

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:
- on identified visibility areas
 - to provide a pedestrian refuge by cutting 1 swathe width (approx 1 metre) from the edge of carriageway
 - 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 GRASS CUTTING FREQUENCIES

- 3.01 Areas of grass will be classified into one of the following categories
- Roadside verges
 - Amenity Areas & grassed areas within the 30mph Highway boundary
 - Public footpath standard
 - High Profile areas – adjacent to Civic Buildings etc.

3.02 The following grass cutting frequencies will apply:

- 1. Roadside verges** Cut by tractor flail to a height of approx 50mm –

Frequency:

Visibility splays at junctions

4 cuts per year in -

April

June

August

September/October

Remaining Verges

2 swathe widths on all principal roads

1 swathe width on all non-principal and unclassified roads

1 cut per year in June

Full width verge cutting for weed and self sown sapling control on all classifications of rural roads once every 6 years in September/October

Additional cuts may be carried out on Health and Safety grounds in specific locations if required

- 2. Amenity Areas & grassed areas within the 30mph highway boundary**

Minimum of 13 cuts per year as required

- 3. Public footpaths**

A maximum of 4 cuts per year as required

- 4. High Profile areas**

A maximum of 30 cuts per year as required

- 3.03 Removal of grass cuttings will only take place on bowling greens and high profile areas if required.

4.00 HEDGES.

The majority of highway hedges are the responsibility of the adjacent land owner. Where the hedge has grown to an extent that it is causing an obstruction to the highway user, notice will be served on the land owner to cut the hedge accordingly. Highway hedges owned by the Council will be cut once a year after the nesting season has passed. All other hedges owned by the Council will be cut as required.