



North

Yorkshire County Council

Business and Environmental Services



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Dear Parish or Town Clerk

CHANGES TO THE HIGHWAY GRASS CUTTING SERVICE

I wrote to you earlier this year and outlined the County Council's future proposals for reductions in the highway grass cutting service which form part of the authority's 2020 North Yorkshire savings programme.

The County Council, as Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to cut grass for safety reasons, for example where grass impedes visibility at junctions. However the majority of urban grass cutting currently funded by the County Council is cut for amenity or aesthetic reasons and is therefore a discretionary service rather than a statutory duty.

The County Council intends to stop funding grass cutting where it is not required for safety reasons from March 2015 but will of course continue to fund it to maintain minimum visibility requirements.

We are currently in commercial contractual discussions with our Highways contractor in order to finalise the cost of delivering our revised grass cutting standards and the equivalent payments that we will propose to make to Parish and Town Councils who cut grass on behalf of the County Council.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with details of the areas of grass that we will continue to cut in your area along with an estimate of the equivalent payments that will result for those Councils that cut grass on our behalf.

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The service consists of two elements, the rural cut (roads where the speed limit is more than 40mph) and the urban road cut (roads where the speed limit is 40mph or less) and the requirements are different for each element.

The aim of the proposals is to ensure that we continue to cut areas of grass required for safety reasons. As a result, there will be only minimal change on the busy high speed rural roads, however there will be significant reductions in the amount of urban grass cutting that we fund given that the vast majority of the urban grass is currently cut for aesthetic or amenity reasons. I have enclosed a technical note that provides more details about how the grass cutting areas have been worked out.

On all road categories we will continue to ensure that safety related 'street furniture' such as verge marker posts and bend warning signs are visible and we will continue to cut grass on any highway verge that is identified as part of a prescribed 'safe route' to school.

Rural Roads – minimal change

Our current standards for grass cutting on rural roads are as follows:

A and B roads - a width of 3 metres (on both sides of the road) where attainable, is cut twice per season. In addition, visibility splays are cut twice per season.

All other Rural Roads - verges are cut for visibility at road junctions and also for visibility of road signs alongside well used footways and carriageways which have heavy pedestrian use. In addition, a cut of 1.0 to 1.5 metre cut width on each side may be made once per season, on C Roads, or Unclassified Roads provided the costs are contained within cost limits.

Our proposed standards for grass cutting on rural roads are as follows:

On heavily used rural roads we will continue to provide visibility related cuts at junctions and roundabouts. We will also provide 'visibility' cuts where it is considered necessary to facilitate overtaking along with a safety related cut that is 1.5 metres wide at the edge of the carriageway.

On the lesser used rural roads we will continue to provide visibility related cuts at junctions and roundabouts. There will be no other cuts unless they are required as part of a previously implemented safety related road improvement scheme.

Urban Roads – significant change, equates to approximately a 95% reduction in the area of grass cut

Our current standard for grass cutting in urban areas requires highway grass to be cut for up to 6 cuts per season.

It is proposed that we will only provide a visibility related cut at each road junction and roundabout in urban areas. This would be for up to 5 cuts per season instead of the current 6 cuts. Safety related street furniture will also fall within the cutting regime.

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I have enclosed a series of plans, covering your Council's 'area' of interest. These identify the localised areas of grass cutting that the County Council will undertake or continue to fund. You will also find enclosed a table that provides you with details of the changes to the overall areas for each Parish or Town Council in the district and consequently an estimate of the change to the equivalent payment that would be made by the County Council to those councils that cut grass on our behalf. Please note that the figure is our best estimate and at this stage is still subject to the on-going commercial and contractual discussions with our Highways Contractor.

What to do next

I appreciate that this represents a significant issue for your Council and for that reason I have put in place an engagement process where you can make representations through your local County Councillor about the details of the proposals specifically:

- Are there any locations that you feel require a visibility related safety cut that are not shown?
- Please identify any areas that are currently shown to require a visibility related safety cut that you feel do not warrant one.

Your local County Councillor will be offered the opportunity to put forward your comments at the meetings I have scheduled with the Business and Environmental Services Executive Members on either 12 December 2014 or 30 January 2015. I would therefore be grateful if you could provide any comments to your local County Councillor by Friday 28 November 2014.

Yours sincerely



DAVID BOWE
Corporate Director - Business and Environmental Services

Supporting Information

Categorised Road Hierarchy

The County Council manages and maintains its road network based upon traffic flows not by Road Class. The most heavily trafficked roads fall within categories 2, 3a and 3b (examples include the A19, A65, A59, A658 and the A170) roads. Category 1 covers the motorways and trunk roads that are the responsibility of the Highways Agency.

A brief over view confirms that all A Class Roads fall within Categories 2, 3a and 3b, 95% of B Class Roads fall within Categories 2, 3a and 3b and 77% of Class C Roads fall within Categories 4a and 4b, there are a few Unclassified roads that fall within Category 3b but the majority are either category 4a or 4b (we have approximately 43 Km of back streets that are category 5).

Rural Junction Visibility Envelopes

Visibility requirements are dictated by vehicle speed (on the 'main road' not the joining road), the 85th percentile speed is used as 85% of vehicles do not exceed this speed.

Road Category / Rural - All junctions on	Presumed 85 th ile Speed mph / kph	SSD Junction Splay ('x' metres x 'y' metres) Desirable Minimum	SSD Junction splay -1 ('x' metres x 'y' metres) Absolute Minimum
Cat 2	53mph (85kph)	9 x 160	9 x 120
Cat 3a	53mph (85kph)	9 x 160	9 x 120
Cat 3b	53mph (85kph)	9 x 160	9 x 120
Cat 4a	43.75mph (70kph)	9 x 120	4.5 x 90
Cat 4b	37mph (60kph)	4.5 x 90	4.5 x 70

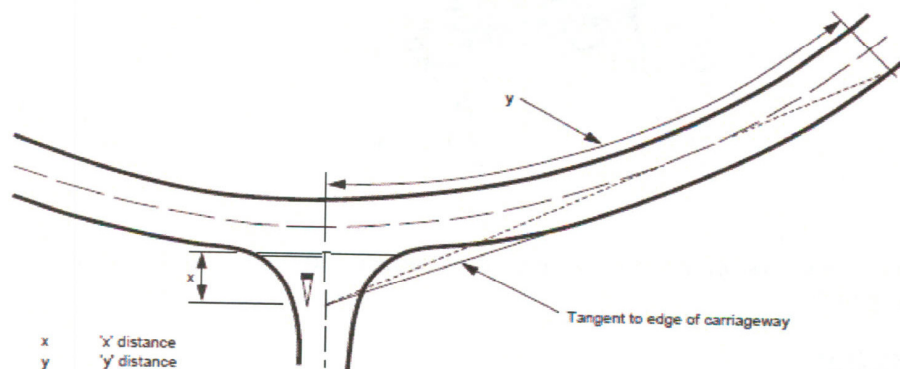


Figure 7/2 : Visibility Standards with a Curved Major Road (para 7.7)

Urban Junction Visibility Envelopes

Visibility requirements are dictated by vehicle speed (on the 'main road' not the joining road), the 85th percentile speed is used as 85% of vehicles do not exceed this speed.

Road Category / Rural - All junctions on	Presumed 85 th ile Speed mph / kph	SSD Junction Splay ('x' metres x 'y' metres) Desirable Minimum	SSD Junction splay -1 ('x' metres x 'y' metres) Absolute Minimum
Cat 2	37mph (60kph)	9 x 90	9 x 70

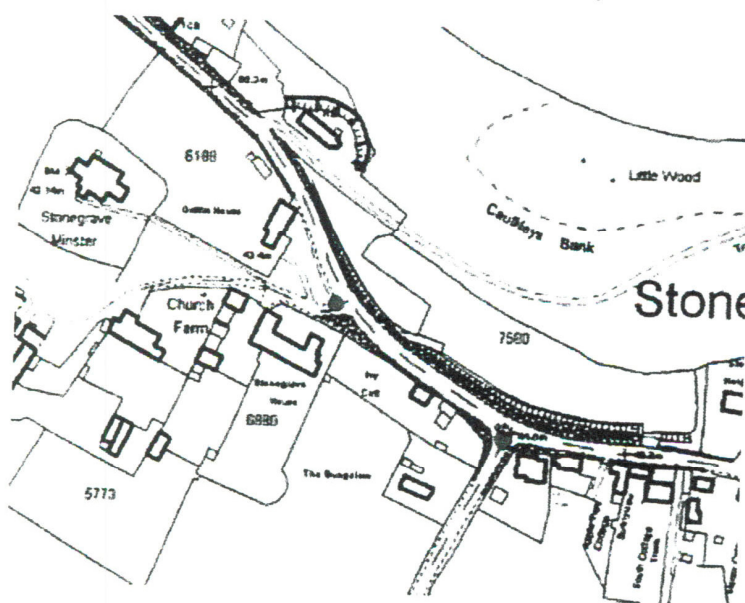
Cat 3a	37mph (60kph)	9 x 90	9 x 70
Cat 3b	37mph (60kph)	9 x 90	9 x 70
Cat 4a	37mph (60kph)	4.5 x 53	4.5 x 53
Cat 4b	37mph (60kph)	4.5 x 53	4.5 x 53

Roundabouts

Visibility, both forward and to the right are prescribed by national standards, we will continue to maintain the current safety regime. Roundabouts that are the subject of 'sponsorship' are not affected by any change to standards.

Consultation Plans

The plans provided as part of this consultation reflect the current (2014/15) service standards over which we have identified (with a red dot) those junctions that will in future be cut in order to maintain safety based visibility at junctions.



Across the network as a whole we estimate that this will reduce the amount of urban grass that we cut by about 95%.

Grass Cutting Records

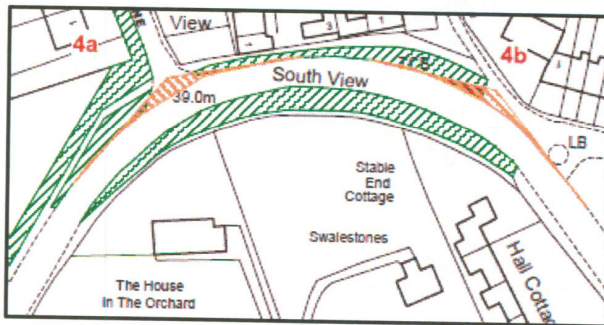
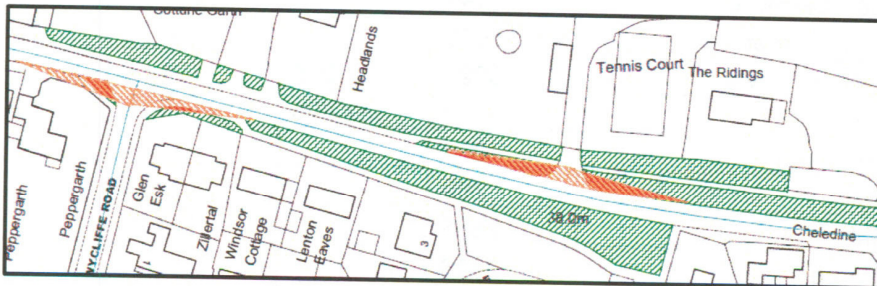
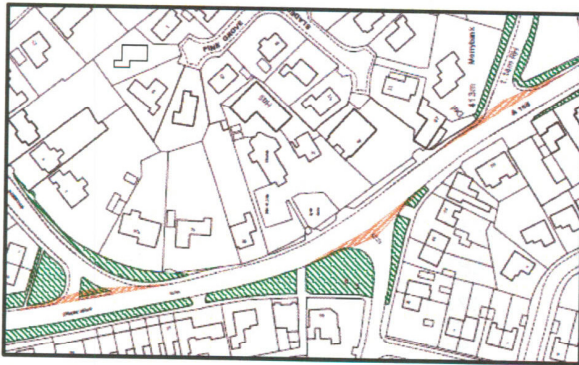
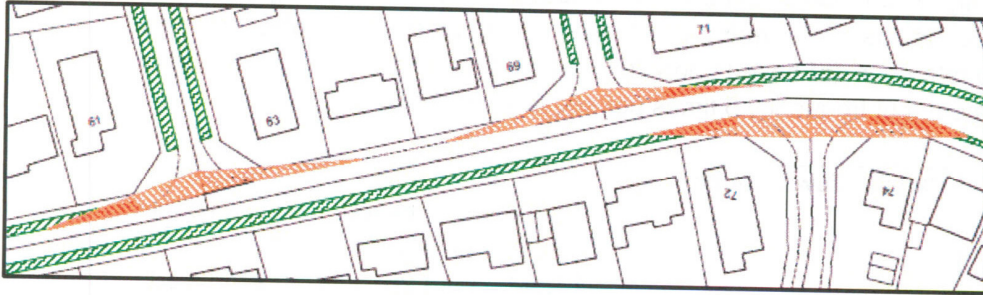
At the onset of the project we had neither accurate nor consistent records of what grass was cut across the county. We implemented a data capture project, the outcome of which will enable us to display against a current Ordnance Survey background not only the full extent of highway verge but also those that are cut on a cyclical basis.

The following are extracts of completed digitisation works, the intention here is to provide a map based view of what grass will be cut by the County Council as part of its safety related regime from April 2015 onwards.

Examples (using full spatially mapped information) of 'urban grass cutting standards'

- Green hatching = highway grass
- Amber Hatching = visibility envelope
- Red Hatching = grass to be cut

“For operational reasons areas greater than those shown may be cut depending on machinery being used”.



The service intends to make this map based information available to the public, via the County Council web-site later this financial year.

Area 4, Kirby Misperton

We are currently in commercial contractual discussions with our Highways contractor in order to finalise the cost of delivering our revised grass cutting standards, the figures below relate to a pro rata payment based upon 2013/14 outturns and offer an indication of the potential payment (cut frequency 5 times per season, visibility only).

Area Office	Parish / Town Council	Approx. area cut 2013/14 / SqM	Payment based upon 2013/14 outturn / £	Potential area of cut under proposed standards / SqM	Potential quantum of payment under new regime / £
Area 4	Acklam	1649			
Area 4	Allerston	5256		82.45	12.37
Area 4	Aislaby	1683		262.8	39.42
Area 4	Amotherby	3674		84.15	12.62
Area 4	Ampleforth	9440	1585.92	183.7	27.56
Area 4	Appleton-Le-Street	4147		472	70.80
Area 4	Barton-Le-Street	1675		207.35	31.10
Area 4	Barton-Le-Willows	3821		83.75	12.56
Area 4	Beadlam	3172	641.928	191.05	28.66
Area 4	Bossall	643	532.896	158.6	23.79
Area 4	Brawby	769		32.15	4.82
Area 4	Broughton	2885		38.45	5.77
Area 4	Burythorpe	2346		144.25	21.64
Area 4	Buttercrambe	2735		117.3	17.60
Area 4	Butterwick (near Foxholes).	8394		136.75	20.51
Area 4	Byland Abbey	914		419.7	62.96
Area 4	Claxton & Sand Hutton	2777		45.7	6.86
Area 4	Cold Kirby	2718	466.536	138.85	20.83
Area 4	Coulton	856		135.9	20.39
Area 4	Cropton	994		42.8	6.42
Area 4	Duggleby	1970		49.7	7.46
Area 4	East Knapton	0		98.5	14.78
Area 4	Ebberston	8112	1362.816	0	0.00
Area 4	Fadmoor	691		405.6	60.84
Area 4	Flaxton	111		34.55	5.18
Area 4	Foston			5.55	0.83
Area 4	Foxholes	4000			
Area 4	Ganton	2700	1034.21	200	30.00
Area 4	Gate Helmsley	1450		135	20.25
Area 4	Gillamoore	3044		72.5	10.88
				152.2	22.83

Area Office	Parish / Town Council	Approx. area cut 2013/14 / SqM	Payment based upon 2013/14 outturn / £	Potential area of cut under proposed standards / SqM	Potential quantum of payment under new regime / £
Area 4	Gilling East	1431		71.55	10.73
Area 4	Great Barugh	1225		61.25	9.19
Area 4	Great Edstone	988		49.4	7.41
Area 4	Great Habton	876		43.8	6.57
Area 4	Harome	6256		312.8	46.92
Area 4	Harton	40		2	0.30
Area 4	Helmsley	8817	1481.256	440.85	66.13
Area 4	Heslerton (East & West)	2622	686.28	131.1	19.67
Area 4	Hovingham & Scackleton	7656	1449.84	382.8	57.42
Area 4	Howsham	1829		91.45	13.72
Area 4	Huttons Arnbo	3236		161.8	24.27
Area 4	Kirby Misperton	846		42.3	6.35
Area 4	Kirkby Grindalythe	1327		66.35	9.95
Area 4	Kirkbymoorside (Keldholme & Kirby Mills)	2566	5278.84	128.3	19.25
Area 4	Leppington	1688		84.4	12.66
Area 4	Little Barugh	262		13.1	1.97
Area 4	Lockton	2000	336	100	15.00
Area 4	Luttons	14301	2402.568	715.05	107.26
Area 4	Malton	25957	4360.776	1297.85	194.68
Area 4	Marion	1397		69.85	10.48
Area 4	Middleton	3817		190.85	28.63
Area 4	Nawton	2950	495.6	147.5	22.13
Area 4	Newton-on-Rawcliffe	2104		105.2	15.78
Area 4	Normanby	1955		97.75	14.66
Area 4	Norton on Derwent	24731	4154.808	1236.55	185.48
Area 4	Nunnington	4975	835.8	248.75	37.31
Area 4	Old Malton	see Malton		0	0.00
Area 4	Oswaldkirk	1996		99.8	14.97
Area 4	Pickering	44004	7442.67	2200.2	330.03
Area 4	Pockley	1689		84.45	12.67
Area 4	Potter Brompton	3456		172.8	25.92
Area 4	Rillington	4961	833.448	248.05	37.21
Area 4	Rosedale East & West	1616	471.49	80.8	12.12
Area 4	Salton	909		45.45	6.82
Area 4	Scackleton	974		48.7	7.31

Area Office	Parish / Town Council	Approx. area cut 2013/14 / SqM	Payment based upon 2013/14 outturn / £	Potential area of cut under proposed standards / SqM	Potential quantum of payment under new regime / £
Area 4	Scampston		368.76		
Area 4	Scawton	2154		107.7	26.93
Area 4	Scrayingham	3317		165.85	41.46
Area 4	Settrington	9105	1542.24	455.25	113.81
Area 4	Sherburn	3145	528.36	157.25	39.31
Area 4	Sheriff Hutton	9784	1643.712	489.2	122.30
Area 4	Sinnington	1918		95.9	23.97
Area 4	Slingsby	7740		387	96.75
Area 4	Sproxtton	725	121.8	36.25	9.06
Area 4	Stonegrave	2953		147.65	36.91
Area 4	Swinton	7676	1289.568	383.8	95.95
Area 4	Terrington	2877		143.85	35.96
Area 4	Thixendale	1787		89.35	22.33
Area 4	Thornton-Le-Dale	15928	2675.904	796.4	199.10
Area 4	Thorpe Bassett	3405	572.04	170.25	42.56
Area 4	Warthill	2265	380.52	113.25	28.31
Area 4	Wass	821		41.05	10.26
Area 4	Weavethorpe	6700	1125.6	335	83.75
Area 4	Welburn (Malton)	2250	747	112.5	28.13
Area 4	West Knapton	0		0	0
Area 4	West Lilling	3190		159.5	39.87
Area 4	Westow	2304		115.2	28.8
Area 4	Wharram Le Street	2770		138.5	34.62
Area 4	Whitwell on the Hill	1560		78	19.5
Area 4	Willerby & Staxton	8932	1500.576	446.6	111.65
Area 4	Wilton	1723		86.15	21.53
Area 4	Wintringham	3388	619.18	169.4	42.35
Area 4	Wombledon	2250	378	112.5	28.13
Area 4	Wrelton	3013.75		150.6875	37.67
Area 4	Yeddingham	see Ebb		0	0.00