

NEC4

Term Maintenance Contract

Scope S2200 Client's service specification and drawings

**Series 7000 – Highway Verge and Visibility Cutting
DN581359**

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7070AR: Highway Verge and Visibility Cutting

Scope

- 1 This Clause provides for the cutting of roadside vegetation to comply with the following objectives: -
 - to preserve visibility sight lines at junctions and bends,
 - to prevent the obstruction of signs by foliage,
 - to provide a pedestrian refuge in the absence of a footway,
 - to provide space for temporary traffic management signage,
 - to prevent the spread of noxious and invasive weeds as defined by the Weeds Act 1959,
 - to preserve the amenity of highway land and
 - to maximise the nature conservation value of highway land where this does not conflict with safety requirements.

The *Client* notes that the operational boundaries for delivery of the service may change to align with the aspirations of the New Somerset Council and the *Contractor* is expected to recognise and work with the *Client* to review and realign operational boundaries should they be required over the lifetime of the contract at no extra cost.

Method of implementation

- 2 The objectives listed in sub-clause 1 will generally be met by the following methods, subject to the prevailing policies of the *Client*: -
 - visibility cutting at junctions, roundabouts, bends, lay-bys and other locations where driver vision may be impaired,
 - general cutting adjacent to carriageways and footways to a minimum width of 1.10 metres, if available,
 - Widening beyond general cutting, as necessary, to maintain visibility and access to assets and
 - Full cut back of vegetation to the limits of the highway, when instructed by the *Service Manager*.
 - As part of a programme of transformation and / or rationalisation through the Unitary transition period and beyond, the *Contractor* will work with the *Client* to look at opportunities around consolidation of highway verge and visibility cutting programmes. This may include, but not limited to:-

- General cutting may be instructed on a “cut and collect” basis, when instructed by the *Service Manager*.
 - High Amenity cutting in urban areas may be instructed by the *Service Manager*.
- 3** The frequency, timing, operational window and order of cutting will be subject to the prevailing growing conditions. This will be instructed by the *Service Manager*.

Vegetation

- 4** For the purposes of this Clause, vegetation is defined as grass, undergrowth and seasonal growth on verges, banks and hedges, occurring within the widths of cutting instructed by the *Service Manager*, but excluding trees and saplings.

General Cutting

- 5** Cutting widths (the number of swathe cuts) shall be as specified by the *Service Manager*. Flails or other large mechanical cutters may be used to within 200mm of traffic signs, street furniture or any other property within the specified area of cut. Cutting by hand tools shall subsequently be undertaken to all such obstructions to remove all remaining vegetation above the prescribed height

General Cutting on Slopes from the Horizontal Axis

- 6** Cutting shall be to achieve an even height of 75mm above general soil level, with a tolerance of plus or minus 25mm.
- 7** Mechanical cutting shall be carried out in swathes of minimum 1.10m width, if available, the first swathe being cut neatly to the edge of adjacent hard surfaces.
- 8** Forward speed of the machine shall be such so as to produce a clean, even cut to the full width of the swathe. Cutting above the optimum speed, which results in vegetation standing up after a few days, shall be deemed a non-compliance with the Specification.
- 9** Where more than one swathe is to be cut, sufficient overlap of each cut shall be made to prevent ridges of uncut vegetation being left.

General Cutting on Slopes from the Vertical Axis

- 10 Cutting shall be to remove seasonal growth of verges, hedgebanks and hedges.
- 11 Mechanical cutting shall be carried out in swathes of minimum 1.10m width, if available, the first swathe being cut neatly to the edge of adjacent hard surfaces.
- 12 Forward speed of the machine shall be such so as to produce a clean, even cut to the full width of the swathe. Cutting above the optimum speed, which results in vegetation protruding after a few days, shall be deemed a non-compliance with the Specification.
- 13 Where more than one swathe is to be cut, sufficient overlap of each cut shall be made to prevent protruding ridges of uncut vegetation being left.

Visibility Cutting

- 14 Each individual location/configuration shall be cut to the whole of the area specified by the *Service Manager*. Flails, or other large mechanical cutters, may be used to within 200mm of traffic signs, street furniture or any other property within the specified area of cut. Cutting by hand tools shall subsequently be undertaken to all such obstructions to remove all remaining vegetation above the prescribed height. The plan area extent of each location is stated in terms of one of the following bands:-
 - 0 sqm – 150 sqm
 - 151 sqm – 500 sqm
 - 501 – 1,000 sqm
 - greater than 1,001 sqm

Timing

- 15 The *Service Manager* will instruct the *Contractor* as to the date of commencement of cutting on each road category and the sequence of cutting on each road classification.
- 16 The *Service Manager* may instruct the *Contractor* to carry out Visibility Cutting either at the same time as General Cutting or as a separate operation.
- 17 Both sides of any carriageway shall be cut within 48 hours of one another.
- 18 The cutting by hand, to obstructions requirement for General Cutting and Visibility Cutting, shall be undertaken within 7 days of the mechanical cut.

- 19** Unless agreed by the *Service Manager*, grass cutting hours are not to be outside of the hours of 07:00-20:00 and must comply with the restrictions of the Client's Traffic Sensitive Routes. Approval can be sought, by the *Contractor*, from the *Service Manager*, for work outside of the specified hours, and this will not be unreasonably withheld.

Direction of Cutting

- 20** General Cutting shall be undertaken with the plant progressing in the same direction as the flow of traffic.

Traffic Sign Visibility

- 21** Where general cutting or visibility cutting is being undertaken, and seasonal growth from adjacent hedges/banks/trees/saplings would continue to obscure a traffic sign face following the completion of all cutting within the prescribed width and height, additional cutting shall be undertaken to remove such growth, even though such additional cutting may be outside the prescribed cutting width or height. The required outcome is that all sign faces are fully visible to highway users, following the completion of the cut, on any route.
- 22** The required outcome is that the whole of any sign face has an unobstructed view, specified as the "minimum clear visibility distance", in Table A-1, Appendix A, Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual (2019), extract below.

85 th Percentile Speed of Private Cars (mph)	Minimum Clear Visibility Distance (m)
Up to 20	45
21 to 30	80
31 to 40	80
41 to 50	75
51 to 60	90
Over 60	105

Removal of Debris

- 23** Any debris arising from cutting operations, causing danger or nuisance to highway users, shall be removed immediately after cutting. If additional enhanced

sweeping, either mechanically or by hand, is required, this is instructed separately by the *Service Manager*.

Protected Verges

- 24** Verges identified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest or County Wildlife Site or other verges designated under a policy of protection for visual, scientific or ecological purposes, shall not be cut, unless specifically ordered by the *Service Manager*. The locations of all such verges shall be provided by the *Service Manager*. The *Contractor* will make provision to ensure that operatives do not cut the specified lengths.

Privately Maintained Verges

- 25** Verges, banks and hedges which appear to be privately maintained (eg. planted with ornamental or domestic flowers, shrubs and the like) or which are trimmed to a domestic standard, shall not be cut and should be brought to the attention of the *Service Manager*.

Hedges

- 26** Due care shall be taken at all times to protect the fabric of hedges. Unless there are compelling safety reasons, no hedges shall be cut during the bird nesting season (1st March to 30th September).
- 27** Hedge cutting, if required, will be instructed by the *Service Manager* in multiples of 1.1 metres vertical swathe widths. The horizontal depth to be instructed by the *Service Manager* in 0.25 metre increments.

Progress Records and Digital Reporting

- 28** The *Contractor* shall record progress information, vehicle location, asset condition data and amendments to the known inventory. This information is to be returned to the *Client*, in a digital format to be approved by the *Service Manager*, as a contemporary record for asset information and payment purposes. This would include data to enable digital web-based reporting in real time, for the purposes of informing the *Service Manager* and Somerset communities of works progress.

- 29** The *Contractor* shall report any damage to assets or infrastructure caused by the grass cutting operation to the *Service Manager* within 24 hours of any incident.