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Meeting	Parks and Open Spaces Committee
Date	12th July 2022
Report Title	Grass and Hedge Cutting Report
Agenda Reference	10
Author	Laura Cutter, Deputy Clerk & Services Manager and David Hunt, Head of Parks & Open Spaces

Officers Recommendations

1. To note the report.
2. To note the mower repair costs for Q1 for budget code 4517/307.

Grass Cutting

The Grass Cutting Team has just started its fifth cycle of the parish and is followed closely by a team of two back up operatives and the mini compact sweeper. One of the machines went in for repair on Monday 4th July 2022. It is unknown how long the machine will be off the road for, so the schedule is continuing with one mower and three back up operatives.

June remained mainly breakdown free for the mowing machines. The two, recently mowing machine trained operatives have had opportunity to spend some operational time using the machines. This operational time will be maintained so that the operatives can further their mowing experience. Follow up mowing has continued to prove successful. The follow up team have capacity to pick up other grounds maintenance tasks local to them within their daily work area.

The compact mini sweeper has also complimented the follow up mowing service. Operating within the daily vicinity of the mowing operations the sweeper has contributed to keeping roads, footpaths, and cycleways tidy.

Grass Cutting Machine Maintenance Costs (Q1)

The annual budget for grass cutting machine maintenance (4515/307) is set to £8,000.00. So far, this financial year (Apr-June; Q1) £2,773.25 has been spent. The machine in for repair currently will cost in the region of £500.00 to repair and will be settled with July's invoices.

Hedge Cutting

The start of the hedge cutting schedule was delayed by four weeks due to resources and working on priority hedge cutting areas (near schools and crossings) and dealing with public enquiries. The Hedge Cutting Team has now started the official schedule cutting in Zone 1 (Abbey Meads) and will then move on to Zone 2 (Haydon End/Taw Hill), Zone 3 (Haydon Wick) and Zone 4 (Oakhurst). With starting the hedge cutting schedule later than planned, this will bridge the gap between the spring/summer and autumn/winter cut, meaning there will be less need for a secondary visit.

The Parks & Projects Team has been bolstering the Hedge Cutting Team since the end of June and will likely be required until the end of August. The team can be called off for any urgent jobs or ad hoc requests, but a schedule is being created for the late summer/ autumn months. The summer holidays will defer items, due to the play areas being used during working hours, so the team will be back on Parks & Projects by September. In September, the team will receive assistance from other areas of the Parks & Open Spaces Team.

The Head of Parks & Open Spaces and the Deputy Clerk & Services Manager conducted an initial quality check of the areas cut within the last two weeks in Abbey Meads. Overall, the area was looking very well maintained and good feedback has been received regarding the quality of the finish. The bolstered Hedge Cutting Team has made more progress than envisaged in a short period of time. A few items have been raised, such as removal of stray small ashes within hedge rows and other observations made by the Head of Parks & Open Spaces. This will form part of the induction plan and as the work continues, the experience and local knowledge will expand.

Impact Summary

Procurement & Financial: 29% of budget spent (4515/307)
Climate Change Impact: There is no impact within the service delivery. The Council is developing its carbon footprint in line with its strategy.
Risk Assessment: N/A
Operational Considerations: Delays < 2 days. Staffing hours 75 (five operatives).