

Proposed transfer of grounds maintenance service to Qualis Group Ltd.

Consultation: Supplementary Information Main Clients November 2022

- **Highways Client** – Highway verges are cut to maintain road visibility and prevent vegetation encroaching onto roads & paths that could be dangerous to road users, cyclists, and pedestrians. Keeping verges under control helps prevent fly tipping, littering or other potential hazards being hidden.
- **Essex County Council** – ECC undertakes twice-yearly fail cutting of roadside verges, EFDC Grounds service supports this by providing additional interim cuts on potentially higher risk sites such as at road junctions and sightlines.

This aligns it with the main body of grass cutting undertaken on behalf of other main stakeholders e.g. PCs and Housing and Leisure. This ensures a consistent standard of service is achieved across all the towns and villages. The Grounds service are responsible for ensuring this continuity of service is maintained.

- **Housing Client** – The Grounds Service forms an essential part in the management of green spaces designated as EFDC Housing land. Working closely with the client, the Grounds service has a wide range of maintenance programmes to ensure these spaces meet the needs of residents.

The Grounds team will work closely with the Housing team in the provision of estate enhancement projects e.g., new landscaping and playground provision. Sheltered housing is also a key and important work area for Grounds, where a high level of maintenance must be achieved to ensure communal gardens, walkways and wash-areas remain fit for purpose.

Hard surface area such as garages hard-standings are also maintained by the Grounds team where a specialist weed-spraying programme is managed.

- **Parish and Town Councils** – The Grounds Service has a longstanding working relationship with many of the local town and parish councils. The service usually includes routine maintenance of green spaces and often more specialist areas of work such as sports marking and playground maintenance.

- **Leisure Client** – Maintaining the numerous areas of Council owned ‘Leisure’ land is significant core of work for the Grounds service. This involves the essential maintenance of land designated as open space and will include sites within new residential developments where the main green space is set aside for recreation and play. This service area is also responsible for managing the large recreation area at Chigwell Row.
- **Countryside and Land-drainage Services** – The Grounds service work alongside CountyCare and Land Drainage to assist with the management of several key flood alleviation schemes sited across the district. Work will include the maintenance of the flood-meadows in accordance with the needs of drainage requirements to ensure they are fit for purpose but undertaken sympathetically to ensure biodiversity and wildlife habitat is maintained.
- **Airfield Client** – The airfield is a unique facility to this authority and the grounds maintenance too, has specific requirements to meet the needs of the various user groups. Varying the cutting heights and frequency helps ensure the associated safety aspects can be met. This grass here is extensive and covers 767,266.00sqm.