

Appendix D – Grounds Maintenance

1. Grounds maintenance service

Your provider should ensure all horticultural features (grassed areas, hedgerows, shrub, rose and seasonal beds) and sports markings included in your grounds contract or SLA should be maintained at the agreed standard you have chosen to suit the budget available.

2. Response rate

The total number of schools responding to this question is shown below in Table 1 from 2004/05 to 2009/10. It also shows how this figure equates to the total survey population, see Table 1 below.

Year	Number of responses	% of Leeds Schools
2004/05	123	45.22%
2005/06	76	27.94%
2006/07	113	41.54%
2007/08	66	24.44%
2008/09	110	40.74%
2009/10	107	39.62%

Table 1 : Total number of responses by year.

3. Service providers

Those service providers recording five or more responses are shown below in Table 2. The table lists the total responses for 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 and further breaks down the responses into primary, secondary and other phases for 2009/10.

Service Provider	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10			
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Primary	Secondary	Other	Total
Parks and Countryside Service, Leeds City Council	54	58	58	66	62	4	1	67
Chevin Landscapes Ltd	6	7	8	13	7	3	0	10
Carillion PLC	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-

Table 2 : Total number of responses by service provider.

Parks and Countryside Service provided by Leeds City Council still hold the majority of schools for this service although there are a growing number of alternate private sector options available to schools. Many of these providers received two, three and four responses which is not enough to be included in the survey. Carillion PLC did not receive enough responses to be included in this year's survey.

4. Performance level

The key performance level review is measurable on a scale of 1 = very good, 2 = good, 3 = highly satisfactory, 4 = satisfactory, 5 = unsatisfactory, 6 = poor and 7 = very poor. The mean performance level is shown in Table 3 below.

Service Provider	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		
	Avg	Performance Level	Avg	Performance Level	Avg	Performance Level	Change
Parks and Countryside Service, Leeds City Council	2.45	Good	2.55	Highly Satisfactory	2.36	Good	Better

Chevin Landscapes Ltd	1.57	Good	1.77	Good	2.10	Good	Worse
Carillion PLC	-	-	3.8	Satisfactory	-	-	-

Table 3 : Performance level by catering service providers

The average performance score achieved by Parks and Countryside Service returned to a good level. Schools recorded favourable comments. However, it was also noted that there could be an improvement in attention in communication and procedures when arriving on site.

The average performance score achieved by Chevin Landscapes Ltd continues at a good level, the same level as the previous year, but with a slightly decreased average score. All comments regarding this provider were very favourable.

A list of comments is available in [Annex D](#)

5. Service providers – value for money

Schools were asked to record whether or not the service provider was delivering value for money. The responses are listed below in Table 4.

Service Provider	Primary			Secondary			Total		
	Yes	No	No Comment	Yes	No	No Comment	Yes	No	No Comment
Parks and Countryside, Leeds City Council	48	7	7	2	1	1	50	9	8
Chevin Landscapes Ltd	7	0	0	3	0	0	10	0	0

Table 4: Value for money by service providers

Schools found that Parks and Countryside's and Chevin Landscapes services provided value for money.

6. Service providers – improvement

Schools were asked to record how the service provider could improve their service delivery and what steps they were taking to ensure that this was taking place, see Table 5.

Service Provider	Primary			Secondary			Total		
	Yes	No	No Comment	Yes	No	No Comment	Yes	No	No Comment
Parks and Countryside, Leeds City Council	28	11	23	4	0	0	33	11	23
Chevin Landscapes Ltd	4	1	2	0	2	1	4	3	3

Table 5 : Expected improvement by service providers

Those schools using the Parks and Countryside service expect to see improvements. Schools noted that the service should focus in the main on improvements in communication and ascertaining what requirements of the school are.

The full list of comments is available in [Annex D](#)

Annex D – Grounds Maintenance

Parks and Countryside, provided by Leeds City Council

1. Please explain why you rate the service provider this way?

Positive responses

- Staff who come regularly are very courteous and willing to do as asked.
- Groundsmen are obliging if they are cutting grass and playtime begins, and will wait. Weed killing undertaken during holidays and therefore safe for children. If we have a particular event they will come and cut the grass at quite short notice.
- A first class very obliging team are allocated to our school.
- Always very helpful and accommodate requests for sports day requirements very well.
- Always helpful and meet the needs of school.
- Always turn up and do the job needed.
- Delighted with work done. Perhaps improve communication with school as to when coming to cut the grass, but realise this is difficult due to weather.
- Friendly, efficient service.
- Professional staff - polite and approachable Accommodating and flexible.
- They can be a bit gung-ho but generally reliable.
- Workers carry out their duties to a high standard.
- The large grounds are kept tidy. Sometimes there is some 'one size fits all' pruning of shrubs in the autumn that then inhibits their flowering in the spring. Sometimes after grass has been mown are chippings left on walkways.
- Very limited service no grounds that need gardening service.
- Excellent group of workers.
- Great service, obliging staff, high quality work, flexible response to requests.
- Maintained school site very well in snow clearance over bad weather period last winter with very little notice.
- Very responsive and good work done.
- Regular attendance, work completed to a good standard.
- Reliable response when called out. The team do a good job and are tidy workers.
- Excellent service.
- Staff are prompt and reliable and take into account our requests. Friendly and approachable.
- They do a decent job and are usually open to any changes in provision over the year.
- Regular and efficient.
- It would be nice to know when they are coming. They just turn up unannounced and we are expected to work around them. Apart from that they do a great job and are always willing to do that little job we cant quite manage.

Negative responses

- Very difficult to get additional grass cuts. Seem very evasive and no one really follows enquiries up.
- No schedule provided. Workers don't sign to say what they do and when.
- We never know when to expect them and they no longer leave a service sheet as to what's been done and when. We would benefit from an annual to six monthly meeting with a supervisor or charge hand so we can let them know of any issues and they can let us know what will be done and when.
- While the service provider has been very competitive as to costs, the service has been sporadic and dictated by availability of staff rather than needs of the school. While the contract specifies two hedge cuts a year, this has never been forthcoming, and school receives complaints from neighbours as a result. Calls to their office have been unsatisfactorily dealt with, and actions promised have had to be chased up.

- The school has a lot of grounds and therefore this will again be an area which I will be looking into as regards potential cost savings and best value.
- When trimming the boundary hedge a large area was missed and we had to call them back out to complete the job satisfactorily. They had left the premises without asking for the work to be checked.
- Communication is poor. Standards of individual pieces of work are let down by haphazard relaying of important information.
- Very expensive service. Am looking at other providers who can do a better job for less.
- Grass cutting is satisfactory, but no care is taken with edges / finishing of the job well. Will be changing provider this year.
- Again the problem appears to be contractors taken off site to work somewhere else without completing the task. Have taken this up with management of service - some improvement.
- They need to ask what we want doing, not just arrive and do what they want. We need to know in advance when they are coming.
- Never know when anybody is going to turn up!
- Spray weeding done but leaves the kerbs looking messy as dead plants not removed.
- Very intermittent service. Regularly has to be reminded to return to finish a job. Long period of time between visits.
- Grass cutters always arrive when children are needing to play out. Staff are not CRB vetted but expect to have free run of grounds. Have experienced some dangerous 'driving' of tractors and trailers when children around. The 'pruning of shrubs' consists of a chain saw massacre and last time they even cut the wires to our electric gates and had to pay £700 for the repairs.
- When grass cut grass and soil from machine left on playground and driveway. Children walk into school. Putting machine onto a trailer would solve problem.
- I have had to write to complain that they do not come into school to let us know when they are on site - we only know when they are on the field. They have not marked the pitch etc when asked. They should let us know when they are coming in advance. They should come into school to let us know when they arrive.
- I have discovered over time that my SLA has not been met and the condition of my school grounds is not good. I have taken steps now to rectify this but it would never have happened otherwise. There is a problem between the co-ordination of teams and the work ethic of the individuals within the teams.
- We have an issue with the inappropriate behaviour of one of the staff.

Chevin Landscapes Ltd

1. Please explain why you rate the service provider this way?

Positive responses

- No problems with Chevin. Review the contract annually.
- Provide a very good service and always happy to pick up any extra. Would be useful to have a schedule of exactly when they are coming on site.
- Grounds were well kept in the main.
- Chevin Landscapes are well managed and carry out programmed works without interference from the school. They are flexible and will provide quotes and carry out additional work when requested to do so.
- The condition of the school site is improved and the providers have responded flexibly to our requests. We did however have a recent problem with the mowers arriving either during playtimes when the children were out playing on the grass and more recently, at home time when the school grounds were busy with parents, carers and children. The mower had to cross a number of pedestrian paths to gain access to the school field which became a health and safety nightmare. They now know not to come at these times.
- Usually appear without prompting - this year have needed to request some visits.
- Excellent.

- Pleased - do everything required.
- Standards are high nothing is a problem. Staff are friendly and obliging.
- Chevin Landscapes have continued to provide a good service at what I regard as being a sensible price. They have responded quickly to any requests that I have made regarding the grounds and the work has been of a good standard.