



REPORT OF: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

TO: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 25TH MAY 2017

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FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC REALM AGREEMENT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Executive on the reduction in funding from Lancashire County Council for Highway related activities and advise members on the impact the reduced funding will have on Pendle's schedule of activity.

ISSUES

BACKGROUND

Pendle Borough Council annually refreshes its agreement with Lancashire County Council to provide services to the County Council on highways which run through the Borough.

The agreement commences on the 1st April for a period of one year ending on the 31st March. Within the agreement there is a requirement for each party to indicate in writing to the other by the 1st January whether it wishes to enter into a new agreement. Neither Pendle nor Lancashire County Council has reported a desire to end the agreement and as such arrangements to deliver the service within Pendle have been made for 2017/2018.

In 2014 agreement was made with District Councils across Lancashire for payments made in respect to Public Realm activities to be progressively reduced over a three year period by a total of 25%.

Under the agreement the final reduction payment was to be introduced in 2016/2017 financial year.

In 2016 Clare Farrer, Area Highway's Manager for Lancashire County Council wrote to District Councils advising that the County was assessing service provision across all areas of its services in order to meet its target reduction in spending.

Within the letter Clare Farrer reported that it was necessary to further review the payments made in relation to Public Realm activities including payments agreed for 2016/ 2017.

The income received since 2013/ 2014 through to 2016/2017 is below.

PUBLIC REALM PAYMENTS TO DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCILS 2016/2017

Council /Parish Council	2013/2014 £	2014/2015 £	2015/2016 £	2016/2017 £	2016/2017 REVISED £
Pendle	110,570	102,830	93,985	82,928	66,720

Within her letter Clare acknowledges that services provided on behalf of the County Council may be interlinked with services directly carried out for ourselves and a reduction in one work area may have a corresponding effect upon our own resource requirements.

No further information regarding the possible revision of the schedule of activity was provided at the time of the Public Realm Functions letter being received.

In January 2017, Officers from Pendle met with a representative of Lancashire County Council's Highway's team. During the meeting the discussion turned to the reduced level of funding and the need for the County Council to provide clear instruction on the expected operational standards for grass cutting and other Public Realm functions which would be affected by the budget cuts.

In response to our questioning Pendle were requested to provide the County Council with details of the level of service that could be provided for the funding that was being given.

Details on the level of service that could be achieved within budget were provided in March 2017.

The information provided reported that there would be a need to reduce the number of cuts to highway verges from 5 cuts down to 3 cuts per annum.

The Council would need to amend the leaf sweeping service to reduce the number of week's leaf sweeping would be carried out over.

The reduction would depend on the resources deployed and could see either a reduction from 5 weeks of sweeping to 4 weeks of sweeping with driver and vehicle only.

Alternatively we could amend the operational practice for leaf sweeping by reducing the frequency further in order to allow the use of a labourer to assist with the clearance of leaf fall. This would reduce the service to 3 weeks.

Councillors are reminded that Pendle currently subsidise the County Council's urban verge cutting programme by funding 3 further cuts to highway verges. Should this continue the reduction would mean that Highway verges receive 6 cuts instead of 8.

In line with the requirements of the operational standards for grass cutting we have recruited seasonal workers and commenced the first cut to highway verges across the Borough.

Lancashire County Council Officers were advised of the work commencing and were requested to provide a response to the proposal which had been submitted for their consideration in March.

On Tuesday 11th April 2017, Pendle received confirmation from County Officers that they wished for Pendle to continue delivering services through the public realm agreement for 2017 – 2018. Officers also confirmed that they would be happy for the reduced frequencies to be implemented as we had suggested in order to provide the services within the given budget levels.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	No implications arising directly from the Report
Financial:	Potential saving of £5000 created by the reduced frequency
Legal:	No implications arising directly from the Report
Risk Management:	No implications arising directly from the Report
Health and Safety:	No implications arising directly from the Report
Sustainability:	No implications arising directly from the Report
Community Safety:	No implications arising directly from the Report
Equality and Diversity:	No implications arising directly from the Report

APPENDICES None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lancashire County Council Public Realm Agreement
Table 5.6.1 Operational Standards for grass cutting.