

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 25 February 2019

Reporting officer: Nick Brown, Director (Environment & Operations)

Subject: Scrutiny Topic Review Report - Grass Cutting & Horticulture

Purpose and summary of report:

To present Members with the Topic Review Report of Grass Cutting & Horticulture approved by Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to consider the report at Appendix Two, taking into account the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of their work programme, the Overview Scrutiny Committee identified the subject of Grass Cutting & Horticulture as an area for review at its meeting in June 2018.
- 1.2 The membership of the sub-group for the review was agreed as follows:
 - 1.2.1 Grass Cutting & Horticulture
Cllr John Burden (Chair), Cllr Lyn Milner, Cllr Gary Harding, Cllr Sara Langdale
- 1.3 Two comprehensive meetings of the sub-group were held (October and November 2018) in order to progress the review and identify possible recommendations or options for consideration by Cabinet.

2. Review Findings

- 2.1 The report for the Grass Cutting & Horticulture review is attached at appendix two to this report and sets out five recommendations for consideration by Cabinet, as summarised below:

Grass Cutting & Horticulture Review Recommendations

- 2.1.1 Improved training for all horticultural operatives on machinery usage techniques
 - 2.1.2 Review current tree operating procedure
 - 2.1.3 Planning guidance on appropriate trees and shrubs
 - 2.1.4 Explore additional sites where the practices of 'set-aside' areas or wildflower meadows can be adopted and to ensure clear explanatory signage is used to detail why an area has been set-aside or a wildflower meadow has been established
 - 2.1.5 A new two person grounds maintenance team should be set up to carry out increased levels of grounds maintenance on Housing owned sites especially sheltered housing communal areas to improve the local environment for residents
- 2.2 The detailed information to support these recommendations is contained within the main body of the topic review report.

3. Proposed Way forward

- 3.1 Cabinet Members are asked to discuss the review findings and in particular the recommendations and, if they are supportive of the recommendations, task the Director (Environment & Operations) with progressing these recommendations accordingly.
- 3.2 As set out in the report, and subject to Cabinet approval, an update on the recommendations will be provided to the Overview Scrutiny Committee in six months.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 There are no background papers pertaining to this report.

Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

<p>Legal</p>	<p>There are no legal implications resulting from this report. The Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Overview Scrutiny Committee and the activities set out within this report are in line with this.</p>
<p>Finance and Value for Money</p>	<p>It is anticipated that if the recommendations in the report are progressed they will provided good value for money and potential savings. If recommendation 5 is progressed; the additional revenue cost of establishing a new grounds maintenance team would be £53,380 with an initial capital outlay of £18,000 for a new van and associated equipment. The new team would be funded from ongoing salary savings within the HRA budget as the team would be working exclusively on Housing-owned land.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment</p>	<p>There are no specific risks associated with this report.</p>
<p>Equality Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Screening for Equality Impacts</p>
	<p>Question</p>
	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p>
	<p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No</p>
<p>Corporate Plan</p>	<p>The work of the Scrutiny Topic review sub-group in relation to the Grass Cutting & Horticulture assists in the delivery of the following Corporate Plan Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Safer Gravesham <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver a quality built and green environment; keeping streets clean and maintaining a high standard of local horticulture 3 – Sustainable Gravesham <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure open and green spaces in future development areas and that any new external spaces prioritise walking, cycling and mass transit. 4 – Sound & self-sufficient council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuously review and adapt how we deliver our services to achieve financial efficiencies and improved performance.
<p>Crime and Disorder</p>	<p>There are no implications in respect of crime and disorder</p>

Digital and website implications	There are no implications in respect of Digital and Website interactions.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	There are no implications in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.