

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT AND WELLBEING  
CABINET MEMBER**

**TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRASS CUTTING AND ASSOCIATED GRANT  
FUNDING AWARDS TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to gain approval to implement a proposal to enable Town and Parish Councils to manage grass cutting at a community-based level. This applies to public rights of way, highway verges and small public open spaces and includes scope for responsibility for other functions to be transferred to Town and Parish Councils.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The council is progressing work to realise the benefits of enabling community organisations, including town and parish councils, to do more for their communities. This work is focused on achieving the council's ambition, outcomes and priorities for the area of North Lincolnshire.
- 2.2 With specific reference to grass cutting, there is an opportunity to immediately implement a proposal. This applies to public rights of way, highway verges and small public open spaces. This would build on the success of a number of pilot schemes associated with grass cutting.
- 2.3 The proposal is to transfer responsibility to Town and Parish Councils for managing all aspects of grass cutting to public rights of way, highway verges and small public open spaces in each respective town or parish. As Town and Parish Councils accept this responsibility they would be supported by an appropriate fixed lump sum award of grant funding. This will be effective for two years from 1 April 2020, with an option to extend by an additional third year subject to satisfactory performance by the Town or Parish Council. Town and Parish Councils will benefit from greater control over grass cutting arrangements, particularly the ability to exert greater influence on the programming and quality of grass cutting work to better meet local needs and expectations. Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to work collaboratively with other Town and Parish Councils and community organisations to drive even better value for money out of grass cutting arrangements. Under the proposal this includes Town and

Parish Councils benefitting from grant awards for the same responsibilities in other Town and Parish Council areas where other Town and Parish Councils have chosen not to accept responsibility.

2.4 The proposal has the potential for Town and Parish Councils to make a significant contribution to the following outcomes:

- Safe - safer environments.
- Well - cleaner and greener spaces, good health and wellbeing, improved quality of life.
- Prosperous - thriving businesses.
- Connected - flourishing communities, strong sense of pride and belonging.

2.5 It delivers on our 'Enabling Communities to Flourish' priority by enabling communities to become more involved in community life, providing communities with more choice and control about what happens and contributes to creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live, get on well together and support each other.

2.6 It is important that the council keeps Town and Parish Councils positively engaged whilst we work with them and other community groups to enable them to take on a greater leadership role and do more to achieve better outcomes at a community-based level. The proposal includes scope to transfer responsibility for other functions to Town and Parish councils – a key factor in maintaining this positive engagement with them.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 The recommendation is to approve the proposal to transfer to Town and Parish Councils responsibility for managing all aspects of grass cutting to public rights of way, highway verges and small public open spaces and other functions. Where Town and Parish Councils accept this responsibility, including where this is for other Town and Parish Council areas, they will be supported by an appropriate award of grant funding.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Approval to proceed with the proposal will ensure that community needs are met at a truly local level. It enables Town and Parish Councils to benefit from greater control over grass cutting arrangements whilst also contributing to both their and North Lincolnshire Council's financial sustainability.

**5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

- 5.1 Where town and parish councils have previously received grant awards, for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 the value of this grant award will be maintained. For 2023/24 this will be reviewed, taking into account the expected increase in range of activities that town and parish councils and other community groups could benefit from.
- 5.2 The proposal will enable the council to operate within approved revenue budget limits. This is based primarily on capturing efficiencies from the council needing less front line supervision resources and making grant funding awards based on open market values.
- 5.3 The councils Principal Solicitor has drafted a set of draft terms and conditions that would regulate the relationship between North Lincolnshire Council and each Town or Parish Council.

**6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

- 6.1 The proposal will strengthen community resilience by enabling communities to support themselves. The proposal supports the Council Plan priority of 'Enabling Communities to Flourish' and contributes to council outcomes as set out in paragraph 2.4.

**7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 7.1 No adverse impacts have been identified. The Integrated Impact Assessment will be reviewed at all stages of development and delivery of the proposal and any adverse impacts that emerge will be reported by exception.

**8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

- 8.1 Generally, feedback from Town and Parish Councils taking part in the pilot schemes has been positive. They have demonstrated that they can effectively and efficiently manage the work involved and appear to value greater control over grass cutting arrangements, particularly the ability to exert greater influence on the programming and quality of grass cutting work to better meet local needs and expectations.
- 8.2 Key officers have been engaged in developing the proposal, including the Director of Governance and Partnerships and Deputy Chief Executive. They have confirmed the proposal is consistent with the emerging strategic intent intended to realise the benefits of enabling community organisations, including town and parish councils, to do more for their communities.

8.3 No conflicts of interest have been declared.

## 9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the implementation of the proposal to transfer to Town and Parish Councils responsibility for managing all aspects of grass cutting to public rights of way, highway verges and small public open spaces and other functions. Where Town and Parish Councils accept this responsibility, including where this is for other Town and Parish Council areas, they will be supported by an appropriate award of grant funding.

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –**

N/A