



Northumberland County Council

To: County Councillors and
Town & Parish Clerks

Your ref:
Our ref: GG/SGM1
Enquiries to: Greg Gavin
Email: Greg.Gavin@northumberland.gov.uk
Tel direct: (01670) 622278
Date: 22 April 2020

Dear Councillor/Clerk

Summer Grounds Maintenance Programme Update

I am writing to provide you with an update on the summer grounds maintenance programme during the Covid 19 pandemic.

It is important to keep our local environment clean, green and safe. The summer grounds maintenance programme is key to this, which is why we have been delivering our grass cutting service and why it is our intention to also deliver as full a summer programme as possible, including our planting and our weed control works.

Maintaining an attractive local environment is important during this difficult time as it helps to lift public spirits and sense of well being and ensures that residents have accessible locations within their local area where they can safely take daily exercise, whilst maintaining social distancing requirements and complying with restrictions on any unnecessary travel.

We are currently finalising plans for this year's summer planting. All of the plants were either grown or ordered before the current restrictions were put in place and soon will be available to be planted in our strategic parks and, where agreements are in place, in other various locations on behalf of Town & Parish Council and other partners.

Careful consideration has been given on how we can safely undertake this work while following the current restrictions in place regarding social distancing, it is crucial that we protect the staff involved as well as the general public, and we have introduced a number of additional control measures for our grounds maintenance staff. These include separate travel arrangements to and from sites, lone working practices, additional signage to advise the public to stay back and guidance for staff on how to interact with the public and maintain social distancing.

We are responding to a number of challenges in respect of Covid 19 that may impact on service delivery and productivity levels, and while we are striving to deliver these key services



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to our usual standards, this may not be possible in all circumstances. I would ask for your understanding of this, but if you have any questions or concerns please raise them in the normal way through your local Neighbourhood Services team.

In these difficult times I am pleased to say that our staff have responded brilliantly to the challenge of maintaining an attractive local environment for our residents, they have worked hard and shown real commitment to supporting local communities in this way, and I am sure you will join me in thanking them for this.

We will continue to review our service delivery arrangements taking into account any changes to Government guidance, restrictions and other service demands.

Yours sincerely

Greg Gavin
Head of Neighbourhood Services