

To: Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

By: Behdad Haratbar – Head of Programmed Works

Date: 18th July 2012

Subject: Highway vegetation management - update

Classification: Information only

Summary: An update on the levels of service for highway vegetation maintenance.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The County Council undertakes programmed maintenance of highway vegetation throughout the County as well as reactive inspections in response to public enquiries or emergency call-outs.

1.2 Service levels

1.2.1 Service levels and programme dates for the maintenance of grass, shrubs, hedges and weed control are shown on the attached Appendix 1. The standards being implemented are the ones we are able to afford within the available budget.

1.2.2 Weed growth following the prolonged wet weather has been prolific and we are now spraying weeds across the county. The spray takes effect within two to four weeks and we will return to the worst affected areas to remove and dispose of the larger dead weeds. A further spray will be undertaken during October and November with a special focus on targeting weed growth which has taken place since the first spray. This will help tackle the remaining problems caused by the weather conditions as well as restricting weed growth in the following growing season.

1.2.3 The prolonged wet weather has adversely affected the grass cutting programme and mowing equipment has had difficulty dealing with the long wet grass. We are working with the contractor to address the resultant quality and timing issues.

1.2.4 Highway tree safety inspections are undertaken by qualified arboricultural staff on a rolling 5 year programme for all roads. This is in line with best practice guidelines set out in 'Well Maintained Highways'. The priorities for the tree safety works are regularly reviewed with some operations no longer being undertaken, such as removing minor deadwood, pruning for aesthetic reasons and removing stumps unless they pose a safety risk to highway users.

- 1.2.5 Tree planting relating to legal replacement requirements will be undertaken and funded from the highway tree maintenance budget.
- 1.2.6 Funding opportunities for additional maintenance works including tree planting can be provided through the Member Highway Fund Scheme. We encourage communities to help with the maintenance of vegetation on roadsides in front of private homes and properties.
- 1.2.7 The Tree Management Policy is currently under review and will be combined with other highway landscape management requirements into an overall approach.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the content of this report

Background documents: None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Service Levels

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