

Grass cutting

SUMMARY

- 1.1 We currently have long grass in areas across Derby, this report will explain why this is so and any actions we can take to combat this.
- 1.2 The New Neighbourhood Charter has not put any budget into reintroducing the previously higher frequencies of grass cutting.
- 1.3 Staff from Grounds Maintenance were recently taken off core grass cutting duties to plant out the flowerbeds which is one of the Council pledges.
- 1.4 Grounds Maintenance currently has three vacancies that they are struggling to recruit to, the service has tried three times to recruit to these posts.
- 1.5 We are currently experiencing mixed weather with hot temperatures and heavy rainfall; this provides good growing conditions for grass.
- 1.6 We are facing excessive levels of litter on parks which means the mower driver has to stop and litter pick first which slows the team down.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To look at carrying out a targeted recruitment process to fill current vacancies.
- 2.2 To look at the opportunity to bring on a number of apprentices into Grounds Maintenance to train our own staff.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The current weather is out of our control and planting of flowerbeds is one of our pledges. Filling the current vacancies will help us carry out the day to day work required.
- 3.2 Looking at apprentices will not only increase the number of employees within Grounds Maintenance but it will give us the opportunity to train staff in the skills we require. This is good on a service and Council level. We would need to look at the option of funding via the apprentice levy for this.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Current grass cutting frequencies are once every three weeks for residential verges and parks, Once every two weeks for sports pitches rising occasionally to once every week during the peak growing periods as required.

We currently have long grass in some areas across Derby and there are a number of reasons for this

- Previous budget cuts in this area have not been reinstated and the new Neighbourhood Charter has not put any budget into reintroducing the previously higher frequencies of grass cutting.
- Staff from Grounds Maintenance were recently taken off of core grass cutting duties to plant out the flowerbeds which is one of the Council pledges.
- Grounds Maintenance currently have three vacancies that we are struggling to recruit, we have been out three times to recruit these posts.
- We are currently experiencing mixed weather with hot temperatures and heavy rainfall; this provides good growing conditions for grass.
- We are facing excessive levels of litter on parks which means the mower driver has to stop and litter pick first which slows the team down.

Grounds Maintenance are looking to carry out a targeted recruitment process to try and attract trained Grounds Maintenance operatives. Also look into the possibility of employing a number of apprentices to help deliver the core service requirements, support the Neighbourhood Charter and deliver the current pledges.

Employing apprentices underpins the Councils current strategy for raising achievements and skills, delivering services differently and where young people can achieve their full potential.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	David Bartram
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For more information contact:
Background papers:
List of appendices:

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None
Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1 N/A

Legal

2.1 N/A

Personnel

3.1 We are recruiting existing vacancies and looking at the opportunity to bring on board a number of apprentices.

IT

4.1 N/A

Equalities Impact

5.1 N/A

Health and Safety

6.1 N/A

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 N/A

Property and Asset Management

8.1 N/A

Risk Management and Safeguarding

9.1 N/A

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 This also underpins the Councils current strategy for raising achievements and skills, delivering services differently and where young people can achieve their full potential.