

Proposed transfer of grounds maintenance service to Qualis Group Ltd.

Consultation: Supplementary Information Overview of Grounds Maintenance

- Undertaking general grounds maintenance and landscaping on District and County owned land, as well as on behalf of local Town and Parish Councils.
- Maintenance of Housing land, including community, amenity, and green spaces. The management of communal gardens at sheltered housing units and clearance of void property gardens. This includes a safety and maintenance inspection regime for Housing's children's play areas and the consultation, procurement and installation of new playgrounds as required.
- The maintenance operation covers a broad range of activities and includes an extensive grass cutting program. The amount of grass maintenance is in excess of 3 million sqm, there is a mowing regime that ensures each area is maintained according to its individual requirements; these can range from mowing rural verges to clear vehicle sightlines for road user and public safety to the management of open spaces for recreation & play.
- Maintenance of Leisure and all other Council owned greenspace and land.
- The service maintains numerous rose beds, shrub borders and hedgerows, along with the maintenance of various sports pitches and children's playgrounds.
- The North Team is responsible for the nursery team that provides a bedding program and includes planting in excess of 45,000 spring and summer bedding plants used in the floral displays located across the district. The nursery supplies and maintains various in-door plant displays at Council offices & reception areas. One-off floral displays are also provided for the annual Remembrance Day Parade services, and at various Civic functions and awards ceremonies.
- Soft landscaping is also undertaken to enhance the urban environment and includes the recent Town Centre enhancement project in Epping High Street.

The service operates seasonal hours to meet the demands for service

Period	Daily Working Hours	Total Weekly Hours
1st week in March to 2nd week in October	Monday – Thursday 07.00 – 16.00 Friday 07.00 – 15.30	42 hours 5 Days
3rd week in October to 4th week in February	Monday – Thursday 07.30 – 14.45	27 hours 4 Days

Context to the service as is today (November 2022):

Most grass plots as identified in the work schedule will be referred to as Category 1.

This category covers the main core of mowing operations undertaken on council managed land within the urban areas of the district e.g., highway verges, leisure open space, housing estates etc. This is the ‘standard’ grass cutting service which has a frequency of 17 cuts per year taking place between the months of March and October.

It is worth noting that the growing seasons have gradually extended over the years and mowing will now often continue well into November with additional cuts as required.

The grounds maintenance regimes are tailored to meet the customer requirements/budget and will also take into account good horticultural practice.