

Protection of Grass Verges Scrutiny Review – Implementation of Recommendations

Recommendations	Update of Implementation May 2017
<p>The Task Group recommends that the Council:</p> <p>i. Continues to carry out its current policy to repair grass verges when reported as and when it deems it appropriate.</p>	<p>Work ongoing as required.</p>
<p>ii. Sets up a system to acknowledge and record complaints with a view to taking action against individuals and organisations where this is possible and practical.</p>	<p>The corporate complaints system covers all areas of Council activity which would include grass verges, where additional evidence is provided action will be taken (cases will be logged as and when required).</p>
<p>iii. Ensures off-street parking provision is a consideration in the revised Local Plan</p>	<p>Traffic and transport impact are integral part of the evidence base required to support the forward Plan for submission to public inquiry and parking will be part of this work.</p>
<p>iv. That the Director of City and Environmental Services (now Corporate Director of Economy and Place):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes via My Account the need for a 	<p>My Account roll out has just started and as user</p>

<p>verge crossover where front gardens have been made into hard standing areas and offers residents the facility to construct a vehicle access crossing point, at their own cost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers reduced rates where a number of residents decide to proceed with construction of vehicle access crossing points or when other significant highways construction work is taking place in their neighbourhood. • Arranges for an informative to be included in planning application documentation to reduce the risk of damage being caused to verges by contractor's vehicles during building work and if damage is caused during the course of any work it should be repaired on completion of the work and the verges reinstated to their original condition. 	<p>numbers increase this facility will be used to publicise this issue as requested by Scrutiny.</p> <p>The authority currently offers a reduced rate for vehicle crossings in relation to footway schemes in the area where work is being undertaken. Charging is based on the householder requirements and the work is being undertaken by the authority in the street at that time and is VAT exempt which would not be the case with other providers.</p> <p>An informative has now been agreed for attaching to all decision notice approvals involving construction works. This has been forwarded to all case officers. The text is as follows:-</p> <p>'AVOIDING DAMAGE TO THE HIGHWAY GRASS VERGE</p> <p><i>Applicants/Developers are reminded that great care should be taken to ensure that no damage to the surface or structure of the public highway is caused, by activities relating directly to the approved development (e.g. delivery of building materials via HGV's). The Council is particularly concerned at the increasing</i></p>
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	<p><i>impacts and damage occurring to grass verges. This is detrimental to residential amenity, can present safety issues and places an unreasonable financial burden on the Council, if repairs are subsequently deemed necessary. Therefore, applicants/developers are strongly advised to work proactively with their appointed contractors and delivery companies to ensure that their vehicles avoid both parking and manoeuvring on areas of the public highway (grass verges) which are susceptible to damage. The council wishes to remind applicants that legislation (Highways Act 1980) is available to the authority to recover any costs (incurred in making good damage) from persons who can be shown to have damaged the highway, including verges. If the development is likely to require the temporary storage of building materials on the highway, then it is necessary to apply for a licence to do so. In the first instance please email highway.regulation@york.gov.uk, with details of the site location, planning application reference, anticipated materials, timelines and volume. Please refer to the Council website for further details, associated fees and the application form.'</i></p> <p>The informative will be attached to all relevant new permissions.</p>
v. The Communications Team produces a pro	This recommendation has been fully implemented and

<p>forma letter to further promote community and neighbourhood pride and advise that it costs council tax payers £35 per square metre to repair damaged verges, which can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be made available to ward councillors for distribution to drivers and residents when a particular problem is identified or reported; • Be circulated to residents online or by text message via the new My Account system; • Form the basis of a poster to be displayed in local libraries, community centres, other public buildings and included in relevant council publications. 	<p>a copy of the letter is attached at Annex 1. Once the communications team is given the go ahead this can be tweeted to residents on social media. Posters can be created on request.</p>
<p>Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the Director of City and Environmental Services (now Corporate Director of Economy and Place):</p> <p>vi. Reviews, and where appropriate amends, the existing Council policy with regard to damage to grass verges and assesses staff resources required.</p>	<p>This issue will be considered as part of the Highway Monitoring programme which ensures that the authority's obligation in maintaining a safe highway and our insurers' expectations are met.</p>
<p>vii. Produces a menu of options to be made available to ward councillors, ward committees and parish councils so that they:</p>	<p>Prices are being provided to elected members on request, allowing members and communities to determine the areas of greatest need.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have an idea of the cost of various interventions that could be funded through ward budgets, such as installation of parking bays or repairs to damaged verges;• Can focus on areas of greatest need dependent on a consensus of support from the local community and partner agencies.	
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Annex 1 – Example Letter