

GRASS CUTTING POLICY

1.00 BACKGROUND

1.01 The County has a legal responsibility for the highway network in terms of keeping the routes available and safe for the passage of the highway user. It undertakes this duty in its role as the Highway Authority.

1.02 It is the duty of all Highway Authorities to reasonably maintain and repair the highway and to keep the surface of the road free from that which might otherwise obstruct it or prevent its safe use.

2.00 CONSIDERATIONS

2.01 The "Well Maintained Highway - Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management (July 2005)", sets out recommendations and good practice for the cutting of grassed areas that adjoin the highway for grassed verges and soft estate areas (amenity grass).

2.02 The Code of Practice recommends that Authorities should develop local standards based on fitness for purpose to provide the level of service required and assessment of the risk of this being compromised by failure.

2.03 The Code also recommends that Authorities should cut the grass as follows on rural roads:

- (a) on identified visibility areas
- (b) to provide a pedestrian refuge by cutting 1 swathe width (approx 1 metre) from the edge of carriageway
- (c) areas of highway verge should be cut back to boundary every three years unless a positive decision is taken to allow it to vegetate.

2.04 The code recommends that in urban areas, grass cutting practice needs to involve a different balance of highway safety, serviceability and sustainability.

2.05 The code states that using standards for rural roads would deliver safe standards from a visibility perspective, but length of grass, possible concealed debris, and the potential for grass cuttings to block gullies, suggests there is a need for a higher frequency of cutting in urban areas. The frequency of cutting needs to balance these priorities in contributing to overall townscape management, taking into account the needs of users and the Community.

2.06 On urban roads, litter picking is carried out before each cut to reduce the risk of debris becoming potential missiles thrown into the path of oncoming

traffic, or being left as unsightly shredded litter. On rural roads the grass cutting is undertaken by contractors who are responsible for ensuring that no litter is left after the grass has been cut. This will generally be achieved by undertaking a pre-cut litter pick, but, if necessary, the contractor is required to collect any shredded litter immediately after cutting.

3.00 GRASS CUTTING FREQUENCIES

3.01 All grassed areas will be classified into one of the following categories

1. Roadside verges
2. Amenity Areas
3. Public footpath standard
4. High Profile areas

3.02 The following grass cutting frequencies comply with all the recommendations set out within the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management (July 2005).

1. Roadside verges

Visibility splays at junctions

4 cuts per year -

April

June

August

September/October

Remaining Veges

2 swathe widths on all principal roads

1 swath width on unclassified

2 cuts per year -

June

September/October

Full width verge cutting for weed and self sown sapling control on all classifications of rural roads once every 3 years

2. Amenity Areas

Minimum of 13 cuts per year

3. Public footpaths

A maximum of 4 cuts per year

4. High Profile areas

A maximum of 30 cuts per year

3.02 Removal of grass cuttings will only take place on bowling greens and a limited number of high profile grass areas, generally in parks and towns centres.

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