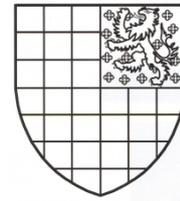


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

To: Cllrs Catlin; Lamb; Murray (S); O'Keeffe; Renton

A Meeting of the Working party formed to consider **Highway Verge Maintenance** will be held on **Tuesday 3rd April 2018** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lewes** at **3:00pm** which you are requested to attend.

S Brigden, Town Clerk
27th March 2018

AGENDA

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman for Working Party for the 2017/18 municipal year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

To receive apologies from members of the working-party who are unable to attend.

3. MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

To note declarations of any personal or prejudicial interests in matters on this agenda.

4. QUESTION TIME

To receive any questions regarding items on the agenda for this meeting.

5. REMIT of the WORKING PARTY

To note the remit of the Working Party as defined by Council

(overleaf)

6. BUSINESS of the MEETING:

To fulfil the remit of the Working Party.

Report FC014/2017 attached for reference.

(attached page 3)

This agenda and supporting papers can be downloaded from www.lewes-tc.gov.uk Copies are available from the Town Hall

For further information about items on this agenda please contact the Town Clerk at the above address.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: Members of the public have the right, and are welcome, to attend meetings of the Council – questions regarding items on this agenda may be heard at the start of each meeting with the Chairman's consent, and subject to time available. Questions or requests to address the Council should, whenever possible, be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk at least 24 hours in advance. **PLEASE NOTE:** As space is limited we would appreciate advanced warning if you plan to attend in a group; perhaps with neighbours, or to bring a party of student observers. We may be able to arrange for the meeting to be held in an alternative room. General questions can be raised at our offices between 9am-5pm Mons- Thurs; 9am-4pm on Fridays – our staff will be pleased to assist.

Distribution: Cllrs Catlin; Lamb; Murray (S); O'Keeffe; Renton

Copies for information:

All councillors; T/hall; website; Lewes Library, Sx. Express, E.Argus, Sx. Police, M Caulfield MP, LDC, ESCC, Fr'ds of Lewes

Highway Verge Maintenance Working Party REMIT

Lewes Town Council meeting 22nd February 2018 - Minute extract

Minute FC2017/101 refers:

HIGHWAY VERGE MAINTENANCE:

Members considered report FC014/2017 (*copy in minute book*) regarding implications of East Sussex County Council reductions in highway verge maintenance:

A message had been received from East Sussex County Council's Director, Communities; Economy & Transport, which explained a reduction in highway contract costs of £400,000 for grass cutting services effective from 1 April 2018. ESCC would be reducing the number of urban grass cuts from the current six per season to two per season from 1 April 2018. This was a change to their urban grass cutting policy (which currently provided for a minimum of five cuts per season) and a report was to be presented to their Lead Member for Transport and Environment in May 2018 with a recommendation to change the policy to reflect the agreed budget.

A map and table of the total areas of the rural and urban grass verges that were currently cut in Lewes was appended, and it was noted that in reducing the urban grass cutting service from six to two cuts per season ESCC would be managing urban grass for safety reasons only. However, recognizing that grass verges in urban centres have an important aesthetic function for the community, two options were offered for consideration:

- a) A financial contribution to the Town Council equivalent to the value of two urban grass cuts based on current ESCC contract rates which was £2,643 per annum. This could be provided as a basis to commission and employ the Council's own contractor
- b) For the Town Council to pay for additional urban grass cuts over the two cuts per season provided by the County Council. To maintain the current standard of six cuts this would cost Lewes Town Council in the region of £5,287 per annum.

An indication as to which option the Council wished to pursue was requested by 31 March 2018 at the latest.

Details were provided of the financial implications. Lewes Town Council's approved budget for 2018/19 included elements which could be applied or redirected to fund the maintenance of current frequency of cuts, and earmarked Reserves held balances which could be utilized in the short term.

Following discussion **it was resolved that:**

FC2017/101.1 A Working Party be set up consisting of Cllrs Catlin, Lamb, S Murray, O'Keeffe and Renton to look in detail at Highway Verge Maintenance. The Working party was asked to suggest detailed exclusions/inclusions, and a letter would be sent to ESCC explaining the Council's approach to these considerations.

Agenda Item No: 9

Report No: FC014/2017

Report Title: Grass cutting reduction by East Sussex County Council

Report To: Full Council

Date: 22nd February 2018

Report By: S Brigden, Town Clerk

Purpose of Report: To advise Members of the recent decision by East Sussex County Council to reduce grass cutting within the town, and refer options proposed..

Recommendation(s):

- 1 That Council notes this report.
 - 2 That Council decides its response to this announcement
-

Information:

1 The message below has been received from Mr Rupert Clubb, Director, Communities, Economy & Transport, at East Sussex County Council:

Dear Lewes Town Council,

As you may be aware the County Council met on Tuesday 6 February to consider the 2018/19 budget. At the meeting the Council voted on and agreed the budget for the 2018/19 financial year. The report and minutes can be found on the website at:

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=133&MIId=2974&Ver=4>

The approved budget includes a reduction in highway contract costs of £400,000 for grass cutting services effective from 1 April 2018. This means we need to reduce the number of grass cuts we undertake.

We will be reducing the number of urban grass cuts from the current six per season to two per season from 1 April 2018. This will require a change to our urban grass cutting policy which currently provides for a minimum of five cuts per season. A report will be presented to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in May 2018 with a recommendation to change the policy to reflect the agreed budget. Rural grass cutting will remain as two 1m swathe plus visibility splay cuts per season.

I appreciate that this is disappointing news for local communities however, we need to continue to provide services within very challenging financial constraints whilst at the same time managing an increasing demand for important services including schools and social care.

I attach a map and table of the total areas of the rural and urban grass verges that are currently cut in your town. In reducing the urban grass cutting service from six to two cuts per season we will be managing urban grass for safety reasons only. However, we recognise grass verges in urban centres have an important aesthetic function for the community and we would therefore like to continue to support this approach where possible. We propose to do this by offering the following options for consideration:

A A financial contribution to your town council equivalent to the value of two urban grass cuts based on current ESCC contract rates which will be in the region of £2,643 per annum. This can be provided to the community as a basis to commission and employ your own grass cutting services using a local contractor

B For your town to pay for additional urban grass cuts over the two cuts per season provided by the County Council. To maintain the current standard of six cuts this would cost Lewes Town Council in the region of £5,287 per annum.

I would be grateful if you would indicate which option you would wish to pursue by 31 March 2018 at the latest.

Yours sincerely, Rupert Clubb

2 *Financial implications:*

Lewes Town Council's approved budget for 2018/19 includes a base element in the Open Spaces account (A/c70) of £2,000 – this is the uncommitted element of that budget and is intended for unforeseen costs arising through the year, based upon recent years' experience.

The account also provides for anticipated costs of grounds maintenance for sites to be devolved by LDC (£40,000) which, if not needed was to be applied to reduce an anticipated General Fund deficit. Given the current and foreseeable position regarding devolution by LDC, for immediate purposes part of the amount could be appropriated to the purpose of grass cutting.

This budget also includes for a contribution from precept to two earmarked reserves:

£1,000 to R3 Open Spaces (for general needs of the Council's land holdings and responsibilities), and;

£1,000 to R8 Environmental Enhancement (for application to appropriate initiatives)

These sums could be diverted to support increased revenue expenditure.

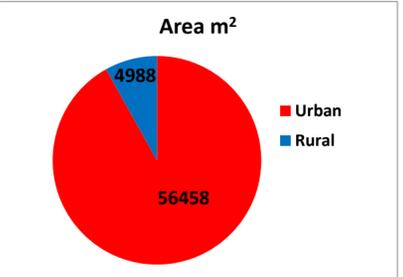
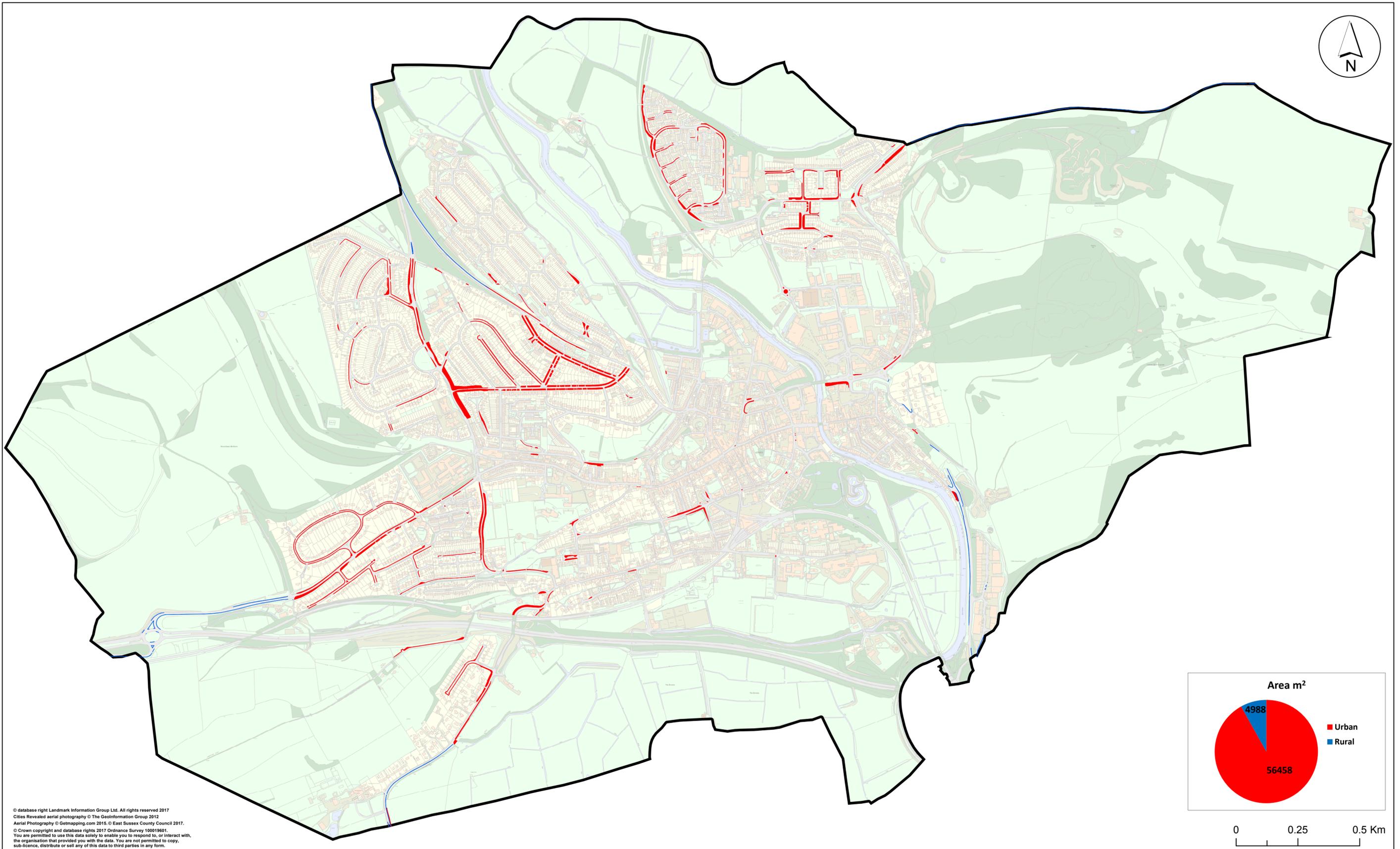
Earmarked Reserves balances which could be utilized in the short term:

R3 Open Spaces	expected balance c/fwd to 2018	£6,000
R8 Environmental Enhancement	expected balance c/fwd to 2018	£18,870

S Brigden

16th February 2018

Appended: ESCC map and area plan



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Map Title: URBAN / RURAL GRASS EXTENT - LEWES

Date: 31/01/2018

Scale: 1:10,000

Author: JOHN GRAINGER

East Sussex County Council
County Hall
St Annes Crescent
Lewes

