

Item No.	
Subject	Ground Maintenance and Verge Cutting activities Budget Reduction Proposals
Summary	

Why was this issue identified for a review?

The Highway Maintenance Budget was reviewed initially with an expectation that the overall budget could withstand some form of budget reduction. The Highway Maintenance Budget was analysed by the Heads of Service, Group Managers and Finance Managers and a number of services supported by the overall Highway Maintenance Budget were identified, the Ground Maintenance and Verge Cutting budget being one of them.

The Council carries out a cyclic approach to the issue of cutting the grass growth on the road verges to the County's highway network and are contracted to carry out a similar regime on the Trunk roads on behalf of NMWTRA.

The Council's horticultural work is carried out by the Council's grounds maintenance DSO and covers a range of work which splits into two main areas. Firstly, grass cutting to the Council's parks, amenity and open spaces. Secondly, they maintain the floral arrangements throughout the County's towns, cemeteries, arboriculture and bowling green maintenance.

Background information

On the transfer to the new senior management structure the Grounds Maintenance DSO was transferred into the Partnerships and Operations Group. A process was started to integrate the grounds unit into the highways unit. Furthermore, the external contracts for the County's verge cutting is in its last year which give rise to further opportunities to consider what work was carried out in-house and what was externalised.

Summary of current situation

The new verge cutting contract will be operational from 1st April 2014. Work to compile the contract documentation is currently underway with the tender process starting prior to Christmas. The service standard is being reduced from two cuts per year to one cut, where officers consider it is appropriate. Some of the areas currently maintained by the in-house DSO will be transferred to the external contracts. Other areas will be transferred into the DSO, to increase the use of our resources.

The County's supply of bedding flowers and floral displays will be re-contracted over the winter. The procurement of flowers and displays has been re-worked to provide a financial 10% saving year on year for the 3 year contract. This could amount to £19,700

The maintenance work to the bowling greens at Tregaron and New Quay is to cease. There will be staffing issues in relation to this which may well involve a redundancy situation. This could realise. £26,200

Together with the cessation of annual grant payment to the Llandysul Sports Society of £19,980 and the annual maintenance of Penparcau Football Club ground of £10,000.

There are both legal issues as some of this work is carried out as part of leases between the Council and third parties as well as PR and political issues.

Conclusion

The opportunity to decrease the cutting regime on the road verges is estimated on current values to realise approximately **£70k**. A new work schedule could be put into force for the in-house DSO effective from 1st April 2014 and realise **£75,880**. Jointly there could be a **possible budget saving of £145,880**.

There is a caveat to achieving the saving, leases will possibly have to be terminated and there could be a decrease in the public perception on the state of the County's highways network is going to decline.

Policy:	
Budget:	
Legal Implications including Human Rights Act 1998 and S17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998:	
Equality Implications:	
Statutory Implications:	
Background Papers:	

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To: The Cabinet and all Members of the Council

