

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

For the Management of Grounds Maintenance

Between

**Housing Services, Community Well-being
And
Street Services, Sustainable Communities**

1. General Provisions

1.1 Introduction

Housing Services currently manages in the region of 10,300 properties with surrounding Estate land, amenity greens, play areas and communal gardens, along with garage areas, hard standings and parking areas. Many of the large and small green areas on estates and in sheltered complexes provide a comprehensive range of visual and recreational facilities that encourage their use and enjoyment by residents who form a diverse cross section of the population.

This SLA sets down the process and expectations in respect of a working partnership between each service.

1.2 Review Process

All parties will review standards set in this SLA informally during normal business.

The SLA will be formally reviewed each year, commencing December 2011.

1.3 Standards and Expectations

Standards set will be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound (SMART)**.

No standards will be set without the full agreement of both parties. Any reasonable amendments or additions will be made only after discussion and full agreement of both parties.

1.4 Purpose of Agreement

To provide a quality Grounds Maintenance Service on all designated Housing Land, as identified on the Corporate GIS system. To ensure that all Estates that are managed by the Council's Housing Service are well maintained, and kept free of rubbish and weeds; the appearance of all planting and lawns will be kept to an acceptable standard; and all Estate facilities (Parking bays, pathways, Sheltered housing complexes, estate roadways, play areas, garage areas, alleyways etc will be clean and tidy, free of weeds and litter and will be kept in good repair and working order by programme of safety and quality inspections.

1.5 Scope of service

Grounds to be maintained that fall within the ownership and, therefore, the responsibility of Housing Services are comprised of the following:

- 51.64 Hectares of amenity greens and open space
- 2.07 Hectares of hedgerow
- 0.39 Hectares of flower beds
- 2167 Trees
- 30 Sheltered housing schemes
- 30.35 Hectares of hard standings
- 13.00 Hectares of footpaths; approximately 108,000 linear metres
- 14 Play areas

Details of individual areas of land are highlighted on the set of maps previously provided by Housing Services.

2. Service to be Delivered

2.1 Grass

- Cut fortnightly from April to June inclusive
- Cut every three weeks from July to September inclusive
- Cut once a month during October, November, February and March
- In general grass cuttings to be left but to be swept/blown from paths back onto the lawn
- Grass cuttings in sheltered housing schemes to be collected and removed from site
- Litter pick all grass areas before cutting
- Strim all edges, around obstacles and areas where mowers cannot gain access prior to mowing or apply herbicide where appropriate
- Edges, grass abutting hard surfaces, bed areas, fences, walls etc to be cut or sprayed with herbicide, depending on surface type
- All grass areas to be cut to an even height
- Direction of cut to be varied to encourage healthy growth
- All grass areas will be edged as appropriate to maintain an acceptable appearance
- As an overall outcome, grass should be maintained at a height between 16 and 100mm

2.2 Shrubs and Hedges

- Prune back encroachment of shrubs, hedges and low hanging branches.
- Cut top growth of upright plants such as hawthorn, privet, blackthorn, buxus and escallonia twice a year.
- Cut deciduous shrubs to a natural shape.
- Cut conifers and evergreens to desired shape twice a year.
- Cut, clear and rake hedge cuttings before grass cutting.

- Formal type hedges to be pruned twice a year, during early Spring and early Autumn.
- Unless otherwise agreed formal type hedges shall be maintained to a constant height above ground level and to a uniform shape.
- All arisings to be chipped or removed to green recycling.

2.3 Trees

- Tree officer to carry out an inspection of trees identified by Housing in order to provide a professional opinion and quote for necessary work.
- Cost of agreed work to be provided from a separate budget.

2.4 Bed Maintenance

- Remove diseased or decaying plants and shrubs in agreement with Housing.
- Remove plant growth encroaching from the bed onto paths, grassed areas, signs or hard surfaces and sight lines.
- Remove items of litter, rubbish and debris.
- Weed growth shall not exceed 10% of the area of the bed
- Edges of the beds to be cut back level to any grass area or hardstanding.
- Shrubs to be cut back from window areas where they are blocking out light.
- All arisings from bed areas to be chipped or removed to green recycling.

2.5 Leaf Clearance

- Collect and remove fallen leaves from all sheltered housing schemes in mid November and mid December.

2.6 Hard Surfaces

This section deals with hard surfaces associated with all Housing Land, such as footpaths and roads on ground maintained, other paved areas, garage sites, communal access ways, parking areas, playgrounds, recreation surfaces and all sheltered housing schemes.

- Provide mechanical sweeping of the above areas on a quarterly frequency.
- Keep all areas weed free by spraying edges, joints and cracks with an appropriate herbicide in April, June and September
- Remove dead weeds from above areas

2.7 Play Areas and Play Equipment

- Provide risk assessments for all play areas
- Carry out maintenance on play areas, including grass cutting, graffiti removal, strimming, removal of weeds, removal of litter, rubbish and dog excrement, edging etc
- Inspect all play equipment and play areas on a weekly basis to comply with the annual ROSPA inspection.

- Make safe identified defects within 24 hours
- Arrange for necessary routine maintenance.
- Report any necessary major maintenance or replacement to Housing

2.8 Assisted Gardening

Assisted Gardening will remain as a separately specified and priced agreement.

2.8 Complaints

- Deal with complaints about the Grounds Maintenance service within corporate timescales.
- Where complaints are made concerning matters, which are considered not to be Grounds Maintenance responsibility to report these to the appropriate department and copy to Housing.
- All compliments to be logged with Housing Feedback and forwarded to the Housing Operations Manager

3. Monitoring, Performance and Pricing

3.1 Attendance at Meetings

Street Services will, where required, provide representation at HEMG (Housing Estate Management Group), Landlord Management Board, tenant and resident meetings and public meetings, some of these during the evening.

3.2 Maintenance of Records

Street Services will maintain records, reports, complaints, compliments, involving any activity relating to work on Housing Land, which might be required at HEMG.

3.3 Liaison

Street Services will routinely liaise with Housing staff on housing related matters and matters relating to the quality of the activities included in this SLA. Grounds Maintenance staff will take part in Estate Inspections as and when required.

3.4 Standards and Performance Indicators

Street Services will work with Housing and other partners to achieve the Housing Respect Standard, BV199 and to meet the requirements and Service Standards set down in the Estate Inspection and Maintenance Document.

3.5 Performance and Statistical Information

Street Services will provide performance and statistical information in relation to the management, trends, volumes of work, customer satisfaction, complaints, accidents and timescales associated with the contract, as and when required or as stated in the SLA.

3.6 Complaints/Enquiries

Street Services will provide a full or joint response, as appropriate, to complaints or MP enquiries relating to Grounds Maintenance issues, Assisted Gardening issues and Street Scenes issues in line with the corporate response times.

3.7 Customer Satisfaction

Street Services will conduct customer satisfaction surveys for the activities they provide for the Housing Department, this will include surveying tenants, leaseholders and the Housing Client, and will monitor satisfaction levels and report these to the Housing Department, either monthly, quarterly or as part of the Status Survey or other customer survey methods used. A satisfaction level of at least 95% will be required.

3.8 Pricing Structure

Housing Services require that the pricing of this service is broken down in such a way that the costs of the various elements detailed above are shown as per hectare or per square metre or, in the case of weed spraying on footpaths etc, per linear metre.

This is to enable benchmarking to take place in order to achieve value for money for tenants in accordance with TSA offers and the Tenants' Annual Report.

3.9 Price Review

The annual review of rates will be based on the following:

50% x previous year's local authority pay award

50% x latest CPI uplift

AGREEMENT

On behalf of Housing Services, I confirm my agreement to the terms and conditions contained within this document.

Signed:

Name (Print):

Position:

Date:

On behalf of Sustainable Communities I confirm my agreement to the terms and conditions contained within this document.

Signed:

Name (Print):

Position:

Date: