

AGENDA ITEM NO.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE		SUBJECT: GARDEN ASSISTANCE SCHEME
FROM: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING		
DATE: 27 AUGUST 1996	REF: TMcK/RM/EW/2	

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on a standardisation of work specifications and cyclic maintenance for the Garden Assistance Scheme.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Housing Committee at its meeting on 1st May 1996 were advised as to the different standards of Garden Assistance Schemes operated by the merging authorities and these are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 The Committee agreed that a standard level of service of 6 cuts and 1 hedge trim per season be introduced for North and Central Divisions whilst the service operated by the former Strathkelvin District continues to operate within the North Division.
- 2.3 Work has commenced preparing a contract tendering document to standardise the Garden Assistance Scheme and a summary of the standard specifications of cyclic maintenance are highlighted in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 A more detailed specification is set down in Appendix 3 and it is proposed that this will cover all the works associated with the Garden Assistance Scheme which will be packaged in one contract covering North Lanarkshire.

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Committee approves the tendering arrangements as set down in paragraph 2.4 after which a further report detailing the timetable for the tendering process and the financing of the Garden Assistance Scheme will be prepared for submission to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

4. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 4.1 Full contract documentation is available from the Housing Department..



GS Whitefield
Director of Housing

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL GARDEN ASSISTANCE SCHEME

APPENDIX 1; SUMMARY OF DIFFERENT STANDARDS OPERATED BY MERGING AUTHORITIES

MOTHERWELL	MONKLANDS	CUMBERNAULD AND KILSYTH	STRATHKELVIN
<p><u>Contractor</u></p> <p>Forgewood Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 cuts + 2 hedge trims • 3,000 + participants • £188,000 budget provision • Reviewed annually 	<p><u>Contractor</u></p> <p>Leisure & Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 cuts + 1 hedge trim • 3,500 participants • £200,000 budget provision • Reviewed annually 	<p><u>Contractor</u></p> <p>Leisure & Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 cuts + 2 hedge trims • 1,750 participants • £80,000 budget provision 	<p><u>Contractor</u></p> <p>Leisure & Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 cuts + 2 hedge trims • 634 participants • £135,000 budget provision • Provided as part of the ground maintenance contract

NORTH LANARKSHIRE HOUSING GARDEN ASSISTANCE SCHEME**APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF SPECIFICATION**

ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY PER GROWING SEASON (THIRD WEEK IN MARCH TO LAST WEEK IN OCTOBER)
1. Grass cutting which includes raking grass cuttings and trimming and edging.	8
2. Cleaning of all litter, stones or other debris however created. Includes same day disposal.	8
3. Application of approved herbicides to areas designated as fallow strips.	2
4. Hedge cutting, trimming and shaping.	2
5. All borders dug includes removal of all weeds and protecting all existing plants/shrubs.	2

appendix 3

GARDEN ASSISTANCE SCHEME - NORTH LANARKSHIRE DETAILED SPECIFICATION

1. GRASS CUTTING

1.1 GENERAL

1.1.1 The Contractor shall carry out grass cutting of all grass areas. He shall provide all plant, labour and equipment necessary to enable him to carry out the specification works, and shall ensure that all plant and equipment is kept in a safe condition and properly guarded and maintained in order to present no danger to either the operator or any member of the public. The Contractor shall provide all his operators with any necessary safety equipment and shall insure that all his operators use such during those times they are engaged in the required operations

1.1.2 In general, all grass cutting shall be carried out between the third week of March to the last week of October, the required number of cuts being as determined in para 1.1.8

1.1.3 The contractor shall use approved machines, appropriate in size, shape and method of cutting for the type of work involved.

1.1.4 The contractor shall at his own expense, make good any damage caused to fences, walkways, furniture, bins, plant materials and trees, and any other obstructions during grass cutting operations.

Should it be determined by the Contract Administrator that the failure of any plant/shrub material is due to damage inflicted by negligent grass cutting, the Contractor shall be required to replace the plant/shrub material at his own expense.

1.1.5 All litter, stones or other debris, however created, shall be collected by the Contractor prior to cutting operations and removed from site.

1.1.6 The Contractor shall remove all arisings from site on the same day that they are created.. The Contractor shall dispose of such materials by proper and efficient delivery to a tip which is licensed under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, or any re enactment or modification hereof for the disposal of all such materials. The Contractor is to take account in his rates of all changes associated with the tipping of this surplus / waste material.

1.1.7 Notwithstanding the requirements of 1.1.6 all leaves which are raked up, as described hereafter, shall be adequately stored by the Contractor to make them available for incorporating into flower beds as described hereafter.

1.1.8 Grass cutting operations are classified as follows:

A: MEDIUM AMENITY AREAS

The Contractor shall cut all areas designated on 8 occasions annually a minimum of 4 weeks between cuts

The whole area shall be cut to produce an even height across the whole area after cutting

The height of the cut will be 25mm.

RAKE GRASS A: MEDIUM AMENITY GRASS

The Contractor shall ensure that all A areas are left, after cutting, in a neat and tidy condition. Without prejudice to the foregoing, the Contractor shall rake all A Areas, and each raking shall be carried out on the day of the cut.

The Contractor should note that, without prejudice to the general conditions, if at the discretion of the Director, excess grass cuttings are found at the completion of cutting, the Contractor shall be required to rake them and remove from site in accordance with paragraphs 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.8.

1.2 TRIMMING AND EDGING

Without prejudice to the foregoing general conditions, the contractor shall:

- (a) Trim all grass edges, whether bedside paths, around the bases of trees, street lights, poles or other obstructions at the base of walls or fences, manholes, hedges of planting beds, kerbs and any other relevant situations of a like kind, and to remove from site any arisings.
- (b) Sweep and adjacent hard areas clear of arisings and remove from site
- (c) All litter, cuttings arisings and any other debris shall be removed on the same day as the cut, and dispose if in terms of paragraphs 1.1.5 and 1.1.6.

1.3 REFORMING GRASS EDGES

The Contractor shall maintain and re-form grass edges to a standard acceptable to the Contractor Administrator, for example, about paths, lie along borders and around tree bases and other similar obstructions.

1.4 FALLOW STRIPS

The Contractor shall allow for and maintain a fallow strip to measure 150 mm wide along the base of all walls, fences and hedges where they occur in the relative areas by means of applying a total, residual herbicide twice yearly upon such areas during the growing season. Any such herbicides shall be applied in accordance with good horticultural practice and without prejudice to the foregoing generality shall be applied in complete accordance with the manufacturers instructions.

1.5 ALL AREAS - VARIATIONS TO GRASS CUTTING SCHEDULE ARISING OUT OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

In normal weather conditions the Contractor is required to conform to the agreed programme of works. However, variations to the grass cutting schedule may arise in the following circumstances:

It is recognised that weather conditions may occur so as to exceptionally stimulate growth to the extent that additional cuts are required to the programme in order to maintain the foregoing standards.

In such circumstances the Contractor, in order to meet the requisite standards, shall notify the Director of any such occurrence and the Contractor shall, if so instructed by the Director, increase the number of cuts and such work shall be chargeable as all extra, but that subject to the condition that the additional cut shall be at the same rate of costs as the programmed cuts. Alternatively, if considered appropriate by the Director, the Director may instruct additional cuts in conditions of exceptional growth and the Contractor may be requested to conduct such additional cuts which shall be subject to the foregoing conditions.

If inclement weather prevents cutting being carried out, the Contractor is required to notify the Director of his reasons for his intended variation to the programme of cutting. If acceptable to the Director, the Contractor is required to resume work in conformity with the programme as soon as the weather conditions permit.

The Contractor is required to implement such works as have been varied at his own expense to be in conformity with the programme as soon as weather conditions permit and that, in any case within seven days of the cessation of any such inclement weather.

In the circumstances where in the opinion of the Director any work should be delayed in order to prevent damage to the ground the Director may instruct the Contractor to vary his work to take account of such potential damage and the foregoing conditions in respect of any such work required to restore conformity to the programme shall apply, or in the circumstances where weather conditions are such as to inhibit the growth of grass to negligible amounts between scheduled cuts the Contractor will not be paid for work which is not done in terms of this paragraph.

2. HEDGE CUTTING

- 2.1 All hedges must be trimmed by the Contractor on two occasions in each year in the first ten working days of October. The cutting will remove all current year growth to a regular line and be shaped to ensure that all surfaces of the hedge are level.
- 2.2 The Contractor shall collect and remove all arising in terms of paragraphs 1.1.5 and 1.1.6.
- 2.3 Arising must not be allowed by the Contractor to block paths or interfere with free access of paths and roads.

3. BORDER DIGGING

- 3.1** All borders must be dug by the Contractor on two occasions in each year on the same times as the hedges are trimmed. All digging must result in all weeds being removed from border areas but plants to remain.
- 3.2** The Contractor shall collect and remove all arising in terms of paragraphs 1.1.5 and 1.1.6

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL GARDEN ASSISTANCE SCHEME

APPENDIX 4: QUALIFYING CRITERIA

This scheme is run by North Lanarkshire Council to provide a basic garden service to tenants of the Council and owner-occupiers who cannot maintain their gardens themselves. The scheme is open from April to October each year. The criteria for entry to the scheme is as follows:-

Criteria

Non-Pensioners

Non-pensioners will qualify only if they meet all the following conditions:

They must be:

- Receiving Incapacity Benefit or Disability Living Allowance;
- live alone except when all household members qualify separately;
- have no relative or friend who can carry out the garden work for them;
- be able to provide medical proof of incapacity to maintain their garden.

Pensioners

Pensioners who are not receiving Incapacity Benefit or Disability Living Allowance will qualify but should be able to provide medical proof of incapacity to carry out work and must also meet the other criteria listed above.

Each applicant will require to submit a Garden Assistance Scheme Application Form to the local Area Housing Office.

Once received, the Housing Officer should carry out the following checks to establish if anyone is staying at the property but not included on the application:

- Housing Benefit application.
- Housing Allocation application.
- Register Council Tax.
- Voters Roll.

A visit must be carried out by the Housing Officer to check the information given and assess the application. The following information is also required:

- Size of garden area (S-M-L-XL) or m2 dependant on the individual contract areas.
- Present condition of garden (may require special one-off cut.)

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL GARDEN ASSISTANCE SCHEME
APPENDIX 4: QUALIFYING CRITERIA

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The Housing Officer would then pass the application form, with recommendation, to the Area Housing Manager for approval/refusal.

Once decision has been reached, one of the following letters should be sent:

- Approval -- added onto scheme.
- Approval -- list full -- included on waiting list.
- Refusal -- not eligible.

The waiting list/programme should be updated and copies given to the Housing Officer for reference during area inspections, and a 10% check must be carried out each month.

If it is identified that a garden has not been maintained to the standard required by North Lanarkshire Council, contractors should be telephoned immediately advising them to check the garden within 2 days, rectify and report back in writing.

Records of all complaints against contractors must be maintained by Area Housing Managers for monitoring purposes.

All Garden Assistance Scheme applications must be investigated and written decision given within 10 working days.

Ensure the list is kept up-to-date with all terminations and tenancy changes being actioned immediately.