

Wherry Housing Association

Output specification for the provision of estate services

Part four – grounds maintenance (gardening and horticulture)

1) Overall scope of the specification

Note: this part of the specification needs to be considered alongside Part three covering external cleaning. The Contractor should note in particular that Part three sets out requirements to remove litter from beds etc where this can be reached from outside the bed. This is set out in this way as such litter removal is envisaged to be part of routine cleaning work carried out by cleaning operatives. This Part sets out requirements to remove all litter from beds etc. It is envisaged that such removal requiring access to the beds would be carried out by trained horticultural operatives as part of horticultural maintenance. By separate negotiation an enhanced service may be required for certain sites, for example; box cut and increased frequency

The scope of the service in broad terms is as follows:

- a) The removal of all litter, rubbish, refuse and waste from soft landscape areas;
- b) The maintenance of planted areas so that they are healthy, attractive and safe;
- c) The cutting of amenity grass areas and rough grass areas and treatment of excessive weed growth;
- d) The improvement of planted areas and amenity grass areas on an agreed programmed basis over three years to:
 - (i) address gaps and previous plant loss which is evident at present;
 - (ii) replace dying plants and plants at the end of their useful life;
 - (iii) replace particularly unsuitable plants which are difficult to maintain or unsuited for other reasons to their location;
 - (iv) achieve at the end of five years an overall sustainable soft landscape which is attractive, appropriate and well regarded by residents;
- e) The maintenance of trees as follows:
 - (i) Minor maintenance which can be carried out from the ground;
 - (ii) Full maintenance requiring working at height – **Note:** the Association may decide that such work is better carried out by a separate contractor; a decision on this will

- f) The recycling of any organic waste including arisings which are required to be removed;
- g) The sustaining of wildlife in the soft landscape especially in hedgerows and trees.

2) Requirements relating to the collection, recycling and disposal of waste

- a) It is a fundamental requirement that prior to any gardening works being done, that the Contractor shall collect and remove from site all litter, rubbish, debris, flytipping, hazardous wastes and plant wastes (other than permitted arisings);
- b) It is a requirement that the Contractor shall collect and remove from site, except rough grass areas, all leaf-fall and windblown vegetation;
- c) The Contractor shall deliver for disposal at an approved waste disposal site immediately after collection all litter, rubbish, debris and hazardous wastes which have been collected from the sites;
- d) The Contractor shall deliver for recycling at an approved recycling site all recyclable organic waste and arisings except where permitted to remain;
- e) The Contractor shall deliver organic items too bulky to recycle to an approved waste disposal site if no other use can be found for them;
- f) The Contractor shall remove all plant wastes and arisings polluted with pesticides, road salt, oil and other like harmful substances and dispose of these as non-recyclable waste;
- g) Small amounts of plant wastes and arisings which cannot be separated from litter or rubbish shall be disposed of as non-recyclable waste.

3) Dealing with arisings

- a) Arisings following cutting of amenity and rough grass shall be left except where:
 - (i) they fall on paths, roads, building entrances and other hard areas;
 - (ii) the height of the grass before cutting exceeds the maximum performance standard (and the volume of grass arisings is therefore greater than normal) irrespective of the cause,

in which cases the Contractor shall immediately collect and remove the arisings.

4) Dealing with weeds

Note: - see also Part three of the specification for the removal of weeds from hard areas.

- a) The Contractor shall periodically eliminate from the site (except in rough grass areas), using an approved herbicide or approved mechanical method (or a combination):

- (i) all weed and grass growth encroaching from amenity grass areas into beds and hedge strips unless otherwise instructed by the Technical Client Manager;
 - (ii) all weed and grass growth encroaching from amenity grass areas onto paths, roadways, paved and other hard areas;
 - (iii) all weeds and grass growing in crevices at the bases of buildings, walls, railings and fences adjoining amenity grass areas;
 - (iv) excessive weed growth in the amenity grass areas themselves;
 - (v) grass and other growth encroaching into tree pits so as to maintain the pits at one metre in diameter.
- b) The Contractor shall eliminate as necessary in rough grass areas, using an approved herbicide or approved mechanical method:
- (i) all grass and herbage encroaching from the grass areas onto paths, paved areas, tarmac, roadways and mowing strips, or into tree pits;
 - (ii) all grass and herbage growing into crevices in the footings of buildings, walls, fences and railings from adjoining grass areas;
 - (iii) any tall, aggressive, noxious or harmful weeds which may from time to time appear in rough grass areas.
- c) The Contractor shall be especially vigilant with regard to identifying and removing any particular weed growth which is noxious and invasive. In particular the Contractor shall deal with any Japanese knotweed found in accordance with the guidance issued by the Environment Agency.
- d) The Contractor shall restore within the same growing season grass to any area where that area has lost grass as a consequence of weed removal.

5) Barriers to carrying out works

- a) The Contractor shall report immediately to the Technical Client Manager any obstructions or constraints to the performance of the Services including but not limited to:
- (i) inclement weather;
 - (ii) prevention of access including obstructions to grass cutting machinery,;
 - (iii) works in progress by Statutory Undertakers or other Contractors;
 - (iv) damage to the areas themselves;

using an approved format.

- b) The Contractor shall restore the area(s) which have been subject to obstructions or constraints to meet the specified performance standards as soon as the obstructions or

6) Carrying our minor repairs

- a) The Contractor shall on the instruction of the Technical Client Manager, or on its own initiative, carry out at no additional cost minor repairs to the Grounds such as:
 - (i) filling small pot holes, subsidence and empty tree pits;
 - (ii) levelling small mounds of soil left by other Contractors;
 - (iii) any other minor repair needed to fulfil the Contract which can reasonably be carried out as part of routine maintenance works to the site.

7) Carrying out ad hoc improvement or repair works

- a) The Contractor shall on the instruction of the Technical Client Manager carry out any works required by the Association and shall price the works from the approved Schedule of Rates according to the Conditions of Contract.
- b) Such works are works required to meet a specific local circumstance and are not to be confused with the agreed five year improvement programme.

8) Developing and implementing an integrated programme to sustain the soft landscape on estates

- a) The Association requires the Contractor to prepare a 5 year programme of minor replanting to address plant loss, degrading and unsuitable planting (including grass area planting) within 3 months of contract start (see para 1 d) above).
- b) The purpose of the programme is to restore the landscape over the period to an attractive, well-maintained and fully planted state;
- c) It is envisaged that the implementation of the programme will be integrated with routine maintenance so as to minimise additional costs; generally costing the level and nature of work envisaged should be related to materials and plants and possibly temporary fencing in some locations, with only small additional labour elements;
- d) The Contractor will be required to set out how this approach would be delivered in the Method Statement.

9) Key performance standards applicable to the service

The Contractor shall be required to attend estate inspections with both staff and resident representatives of Wherry as requested.

The Services shall be performed:

- a) at the frequencies set out in the Contractor's Method Statement and Operating Procedures approved by the Association;
- b) using the methods and resources set out in the Contractor's Method Statement and Operating Procedures approved by the Association;
- c) in compliance with health and safety requirements;
- d) in compliance with requirements for the use of chemicals;
- e) in compliance with agreed Customer Service Code;
- f) in compliance with the equal opportunities requirements;
- h) without damage to property;
- i) so that obstacles to residents do not arise;
- j) so that access is maintained for emergency service and other Association personnel and their vehicles;
- k) so that Association standards for the removal of bulk refuse and fly tips and of hazardous waste are complied with (see Part three); .

The Contractor shall use its best endeavours to achieve the following outcomes:

- j) residents are satisfied with gardening services;
- k) no Default Points served by the Association's monitoring officers; [whether term Default points is right here depends on the default scheme applied to the contract]
- l) all emergencies dealt with within the terms of the Association's requirements;

Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph 8 a) to l) above, the Contractor shall perform the Services so that for each of the activities listed from para 10 to para 14 below, the required outputs shall be achieved.

10) Maintenance of amenity grass areas

- e) Scope of requirements for services to amenity grass areas:
 - (i) to maintain throughout the year, a dense, even and unbroken cover of grass throughout amenity grass areas;
 - (ii) to clear all leaf-fall, windblown vegetation, litter, rubbish, debris and other loose objects from amenity grass areas immediately prior to grass cutting;
 - (iii) to cut all amenity grass areas including their edges to paths, paved areas, channels, tree pits, mowing strips, beds and borders, and up to inspection covers, posts, outdoor furniture and any other fixtures;
 - (iv) to maintain pathways, roadways and pavements free of grass, weeds and arisings;

- (v) to eliminate any grass or weed growth encroaching from adjacent grass areas to prevent damage to and defacement of building perimeters and the bases of walls, fences and railings;
- (vi) to repair amenity grass areas which have been damaged by incorrect or inadequate maintenance;
- (vii) to maintain definition of the shape and position of amenity grass area edges to tree pits, shrub and flower beds and borders, and channels.
- (viii) to deliver the five year integrated sustainability programme as set out in para 8 above

b) All amenity grass areas, hard and soft landscapes, adjacent walls, fences and railings mesh are maintained so that they are free of:

- (i) obstacles and obstructions to residents;
- (ii) accumulated leaf-fall, blossom and other like wind-blown vegetation;
- (iii) slip hazards;
- (iv) shredded litter or shredded tree-waste;
- (v) arisings exceeding 75 mm in height;
- (vi) discoloured mounds, piles and ridges of arisings.

c) Amenity grass is maintained so that it:

- (i) is at a height of between 25 mm and 75 mm throughout in all areas (except in naturalised bulb zones);
- (ii) is cut to an even height throughout;
- (iii) is free of tussocks of taller grass;
- (iv) is free of erosion, defacement and damage in any area, including edges and other features;
- (v) has arisings left in a fine, even layer;
- (vi) is free of arisings three days after cutting;
- (vii) has any naturalised bulbs flowering and multiplying;
- (viii) has shape and boundaries which are neat and clearly defined.

d) Naturalised bulb zones in amenity grass areas are maintained so that they:

- (i) are left uncut throughout the period from shoot emergence to leaf yellowing;
- (ii) have grass at a height of between 25 mm and 75 mm throughout after bulb leaves turn yellow.

e) After five years, amenity grass areas:

- (i) Have an overall fully planted appearance with no major bare patches;
- (ii) Have an even sward which is largely free of weed growth and totally free of noxious or aggressive weeds;
- (iii) Have no areas of sward which need imminent attention.

11) Maintenance of rough grass areas

a) Scope of requirements for services to rough grass areas:

- (i) To cut all rough grass areas, including their edges to paths, tree pits and shrub beds and up to inspection covers, posts, outdoor furniture and any other fixtures;
- (ii) To maintain pedestrian pathways through rough grass areas at the specified amenity grass height, and remove from such pathways aggressive and harmful weeds;
- (iii) To prevent the reversion of rough grass to scrub;
- (iv) To prevent the defacement or pollution of rough grass by machinery damage, accumulations of litter, debris, rubbish, fly-tipping or excessive amounts of plant waste;
- (v) To minimise any nuisance or physical obstruction caused by the tall herb vegetation to users of adjacent pathways, roadways and paved areas and to improve access to rough grass areas by maintaining a strip of grass to amenity grass area height along their entire perimeter;
- (vi) To effect timely repairs to rough grass areas which have been damaged by incorrect or inadequate maintenance;
- (vii) To eliminate herbage growing into the pits of newly-planted trees in rough areas using mechanical methods only, so as to maintain the pits at no less than 1 metre in diameter for two years after planting;
- (viii) To carry out any development or improvement to rough grass areas instructed or specified by the Technical Client Manager based on the requirements of the Association, and priced from the approved Schedule of Rates.

b) Rough grass areas are maintained so they are free of:

- (ii) hazards and bulk refuse;
- (iii) accumulations of plant waste including leaf fall, litter, debris, and rubbish;
- (iv) obstacles and obstructions to residents;
- (v) weeds including self seeding trees which are either tall, noxious or aggressive.

c) Rough grass areas are maintained so that:

- (i) grass is at a height of between 75 mm and 150 mm;
- (ii) grass at the edges to all other soft and hard landscape features is at an even height;
- (iii) a metre wide strip where the rough grass area has a boundary with any hard surfaced area, and approved pedestrian pathways are cut to the amenity grass standard;
- (iv) they have any naturalised bulbs flowering and multiplying;
- (v) they have boundaries which are clearly defined, including around tree pits.

d) Naturalised bulb zones in rough grass areas are maintained so that they:

- (i) are left uncut throughout the period from shoot emergence to leaf yellowing;
- (ii) have grass at a height of between 75 mm and 150 mm throughout after bulb leaves turn yellow.

12) Tree maintenance

Note: - The Association may award the Full Tree Service works to a separate specialist contractor if in its view it would achieve better value for money. In that case the Association may either require the Contractor to fulfil the limited requirements of the Basic Tree Service or may chose also to award that work to the separate specialist contractor.

a) The overall objectives of the tree service are:

- (i) To meet all statutory duties and responsibilities relating to the maintenance and management of trees on the Association's land;
- (ii) To have trees that are healthy and undamaged;
- (iii) To have trees that are safe and visually pleasing;
- (iv) To have trees that do not cause undue obstruction and do not unduly obscure natural and illuminated light;
- (v) To minimise the risk of damage to buildings and property;
- (vi) To provide habitats for wildlife;
- (vii) To have a rapid response, around the clock call-out service to restore safety and access in the event of trees becoming unsafe or presenting an immediate threat to public safety or property;
- (viii) To have a comprehensive, planned and ad hoc tree maintenance service which is timely, reliable, responsive, cost-effective, efficient, well-informed, courteous and safe.
- (ix) To provide appropriate levels and types of service to trees adjoining the public highway (Highway Trees) and other trees (Non-Highway Trees).
- (x) Planting of new / replacement trees should be with suitable and mature trees

b) The scope of the Basic Tree Service is as follows:

- (i) To remove epicormic and basal growths from all trees once in each year of the Contract period, and remove arisings;
- (ii) To remove and dispose of fallen branches, blown-over trees and other bulky tree debris;
- (iii) To deliver for recycling at an approved recycling site all arisings which have been collected, unless they are too bulky to recycle (e.g. trunks and rootplates), in which case they shall be delivered to an approved waste disposal site if no other use can be found for them.

c) The scope of the Full Tree Service is as follows:

- (i) To crown lift all Highway trees once every two years during the Contract period;
- (ii) To crown thin or crown reduce all Highway trees once every two years during the Contract period;
- (iii) To clean and deadwood all Highway trees each time and at the same time as they receive crown lifting, crown thinning or crown reduction treatment;
- (iv) To (at a cost based on the agreed schedule of rates) carry out the following:
 - 1. tasks (i) to (iii) above for all Non-Highway trees according to an annual programme set out by the Technical Client Manager;
 - 2. ad hoc works as required by the Technical Client Manager which may from time to time be needed including:
 - (a) surface root pruning;
 - (b) felling and stump removal;

- (c) root plate removal;
 - (d) re-stabilising and making safe unsafe or obstructing trees;
 - (f) feeding;
 - (g) cable bracing;
 - (h) aerial inspections; and
 - (i) any other remedial treatment which may be required.
 - (j) remove and dispose of all fruit and produce
- (v) To collect and remove from site all arisings from crown lifting, crown thinning or reduction, and cleaning and deadwooding immediately after completing the tasks, unless otherwise instructed by the Technical Client Manager;
 - (vi) To deliver for recycling at an approved recycling site all arisings which have been collected, unless they are too bulky to recycle (e.g. trunks and rootplates), in which case they shall be delivered to an approved waste disposal site if no other use can be found for them.
 - (vii) To immediately remove all tree roots after performing an excavation and immediately backfill with approved loose filling.
 - (viii) To use all best endeavours to ensure that restabilisation, pruning and other like methods of preservation are used instead of felling.
 - (ix) To, on any call-out outside working hours for emergency attention to a tree from the Association's emergency service or from a member of the public, arrive at the site within 2 hours of notification and effect any remedial treatment which is immediately necessary, pricing the work from its agreed Schedule of Rates.
 - (x) To backfill the holes produced by stump and rootplate removal, and by surface root pruning with an appropriate approved material and restore the soil surface level, pricing the work from its approved Schedule of Rates.
 - (xi) To on the instruction of the Technical Client Manager prune or remove large climbing shrubs growing against walls or buildings or carry out any other horticultural treatment requiring access to heights, as may from time to time be required on estates, pricing the work from its approved Schedule of Rates.
 - (xii) To report immediately to the Technical Client Manager any deterioration in the condition of trees, threats to public safety or property from trees, and obstruction or constraint to tree maintenance using the approved format.
 - (xiii) The Services shall be performed so that safety and/or warning signs are correctly sited during all tree-related operations.

d) Output standards for tree maintenance

- (i) Tree works generally shall be performed so that:
 - a. all relevant statutory requirements are met;
 - b. trees are visually pleasing, healthy and undamaged;
 - c. trees have naturally crowned and balanced shapes, unless located adjacent to a building;
 - d. trees provide to the best endeavours of the Contractor, protected and undisturbed habitats for wildlife;
- (ii) Tree works shall be performed so that trees do not:
 - a. obstruct or constitute hazards to residents, property, vehicles or play areas;

- b. impede access to any grounds area;
 - c. compromise personal safety;
 - d. block artificial light to external areas;
 - e. block or impede natural light to dwellings;
 - f. have dead, diseased, weak, crossed or awkwardly positioned branches;
 - g. have epicormic and basal growths;
 - h. appear more than heavily pruned than their location necessitates;
- (iii) After crown thinning and reductions, trees:
- a. are undamaged;
 - b. have no more than 30% of the crown thinned, except in the case of pollards;
 - c. have pollards pruned back to their original position;
- (iv) After root pruning trees are:
- a. healthy and stable;
 - b. backfilled with approved loose material;
- (v) After felling, trees:
- a) are recycled, unless diseased;
 - b) have their stumps removed free of stumps, unless otherwise instructed by the Technical Client Manager;
 - c) have their roots removed when felled trees are no more than 4.5 metres in height.

13) Shrub beds

- a) The scope of requirements for the maintenance of shrub beds is as follows:
- (i) To routinely collect and remove from shrub areas all litter, rubbish, debris, hazardous wastes and plant wastes, including leaf-fall;
 - (ii) To routinely eliminate weeds from shrub areas by means of approved mechanical methods and / or appropriate approved herbicides;
 - (iii) To suppress weed growth in shrub areas by means of applying a mulch of approved material and / or planting a ground cover layer of approved hardy vigorous plants and / or applying an approved pre-emergence herbicide.
 - (iv) To prune, trim or reduce plants in shrub areas as necessitated by:
 - a) the pruning requirements of flowering, fruiting or other shrub decorative effects;
 - b) the condition of individual shrub area plants;
 - c) the general pruning requirements of shrub area plants;
 - d) restrictions as space available in shrub areas;
 - e) the proximity of building and their entrances and windows;

- f) the proximity of walkways, play areas, roadways and car parks;
 - g) the particular pruning requirements of hedges; and,
 - h) the particular pruning requirements of climbing and ground cover plants.
- (v) To minimise any physical obstruction, obscuring of view or blocking of natural light caused by shrubs planted near to estate buildings and paths, by means of approved modifications to the pruning program, without adversely affecting their shape, growth rate, decorative value and life expectancy.
- (vi) To apply appropriate approved fertiliser and approved peat-free soil improvers to shrub areas planted with bedding roses or standard roses in each year of the Contract.
- (vii) To periodically reform the sloped gullies at the perimeter of shrub area beds adjacent to amenity grass areas, and periodically redefine and reposition the boundaries of shrub areas which adjoin amenity grass and rough grass areas.
- (viii) To routinely monitor the condition of shrub areas and report deterioration, damage and any constraints or obstructions to maintenance in the approved format.
- (ix) To respond to variation orders or a work orders (to be priced from the schedule of rates) from the Technical Client Manager to:
- a) remove and replace specified individual dead or dying plants;
 - b) replant specified empty or partially-empty shrub areas other than rose beds, with plants of wildlife or ornamental value;
 - c) create and plant new shrub beds of wildlife or ornamental value at specified sites;
 - d) plant ground cover in specified shrub areas;
 - e) plant bulbs to naturalise in specified shrub areas;
 - f) thin out the number of shrubs in specified overcrowded beds;
 - g) prune or reduce specified plants beyond the normal requirements;
 - h) rectify the effects of major damage or vandalism in specified shrub areas;
 - i) apply an approved balanced granular fertiliser to specified shrub areas;
 - j) apply an approved peat-free soil improver to specified shrub areas;
 - k) apply approved non-intensive and non-chemical management methods to specified shrub areas in order to encourage birds and beneficial insects to use them;
 - l) apply an approved pesticide or fungicide to control outbreaks of pests or diseases at specified sites;
 - m) irrigate new or mature plantings at specified sites during periods of drought or other stress;
 - n) implement landscape improvements required by the Association;
 - o) carry out any other like works which may from time to time be required by the Technical Client Manager.
- (x) On the instruction of the Technical Client Manager to carry out any landscape development or improvement required by the Association during the Contract period, to agreed standards, and price these from the approved Schedule of Rates.

- (xi) to deliver the five year integrated sustainability programme as set out in para 8 above.

b) Output standards for shrub maintenance

- (i) Generally shrub beds are:
- d. decorative, visually pleasing, shapely, healthy and undamaged;
 - e. safe;
- (ii) Shrub beds are maintained so that they have:
- a. plants, ground cover and climbing plants which are kept within their bounds;
 - b. healthy, stable, shapely and compact hedges;
 - c. bedding roses flowering to their full potential;
 - d. naturalised bulbs flowering abundantly each year;
 - e. neat and clearly defined grass edges maintained in their original position;
 - f. all adjacent paths, roadways, paved areas and tarmac free of arisings, weed growth and shrub growth;
 - g. healthy, beneficial wildlife;
- (iii) Shrub beds are clear of
- a. pollution;
 - b. weed growth;
 - c. arisings;
 - d. accumulations of ground leaf-fall, blossom and wind-blown vegetation;
 - e. erosions to grass edges;
 - f. hazards;
 - g. all dead, dying or diseased shrub material;
- (iv) Shrub beds do not:
- a. have rose beds empty or partially-empty for no more than one growing season during the Contract;
 - b. obscure views or light to dwellings;
 - c. obstruct resident or vehicular access.
- (iv) After three years, shrub beds:
- a. Have an overall fully planted appearance with no major gaps or bare spaces;
 - b. Have plants which are suitable to the location of the beds;
 - c. Have no dying plants or plants which are clearly at the end of their useful decorative lives and need imminent attention.

14) Decorative beds

a) The scope of requirements for maintaining decorative beds is as follows:

- (i) To supply and install spring-flowering bedding plants by the first week of November in each year of the Contract period;
- (ii) To supply and install summer-flowering bedding plants by the third week of May in each year of the Contract period;
- (iii) To maintain the bedding plants after installation until they are removed to make way for the next bedding plant installation;
- (iv) To routinely collect and remove all litter, rubbish, hazardous wastes, animal excreta, leaf-fall and wind-blown vegetation from bedding areas.

b) Output standards for decorative beds

- (i) Decorative bedding areas generally are:
 - a. attractive;
 - b. healthy and undamaged;
 - c. in full flower during their peak display periods;
 - (ii) Decorative bedding areas have:
 - a. sufficient numbers of bulbs, groundwork, interplants and edging plants;
 - b. large, well-rooted, vigorous, sturdy and true-to-type plants;
 - c. plants arranged appropriately, attractively, and well spaced;
 - d. thoroughly moistened plant root-bulbs before and after planting;
 - e. tall interplants supported in their planting positions;
 - f. prolonged periods of flowering;
 - (iii) Decorative bedding areas are free of:
 - a. stunted, diseased, drawn, damaged and untypical specimens;
 - b. weed growth;
 - c. litter, leaf-fall and animal excreta;
-