

Appendix 2

Summary of feedback from grounds maintenance teams during 2014

- Doing perimeter strips or small parts of sites means that travelling, loading and unloading takes up a disproportionately high amount of time compared to actual grass cutting. It would be better to either do the whole site whether that be on a regular basis or less frequent basis depending on location and site conditions.
- Spring started quite early and grass growth was exceptional at the start of the season. We need to plan for a similar event and start temporary seasonal staff earlier to ensure there are enough resources to cope.
- Grass growth been so lush when sites have been visited it has needed up to 3 passes with mower to cut it to any quality – therefore increasing time per site and overall increasing time between each cut, thus exacerbating the initial problem of frequency at start of season.
- Increased wear and tear on machinery has been very apparent. Belts, blades, motors – wearing within 2-3 weeks at the start of the season.
- The combination of weekly sites, fortnightly cemetery work, twice weekly or once weekly bowling greens, then high priority and low priority grading makes the whole system of determining which areas to cut in which order over complicated. Would prefer to get back to a simpler system.
- So much focus on grass complaints and trying to get this in order that other work may have suffered – e.g. beds and borders. Consider separate team for this type of work and other elements such as JK spraying, bedding that will take pressure off amenity teams.
- Work including Japanese Knotweed spraying, closed churchyards, public realm work and bedding come at time of year when the grass is growing very fast. The reduction of staff and increase annual leave has shown that staff being taken off normal route to complete these tasks is having a greater effect as it affects a greater % of overall workforce compared to previous years.
- Car parking on highways is becoming a major problem and is often preventing teams from being able to park and unload near to the site and / or being able to physically cut the verge due to risk of hitting vehicles with equipment or stones being thrown out. This results in additional time taken to mow the site or having to return to sites on another day to try and gain access – this all adds time on.
- Teams know the site conditions, rates of grass growth and often the type of users. They would like the flexibility to decide the extent and frequency of grass cutting within parameters so that they can adapt to changing conditions and resource levels.
- The flower meadows look good in the right location and can reduce the grass cutting burden at peak times. However to create the meadows and then maintain them during establishment takes up some time so the number and extent needs to be carefully planned so that they can cope.
- The bowling greens which are only being cut once per week are taking much longer to cut when we do visit. There is no appreciable time saving and it would be better to revert to a twice weekly cut as previously done.
- The reduced reliance on bedding displays has helped