine. Routine Tasks will be in the inspection of Safety Features, the cleaning of facilities and play area inspections.

The team will deliver all the Council's Statutory and essential duty of care functions, ranging from Play Area checks and maintenance, maintenance and management of water courses, Health and Safety work on assets and other work as is required for the Council to meet its key obligations.

The main purpose of the team is to ensure compliance and, over time, reduce the amount of external expenditure. A more detailed explanation of this team is shown in Appendix A.

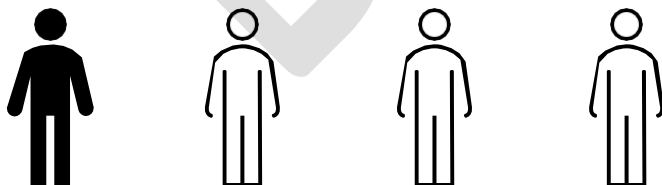
The team will also be available to support the day-to-day operations teams and the street cleansing service.



Function	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Play Area Inspection	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Other recreation facilities	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Cleaning of Park Furniture	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	
Cleaning of Memorials	1		1		1		1		1	1	1	
Cleaning and Inspection of Signs	1			1			1			1		
Dipping Platforms		1						1				
Picnic and Other Street Furniture	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

A2.6.6 Cemeteries Team

The cemeteries team consists of a team leader and in the team will be two specialist grave diggers and plant operatives. supported by two staff for grass cutting and other duties.



Provision of Cemeteries is a statutory function and a sensitive and emotive area. Cemeteries Maintenance consists of the standard horticultural activities and grave digging.

The Council is fortunate that it has one Cemetery, which although large affords the opportunity to change the maintenance regimes into one of environmental management, especially in the older parts.

The indicative works frequency plan shown below indicates the level of minimum activity required to deliver a base service.

Function	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Cemetery Grass Cutting			1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	
Grave Digging	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR
Shrub and Border Maintenance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Path and Hard area clearance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ornamental Lawn Cutting			2	4	4	4	2	2	3	2		
Rose and Memorial Beds	1	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1

A2.7 Staffing Principles

These numbers and allocation of staff are indicative of how the service is intended to run for the majority of the time.

The benefit of delivering a service in-house is flexibility and adaptability. This is combined with the ability for long-term planning which is not constrained by contract end dates. With the current situation the Council is undergoing then the Service can be expanded or decreased as the financial situation changes at a pace the Council can afford.

A core of 16 fulltime skilled and semi-skilled staff is needed to meet the present demands and requirements of the reduced specification. As Grounds Maintenance is a cyclic, seasonal operation then additional support is available in the form of seasonal staff to meet the seasonal nature of the work, and provide cover for training, leave, sickness etc.

A2.8 Supervision Levels

In addition to the Supervisor, allowance has been made for 4 working Team Leaders supervising the team members on a day-to-day basis. This will allow a degree of accountability and management within the teams as well as putting a succession plan in place.



A3 Machinery and Equipment

The purchase of machinery and equipment for the HDSO is based on the principle of a mix of new and used items. The reasoning for this approach is:

- Reduction in the start-up CapEx requirement and a reduced on-going revenue impact of depreciation and capital charges
- Allowing the Council the option to review its purchase options in the near future, to meet its climate change target and ambitions, by replacing fossil-fuelled equipment when an alternative battery powered product is available
- Enabling a mix, and range of equipment to deliver to the specification and have reserve equipment in case of breakdowns and seasonal demand
- Immediate availability of used items, so no delay to the service go-live date.

A3.1 New Items

New items are a mix of larger pieces of kit and smaller equipment.

For larger machines, which are fully integrated items, buying new or ex demonstrators is a better option with warranties, especially where they are worked intensively. For some items which have a long life and durability being able to depreciate them over a longer period maximise the budget.

With the usage and HAVs management required on smaller items of equipment such as Strimmers and Blowers then the purchase of new equipment is generally the better and more responsible approach.

A3.2 Used Items

Where it has been identified that items may, in the near future, be replaced with an electric alternative, a machine is adaptable such as a Kubota tractor unit, immediately available on the used market or there is confidence in the expected life span (such as a tractor) then purchasing used equipment is often the better option.

A3.3 Depreciation and Purchase Costings

Depreciation has been estimated on the expected lifetime of the equipment. Purchase costings are based on the best information at the time of the exercise and will need to be kept under constant review.

A3.4 Replacement

Notwithstanding the need to replace written off and damaged items, a programme of replacement has been put in place. Given their nature, smaller handheld and some pedestrian equipment have a limited life expectancy. It would be likely that items up to c.£800 in cost would be included in the annual revenue budget as part of the service planning process.

A3.5 Repairs

The costing and principle of service delivery is, all equipment is repaired by external sources, and no internal fitter or mechanic is employed. The cost of employment, fitting out, maintaining and locating a workshop, combined with a need for holiday and sickness cover, plus the Health and Safety issues of workshop management mean for a service of this size it is not a viable, economic (or operationally practical) option. It is however, suggested that HBC give serious

consideration to establishing such a facility if further services are brought back in-house in future.

A repair budget has been allocated to each machine, plus an allowance for consumables and an annual service in line with Provision and Use of Equipment Regulations. Combined with a contingency, an overall budget allowance should ensure a properly resourced and maintained asset base.

This approach may also benefit local SMEs should the Council undertake a procurement exercise.

A3.6 Equipment Types and examples

Large Machines



120hp Tractor

Given the larger areas of grass to cut



Ransomes HR6010 "Batwing" a flexible approach to the cutting of areas and road transportable



Kubota F series outfront

For general amenity grass cutting, can be fitted with a number of deck options from rotatory as shown to flail.



Small Ride on precision mower

The above is an example of a small precision cut machine which can be used on the larger ornamental lawns and gardens, increasing productivity.

A3.7 Smaller Machines and Equipment

A mix of smaller machines and equipment are allowed for in the proposal. A mix of powered walk behind machines both rotatory and cylinder mowers designed to meet the needs of the service requirements which are:

- Mowing of Fine Turf including sports and ornamental lawns
- Amenity areas where larger machines cannot be used
- Maintenance of Cemeteries and closed churchyards
- Other smaller sites such as Allotment Areas and Playgrounds.

It is intended for the initial life of the service delivery that machines are petrol or diesel powered, due to the cost of purchase and the shortfalls in the effectiveness of current electric mowing machines, although it is envisaged that within the lifetime of the purchased equipment suitable battery powered replacements will be available.



Hayter Pedestrian Mower – variances of this machine to be used in Parks and Cemeteries.

A3.8 Hire and Other Costs

An allowance has been made in the proposal for the hire of some equipment, which although may be necessary for use on certain tasks is not necessarily deployed on a regular basis, The cost of hire would be a more cost effective option than purchase and limited use.

Appendix A

Detailed Summary of the Action Team

Introduction

Within the Parks Contract delivered by idverde UK there a number of activities which, although essential to the maintenance and upkeep of the Parks and Open Spaces, are not those generally recognised as pure Grounds Maintenance activities.

These activities are as follows:

- Cleaning and Maintenance of Parks Features
- Inspection of Playgrounds
- Maintenance and Management of Playgrounds including minor repairs
- Maintenance and Management of Sports Equipment
- Maintenance and Management of Water Bodies and features
- Other required items such as Repairs and Maintenance, erection and repairs of fencing and other items
- Unlocking and Locking of Gates
- Support for activities such as events.

Delivery of Extra Works

The present system of working is on the principle that the core works activities are paid via the routine contact sum for operations. As part of the previous contract, the Contractor provided rates for delivering extra works, over and above the regular works.

Also, where works are required which do not form part of the regular specified Contract Operations (such as pitch renovations, treatment of Japanese Knotweed and Playground repairs) payment is made to either the incumbent contractor, or a specialised supplier. In 2021 this total appeared to be in the region of £69,000.

It is intended that the Action Team will have the skills to reduce the need to pay external contractors, with the labour costs of the team included in the overall service budget, the only 'additional' costs would be materials and parts.

It is proposed that the in-house Grounds Maintenance Service would have a dedicated and flexible resource to deliver this works and provide general support to the Parks and Street Cleansing Management function.

By removing this activity from the teams engaged on cyclic activities, such as grass cutting and shrub and hedge maintenance, it offers the benefit of delivering additional services; ensuring the Council meets its Statutory obligations and Duty of Care, without impinging on the routine works during peak periods.

By delivering this function by a separate team, the Council can be sure that works are completed to the required standards, minor defects and other problems are swiftly dealt with. It offers greater flexibility to undertake works where, in most cases, the only costs incurred are

those of materials and parts. Labour, vehicles and plant are already accounted for in the overall budget for the service, thus allowing the Council to budget and ensure that it can meet its required obligations.

As these functions and requirements, especially in the area of inspections, are required to keep some facilities safe and operational, by dedicating a specific team to undertake these tasks the Council can have confidence works are being completed.

Operations and Tasks Overview

The team would have a planned programme of operations agreed prior to the commencement of the in-house delivery function. This would include:

- Cleaning of Notice Boards and Handrails as per the current specification
- The management of water courses, boating lakes and drainage ditches
- Inspection and undertaking of playground repairs
- General asset maintenance operations (i.e. fence and seat repairs).

Team Structure and Hours of Working

- The team consists of three members of Staff employed on a full-time basis, led by a team leader
- The team works a standard working week of 37 hours Monday to Friday with no annualised hours in place

Due to the work undertaken by the team, there is no need for summer/winter working through an annualised hours system as a consistent presence is needed throughout the year to allow the Council to respond to any issues and requirements which may occur.

It is intended that two of the team members will have a higher level of skill and be supported by semi-skilled staff members. These can be either permanently attached to the team or seconded during the off season.

It would also be envisaged that in the winter period where operations such as routine maintenance of facilities is undertaken that the team would be supplemented by other members of the Grounds Staff where required.

It is likely that, as the delivery service becomes more established, the team will need to be upskilled to carry out a wider range of works, such as Landscaping or minor construction. The requirement for this will depend on the skill level of the staff recruited.

Vehicle

The Team will be equipped with a standard 3.5 tonne vehicle with no cages but equipped with a towbar and full highway markings.

Equipment

A trailer will be required, and the team will be equipped with a range of tools and small plant. For any ad hoc works over the more general level, equipment will be hired and this factored into the work estimate per job or task undertaken.

Monitoring and Recording of Activities

Due to the nature of some of the works undertaken a monitoring and reporting system will be used as part of the wider service reporting and monitoring system. This will ensure, where inspections and critical works are undertaken where there may be claim, liability or a statutory operation, that this is properly recorded for the purposes of Quality Assurance and general protection in support of any possible legal action against the Council.

Miscellaneous Support and Functions

As part of the combined synergy with other in-house functions, it is anticipated that the Action Team will support the Street Cleansing Service in, for example, replacing Street Bins and Dog Bins and smaller elements of fly tipping in Parks and Open Spaces.

The team would also be available to support community groups and, if required, combined clean ups in areas of concern to the Council as part of a general approach to help keep the Borough clean and tidy.

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In House Grounds Maintenance Service Delivery for Hastings Borough Council

**Part B – Service Detail –
INDICATIVE OPTION**

Service Detail (Part B)

Summary

Hastings Borough Council is facing a situation where its finances limit the ability to continue to provide a 'full' Grounds maintenance Service. However, it presents an opportunity to reconsider how it delivers this function. Bringing work in-house offers the flexibility to shape its service over the short, medium and longer term, both 'on the ground' and the type of assets, facilities and operations it delivers and control the amount of expenditure.

It also offers the chance to review the management, and more importantly the costs and extent of management and monitoring.

The proposed solution of in-house delivery, supported by some limited use of contractors (a 'mixed economy' approach), offers the Council the chance to continue, albeit with a reduced maintenance regime, the upkeep of the majority of its assets.

An exercise has been undertaken to analyse costs into the following key 'delivery categories':

- Statutory
- Duty of Care
- Desirable
- Sports
- Cleansing.

The cost of delivering these areas, under a new mixed economy, is shown to enable a clearer understanding of the new operation (see paragraphs B3 and B7, below). This is intended to support HBC in its decision on the level (and type of service) it wishes to provide from November 2023.

The success of a new Hastings Borough Council DSO (HDSO) to deliver within the cost envelope, is also reliant on reviewing and then changing the maintenance regimes and the type and number of some assets on site over the period to November 2023.

There are risks to the Council in delivering a reduced service HDSO especially running with reduced staffing numbers which will require careful and experienced operational management to ensure continuity of service.

WCL believe this proposed delivery model would offer the Council the following functions (some on a more reduced basis than current levels):

- Grave Digging
- Cemetery Management
- A regular 15-day grass cutting cycle across its open spaces
- Limited Shrub and Hedge Maintenance
- Delivery of Sports facility on a reduced maintenance regime
- Maintenance of main parks on a reduced scale
- Full maintenance of all sites and functions the Council has full control over for the purposes of Health and Safety and duty of care.

The Council may also wish to further review opportunities such as:

- Working with 'Third Sector' partners (Voluntary organisations, Charities, Friends Groups, etc.)
- Commercial work
- Partnership with neighbouring Councils, Town Councils and Parish Councils
- Sponsorship

HBC should not underestimate the amount of preparatory work required to have a service in place, this will include (but not be limited to):

- Scheduling of works to meet the new requirements
- Procurement of CapEx equipment, tools and other materials
- TUPE and integration of staff (possible new recruitment)
- Health & Safety and other Statutory requirements (e.g. Risk Assessments)
- Budget and Finance/back-office arrangements (HR/ICT/Insurance etc.)
- Changing of maintenance regimes on site.

B1 Introduction

This document (Part B) outlines how the Grounds Maintenance Service could be delivered and operated through a HDSO to meet the affordability framework the Council has in place for at least the next two to three financial years.

A redesigned service of in-house resource combined with additional some elements of external provision may allow the Council to deliver a base in-house service whilst the wider challenges the Council is facing are addressed.

This part of our support proposes recommendations to the Council of how this service could look, and the areas of the which will be delivered, under a reduced service scenario.

B2 Statutory Requirements

Within Parks and Open Space management there are few areas in which the Council has a Statutory requirement to deliver and retain a service. The exception being the following functions:

- Cemeteries
- Allotments

Both these services are regulated by a number of different pieces of legislation rather than a definitive Act of Parliament. However, the Council also provides a number of different facilities and assets which are open to the public to use either on a cost or free to use basis. So, by providing these facilities the Council has a duty of care to those users.

In considering a service which is designed to meet this duty of care, the following areas can be identified as being key:

- General Cemetery Management and Grave Digging including graves maintained in perpetuity
- Play Area Maintenance and Management
- The Management of Vegetation where it effects and has an effect on the general public for example traffic sightlines or shrubbery around residential areas
- Public Health where the management of assets or features, both manmade and natural is required

- Safety of Waterways and Water Courses, both for infrastructure and Public Health.

Consideration should also be given to risk; where the neglect of assets for a sustained period may lead to such a decline, as to leave the asset or facility unsalvageable or uneconomical to return to its previous use. The following may be included in this area:

- Bowling Greens
- Decorative Horticultural features
- Benches and other similar assets.
- Sports Facilities such as Cricket, Putting and Multi Use Games Areas.

Therefore, there is a need to balance the Councils financial restrictions against the long-term management of the Parks and Open Spaces.

WCL has recommended that HBC consider a wider, review of its GM owned assets and consider how they fit with Council's the future strategy (this might result in some being sold, put into shared ownership, etc.) as part of any exercise to create a DSO. This will provide more clarity over work required, sites to be maintained and assets managed and could be carried out as part of Asset Management and Contract Management projects.

B3 In House Delivery

The following services (which have been costed in B7, below) are shown under each of the key 'delivery categories' along with the benefits and risks factors associated with delivering them through an in-house operation:

Category	Service	Benefits to return in House	Risk Factors
Statutory	Grave Digging and maintenance of Hastings Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of Key Activity such as grave digging • Flexibility in the future maintenance regimes adopted in the Cemetery • Greater economy of scale for combining Grave Digging and Grass Cutting and Other Maintenance as staff already accounted for. • Income is provided to the Council via Grave Digging. • Support from other areas of the service at pinch times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If externalised two contractors in the same site • Service is statutory so must be provided • Inability to retain or recruit experienced staff • Large areas of grass cutting to be undertaken with a limited core staff.
Duty Of Care	Maintenance and Inspection of Play Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has control of operations and can draw on support across the wider service • Rapid response to urgent repairs • Direct control of supply chain therefore no profit on profit • Depending on skill level repairs undertaken in house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If externalised no local company to provide the service • Staff retention and training
Desirable	Grass Cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control and flexibility of maintenance regimes, these can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance and breakdown of kit if the

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be adapted to fit climatic and financial considerations Provides a resource to support other areas of an in-house service Can contract out some areas of work without affecting the wider service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> service does not have spare resources or capacity In prevalent growing conditions no additional capacity to provide extra resource
Sports	Sports Features (if retained)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control and flexibility Provides some income and has potential depending on how the sites are managed for an income offset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited contractors in the market to deliver this value of work, therefore ultimately have to deliver in-house.
Duty Of Care	Maintenance of Waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximises use of Labour during the winter season Availability of resources to cover holiday and sickness Flexibility in the management and use of facilities Council has direct control of operations and no double profit or enhanced payment for out of hours work No double payment of replacement items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited contractors to deliver the service if externalised Waterways have a greater risk in all seasons of an incident or accident Value of work means it would not be attractive in the open market.
Duty Of Care	Maintenance of Assets and Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximises use of labour during the winter season Council can dictate the annual maintenance regime and percentage of work undertaken Repairs and Maintenance can be undertaken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff
Desirable	Maintenance of Horticulture and Decorative Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility and Control of Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is often undertaken at High Peak Times so puts a demand on potentially limited resources

Note: **Cleansing** functions have been included in the costing model but excluded from the above table.

B4 Externalising Some Elements of the Service – the ‘mixed-economy’

While there are benefits to the Council in retaining a number of functions to be delivered in-house, there are some areas where having an external contractor to support the Council would be cost effective.

In previous costing exercises, Officers have identified works which have been delivered as additional to the existing contract or are specialised works. The annual expenditure on extra and over routine works is shown in the Appendix A.

We understand from our discussions with Officers that some of these works are included in the projected/agreed sums for the Contract although they do not appear in the Bill of Quantities sum supplied by HBC. We have made an assumption that additional works, in general, are part of an overall Parks Budget for the Service, not just the maintenance activities.

Other ad-hoc works that are paid to *idverde* as they're carried out such as grave digging will be undertaken by the HDSO team whose costs are paid and therefore, in effect, form part of the 'core' service.

We believe the following areas could be externalised and delivered more economically via a procurement exercise (in, for example, a 2-year contract):

- Large Area Meadow and Informal Grass Cutting such as The Hills and areas within the Country Park
- Some smaller sites where the cost of travelling exceeds the time needed on site
- Specialised Grass Cutting areas where specialised equipment is used
- Work that can be mechanised but where the cost of the Council purchasing and operating the activity is uneconomical.

To establish the cost-benefit of procurement of the above areas, a cost of in-house service for this delivery can be estimated and a procurement exercise undertaken, so a direct comparison and value-for-money assessment made.

The benefits to the Council, at this stage, as it sets up a new internal operation, is that by using some outsourced provision it removes the need to purchase some of the large, expensive equipment items such as a tractor, and associated implements. The need to train at least one staff member to drive and operate it is also removed. It also applies to the use of specialised equipment for one off annual works, for example (but limited to) sports ground or cultivation equipment where the operating time it is actually used (and the time is in storage) means the purchase does not offer good value for money.

In reviewing its assets and sites, HBC may also determine that some could be maintained more economically by smaller contractors with less overhead cost. As stated above, we recommend this exercise is completed ahead of returning services back in-house to allow a 'fresh start' and a focus on key assets and sites.

B5 Use of Voluntary Section and other Management Options

The third element of a true, mixed-economy provision is the involvement of the 'Third' Sector in supporting the wider delivery of services. This can take many forms and we understand the Council has in place a number of arrangements with 'friends groups' and other organisations. This need not be limited to just these arrangements. For example, working alongside sports clubs in undertaking some operations, or even the management of bowling greens being devolved to clubs, where the Council undertaking operations for a paid fee while the clubs manage the greens and take the income may be a more feasible operating model. Ultimately, the provision of leisure facilities means the income never matches the 'real' expenditure in most cases.

B6 Delivering to the present costs

Our earlier work, which included an assessment of the value of a tender under the existing specification standards, estimated (at today's costs) would likely be between 40% and 60% higher than is currently paid.

It is clear figures within this range, given the current financial constraints facing the authority, would be unsustainable and HBC must look at alternative options, including the extent services being delivered future and the means of such delivery.

B7 Comparing the Service Costs of Alternative Options

Removed for Part 1.

B8 Risks of Delivering a Reduced Specification Service

There are several risks associated with delivering a 'reduced' service. The staffing model is the at the minimal level and does not have a great deal of resilience for example in terms of long-term sickness. This reflects the base nature of the service and this level of resource reflected in the output standards and number of maintenance visits.

However, the model does allow, by careful management, dynamic scheduling and resource switching, for the Council to retain the majority of its services. If work was externalised, it is more than likely that a contractor's model would adopt the same principle. The Council's allocation of a contingency sum, which could be used as a "risk pot" may mitigate the major risks and allow for adequate service preparation in delivering a Grounds Service directly which the Council has not done for a number of years.

A full SWOT Analysis is included at Appendix B.

Appendix A

Expenditure Outside of Routine Contract Works

(*idverde* works outlined in yellow)

Removed for part 1.

Data provided by HBC. This shows, highlighted in yellow, the expenditure made with *idverde* for extra works paid over and above the main, 'core' contract for routine works.

Note: payments to *idverde* for grave digging are not included in this table.

Appendix B

SWOT Analysis for delivering an In-house Service

Strengths

- Flexibility in Service Delivery allowing growth and reduction to meet changing financial circumstances
- Direct Control and Management allowing change in policy to be implemented without the need to negotiate with an external body
- Undertaking additional works is less of a cost as the labour is already in place
- Option to expand service numbers as required
- No reliance on external companies
- Works with total delivery or “mixed economy”
- Part of an existing DSO infrastructure

Weaknesses

- Lack of experience in managing and delivering GM in-house services
- As a stand-alone operation a lack of back up resource compared to a national contractor
- Staff Conditions of Service mean less productivity due to less working hours, more annual leave and sickness entitlement
- Less staff and equipment, so needs greater management and flexibility in approach
- Is delivering a reduced service than before, so more open to criticism

Opportunities

- Income generation via external bodies
- Partnership working with other public sector bodies offsetting cost and generating income stream
- Service delivery to meet the Councils aspirations in climate and environmental management
- Partnership working with Third Sector, community and educational groups etc.
- Synergy, cross over and support with/for other existing DSO operation(s) now and in the future

Threats

- Continuing rising costs of fuel, vehicles and supplies may require increased funding or a reduction in service
- Public or political pressure reaction to a reduced service may lead to poor perception of the service
- Downward trends in available labour, both skilled and semi-skilled
- Inability to retain or recruit experienced management

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Hastings Borough Council

Part C – Method Statements –
INDICATIVE OPTION

Hastings Borough Council
In House Service Delivery Part C

Introduction

This Document, Part C gives an illustration of the works required to be undertaken, to deliver a comprehensive in house service based on the agreed specification of July 2022 with HBC officers.

Grounds Maintenance is by its nature a seasonally driven service, where although a programme of proposed works can be produced on an annual basis, it can only be seen as indicative due to the variances in climate and seasonal usage.

This document provides for routine works on a cyclic basis. It is however recognised that certain activities are required which cannot be programmed due to their nature or type. These can range from Grave Digging to Snow Clearance where the service may be required, but the quantity and regularity cannot be programmed, but the resource required is included in the resources allocated to the service.

How works are undertaken and managed

To ensure that the proposed works and operations detailed in Parts A & B are undertaken as required and when required, an annual programme of works will be produced. These works will be placed on work programming software the Council already has in place but linked to a task recording and completion interface and produced as a series of tasks. The type of software to be used will be chosen by the Council nearer to the service start date, but will be to be linked to the “confirm” system currently used for contract management and asset management.

Using this method of works programme management, it will ensure that all operations are planned on a monthly, weekly and daily basis. The carrying out of tasks can then be recorded to ensure compliance and performance. Over time this will give the Council confidence in the service delivery, KPI's and the opportunity to review annually the tasks and resources required to maintain the sites.

Maintenance of Equipment

All equipment used for maintenance will be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers servicing requirements, and in accordance with the Provision and Use of Equipment Regulations 1998. Service logs and records will be maintained of all repairs and servicing.

Use of Equipment

There is a number of different types of equipment employed on the work required. All types of equipment will have SOP (Safe Operating Procedures) and generic risk assessments. All tasks will also be risk assessed.

Use of Chemicals and Pesticides

Unless absolutely necessary it is intended that no chemicals or pesticides will be routinely used. There may be occasions however when it is necessary to use fungicides or other similar products to prevent disease on fine turf areas for example.

Works to be undertaken

In the method statements detailed in this document an indicative number of occasions per month is shown. Occasions are the time allocated to complete each task which are variable.

Method Statements for Required Operations

Grass Cutting and Maintenance

Grass Cutting will be undertaken on a cyclic basis across the Borough, frequencies will meet the required outputs and the expected seasonal changes and demands.

The required output for grass cutting is an area which is cut evenly and within the maximum heights as specified in the agreed specification standard.

Grass cutting can be classified as a duty of care, the frequency of which could be classified as desirable,

Grass Cutting	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Ornamental Grass Cutting	0	0	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	1
Amenity Grass Cutting	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
General Amenity Grass Cutting	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	2	2	2	1	0
Enviromental Grass Cutting 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Environmental Grass Cutting 2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Enviromental Grass Cutting 3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Grass Cutting will be carried by the appropriate machine for the site, with the type of equipment shown in the equipment list for this proposal. The inductive frequencies are shown in the table above to deliver the required standard. The frequencies may be increased or decreased depending on climatic conditions.

All Grass cutting left to fly with the exception of ornamental grass which is collected and disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, or in periods of excessive growth when cut and collect is required.

Supporting and Miscellaneous Grass Operations

Miscellaneous Operations (Grass)	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Strimming and Follow Up	0	0	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	1
Leaf Clearance (ornamental)	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
Leaf Clearance (Amenity and General)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Grass Edging (Ornamental)	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	1
GrassEdging (Amenity and General)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Edging Reform (20% sites per annum)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Once an area is cut then a follow up operation of stimming is undertaken to cut areas which are left uncut, it is envisaged that work is programmed to do this within 2 days of cutting where machine operations are undertaken separately.

Ornamental Lawns which have decorative beds in them will be trimmed once per week for aesthetic and bed management reasons.

Leaf clearance will be undertaken on a more frequent basis where leaving leaves on the ground would damage grass areas or form a potential hazard (ie blowing on to road and pathways)

Mechanical edging reform will be carried on a rolling programme of 20% of all sites, to maintain the integrity of the feature and damage to hard surfaces.

Hard Landscape Maintenance Areas

Hard Landscape can be classified as potentially Statutory work but mainly as a duty of care operation.

Hard Landscape Areas will be maintained to the following levels:

- Swept/cleared of litter, twigs and loose vegetation.
- Kept clear of weeds by manual maintenance methods.
- Keeping Gullies clear of debris and free running

Weed Control

Pathways and other Hard landscape areas will be cleared by manual methods of weed management, no chemicals will be used. A strim and use of a multi head equipment will be used as the main method of control management. These operations will be undertaken on the same frequency as the site is visited for grass cutting.

Litter Picking

Although litter picking in general may be moved to a different service area, as part of a site visit the whole area will be litter picked on the same frequency, and twice per annum at the start of summer and during the winter the whole site will be scavenged and a through clearance undertaken.

General

Where defects or dangerous items are found these will be reported.

Grass Edging

As per frequency stated in grass cutting operations

Hard Landscape	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Weed Clearance	1	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	1
Leaf Clearance	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Sweeping (EPA 1)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sweeping (EPA 2)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Sweeping Misc	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Shrub Borders

In general shrub borders would be classified as desirable works as the provision could be removed.

Shrub Border Maintenance will be undertaken in accordance with the designation type of the shrub bed, these being:

- High Amenity Shrub Beds
- General Shrub Beds
- Reduced Frequency Shrub Beds

General Shrub Beds

Visited Monthly

On each maintenance visit the following operations will be undertaken

- Litter scavenge
- Cut out weeds, brambles and other type of growth
- Raking and surface cultivation
- Trim grass edging
- Cut back overhanging growth which is causing an obstruction to pathways and other areas of required access

Once per annum

- Deep litter clearance
- Cut back and removal at base of all high growth weeds such as bramble
- Cultivation of service to remove all weeds
- Top up with mulch and shingle
- Carry out pruning to the required regime.(timing dependant on species)

Operations to be undertaken as per descriptive element of agreed specifications.

High Amenity Shrub Beds

These beds are recognised as having High Amenity Value, and require more additional visits.

Maintenance Visits will be the same as the those carried out for general amenity except that beds will be visited on 26 spaced occasions per annum plus an annum deep clean.

Reduced Frequency Shrub Beds

These beds will be visited on a monthly basis for the following operations;

- Litter Picking and clearance
- Cut back of vegetation overhanging pathways

On one occasion per annum a visit will be undertaken in line with the operations for the other types of shrub bed designation.

Pruning will be undertaken in accordance with the frequency type in line with the previous grounds maintenance specification and good horticultural practice.

Shrub Borders High Amenity	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Litter Collection	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Weeding	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Cultivation	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Trim Edging	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Cutback and Light Prune	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Heavy Pruning	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Apply Mulch	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Deep Vegetation Clear	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Shrub Borders General	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Litter Collection	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Weeding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cultivation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Trim Edging	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cutback and Light Prune	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Heavy Pruning	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Apply Mulch	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Deep Vegetation Clear	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Shrub Borders RF	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Litter Collection	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Weeding	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Cultivation	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Trim Edging	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cutback and Light Prune	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Heavy Pruning	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Apply Mulch	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Deep Vegetation Clear	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Hedge Maintenance

Hedge Maintenance planning and delivery is based on the following factors:

- The bird nesting season
- The type, species and location of hedge.

Hedge Maintenance Operations also include the clearing of the hedge base.

Litter Picking Operations will be undertaken on a minimum basis of once per month and increased for those hedges in High Profile areas.

Species Specific Pruning Times

Code	Hedge Type	FREQUENCY	PERIOD
HE01	Berberis	Once	Mid July
HE02	Beech	Once	August
HE03	Blackthorn	Once	October
HE04	Box	Twice	Mid July, October
HE05	Cotoneaster	Once	Mid July
HE06	Escallonia	Once	Mid July
HE07	Euonymus	Once	Mid July
HE08	Holly	Once	Mid July
HE09	Hornbeam	Twice	Mid July, October
HE10	Laurel	Once	Mid July
HE11	Lonicera	Twice	Mid July, October
HE12	Privet	Twice	Mid July, October
HE13	Thorn	Once	Mid July
HE14	Yew	Once	Mid July

Hedge Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Pruning (species dependant)								1	1		1	
Hedge Base Maintenance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hedge Base Clearance	1									1		
Path or Access clearance visit				1								
Litter Collection (HP)	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	1

Cemetery Maintenance

Cemeteries can be classified as Statutory in terms of the Public Health requirements for internments, contain a duty of care in the infrastructure management and maintenance and desirable for some of the soft landscape maintenance.

Maintenance of the Cemetery comprises a number of different operations which are covered by the requirement outputs of other operations, these being:

- Grass Cutting Operations
- Shrub, Hedge Cutting and Bedding Maintenance
- Pond and Water Bodies Maintenance.

Cemetery Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Grass Cutting General Amenity	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Grass Cutting Ornamental	0	0	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1
Grass Cutting General	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Maintenance of Perpeturity Graves	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maintenance of Bedding	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2
Pond Maintenance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grave Digging	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Snow Ice Clearance	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grave Levelling	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grave Topping up and Turfing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hedge Maintenance	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1		1	1
Shrub Bed Maintenance	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Other works to be undertaken in the Cemetery such as grave and ashes casket digging which are all year round operations but are an unknown quantity, resource and equipment is still required to deliver these works. The present expenditure for this element is circa £26,000

Allowance is made in the resource allocation for staff and equipment to dig graves, backfill and carry out any other miscellaneous operations required to delivery a Cemetery service which is sympathetically delivered.

Maintenance of Water Features (inc lakes, reservoirs, ponds and drainage assets)

Maintenance of Water Features has a degree of Statutory operations in relation to Public Health and Health and Safety and a Duty of Care.

Maintenance of water features is to be delivered as a number of routine operations such as inspections, clearing and waterflow management. These will be combined with deeper cleaning and clearing. and specific operations such as drain down, emptying and opening and closing of sluice gates. These are on occasions required to be undertaken outside of the planned maintenance operations timetable. There is flexibility built into the resource allocation for these works.

A weekly visit and clearance of rubbish and other debris has been allowed for, this operation will also include the inspection of all life saving equipment and signs, including replacement where necessary.

An allowance for out of hours emergency call out is also included in the programme of works for this task.

Water Course Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Rubbish Debris Obstructions	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Vegetation Clearance	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Clear Outfalls	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sluice Operation Checking	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Culvert Cleaning (small)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culvert Cleaning (large)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Inlets, Outlets, Overflows	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ensuring Waterflow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Alexandra Park Boating Lake D/D	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alexandra Park Boating Lake Rou	4	4	3	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	4	4
Buckshole Reservoir	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Emergency and Support	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vegetation and Plant Maint	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Clearance and Management Ditch	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

Playground Maintenance

Playground Maintenance is partly statutory in regards to Health and Safety and also as a Duty of Care function.

Playgrounds are to be maintained to a safe standard which will be achieved by routine inspections and repairs (where possible) or the temporary closure of equipment or sites. Inspections will be undertaken by qualified staff only and any non routine repairs by qualified staff or contractors. The importance of regular and through playground maintenance is recognised in the planning and programming of works. Resource is available to carry out additional works, inspection and cleaning as required, especially in busy periods such as school holidays and summer weekends. All inspections and works will be recorded.

The following inspection routine will be employed:

Daily Inspections:

- Alexandra Park Lower
- Shornden
- Seaside Road
- St Johns Road
- West Hill
- Wishing Tree Road North
- White Rock Skate Park

Three Times a Week:

- Beckley Close
- Bembrook Road
- BOS
- Carnoustie Close
- Cookson Gardens
- Gensing Gardens
- Kensington Close
- Waterside Close

Once a Week:

- Hare Way
- Harvest Way

- Heron Close
- Highwater View
- Mare Bay Close

The requirements for inspection are as per those required in the current service specification these being;

Maintain Surfaces

- Sweep all surface areas leaving in a clean tidy condition free of litter, mud, broken glass, excreta and other debris.
- Remove arisings from site immediately.
- Sweep to remove standing water after rain.
- During periods of snow/ice salting and removal of ice/snow to prevent slippery condition.
- Maintain free of moss, algae and weeds all impact absorbent surfaces and tarmac to ensure that clean non-skid surfaces are maintained.
- Report all incidences of damaged or missing impact absorbent surfacing.
- Make minor repairs to wet pour impact absorbent surfacing using respective proprietary surface repair kit.
- Where grass is used as a safer surfacing for play equipment with a critical fall height of up to 1.5m the grass to be inspected in the same way as other types of surfacing and any defects such as compaction and lack of grass cover reported.

Sand/Bark Loose Fill

- Check thoroughly for contamination i.e. debris, sharps, excreta, rubbish, stones etc and remove.
- Rake and re-grade loose fill to ensure minimum 300mm depth is maintained at all times.
- The loose fill bark material is to be raked and re-levelled daily and topped up as required to maintain at 300mm depth.
- The sand pit level is to be maintained at 450mm and is to be raked and re-levelled daily and topped up as required.

Maintain Gate/Fence/Boundary Treatment

- Ensure fencing is intact and gates are secure.
- Lubricate locks and hinges as necessary to maintain effective use.
- Erect temporary high visibility plastic pedestrian fencing, secured with plastic cable ties around unsafe items where repairs cannot be effected immediately and maintain in a safe and secure condition until repairs to the equipment are carried out.

Maintain Seats

- Maintain and clean seating to a clean and safe standard
- Any damage to benches to be reported immediately and made safe prior to leaving site.
- All information regarding accidents to be brought to immediate attention.

During Inspections of Equipment Generally

- Ensure all fittings are correctly positioned and all fixings are properly secure.
- Remove minor protrusions and sharp edges to ensure normal safe use and repaint to prevent corrosion as appropriate to the item of equipment.
- Erect warning signs to prevent use until surface finishes have properly hardened.
- Ensure all moving parts are working in a smooth, quiet and efficient manner.
- Ensure paintwork and other finishes are in a good condition and free from corrosion.

- Ensure all safety measures installed around or fixed directly to items of equipment are in a good condition and fully effective for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Check for damage from whatever cause to timber components/items.

During Inspections of Specific Features

Swings

- Check for damaged seats.
- Ensure that shackles and chains are in a good and safe condition for use.
- Check that main frame/structure is fully secure.

Slides

- Ensure that the sliding surface, including the run-out point, is complete, secure, safe and free from protrusions and obstructions.
- Ensure that the steps, handrails and slide entry are complete, secure and in a safe condition for use.
- Check that main frame/structure is fully secure.

Zip Wires

- Check for damaged seats.
- Ensure that the seat attachment is not knotted.

Rotating/Rocking Equipment

- Ensure that all bearings are working in a smooth, quiet and efficient manner.
- Ensure that seating platforms, footboards, side panels and handgrips are complete, secure, free from protrusions and obstructions and are in a safe condition for use.

All Other Structures/Equipment

- Ensure that each item is complete, with fittings correctly positioned and all fixings properly secure.
- Check that main frame/structure is fully secure.

Operational Inspections

- Throughout the year carry out detailed inspections every two months of all items of equipment in all children's playgrounds.
- Such inspections shall include all checks specified below and following inspections, carry out all necessary works to maintain all aspects of children's playgrounds to the specified standards without in any way altering the construction or design of the equipment.

Checking

- Paintwork/preservative is in good condition.
- all parts including bolts and screws are present and secure.
- supports are firmly fixed
- for corrosion throughout the equipment
- for corrosion at ground level
- impact absorbent surface is in good and safe condition and securely adhered to the general surface of the playground, loose fill is to be maintained at correct consistent level.
- for sharp edges, protrusions and damaged cables showing exposed wire
- rope strands
- that timber components are in good safe condition having no breaks or

- splintering or cracking sections
- that moving parts are working correctly
- wear on individual chain links on swing chains
- swing seats are at correct height, in good safe condition with fixings secure
- multi-section slide chutes for gaps in sliding surface and chute sides
- height of slide run-out sections ensuring no water is retained
- steps are secure and each one is in good safe condition
- side panels/rails to steps and slide entries are secure and in good safe condition
- all platforms and footboards are in good safe condition, to correct levels/heights and are secure
- ground clearances are correct when stationary and in motion
- bearings are working smoothly, efficiently and quietly and are correctly lubricated.
- ends of rocking equipment do not touch the ground
- tube plugs are secure
- nuts, bolts and other fixings/fastenings are properly secure
- safety features are in good condition and effective for the purpose of which they are intended.
- surface beneath equipment is free from glass, grit or other debris.
- fibre glass and plastic components for damage
- drainage gullies are clear with correct gratings properly positioned.
- general surface freespace areas are in good safe condition
- tunnels are clean and clear of litter and other debris.
- check the condition of ropes
- gates operate satisfactorily and check for closing time not less than 5 seconds
- erosion/wear to grass mounds has not exposed hard/sharp surfaces/materials or caused trip hazards.
- During inspections remove all arisings occurring as a result of the specified checks to approved site.

Annual Main Inspection (to be undertaken externally)

- At intervals not exceeding 12 months all items of equipment and all other aspects pertaining to play activities and security in all children's playgrounds shall be inspected by an independent specialist playground engineer with proven experience of playground inspection, whom the Council will pay to assess the overall level of safety. Attendance by responsible staff is required.

Concrete Skate Parks – Facilities for users of Roller Sports Equipment

- Inspect both sites on 5 occasions per week. Additional inspections to be undertaken immediately prior and following skating events during the summer.
- Remove litter, sharps and debris from bowl and surrounding areas that form part of the skating surface using Ladder access is provided.
- Ensuring the ladder is maintained in a safe condition and serviceable for use at all times.
- Check barrier railings and other site features for stability and safety.
- Report and record incidences of vandalism, damage, wear and tear and flooding of bowl.
- Maintain inspection reports for each visit (playground inspection report format applies).
- Remove/paint out offensive graffiti/tags immediately by means of chemical or use of grey masonry paint.
- Every four months to remove all graffiti.

Play Area Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Playground Daily Inspections	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Playground 3 Occasions per week	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Playground 1 Occasion per week	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Equipment Checks (all sites)	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Annual Inspection	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Concrete Skate Parks	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

Rose Bed Maintenance

Rose Beds are classified as Desirable

Rose Beds are located in a number of high profile areas including Parks and the Cemetery. Rose Beds within in the Cemetery are partly planted for memorial purposes. Two types of Rose Beds are to be maintained

- Rose Beds
- Low Maintenance Rose Beds

Rose Beds	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Pruning (dependant on species)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Dead Heading	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Mulching	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Weeding	1	1	1	4	4	2	2	2	2	4	4	1
Fertiliser	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Replace and replant (cems only)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Grass Edging	0	0	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	1	1
Pest and Disease Control	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0

Rose Beds Low Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Pruning (dependant on species)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Dead Heading	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Mulching	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Weeding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grass Edging	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Perennial and Rockery Plants Maintenance

These areas can be classified as Desirable

The maintenance regime is for Perennial and Rockery plants which are primarily set in a more formal garden and sea front settings. Where these areas are located within Shrub or formal flower beds the greater frequency of visits will apply over and above that of Shrub Bed Maintenance to maintain the standard of display.

Rockerries & Perennials	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Operation												
Cut back after flowering	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Weeding and Bed Tidy	4	4	8	12	12	20	20	20	12	12	8	4
Cultivation	4	4	8	12	12	20	20	20	12	12	8	4
Leaf Clearance	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Mulch with Shingle	1		1		1		1		1		1	

Flower Bed Maintenance

This can be classified as desirable.

It is recognised that the quantity of bedding may vary in the future as the Council rationalises its decorative provision. It is recognised that the formal bedding displays have immense value to the sea front and parks areas. Those areas that remain will be maintained to the following maintenance regime.

Flower Bed Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Planting of Summer Bedding	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planting of Autumn Bedding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
General Maintenance	8	8	12	16	20	20	20	20	20	12	8	8
Watering	0	0	0	8	21	21	21	21	20	2	0	0
S & A Liquid Feed	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Bed Edging	1	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	1	1

Bowling Green Maintenance

Bowling Greens are classified as sports function.

Bowling Greens are to be maintained to a high standard of playability, which includes a level even playing surface with a sward coverage of fine grasses with no weeds or diseases present.. Additional operations will be undertaken in the playing season when Tournaments are being played which will include additional grass cutting. Team members engaged in the maintenance of bowling greens will be experienced and qualified greenkeepers.

Bowling Greens	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Switching and Brushing	8	8	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	10	8	8
Mowing	1	1	4	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	2	1
Apply Spring & Summer Fert	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Apply Autumn & Winter Fert	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ph Testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Apply Wetting Agent	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Control of Legionella	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Rolling the Green	0	0		2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0
Aeration	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sacrificing the Green	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	4	0	0	0
Tining the Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Overseeding	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Top Dressing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Maintenance of Ditches	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

Putting Greens

Putting Greens are a Sports Function

Putting Greens will have the same operations to product a playing surface as that used for bowling greens, with the addition of additional litter collection activities and cutting of holes. The putting out of equipment such as flags will be undertaken on a daily basis by the Councils employed attendant staff.

Putting Greens	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Switching and Brushing	8	8	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	10	8	8
Mowing	1	1	4	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	2	1
Apply Spring & Summer Fert	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Apply Autumn & Winter Fert	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Ph Testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Apply Wetting Agent	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Control of Legionella	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Rolling the Green	0	0		2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0
Aeration	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sacrificing the Green	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	4	0	0	0
Tining the Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Overseeding	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Top Dressing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Litter Collection	8	8	8	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	8	8

Cricket Squares

Cricket Squares are classified as Sports

Hastings has one cricket square which is to be maintained to provide a suitable facilities for club cricket. This is namely to have a surface which is firm for consistent bounce, have a coverage of grass to allow roots to hold the surface together and be free of leaves. Allowance is made to reinstate the square in the autumn and also to provide and manage protective fencing.

Cricket Pitch Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rolling the square	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Mowing	0	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	0
Apply Spring & Summer Fert	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apply Autumn & Winter Fert	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Aeration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Sacrificing the Green	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	4	0	0	0
Overseeding	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Top Dressing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Erect and Dismantle Fencing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Litter Collection	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Football Pitch Maintenance

Football Pitches are classified as Sports.

Football pitches are to be maintained all year round to deliver a safe and level playing surface. They will be marked out on a weekly basis to meet all types of pitch requirements (Senior and Junior) All goal posts will be removed and painted and holes capped. The pitch will be litter picked and cleared of other detritus prior to play. Renovations will be undertaken by the team as part of routine operations in April and May.

Football Pitch Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mowing The Pitch	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Aeration of Playing Surface	2	2	2	2	1					2	2	1
Fertiliser Application	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Goal Mouth Renovations Mowing	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
Pitch Setting Out	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Goals Post Erection and Dismantling	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Checking and Inspection Playing Season	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4
Pitch Renovation	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Multi Use Game Area Maintenance (MUGA)

Multi Use Games areas are classified as Sports

Multi Use Game Areas are of two types, sand filled and polymeric. The sand filled MUGA's require greater intensive on site maintenance than the polymeric surfaces the repairs of which are undertaken in line with Playground Surfacing.

MUGA	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Weekly Safety Inspection	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Litter Clearance and Cleaning	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Sand Carpet Maintenance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Surface Scarification	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Maintenance of fences and surrounds	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Asset Maintenance

Assets are defined as those facilities on parks and open spaces which are fixed non growing features. The assets require a minimum fixed programme of maintenance which given the nature of operations may need to be increased, in the area for example of cleaning and graffiti removal.

Asset Maintenance	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
WM - path wash	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
WM - Litter Removal	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Shelters Inspections	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Shelters Maintenance - Sweeping	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Alexandra Park - Floor Wash	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bandstand - Sweeping	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Bandstand - Inspection	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Bandstand Cleanng	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Entrance and other Signage Cleaning	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Notice Board Clean Glass	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Notice Board Clean Cabinet	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dipping Platforms	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alexandra Park - Hand Rails	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Alexandra Park - Bollards	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Seats Cleaning	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Water Safety Points Inspection	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Picnic Tables Inspect	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Picnic Tables Clean	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

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In House Grounds Maintenance Service Delivery for Hastings Borough Council

**Part D – The Current State of the
Grounds Maintenance Market**

State of the Market (Part D)

D1 Introduction

WCL has been carrying out Grounds Maintenance Market analysis reviews for its Local Government clients since 2012/13. The benefit of this is it allows us to track changes over time and help predict future trends; this can help Councils to make informed decisions on future options they may wish to pursue.

D2 Local Government Trends in Parks & Grounds Maintenance Management

There has been a decline in the budgets for the maintenance of Parks across the whole country over the past decade or more. The Heritage Lottery Fund has estimated that £60m has been cut from Parks budgets since 2010. This has been a continuation of the trend that began in the early 1990s, leading to authorities assessing the way that maintenance is undertaken, the frequency of operations and whether they should be undertaking the maintenance of some areas at all. This, in turn, has led to greater devolution to Town and Parish Councils.

There has been a trend towards a more 'Street Scene' approach to maintenance; allowing shared overheads and resources, this has been more evident in services delivered in-house as there are few contractors in the market who offer both services effectively without having to work in partnership or sub-contract work; thereby reducing the scale of any savings.

D3 Potential Contractors Likely to Bid for Work

The market is currently seeing very few local authority contracts over £1m p.a. due to a variety of reasons, such as:

- Local Authorities are returning to in-house provision of services at the end of contracts
- Contracts are being extended to beyond previous extension dates where the service is good and contract costs and available budgets are aligned
- Services are remaining in-house and not externalised
- The number of housing associations which have been established has diluted the value of contracts as they are generally let separately
- Works and operations have been significantly reduced and/or removed from contracts as local authorities seek to reduce the core parks budget.

The majority of high value contracts in the market are being seen in London Boroughs retendering existing contracts or offered by the large social housing providers.

D4 The Grounds Maintenance Market Service Providers

Based on our data and analysis from September 2013 to August 2022, the Grounds Maintenance Market has seen a significant shift in terms of the number of opportunities available to the Private Sector, the number of companies equipped to deliver them and way services are being provided. This, together, has resulted in our view in the emergence of a very *different* market sector.

Our first observation is that the number of companies available to deliver services has decreased by at least one third over that period, based on a list of companies with an annual turnover of over £3m (which we estimate is a level required to deliver the Hastings Borough Council contract). In 2013 we prepared a list of 12 companies of sufficient size and local presence to be in a position to bid for work of this size, in 2017 this list had reduced to ten key players in the market, and we now estimate that just six remain.

The reduction in the number of key players in the market has been effected by:

- the number of acquisitions by the two largest companies of some of the mid-size contractors
- one of the mid-sized companies buying out its rival in a strategic drive for business growth
- the withdraw from the market by multi-functional FM type companies and multidisciplined public realm providers working across Waste, Streets and Grounds Maintenance
- the decision by some Councils to bring work back “in-house” shrinking the market, forcing less profitable operators out of business. Where the North of England was always seen as an area where the majority of work was undertaken by in-house services, we are now also seeing pockets of regional areas in the South, South East and London where the majority of the provision is now in-house, reducing the size of the market for contractors.

We have also seen a trend in the public education sector where individual schools have withdrawn from larger countywide procurement contracts and appointed either as part of a wider, facility-type contract, one of the larger companies or smaller companies of less than £500,000 turnover. Although this has increased the number of companies at the lower end of the market, it would be fair to say that they, in the main, lack the capacity to deliver services to an authority the size of HBC.

Another effect on the market over the past fifteen years or so has been the decision by the MOD to offer work increasingly in large packages normally with a key partner who then procure a supply chain. This has reduced the opportunity at local and geographical level for mid-sized companies to gain work and get a foothold in areas where they can deliver a sustainable presence on the back of one or two contracts. There have been more tender opportunities advertised in the Parish and Town Council Sector which has given the opportunity for smaller and micro businesses. The general

size of work offered by the housing sector tends to be of sufficient size for the larger companies to bid very competitively.

There are still a number of national companies that offer grounds maintenance and are of sufficient size and capacity to potentially be considered for Local Authority work. However, the business model of these contractors is to deliver work on static sites and undertake niche work such as Landscaping and Winter Gritting. Due to the capital costs and low profit margin on Local Government Contracts they do not, as a rule, tend to bid for many public works.

A further trend and consideration by contractors when planning a growth and bid strategy, is based on geographic location of potential contacts, and a view “where is my next contract in this area coming from”. Expanding the footprint and spreading overhead costs is now a key consideration. Where authorities are ‘islands’ amongst a ‘sea’ of in-house operations, attracting an external provider can be a challenge.

D5 Key Players in the Local Government Ground Maintenance Market

As of August 2022, we see the following companies including the incumbent *idverde* as the most likely to apply, if HBC work was offered to the market in 2022/23.

idverde UK

idverde UK is the largest Grounds Maintenance Contractor in the country. Originally the French division of ISS Landscaping they bought English Landscapes in 2015 to gain a foothold in the UK Market. Further acquisitions of the respected Quadron Group in 2016, two acquisitions in Scotland and Northern Ireland and finally that of the TCL group which included Burleys in 2019 has seen them reduce not only market competition but also an increase in turnover and contracts held. We estimate *idverde* turnover in the UK is in the region of £250 million per annum which does not include work undertaken in Europe.

If *idverde* UK wish to continue to grow and retain the level of turnover and, in our view, it is likely that in future they may look to make acquisitions of local companies holding Council contracts, or some of the other companies that deliver public sector grounds maintenance in direct competition.

From our analysis of their current contracts, many are coming to an end in the South and South East. In our opinion, unlike previous practice/strategy, to potentially offset this loss of business, they may take a more conservative approach to winning or buying businesses over the next couple of years and adopt a policy of holding on to contracts they have.

Tivoli

Tivoli was the former Grounds and Landscaping Arm of ISS group, one of the largest FM companies in the world, previously operating in the mid-market range as Waterers, following the acquisition of companies such as JV Strong and Mitchel and Struthers the ISS brand increased considerably in the first fifteen years of the decade. A large growth was made in 2014 with the winning of the MOD National Contracts for Site and Housing based Grounds Maintenance work worth over £16 million.

ISS sold Tivoli to a Capital company in 2018 and the growth and performance of the company has been variable, holding onto some contracts and seeking growth by the purchase of Sodexo Horticultural services in January 2021.

Tivoli lost 80% of its core MOD work in October 2021 only had a one year extension to the remaining 20% (MOD housing work).

However, Tivoli still remains the second largest Grounds Maintenance Contractor in the UK by turnover and contracts held.

Glendale

Glendale was established in 1990 for the purposes of winning Local Government work that became available with the Local Government Act 1988 that extended Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) to 'blue-collar' services, such as refuse collection and ground maintenance.

It is still active in the market, although we have seen a significant drop of around 55% in its turnover from a reduction in the number of contracts delivered in its Grounds Maintenance division over the past fifteen years.

Glendale is actively bidding for work in the Public Sector, although the main aim of the management team appears to be focussed on retaining work they already have while concentrating more on its Leisure and Golf Business. Glendale was formerly one of the two large GM providers in the 1990s.

Continental Landscapes

Continental Landscape, like Glendale, was formed in 1988 to meet the needs of the new market created by CCT legislation. Again, like Glendale, Continental was one of the leading UK grounds maintenance companies in the 1990s and early 2000s but have gradually lost market share with the arrival of larger and more highly capitalised, aggressive competition, along with the shrinkage of the market overall and less opportunities being advertised. They are, however, still active in the market and hold work in Kent as well as some London Boroughs. We understand that following a restructure of the management team in late 2020 they are seeking to actively grow the business again.

John O'Connor

John O'Connor, based in Hertfordshire, has been in the UK Market since the 1980s, gradually built up by its sole owner mainly via education and defence contracts; it has seen some market share and has been able to expand its operations to the South and South East of England. Although still a small player in the market, it has the capacity and resource to bid for contracts over £1.5 million per annum. The company is still family owned. Last Turnover for the Company was £21.2 million per annum.

Gavin Jones

Gavin Jones a long-established Grounds Maintenance Contractor, who concentrated generally on the higher end private sector amenity works, were bought by Nuture Landscapes in 2017

While Nuture has continued its niche and private sector work our analysis of the group's operations is that it is increasingly using the Gavin Jones name and operational arrangement to deliver a greater range of MOD and Social Housing Contracts. This may mean that in the future they may be looking as a growth strategy to deliver what they view as prestigious public sector contracts, especially those in the vicinity of the existing national footprint. We would not now, however, classify Gavin Jones fully in the public sector market. Nuture have made a number of acquisitions in the last year, expanding its portfolio and operations.

Other Contractors - National

We have identified above the key national Contractors who are involved in the Grounds Maintenance Market for Local Authorities. There are a number of companies delivering Grounds Maintenance across the UK with a national or South Eastern presence, some of whom have a substantial turnover and portfolio of contracts.

These companies, such as Ground Control, UK Landscapes, Flora-Tech, GRITIT, Nurture and Mitie Landscapes tend to deliver private sector work or niche public services such as Utility and Rail Arboriculture. We have seen some of these companies gain a number of tranches of large Social Housing contracts, though it remains our opinion that it is unlikely that they would be bidding for Local Authority Grounds Maintenance Contracts in the near future.

Other Contractors – Local/Regional Including Kent and West Sussex

Our research, as part of this exercise, indicates that there are two major contractors operating commercially in the area who would be able to bid for the new contract, these being:

- idverde UK (the incumbent in HBC)
- Glendale (delivering East Sussex Schools).

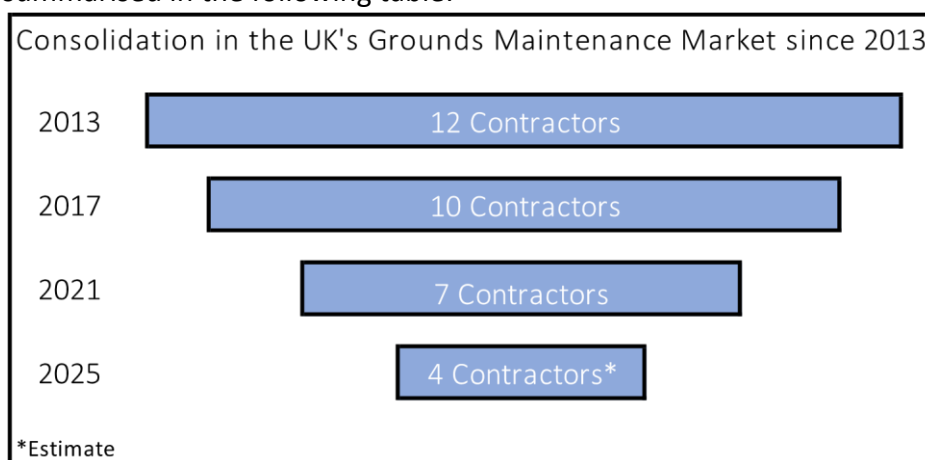
Small/Medium Grounds Maintenance Companies

Within the geographical county of East Sussex and the bordering county of Kent there are some smaller/medium-sized Grounds Maintenance companies. Our review indicates there are 7-8 established contractors with annual turnover between £400,000 - £700,000. They appear to operate as 'Landscape Maintenance' companies that do Grounds Maintenance as part of a wider offering, mainly to Office Sites and other smaller locations.

The value of the HBC contract, estimated in the future between £1.2m and £1.5m p.a., would be too large an undertaking for companies of this size. The diversity and complex nature of large Local Authority grounds maintenance contracts, the capital investment required and the skills needed would preclude such companies from tendering. In our experience, if they did bid, there would be a financial risk to the companies in question which they would seek to offset in the cost, or the risk to the Council in awarding a contract of this size would be too great.

Conclusion

The market has contracted significantly over the last 9 years. Our research is summarised in the following table:



WCL consider that the HBC contract may attract interest from the Private Sector in its previous form, and there may be some Contractors who may wish to tender for works. However, our recent experience in the procurement of a similar sized GM contracts in the South East region, indicates that this cannot be guaranteed.

The trend of reducing numbers of companies in the market is likely to continue and we would be surprised if there were more than 4 'main' operators left by 2025. This inevitably means less competition and tendered values increasing. The consequences of this are that there will be a large gap in turnover and capability between the biggest multi-nationals and the more regional, mid-sized companies which in the past has provided competition and options for procuring authorities.

Geographical

Delivery of Grounds Maintenance Services in East Sussex

Authority	In-house (DSO)	In-house (LATC)	Contracted -out	Contractor Name
Eastbourne*			✓	ID Verde
Hastings	✓			ID Verde
Lewes*			✓	ID Verde
Rother			✓	ID Verde
Wealden			✓	Tivoli
East Sussex CC			✓	Glendale

* We understand that in September 2022 Eastbourne and Lewes Councils may change the delivery model to in-house at the end of the current contract.

Delivery of Grounds Maintenance Services in the county of Kent, by Authority

Authority	In-house (DSO)	In-house (LATC)	Contracted -out	Contractor Name
Dover	✓			
Folkestone & Hythe	✓			
Medway			✓	Norse
Ashford	✓			
Canterbury	✓			
Thanet	✓			
Dartford			✓	Continental Landscapes
Gravesham	✓			
Tonbridge & Malling			✓	Kent Landscape Services
Maidstone	✓			
Swale			✓	Blenwood
Sevenoaks	✓			
Kent County Council		✓		Kent Landscape Services

13 Other Authorities including Kent County Council

8 (c.62%) are delivered in-house

5 (c.38%) are delivered by external providers

75% of those delivered in-house were bought back under Council control since 2010.

Agenda Item 9

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item 10

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