

**3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007**

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**REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES**

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**GROUNDS MAINTENANCE TRADING OPERATION**

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**Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update the members of the Trading Operations Sub-Committee of the activities of the Grounds Maintenance trading operation for the period 1<sup>st</sup> of September to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007.**

**Background**

- 2.1 The Grounds Maintenance trading operation performs contracted and ad-hoc maintenance mainly for Parks and Open Spaces and Burial Grounds and also for local Housing Associations and private individuals.

**Business Performance and Update**

**3.1 Workload**

The section has completed the summer maintenance programme and has commenced with the autumn schedule of maintenance which includes, grass cutting, leaf collection, shrub bed pruning, hedge cutting, sports pitch maintenance, litter picking, play area maintenance, landscaping including planting of trees and shrub/rose beds.

**3.2 Budget**

The current approved budget for the year is a trading surplus of £44k. The Financial report and supporting appendices will be reported at the Trading Sub Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2008.

**3.3 Updated Projections**

The section is currently forecasting a break-even position for the year.

**3.4 Resources**

A report on sourcing of plants previously grown at the Glenraig Nursery in Peebles has been prepared. Due to the nature and content of the report it is now being considered by the Administration Policy Working Group in December.

Following the last round of reporting, the service commissioned a review by APSE into general service provision, with a focus on grass cutting operations. A separate report on this issue is presented at Appendice 1.

**3.5 Staffing**

The section continues to employ its full compliment of 86 FTE manual staff, and 7 APT&C staff.

### **3.6 Training**

The service has been successful in its application for recognition by Investors In People (IIP) as meeting the standard of IIP. The section's approach to training was a major part of that achievement.

### **3.7 Health and Safety**

The section has continued to review risk assessments. One emerging issue is that of cutting grass on embankments. In anticipation of the outcome of the risk assessment review, a trial of grass cutting machinery operated by remote control has been undertaken at the Mote hill in Hawick. The trial proved reasonably successful attracting press and community interest. Further trials are being arranged in other such locations around the borders, to ascertain the usability and functionality of the machinery in a range of different settings.

### **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The budget trading surplus of £44k has been reduced to break-even following a revision of the income forecast for the year. Increased overtime worked has been funded by transport cost savings.
- 4.2 External customer charges increased by 7.5% in this financial year. Whilst further significant increases are being proposed for 2008/09 some clients have indicated that further increases cannot be sustained.

### **Consultation**

- 5.1 The Heads of Corporate Finance, Financial Administration, Corporate Administration, and Legal Services have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the report.

### **Equality**

- 6.1 There are no equality issues directly associated with this report.

### **Environment**

- 7.1 The outcome of the national Beautiful Scotland competition has seen both Galashiels and Peebles achieve national recognition for their efforts. Galashiels was awarded four Thistles (with five being the highest mark) in their category, effectively placing them third in their national category. Recognition was also achieved by Whitsome in the neighbourhood awards.

### **Risk Commentary**

- 8.1 Recruitment and retention of seasonal staff remains a challenge for the section, due to competition in the local employment market.
- 8.3 Two significant contracts with local RSLs are due for retendering this financial year, Elidon Housing association and SBHA. Eildon have intimated that they are to go to open competitive tender, and SBHA has initiated a discussion over a contract extension. Both of these issues will be concluded early in the new year.
- 8.4 The final outcome of the job families re-structuring, and single status is still awaited and also remains a potential risk for Grounds Maintenance

### **Recommendations**

- 9.1 **I recommend that the Trading Operations Sub-Committee:**
  - (a) **Agree the contents of this report**

**Approved by**

Name	Designation	Signature
Callum Hay	Director of Technical Services	[insert signature]

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation
<b>Jason Hedley</b>	<b>Parks Manager</b>

**Background Papers:**                      **ADD AS APPROPRIATE**  
**Previous Minute Reference:**

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REPORT CONSULTATIONS / TIMING			
Report Title:	<i>Grounds Maintenance Trading Operation</i>		
Estimated Time Required for Presentation and Discussion:	10 mins		
<b>MANDATORY CONSULTATIONS</b>			
<u>Service</u>	<u>Date Sent</u>	<u>Reviewed by</u>	<u>Date</u>
LEGAL SERVICES	23 Nov 2007	Ian Wilkie	
CORPORATE FINANCE	23 Nov 2007	Sandy Brown ( <i>send to Pam Spink</i> )	
CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION	23 Nov 2007	Neville Dundas	
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION	23 Nov 2007	Alan Bowman	
<b>OPTIONAL CONSULTATIONS (depending on report content)</b>			
IT			
PERSONNEL			
Any others – detail)			
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK			
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING			
TECHNICAL SERVICES MT			
PORTFOLIO HOLDERS			
MANAGEMENT TEAM:	If YES, date when consulted		

ADD HERE COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM EMAIL RESPONSES DURING DRAFTING, IF APPROPRIATE