

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: Education (Resources) Sub-Committee	Subject: Grounds Maintenance Contracts : Performance Review
From: Director of Education Director of Community Services	
Date: 25 September 2001	

Summary

This report describes the performance of the grounds maintenance contract for the period April to August 2001.

Recommendations

The education resources sub-committee is recommended to:

- (1) note the performance of the grounds maintenance contract for April to August 2001
- (2) request the submission of regular performance review reports to future meetings of the sub-committee



Members wishing further information about the paper should contact:

Michael O'Neill, Director of Education, on 01236 812336, or
Murdo Maciver, Head of Provisions / Contract Services, on 01236 812269
Paul Jukes, Director of Community Services on 0141 304 1913

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL : EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Grounds Maintenance Contract : Performance Review

Joint Report by the Director of Education and Director of Community Services

1. Background

1.1 This report is part of the regular monitoring of the grounds maintenance contract.

2. QUALITY PERFORMANCE

2.1 Monitoring System

As reported at the education resources meeting in August 2001, the monitoring system that has been operating over recent seasons has been improved to better analyse the quality of the service.

2.2 The properties are divided into 9 groups and each is allocated to a local manager. The monitoring operates at 3 levels. Firstly, work is inspected informally on a random sample basis by the supervisory staff for the work. Any problems are addressed as they arise. Secondly, work is inspected formally on a random sample basis by management staff from a separate geographic area. If corrective action is required this is carried out by the staff responsible for the area. Thirdly education staff contact the local grounds maintenance manager if there are concerns about the quality of work.

2.3 Every 4 week period, 24 properties are inspected informally and 3 properties are inspected formally. Over the 8 week period (calendar weeks 26-33 inclusive) 48 informal and 6 formal inspections took place.

2.4 Customer Survey

Part of the monitoring system is a customer questionnaire designed to assess the quality of the grounds maintenance service provided to schools.

2.5 The service delivery questionnaire was issued to 160 Education establishments in April 2001 to cover the period September 2000 to March 2001. 126 questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 79%.

2.6 The analysis of these returns is attached as an appendix to the report. The following conclusions can be drawn

(a) On the whole, the results indicate a general satisfaction with the service. However, it is a concern that certain areas have low customer satisfaction.

(b) The survey indicated poor service in a specific group of education properties in Motherwell. There was a supervision problem which has since been rectified.

(c) Feedback suggests that there is some degree of ignorance about the service even though a service information pack has been issued. In order to address this and issues raised in the survey, local managers will meet with head teachers to explain the service information pack and address specific issues. Priority will be given to those who have concerns about the service.

- 2.7 The service delivery questionnaire for the period 1 April 2001 to 20 August 2001 was issued on 29 August 2001. An analysis of the responses will be reported to a future meeting of the sub committee.

3. BUDGET PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 The expenditure for routine work to August 2001 is £293,778 against a budget of £566,737. During the calendar weeks 26-33, £8001.72 was spent on miscellaneous non-routine work.- Action has been taken to meet the savings target of £28,000.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The education resources sub-committee is recommended to:

- (1) note the performance of the grounds maintenance contract for April to August 2001.
- (2) request the submission of regular performance review reports to future meetings of the sub-committee.

Grounds Maintenance Service : Delivery Questionnaire

1. Analysis of Customer Satisfaction

- 1.1 Question 1 attempted to test the existing service specification and asked, “*is the standard of grounds maintenance meeting your requirements*”, the results were as follows:

Yes	79%	No	21%
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Closer analysis of the “No” responses by looking at geographical areas showed that there was a marginal variation in the response, between North and Central, however, the South area indicated a greater problem.

	Yes	No
North	91%	9%
Central	88%	12%
South	61%	39%

Following investigation it can be reported that a failure of supervision during the period in question gave rise to a localised service failure. This supervision problem resulted from an ill health retiral and the temporary replacement member of staff lacked the necessary knowledge to maintain standards. This has now been resolved.

- 1.2 Question 2 attempted to test the quality of work and asked, “*how do you rate the standard of grounds maintenance*”, the results were as follows:

Excellent	4%
Good	43%
Adequate	46%
Poor	7%

This result shows that 93% of respondents rated the service as adequate or above. However, 7% reflect a poor standard of grounds maintenance and is cause for further investigation as outlined in 5.4.

- 1.3 Question 3 attempted to test whether the service is continually improving and asked, “*if the standard of grounds maintenance was improving, deteriorating or in a state of status quo*”, the results were as follows:

Improved	12%
Deteriorated	7%
Remained the same	81%

Results show 93% of respondents agree that standards are either consistent or improved, however, a return of 7% indicates that the service has deteriorated and is a cause for further investigation as outlined in 5.4.

- 1.4 Question 4 asked, *“are grounds maintenance staff polite and helpful”*, the results were as follows:

Yes	99%	No	1%
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The 1% relates to a single Education property, Christ the King Primary School, Motherwell and this matter will be addressed as outlined in 5.4.

- 1.5 Question 5 asked, *“have you requested additional grounds maintenance operations in the last three months”*, the results were as follows:

Yes	11%	No	89%
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- 1.6 Question 6 asked, *“if you answered yes to the above question were these additional requirements carried out to your satisfaction”*, the results were as follows:

Yes	57%	No	43%
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The number of “No” responses shown as 43% is 6.

This matter will be subject to further investigation as outlined in 5.4 as there are no comments on the questionnaire returns to identify the nature of the problem.

- 1.7 Question 7 asked, *“have you met the Grounds Maintenance Local Manager, during the period”* the results were as follows:

Yes	11%	No	89%
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- 1.8 Respondents were asked to provide further comments to any question to which they had answered “No”. 48% of respondents made comment and this is helpful in determining specific problems with service provision.