



AGENDA

FOR INNOVATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD ON

**11 NOVEMBER 2019 AT CONCLUSION OF SPORT, RECREATION AND GRANTS
COMMITTEE MEETING**

IN COMMITTEE ROOMS, 12 JAMES STREET, SALISBURY

MEMBERS

Cr K Grenfell (Chairman)
Mayor G Aldridge (ex officio)
Cr L Braun
Cr C Buchanan (Deputy Chairman)
Cr A Duncan
Cr D Hood
Cr P Jensen
Cr J Woodman

REQUIRED STAFF

Chief Executive Officer, Mr J Harry
General Manager Business Excellence, Mr C Mansueto
Manager Governance, Mr M Petrovski

APOLOGIES

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

Presentation of the Minutes of the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee Meeting held on 14 October 2019.

REPORTS

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OTHER BUSINESS

CLOSE



**MINUTES OF INNOVATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS, 12 JAMES STREET, SALISBURY ON**

14 OCTOBER 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cr K Grenfell (Chairman)
Cr L Braun
Cr C Buchanan (Deputy Chairman)
Cr A Duncan
Cr P Jensen
Cr J Woodman

OBSERVERS

Cr N Henningsen
Cr S Reardon

STAFF

Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr C Mansueto
Manager Governance, Mr M Petrovski

The meeting commenced at 7.12 pm.

The Chairman welcomed the members, staff and the gallery to the meeting.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mayor G Aldridge and Cr D Hood.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

Moved Cr L Braun
Seconded Cr J Woodman

The Minutes of the Innovation and Business Development Sub
Committee Meeting held on 09 September 2019, be taken and read as
confirmed.

CARRIED
UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

IBDSC1 Future Reports for the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee

Moved Cr J Woodman
Seconded Cr L Braun

1. The information be received.

CARRIED
UNANIMOUSLY

IBDSC2 Customer Review Dashboard

Moved Cr C Buchanan
Seconded Cr P Jensen

1. The information be received.

CARRIED
UNANIMOUSLY

IBDSC3 Community Experience Charter Framework

Moved Cr C Buchanan
Seconded Cr A Duncan

1. Endorse the proposed Community Experience Framework
2. Administration bring back a final draft of the Community Experience Charter to the December 2019 Informal Strategy session before presenting to the Innovation & Business Development Sub Committee.
3. Note the work required on finalising and reviewing the Service Standards, Consultation & Engagement and Feedback documentation

CARRIED
UNANIMOUSLY

Suspension of Formal Meeting Procedures

Moved Cr K Grenfell
Seconded Cr L Braun

1. That formal meeting procedures be suspended to allow discussion regarding IBDSC4 – Local Government Reform Program – Reform Areas 3 and 4.

CARRIED

Formal meeting procedures were suspended at 7.20 pm.

Formal meeting procedures resumed at 7.50 pm.

IBDSC4 Local Government Reform Program - Reform Areas 3 and 4

Moved Cr J Woodman
Seconded Cr L Braun

That the proposed position and associated comments made at this meeting on each of the reform proposals contained in Reform Areas 3 and 4 in the table attached to Item No. IBDSC4 on the agenda, be provided as an attachment to the report from this meeting to the Budget and Finance Committee, for inclusion in the submission to the State Government on the *Reforming Local Government in South Australia Discussion Paper*.

CARRIED

OTHER BUSINESS

IBDSC-OB1 Expenditure for Salisbury Plays Events

Moved Cr P Jensen
Seconded Cr C Buchanan

1. That a report be provided to the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee giving a detailed summary of expenditure for all “Salisbury Plays” events.
2. That the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee undertake a review of the Salisbury Plays program.

CARRIED

CLOSE

The meeting closed at 7.52 pm.

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....

ITEM	IBDSC1 INNOVATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE
DATE	11 November 2019
HEADING	Future Reports for the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee
AUTHOR	Michelle Woods, Projects Officer Governance, CEO and Governance
CITY PLAN LINKS	4.3 Have robust processes that support consistent service delivery and informed decision making.
SUMMARY	This item details reports to be presented to the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee as a result of a previous Council resolution.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The information be received.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments to this report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A list of resolutions requiring a future report to Council is presented to each sub committee and standing committee for noting.
- 1.2 If reports have been deferred to a subsequent month, this will be indicated, along with a reason for the deferral.

2. CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATION

- 2.1 Internal
 - 2.1.1 Report authors and General Managers.
- 2.2 External
 - 2.2.1 Nil.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The following table outlines reports to be presented to the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee as a result of a previous Council resolution:

Meeting Item	- Heading and Resolution	Officer
23/09/2019 IBDSC2 Due:	Salisbury Water Business Unit - Expression of Interest 2. Further update be provided following the finalisation of the Dry Creek proposal. February 2020	Bruce Naumann
28/10/2019 1.1.3 Due:	Collaboration Agreement between Council and Community Centres 3. That the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee conduct a review of the Collaboration Agreement over the next 12 months and conduct a review of the management model for Community Hubs (Burton, Para Hills and Ingle Farm) by June 2020. November 2020	Natalie Cooper
28/10/2019 6.0.2- IBDSC3 Due:	Community Experience Charter Framework 2. Administration bring back a final draft of the Community Experience Charter to the December 2019 January 2020 Informal Strategy session before presenting to the Innovation & Business Development Sub Committee. January 2020	Charles Mansueto
28/10/2019 6.0.2- IBDSC-OB1 Due:	Expenditure for Salisbury Plays Events 1. That a report be provided to the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee giving a detailed summary of expenditure for all "Salisbury Plays" events. January 2020	Julie Kushnir

4. CONCLUSION / PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Future reports for the Innovation and Business Development Sub Committee have been reviewed and are presented to Council for noting.

CO-ORDINATION

Officer: Executive Group GMBE
Date: 04/11/19 28/10/19

ITEM	IBDSC2
	INNOVATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE
DATE	11 November 2019
HEADING	Civil Works and Services Circular Economy Opportunities Presentation
AUTHOR	Dameon Roy, Manager Infrastructure Management, City Infrastructure
CITY PLAN LINKS	1.1 Have a community with the skills, knowledge and agility to participate in a rapidly changing economy. 3.1 Be an adaptive community that embraces change and opportunities. 4.4 Embed long term thinking, planning and innovation across the organisation.
SUMMARY	A presentation to the Committee on circular economy opportunities and current programs related to Council's civil works and services

RECOMMENDATION

1. The information be received.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments to this report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Council has a significant history of innovation, particularly with respect to the management and reuse of its resources. In modern terms this is now referred to as creating the Circular Economy.
- 1.2 The Circular economy is a restorative use of local resources by design, keeping products, components and materials at their highest utility and value. This in practical terms means Council manages resources that would otherwise had low or no value.
- 1.3 This presentation will demonstrate how the City of Salisbury has led the creation of a Circular economy in various disciplines, and gives practical examples of future opportunities.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The creation of the Circular Economy is a key component of Council's Sustainability Strategy.
- 2.2 One of the best examples to date is the harvesting and management of Stormwater throughout Council's catchments. In the 1970's Council made a decision, rather than convey the stormwater as quickly as possible to the Ocean, Council determined to treat and utilise the stormwater back into the environment, creating habitat, enhancing amenity and significantly improving the livability of the City. This presentation does not revisit this area, but builds on this key success of the creation of a small unique Circular Economy.
- 2.3 This presentation addresses the following areas of Sustainability and Circular Economy that Council is either currently undertaking or investigating, which includes:
 - 2.3.1 Use of Recycled materials in the Road Reseal / Construction program.
 - 2.3.2 Silt Management & Landfill Sites
 - 2.3.3 Waste to Energy including Electrical or Fuel Generation

3. CONCLUSION / PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This presentation gives an overview of how Council's infrastructure related works and services are engaging in the Circular economy.
- 3.2 These strategies will be specifically addressed as part of the updated Sustainability Strategy to be presented in mid-2020.

CO-ORDINATION

Officer: GMCI
Date: 07/11/2019

ITEM	IBDSC3
	INNOVATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE
DATE	11 November 2019
HEADING	Community Requests - Response Dashboard
AUTHORS	Charles Mansueto, General Manager Business Excellence, Business Excellence Hannah Walters, Team Leader Customer Relations, Business Excellence
CITY PLAN LINKS	4.3 Have robust processes that support consistent service delivery and informed decision making.
SUMMARY	As per Council resolution a monthly report on the Community Requests - Response Dashboard is provided for information.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The information be received.

ATTACHMENTS

This document should be read in conjunction with the following attachments:

1. Service Request Dashboard

1. BACKGROUND

At the council meeting held on 26/08/2019 item IBDSC-OB2 was considered and the following resolved:

'That, in order to regularly monitor customer service performance, an update report on the "customer review dashboard" be a standing item on the agenda for the innovation and business development sub committee, and be provided at each meeting.'

Resolution No 0250/2019

2. CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATION**2.1 Internal**

2.1.1 General Manager Business Excellence

2.2 External

2.2.1 Nil

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The Community Request - Response Dashboard for the period 1 July 2019 to 5 November 2019 is attached for reference.
- 3.2 A total of 6,441 (78.2%) requests were closed within 10 days.

- 3.3 370 (4.5%) requests did not meet the 10 day response.
- 3.4 Since 1 July the administration has achieved a 95.5% closed/response outcome within the 10 day target from a total of 8,237 requests received.
- 3.5 Year to date, of the requests that had not been closed within the 10 days, 79.5% had been responded to within the 10 day period.

4. CONCLUSION / PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The monthly report on the Community Requests - Response Dashboard be received.

CO-ORDINATION

Officer: GMBE
Date: 06/11/2019

10 Day Service Response Standard – 1 July to 5 November 2019



ITEM	IBDSC4
	INNOVATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE
DATE	11 November 2019
HEADING	Verge Maintenance Review
AUTHOR	Mark Purdie, Manager Field Services, City Infrastructure
CITY PLAN LINKS	4.2 Develop strong capability and commitment to continually improve Council's performance. 4.3 Have robust processes that support consistent service delivery and informed decision making.
SUMMARY	This report provides a review of Council's verge maintenance services and recommends the trial of a number of service level adjustments in 2020 to improve service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The information be received.
2. That Council endorse the trial of adjusted verge service levels for the 2020 cutting season, as summarised in section 4.4 of this report, including additional operating budget provision of \$240k to be made through the 2020/21 budget process to fund the trial.
3. A further report be provided at the completion of 2020 on the effectiveness of the trial.
4. Further work be undertaken over the next 12 months to identify sites for alternative verge treatments with consideration to aligning and funding through existing strategies and capital works programs.

ATTACHMENTS

This document should be read in conjunction with the following attachments:

1. Verge Cutting Comparisons
2. Verge Treatment Types
3. Verge Delivery Method Analysis
4. Verge Focus Groups - Unpacking Perceptions

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the December 2018 Council meeting it was resolved that "a report on regular audits for verge cutting be presented to the Innovation and Business Development Sub-Committee". This report was provided to the February 2019 round of Council meetings (Ref. IDBSC2).

- 1.2 A presentation on verge mowing service levels, challenges and opportunities was provided at the January 2019 Innovation and Business Development Sub-Committee meeting where Council resolved at the 29 January 2019 meeting that:

1.2.1 Council undertake a formal program review of the verge cutting activity

1.2.2 The review to include:

- i. An overview of current service levels and investigate the cost and level of service trends, quality of service by employees versus contractors
- ii. The review to give consideration to litter collection from the verge as part of the mowing process.
- iii. Council undertaking city-wide public consultation to better understand community expectations of service levels and to propose alternatives.
- iv. Consideration of City of Port Adelaide Enfield and City of Charles Sturt models as comparisons of verge maintenance delivery.
- v. Consideration of the use of incentive for residents to maintain and develop their own verges.
- vi. Consideration of the use of alternative lower maintenance verge treatments.

Resolution No. 0001/2019

- 1.3 An update on the verge review was presented at the September 2019 Innovation and Business Development Sub-Committee.

2. CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATION

2.1 Internal

2.1.1 Infrastructure Management Division

2.2 External

2.2.1 Beesquared Consultants – engaged to support the review

2.2.2 McGregor Tan Consultants – engaged to undertake focus groups workshop / community consultation

2.2.3 Community Engagement – Focus Group Workshops with 27 Residents

3. REPORT

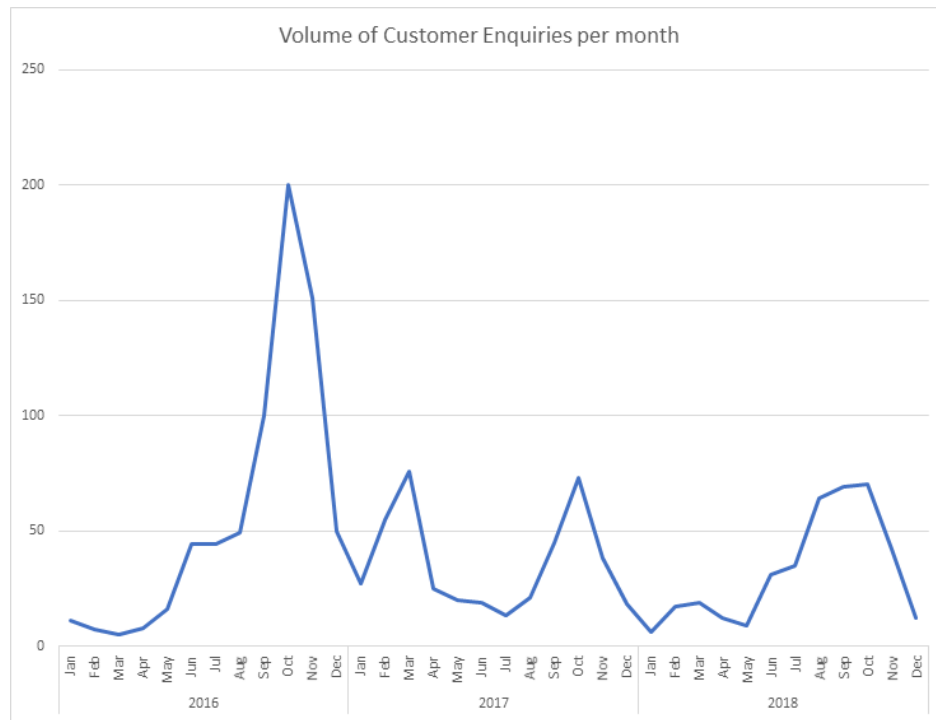
Current Service Levels

- 3.1 Most of Salisbury's streetscapes contain 'naturally grassed/vegetated' verges rather than landscaped or manicured verges. Verge service operations are predominantly aimed to control the height of the verges by slashing on a regular basis where residents do not maintain themselves. As such the service is not designed to present verges at the same level as either residential lawns or feature lawns within the City. The current standards specified are:

- 3.1.1 Local road verges (residential) are serviced seven (7) times between February and December each year on a 30 working day cycle.
- 3.1.2 Main Road verges are serviced eight (8) times over the same time period on a 25 working day cycle.
- 3.1.3 Grass to be cut at height of 60-80mm (+/- 5mm).
- 3.1.4 Service includes litter collection; mechanical edging of posts, structures, pathways and kerb; weed treatment in footpaths; and blow down of debris from footpaths and driveways.
- 3.1.5 Roads and the gutter swept within 24 to 48hrs of grass cutting - this activity is undertaken by internal teams separate to the verge service contract.
- 3.1.6 Main road verges are treated for broadleaf weeds once per annum as part of Council's weed control program.
- 3.1.7 Properties registered on the 'Do Not Cut' list, or where some kind of verge development has occurred and residents are maintaining, are not serviced.
- 3.1.8 Cutting does not take place where asbestos fences abut a verge for safety reasons. Historically cutting has not taken place where a car is parked adjacent to the verge.
- 3.1.9 The medians on DPTI roads are cut by DPTI (Port Wakefield, Main North, Salisbury Highway, Kings Road, Bridge Road) – except areas that Council have developed (Main North Rd median southern boundary).
- 3.2 The current cost of the service is \$1.7M per annum, excluding broadleaf weed treatments on main roads (\$30k). The cost of the service equates to approximately \$28 per rateable property per annum.

Customer Experience

- 3.3 Investigation of the customer service system indicates the number of customer requests regarding verge maintenance is relatively low compared to other service areas of Council.
- 3.4 The average number of customer enquiries over the past five (5) years is 420 per year. In the most recent year (2018/19) there were 389 enquiries received. Assuming 350,000 verge passes per year, this equates to a complaint level of 0.1% of verges passed.
- 3.5 Analysis over the past three years shows regular spikes in enquiries in the spring period where growth of vegetation (primarily weeds) is rapid.



- 3.6 Some anecdotal analysis has been undertaken on the types of enquiries received. The most common query relates to parked cars/missed verges, with around 100 queries per year (more than 25% of total complaints).
- 3.7 Verge cutting was listed as a specific item in the 2016 and 2018 community surveys, receiving a score of 6.0 and 5.4 respectively. This result is on the lower end compared with other Council service satisfaction ratings and is classified as a moderate level of satisfaction.
- 3.8 Despite the low level of enquiries, there appears some level of dissatisfaction in the community with the verge cutting service.

Community Consultation

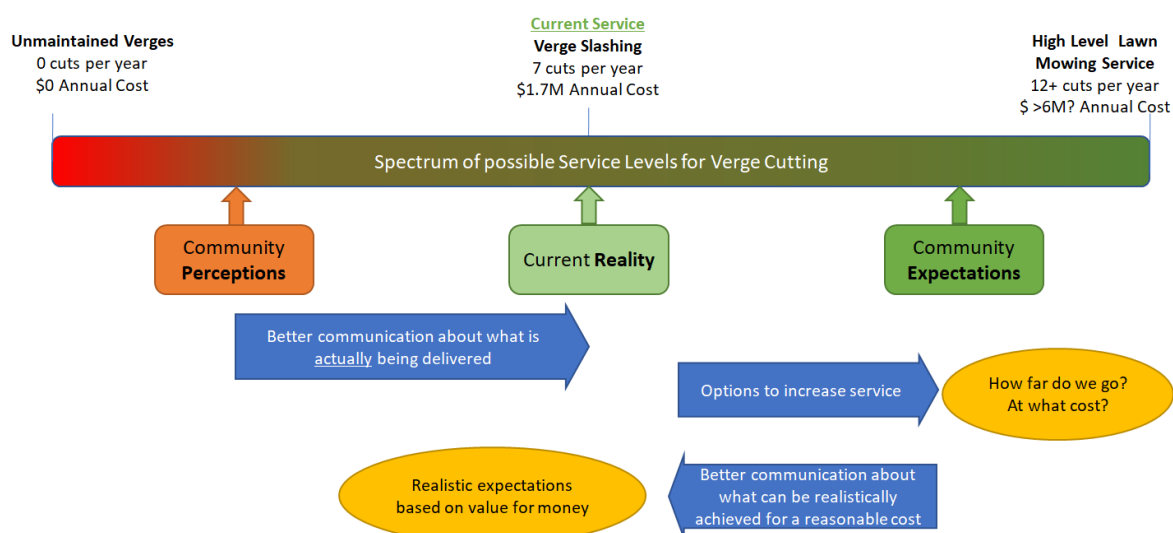
- 3.9 In order to further understand the communities level of dissatisfaction with verge services, McGregor Tan (consultants engaged for the community surveys) were commissioned to re-contact survey participants who rated verge maintenance with a low level of satisfaction.
- 3.10 Focus groups comprising of 7-8 participants per group with 27 participants represented across the Council Wards were conducted on the 9th and 10th of July. A comprehensive report on this consultation process is provided in Attachment 4.
- 3.11 The key finding from this process related to the differences in perceptions, expectations and the current reality of what is being delivered. It was strongly evident that participants did not know the service levels, expected to receive a higher level of service than is currently being delivered without any cost increase, and perceived the current service is being delivered well below actual service standards.
- 3.12 This highlights the importance of communication in helping the community to understand what can be delivered at a reasonable cost.

- 3.13 Many of the participants (who rated verge maintenance low) maintained their own verge adjacent their properties and were dissatisfied with the overall look and feel of verges in the district. Therefore their perceptions were not about their own property frontage.
- 3.14 A summary of some of the key findings from the focus group sessions is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Summary of Focus Group Findings

Perception / Expectation	Reality	Comments
Frequency – verges only serviced a couple of times per year.	8 passes main roads, 7 passes local streets.	None of the 27 participants believed the current frequency.
Service Method - Contractors don't do a good job, are not accountable and don't deliver value for money. Participants spoke positively about Council and their experiences - many suggested they would prefer Council to deliver the service.	Contractors are delivering to the service standard. Contractors audited daily.	Participants didn't understand the service standard – this impacts on perceptions. There will always be some issues given the nature of the works and 350,000 passes per year. This topic is covered in more detail further this report.
Quality - mess left on verge, uneven, not done properly, inconsistency, prefer a mowing service.	Verge slashing service to standards - reality of slashing un-kept, high growth weeds at the current frequency, specification and resourcing.	Participants seemed to expect to see same standard as a typical lawn mowing service. Opportunity to improve communication.
Cost – paying top dollar, don't want to pay more, not getting value.	Competitively tendered service to deliver best value. \$28/year/ratable property – approx. \$4 per property pass.	Participants didn't seem to understand the cost/value of the service. Opportunity to improve communication.
Communication – didn't know the schedule, didn't know the service standard, preferred social media to raise complaint, suggested an annual calendar.	Service schedule and standards are on the website.	This is a key area for improvement. A number of good suggestions were made.
Other – believed service varied across areas, lots of comments unrelated to verge cutting in open questions.	No differentiation in service based on area – only differentiation is main road vs local street.	Comments initially not related to verges when asked open questions – crime, dumped rubbish, trees.

- 3.15 The following diagram was utilised in the presentation to the Innovation and Business Development Sub-Committee and assists with understanding the perception-expectation-reality gap with verge services, highlighting the importance of communication to improve community understanding.



Council Comparisons

- 3.16 Comparisons of verge maintenance service offerings were undertaken with a number of Council's. This included staff liaising with respective counterparts and visiting other Council verge cutting operations in the field.
- 3.17 A comparison table is provided as Attachment 1.
- 3.18 Undertaking a true benchmarking exercise is difficult for this service area as the quantum of work performed in each Council is not easily determined. Some Councils have higher amounts of developed verges on main roads (gravels, paving etc.) and the level of community maintenance differs from area to area.
- 3.19 The exercise provided a number of benefits in comparing different methods and service offerings. A summary of key issues identified from the comparisons is provided in Table 2 below:

Table 2– Summary of Council Verge Cutting Comparisons

Item	Comparison Commentary
Parked Cars	Others cut past park cars – absorbing the risk as part of the service delivery. This is aided by herbicide edging.
Sweeping	Others sweep same day as cutting operation.
Edging	Playford and Port Adelaide Enfield undertake herbicide edging.
Cutting Heights	There is a range however 50-60mm is more common. This is the predominant height Salisbury has trialed during the 2019 season.
Mower Type	A number of Council's are using side discharge mowing decks. The quality of finish is better; however the risk of damage to parked cars, traffic, pedestrians and private property is increased.
Mower Method	Some Councils were running multiple mowers together in the same area, resulting in double cutting. This was providing a higher quality of finish; however requires additional resources and therefore cost.
Cycle Timeframes	Other Council's did not appear to define the cycle timeframes as tightly – may tend to drift more with seasonal conditions.
No. of Cuts	Salisbury is providing a high number of cycles relative to other Council's.

Customer Complaints	Are generally similar per length of km across the Councils
Cost	Salisbury is spending the most on verge maintenance. This is not unexpected given the predominant undeveloped verges, size of the City and low level of community maintenance. Salisbury's cost also includes footpath weed treatment.
Service Method	There is a mixture – Playford and Port Adelaide Enfield utilise internal work teams. Charles Sturt, TTG and Salisbury deliver through contractual services.

3.20 There are many Councils who do not offer any verge maintenance services and some, such as Onkaparinga and Marion, do not offer a cutting service and instead provide herbicide control to un-kept verges.

Treatment Types

3.21 There are a range of different treatment types on verges throughout the City; however at the present time the predominant type is undeveloped grass/weeds.

3.22 Table 3 below and Attachment 2 provide a summary of different treatment types.

Table 3– Summary of Verge Treatment Types

Treatment Type	Current Example	Capital Cost	Maintenance Cost
Undeveloped Grass/Weeds	Most verges	Nil	Medium Regular Slashing, Edging, Weed Control
Herbicide / Bare Earth	None	Nil	Low 2-3 Herbicide applications per year
Irrigated Turf	Mawson Lakes Boulevard	Medium (\$20-30m ²)	High Watering, Irrigation, Mowing, Edging
Landscaped (Gravel)	City Centre Verges	Medium (\$30-40m ²)	Low 2-3 Herbicide applications per year
Landscaped (Mulch)	Nelson Road (south of Montague)	Low (\$15-20m ²)	Low 2-3 Herbicide applications per year. Re-mulching.
Landscaped (Gardens)	Cross Keys Road	Medium-High (\$30-50m ²)	Medium-High Watering, Irrigation, Pruning, Re-planting
Paving/Concrete	City Centre / Mawson Lakes Central	High (\$60-120m ²)	Low Minor weed control, defect repairs

Note – costings are indicative only and may vary based on scope and quantity of works

3.23 In the past, the widespread retrofitting of verges with alternative treatments such as paving or gravels was considered prohibitive due to high capital costs (estimated at \$32M to treat all verges in 2006).

- 3.24 Alternative treatments could be considered in specific areas based on a range of criteria such as adjacent land use, precinct landscape character, and site function and hierarchy, to provide an appropriate mix of verge treatments throughout the City.
- 3.25 Some examples could include alternative treatments at school zones, bus stops, retail precincts, community hubs/centres, sporting precincts, industrial areas, high profile entry statements, and long verge stretches without house frontages.
- 3.26 Further work is planned over the next twelve (12) months to examine the implementation of alternative treatments, including the potential to align these with existing investment programs and strategies such as the Streetscape Renewal Program and Place Activation Strategy.

Service Delivery Method

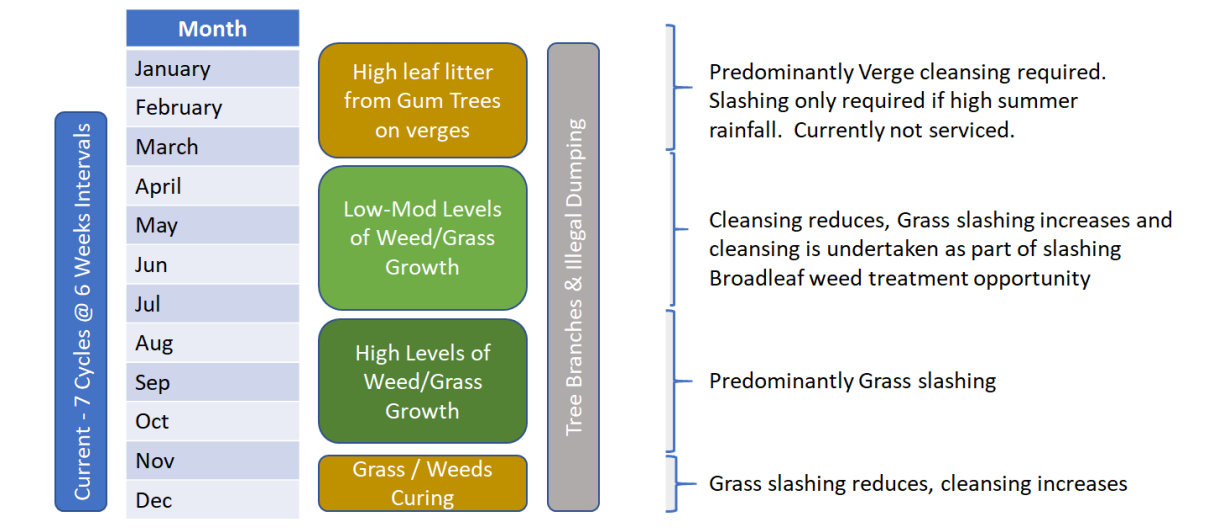
- 3.27 Verge cutting services have been delivered by contract for more than 30 years, with the City divided into two contract areas, east and west. This has been the preferred method of delivery for a number of reasons, primarily due to the nature and seasonality of the work. An assessment of the relevant factors considered in service delivery methods for verge cutting is summarised in Attachment 3.
- 3.28 There is a daily audit regime in place to monitor that the service is being delivered to the contract specification.
- 3.29 The current contracts are in place until May 2022.

Comparison of Costs – Service Delivery Method

- 3.30 For comparative purposes, if verge cutting was to be in-sourced and delivered to the current service standards, the capital cost to purchase necessary equipment and machinery would be in the order of \$630k. The equipment required comprises six (6) utilities, six (6) trailers, six (6) mowers, eighteen (18) brushcutters, two (2) spray vehicles, and six (6) blowers.
- 3.31 The operating costs to deliver to the same standards are estimated to require 28 full time field staff and be in the order of \$2.3M. This would require an ongoing operating budget increase of \$600k per annum. This is largely attributable to the 25% difference in wage costs and is based on the same staffing resources as contractors provide, assuming a similar level of productivity.

Verge Service Requirements

- 3.32 Verges are part of the streetscape environment and the service requirements are highly influenced by seasonal conditions, the nature of the verges (undeveloped/weeds), and the other items within the verge such as tree species. Refer to the figure below and following paragraphs which describe the service requirements.



January-March

- 3.33 During an average season, the main requirements from January to March relate to organic debris from Native tree species littering verges and footpaths. At the current time, a blow down of footpaths is provided as part of the verge maintenance contract. There is currently no provision for debris removal from verges. Slashing of verges is generally minimal and dependent on the level of summer rainfall. Verges are usually brown in appearance.

April-July

- 3.34 During this period, cleansing of debris requirements generally decrease and slashing increases as grasses/weeds start to grow. Verges green up in appearance during this time. Current service levels tend to provide an adequate level of amenity.

August-October

- 3.35 Early spring typically results in very rapid growth of grasses and weeds across the district— which tends to last for an 8-10 week period. During this period the current service level of 30 day slashing aims to reduce and manage growth – however long and thick vegetation is expected and provides a challenge to providing a neat and tidy appearance after slashing that meets community expectations.
- 3.36 This peak seasonal growth is a challenge for the entire horticultural industry with a high demand for additional resourcing for a relatively short period of time.

November-December

- 3.37 During this period grasses and weeds are curing with less bulk to manage and the verge appearance browning.

Going Forward – Considerations and Trial Proposal 2020

Communication

- 3.38 A range of measures are proposed to improve communication and awareness of Council's verge service offerings including:
- 3.38.1 A dedicated and focused media campaign on verge service provision to assist with informing the community about the nature of the service and what can be delivered for a reasonable cost. This would also need to include information about any trials or changes approved as part of this review along with encouraging residents to maintain the verge where they are able.
 - 3.38.2 Updated brochures on verge services.
 - 3.38.3 Update the website information to include a full year calendar of the verge program for 2020.
- 3.39 It should be noted that improved communication may not reduce the number of complaints, however it could change community perceptions and expectations and therefore change the nature of some of the complaints.

Re-timing of maintenance cycles

- 3.40 The duration and timing of maintenance cycles can be adjusted to better align with average seasonal conditions. Currently there are 7 cycles per annum at approximately 6 weekly intervals for local roads. The intervals could be re-timed to 3 cycles at 8 weekly intervals during low growth periods, 2 cycles at 6 weekly intervals during moderate growth, and 2 accelerated cycles at 4 weekly intervals during spring.

Re-Timed Verge Services		
Week Cycle	Month	Main Activity
8	Feb/Mar	Cleanse (litter debris/branches/footpaths)
8	Apr/May	Cleanse/minor cutting
6	Jun/July	Cutting/minor cleanse
6	Jul/Aug	Cutting/minor cleanse
4	Sep	Accelerated cut/minor cleanse
4	Oct	Accelerated cut/minor cleanse
8	Nov/Dec	Tidy up end of season cut/cleanse

- 3.41 The main challenge with this approach is securing additional resources for the relatively short spring period.
- 3.42 The greatest benefit of this option is improved management of the rapid spring growth. There will still be long grass at a 4 week interval, however the period of time where long grass impacts negatively on City image will be reduced.

- 3.43 The additional costs of this service level change are incorporated into the 2020 trial variation proposal.

Herbicide Edging

- 3.44 Applying herbicides two or three times per year is an alternative method to manual brush-cutting to control vegetation on the back of kerb, around structures in the verge, and along the edge of footpaths. A number of other Council's utilise this method and it was successfully trialed in areas of Salisbury North in 2019. The main benefits include:
- 3.44.1 Trees - reduces damage to trees caused by 'ring-barking' with brush cutters.
 - 3.44.2 Safety - reduces time spent by workers on the edge of the roadway undertaking edging. Reduces hazards to pedestrians.
 - 3.44.3 Parked Cars and Traffic – reduces likelihood of damage to parked cars caused by brush-cutting.
 - 3.44.4 Aesthetics – reduces overhang of vegetation onto footpath, kerbing, around trees and obstacles.
 - 3.44.5 Clean Up – reduces volume of grassed material left on footpath, driveways and roadway after cutting.
 - 3.44.6 Fencing – reduced damage to private fences from brush-cutting.
- 3.45 The main disadvantage with this method is public perception regarding herbicide use, in particular with recent media attention on glyphosate. The use of Glyphosate is still considered safe for operators by relevant authorities in Australia with recommendations that manufacturer's instructions are adhered to. Research into alternative herbicides such as organic products and steam are being undertaken and will be reported to Council in early 2020.
- 3.46 It is proposed to trial herbicide edging in verges across the City in 2020 as part of the verge maintenance program. Initially, a waterway approved glyphosate based herbicide would be used, with the intention of establishing the initial edge and assessing the utilization of alternative, organic herbicides as part of the broader herbicide trials currently being undertaken.
- 3.47 The cost of herbicide edging (waterway approved glyphosate based herbicide) as part of the verge maintenance program is similar to mechanical edging.

Tree Debris

- 3.48 Currently there is no service provision for removal of excessive tree debris such as bark. Fallen tree branches are not removed as part of verge services and are currently managed on a reactive customer request basis. This often impacts on verge maintenance operations and contributes to an untidy streetscape appearance.
- 3.49 It is proposed to include the removal of excessive debris (large bark material) and tree branches as a trial as part of the verge maintenance service in 2020. This provides a more holistic verge maintenance service ensuring that when a street is serviced, the verge is cut and the verge and footpath are cleaned of litter and tree debris to leave a neat and tidy street appearance.

- 3.50 The costs of including this service level increase into the program for a 12 month trial are captured in the 2020 trial variation proposal.

Parked Vehicles

- 3.51 Historically verges with parked vehicles adjacent verges have not been serviced due to potential for damage. Data collection has shown up to 3,000 parked vehicles are recorded during verge maintenance each year.
- 3.52 During 2019, a call back service to mow with a pedestrian mower has been trialed where cars were parked. This worked satisfactorily during low growth periods however was not as effective during peak spring growth. From July-October 2019, approximately 2,000 parked cars were called back to at an additional cost of \$75k.
- 3.53 Negotiations with contractors have taken place with regard to cutting past all parked cars at the time of service, lowering engine speed to minimise the risk of damage. Both contractors have accepted to absorb this risk as part of the 12 month trial. Herbicide edging will assist to minimise damage by reducing the need to brush-cut next to parked vehicles.

Broadleaf Weed Control

- 3.54 Currently main road verges are treated annually with a selective herbicide to control broadleaf weeds in the verge. This improves visual appearance and assists in the quality of the cut by reducing bulk and thick stemmed weeds.
- 3.55 It is proposed to trial one treatment of local roads focusing on areas that contain large amounts of broadleaf weeds in 2020 to determine overall effectiveness in improving verge cutting outcomes. The cost to undertake this work is estimated at \$100k.

Street Sweeping

- 3.56 The City of Salisbury currently has 4 street sweepers and throughout the 2019 verge cutting season, alignment with verge cutting has resulted in a large portion (estimated 60-70%) of the day's verge cutting being swept the same day. There are some areas, such as main roads, that are safer to sweep early the next morning to avoid traffic. Saturday shifts have been run to collect any remaining material from Friday cutting operations. From time to time, operational disruptions such as breakdowns have resulted in sweepers momentarily falling behind cutting operations more than 24hrs, however this has been rare and has been quickly recovered.
- 3.57 Purchasing an additional road sweeper would provide a level of redundancy and would improve the certainty of material being swept within 24hours. The capital cost of a sweeper is \$350k and the ongoing additional operating cost would be \$150k per annum (inclusive of an operator and maintenance costs).
- 3.58 It is not recommended to increase service levels for street sweeping at this stage, with a preference for trialing other service level enhancements in 2020 as a higher priority. The impact of other service changes, such as accelerated cuts in spring, on street sweeping service to a target of collection within 24hrs after cutting will continue to be monitored.

Renaming of the Service

- 3.59 The verge maintenance service has evolved from a grass slashing service to a verge maintenance service offering. The proposed trial further moves to a holistic service with the inclusion of debris and tree branch removal.
- 3.60 Subject to the success of the 2020 trial initiatives, consideration should be given to renaming the service from verge cutting to verge maintenance.

Incentive Schemes

- 3.61 Incentive schemes to encourage residents to develop and maintain the verge adjacent their property could take a variety of forms. Financial incentives including one-off grants to contribute to the development of the verge could be considered as part of Council's verge development policy and procedure. Alternatively Council could supply mulch at no cost to the residents when available from the Waste Transfer Station. Examples of other forms of support include technical advice and community education and workshops. At this stage it is proposed to offer free mulch to verge development applicants, when available from the Waste Transfer Station.
- 3.62 Providing ongoing financial incentives for maintenance of the verge area creates a number of legal, administrative, and cost/benefit challenges. Mechanisms include rate rebates, separable rate, ex-gratia payments, contracts and grant schemes. Each of these mechanisms have different requirements but all would require extensive administration, provision in Council's budget to clearly account for the incentive, details of the nature and extent of works required for eligibility, and lawful authorization from Council under section 221 of the LG Act for each property participating. The size of the cash incentive to make it attractive to residents is also a major consideration.
- 3.63 The challenges in administering ongoing financial incentives lie with change in property ownership and specifying, understanding and auditing against the nature and extent of works for eligibility. It would require a full time staff resource to manage this and the costs are anticipated to outweigh any savings to the service.
- 3.64 An alternative approach is through fostering community pride and ownership through community engagement such as the promotion of verge garden and street tidy competitions and the like. This is the preferred method for incentivising community maintenance of verges.

4. CONCLUSION / PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Council's verge maintenance services are being delivered to current service standards. The current service levels are aimed at controlling the height of verges where residents do not maintain and result in relatively low amounts of customer enquiries.
- 4.2 There is a level of community dissatisfaction with the service. Focus groups with a sample of residents dissatisfied with the service indicate that there is low level of understanding of the current service offering and gaps between perceptions, expectations, and what is currently being delivered for the cost.
- 4.3 Improving communication of the service delivery offering to the community is a key priority.

- 4.4 The review has highlighted a number of areas where the service level can be adjusted to help improve outcomes without large increases in cost. These areas have been discussed with the current contractors to provide a trial variation for 2020. The various elements are provided as a package for the trial, as a number of them have dependencies and work together. For example, chemical edging helps facilitate cutting past parked cars, broadleaf weed treatment will reduce cutting loads etc. The trial elements proposed for 2020 include:
- 4.4.1 Re-timed schedule for both main and local road verges (3.40-3.43)
 - 4.4.2 Herbicide edging (3.44-3.47)
 - 4.4.3 Tree Debris – collect and remove bark and fallen branches (3.48-3.50)
 - 4.4.4 Cutting past parked vehicles (3.51-3.53)
 - 4.4.5 Broadleaf treatment to local verges where high amounts of broadleaf weeds (3.54-3.55)
- 4.5 The total cost to undertake the trial in 2020/2021 is an extra \$240k above normal operating costs. No additional operating budget will be required to facilitate the trial in 2019/20.
- 4.6 A review of the effectiveness of the trial is proposed at the end of 2020.
- 4.7 It should be noted that whilst the trial is proposed to help improve verge service delivery outcomes, the service levels are still intended to manage excessive growth and are not designed to provide a manicured lawn mowing service.
- 4.8 A variety of alternative treatments will be considered for use in verges across the City in specific applications; however their widespread application is prohibitive due to the high capital costs.
- 4.9 Incentive schemes for resident maintenance of the verge are generally not proposed except in the form of free mulch available from the Pooraka Waste Transfer station when available for verge development applicants and community pride campaigns such as verge garden and street tidy competitions.

CO-ORDINATION

Officer: GMCI
Date: 07/11/2019

Attachment 1 - Verge Cutting - Council Comparisons



Item	CoS	Playford	Charles Sturt	PAE	TTG
Budget	\$1.7M	\$850k	\$1M	\$1.5M	\$650k
No. of Cuts	7 (8*)	5 (if required)	4 (8*)	7	4
Cutting Height	65-80mm	60mm	39mm	50mm	60mm
Edging	Mechanical	Herbicide	Mechanical	Herbicide	Mechanical
Sweeping follow up	24-48hrs	24hrs	Same day	Same day	Nil – blown to verge
Mower type	Rear discharge	Side discharge	Side discharge	Side discharge	Rear discharge
Service Method	Contract	Internal	Contract	Internal	Contract
Road Length (km)	800	700	730	830	600
Ave no. of complaints	420 (1 per 2km)	200 (1 per 3.5km)	350 (1 per 2.1km)	3-400 (1 per 2km)	280 (1 per 2.1km)
Parked Cars	After by push mower	Cut at same time	Cut at same time	Cut at same time	Return after car moved
Broadleaf Weed Treat	Main Roads	Main Roads	Reactive Basis	None	Main & Local

A number of Council's do not maintain verges.
Some Council's weed treat un-kept verges (Onkaparinga / Marion)

Attachment 2 - Treatment Types – not one solution for the City



Weeds / Un-developed

- Most of the City
- Slashing regime
- Typically green 8 months / brown 4 months of the year
- Capital cost – nil
- Maintenance cost – med



Irrigated Turf

- Example – Mawson Lakes Boulevard (not photo)
- Mowing and turf maintenance regime
- Green all year round
- Capital cost – med
- Maintenance cost – high



Landscaped – low maint. (Gravel)

- Current example – Church Street, City Centre (not photo)
- Weed spraying regime
- Capital cost – med
- Maintenance cost – low



Landscaped – low maint. (Mulch)

- Example – Nelson Road
- Weed spraying and re-mulching regime
- Capital cost – low-med
- Maintenance cost – low



Landscaped – high maint.

- Current example – Cross Keys Road
- Horticultural maintenance
- Capital cost – high
- Maintenance cost – med-high



Paved / Concrete

- Example – Mawson Lakes & Salisbury Centres
- Repair/ minor weed treatment
- Capital cost – high
- Maintenance cost – low

City of Salisbury currently has a range of verge treatments in place, though most verges are weeds/undeveloped.

Future Treatment Types - At Particular Locations / Destinations



Landscaped – High Profile
Entrance Statements



Gravel / Paving – Bus
Stops / Schools / Retail
Precincts



Herbicide Treatment
Industrial Areas where
cars park



Streetscape Renewal –
landscape sands in
select areas

Moving Forward – City Pride – Fit for Purpose Solutions – Streetscape View – Road
Hierarchy - Place Activation Strategy – Existing Investment Strategies

Attachment 3 - Service Delivery Mode Analysis



Dimension	Options for Service Delivery Mode		Would Internal Delivery Mode be better?
	Contracted Delivery	Internal Delivery	
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advantage in labour rates (25% lower) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No requirement for profit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, costs will increase considerably
Flexibility Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on structure of contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal staff can be redirected wherever needed Flexibility usually comes with increased cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes
Service Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are clear in contract and contain penalties Contract is actively managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service levels would be the same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar. Service Levels are set regardless of delivery mode.
Productivity Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor productivity incentives (profit, future work) Accountability is built into the terms of the contract and financial penalties apply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sense of pride in the City may encourage staff to go 'above and beyond', whereas a contractor will stick to the contract terms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar, although productivity drivers are different
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract - DAILY audits There are penalties in place for contractor failure to rectify issues within a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There would be direct control over resources and the ability to dynamically set quality expectations (as needed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar.
WHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor has high responsibility for WHS issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High risk working near roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, Contracted Delivery is significantly better
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor is responsible for all Staffing issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosters (especially 9 day fortnight) take significant time to manage Staff generally dislike the verge mowing task (can be difficult to fill positions) High level of retraining staff and recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, Contracted Delivery is significantly better
Machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor is responsible for all Machinery issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of machinery maintenance and repair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, Contracted Delivery is significantly better
Local Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor often uses locally resident staff Northern region evaluation criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees are not necessarily local residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar
Overall			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On balance, contracted delivery of Verge Cutting is preferable

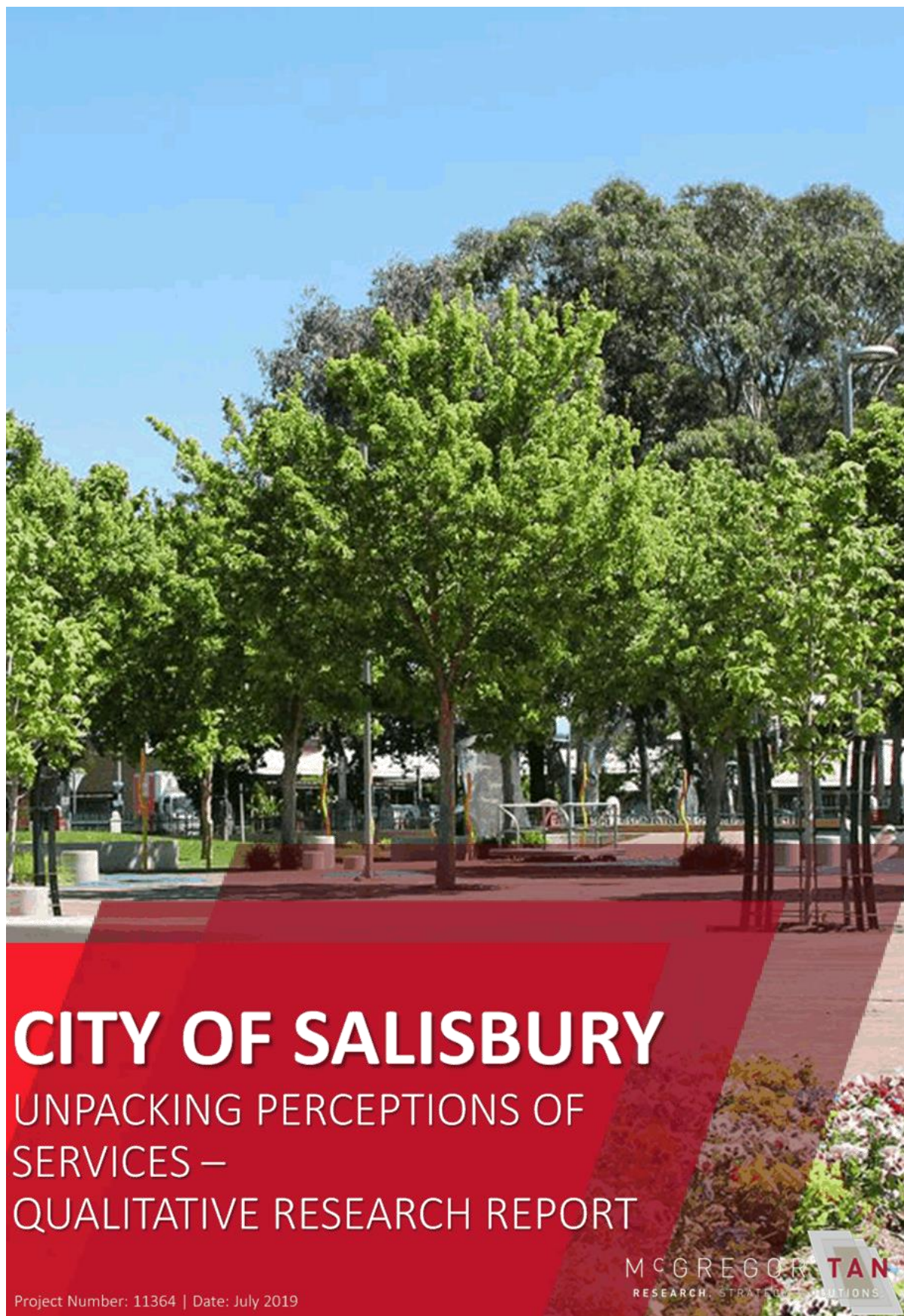


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Item IBDSC4 - Attachment 4 - Verge Focus Groups - Unpacking Perceptions

BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

McGregor Tan was commissioned by the City of Salisbury to conduct an annual survey with households within the City to measure the community's perceptions on a range of services and attributes of the City, by tracking key measures such as quality of life, council services.

RESEARCH BRIEF

City of Salisbury was seeking to further understand community perceptions specifically in regards to verge maintenance and issues surround this topic including verge cutting, and specifically to unpack the perceptions of the residents who were dissatisfied with the verge cutting services.

The survey reported a higher level of dissatisfaction with verge cutting than with other services, with 21% of residents indicating they were not satisfied with this service.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives and focus of the project were to further investigate:

- Community dissatisfaction with verge maintenance and associated cleanliness as identified in the 2018 Community Satisfaction Research;
- Strategic priorities, locations, key issues; and
- Opportunities for improvement.

METHODOLOGY

McGregor Tan re-contacted survey participants who were dissatisfied with verge maintenance and invited them to participate in a series of independent focus group held in the Council area.

Focus groups consisted of 7-8 participants between each groups consisting of the Salisbury wards, including:

- Hills Ward;
- West and South Wards;
- Para and Central Wards; and
- North and East Wards

Focus groups were held on the 9th and 10th of July 2019.

This report outlines the key issues and recommendations suggested from participants from each Ward.

KEY ISSUES

Market research was conducted via discussion with the residents, and not the council. Therefore, McGregor Tan did not investigate the reality of services and can provide little balance to these perceptions, except reinforce that these perception are not representative of all household, but rather from a subset of dissatisfied households (21%) – those that were dissatisfied with verge maintenance/cuttings.

The main issue of perception versus reality was the frequency and quality of verge maintenance. Whilst the City of Salisbury have indicated that they audit verge cuttings daily and that contractors are able to meet their contractual requirements, the perception from participants from the focus groups was that this is not the case with many stating it rarely occurred.

In this instance, communication is key in shifting perceptions, rather than any change in service.

Overall, the issues observed by participants from each Ward included:

- Sense of street pride
- Frequency
- Quality
- Consistency
- Value for money
- Accountability
- Scheduling
- Council could do a better job

Below is the summary of each issue as perceived by the dissatisfied residents.

Sense of street pride

For the most part, participants were dissatisfied with road verge maintenance as they believe it affects the visual amenity of the Council area. Many participants had lived in the City of Salisbury area for most of their lives, and felt a strong connection to their community, neighbourhood and street. As such, they have an innate sense of community pride, which they feel road verge maintenance is letting them down. For most of these participants, they took it upon themselves to maintain the verge adjacent to their own properties, but felt Council could be doing more across the District to maintain the whole streetscape, not just their street. In fact, they prefer to maintain their own verges, as they believe the current contractors take no care, are infrequent, leave behind rubbish and are generally unreliable in the areas of road verge maintenance and cutting.

Frequency

Participants do not believe contractors maintain their verges on a 6-week cycle (they believe it is every few months, sometimes less).

Quality

Participants were only aware that maintenance has been done by the 'mess' left behind by contractors; this was a major source of dissatisfaction. Some described contractors as "hacking" at street trees, not edging well, leaving patches, different heights of cutting from one verge to the next and in some cases saw contractors removing street plantings maintained by residents.

KEY

ISSUES cont.

Consistency

Participants believe the road verge maintenance should account for seasonality, with winter requiring a different approach to summer. Also, they believe that there was lack of consistency in regards to mowing around bins, parked cars, picking up rubbish, removing debris etc.

Value for money

Although participants were unaware of the scope of works for road verge cutting and maintenance, they firmly believed the contractor was not meeting the minimum expectation of the community. Many believed the Council was not getting value for money from the contract, and that the community via rates are funding the service and they believe it should be reviewed.

Accountability

Participants felt strongly that the contractors were not being made accountable to meeting the requirements of the contract for road verge maintenance. They did not believe the process was audited closely enough and did not feel that the staff on the ground were accurately relaying any issues they faced on a day to day basis.

Participants believe contractors do the bare minimum and often did not follow up issues.

Scheduling

Participants were not aware when their verges were due for maintenance and as such felt they couldn't not prepare for the contractors or be aware when they were in the area. Discussion were held around school zones or retail areas where cars are always parked during the hours of maintenance, so they were not sure if they ever get maintained under the current guidelines.

Council could do a better job

Participants spoke positively about Council and many had experienced good customer service and responsiveness on a range of issues over the years. As a result, many participants suggested that Council take the road verge maintenance contract over, as they believe Council staff would have more pride in their area, and would be made more accountable for the work they do.

PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants were most engaged in discussions and as such many recommendations were put forward. It is important to keep in mind these recommendations stem from participants lack of understanding of contractual requirements with verge maintenance, with many having little understanding of the service offered.

1. Communication

Due to the lack of awareness of scheduling and scope of works, participants would like to receive an annual calendar- similar to the bin collection calendar for their fridge, so they are aware of when to expect contractors, what they can expect and who to contact for feedback/ complaints

2. Feedback

Participants see social media as having an immediate affect, and often they feel it is the only way to get action. By promoting another way of feedback for residents, they feel this would lessen the need to post negative content on social media

3. Change of contractor

Participants firmly believe the current contractor is not meeting a minimum standard that they have seen with other verge maintenance in the past. Ideally participants would like Council to take this task in house.

4. Incentivise residents to maintain their own verges

Promote plant sales, offer discounts on rates, suggest community planting workshops to

help individual residents maintain their own verges

5. Investigate other verge options

Many participants thought paving or low plants would be a better option than grass or weeds for verges around the Council area. In some areas, they thought chemical maintenance would be appropriate, but in others they did not. Some would like to see paving and planter boxes, others suggested salt bush type plants that need minimal maintenance.

6. Calling card

A number of participants suggested the contractor should leave a calling card when they have attended the site but have been unable to complete the work. They used examples of meter readers, gas contractors etc, leaving a note in the letterbox and the next date they will attend, with a number for enquiries. Many participants believed this would go a long way to help with accountability and communication, and in turn increase levels of satisfaction.

7. Better lighting

For some, the actual verge maintenance was not the issue but the lighting of verges, particularly in areas with limited security.


8. Street committees/ reps

In the spirit of the community having a role in their own street appeal, it was suggested that streets could nominate representatives to feedback issues to council/ the ward councillor on a regular basis.










Item IBDSC4 - Attachment 4 - Verge Focus Groups - Unpacking Perceptions

GROUP 1



HILLS WARD

	<p>Angela: 52, Gulfview Heights 13 years in current suburb 25 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Elaine: 66, Para Hills 54 years in current suburb 54 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Lara: 46, Para Hills West 19 years in current suburb 19 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Avery: 68, Para Hills 30 years in current suburb 30 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Cassandra: 42, Para Hills West 20 years in current suburb 20 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Michael: 37, Gulfview Heights 4.5 years in current suburb 20 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Mary: 51, Pooraka 51 years in current suburb 51 years in the City of Salisbury</p>

GROUP 1

KEY FINDINGS

Group 1 consisted of seven participants of mixed genders, ages and suburbs from within the Hills Ward. The participants hailed from Gulfview Heights, Para Hills, Para Hills West and Pooraka. A majority of the participants owned their home and half the participants worked full time, the other half being part time, retired and unspecified.

The Hills Ward's main likes about their current location was proximity to amenities, such as trails, netball and tennis courts, schools, and to the city. The participants also cited the size of the blocks, wide open spaces and that everyone takes care of their houses were reasons they liked where they lived. Group 1 also had a sense of community, stating knowing those in their suburb and minimal crime as things they enjoyed about where they live.

Unprompted, the participants' main dislikes regarding where they lived included shopping available, street lighting, quality of parks and predominately the accessibility of public transport.

The satisfaction of the participants with the council was low – they agreed that their satisfaction had decreased since they moved to the area, mentioning lack of maintenance of parks and verges unprompted.

The group all thought that the maintenance came approximately biannually or quarterly, and strongly dismissed the possibility of the current maintenance contract being fulfilled.

Their primary concern regarding the verge maintenance was the quality of the grass slashing, remarking on uneven grass, overgrown verges, missed spots and poor

attention to detail around trees, as well as the disparity within the city of Salisbury.

Their secondary concern was the mess following the maintenance, stating that the grass clippings are not getting cleaned after, and it blowing into the gutters, yards and on cars. This also included that rubbish was not getting collected prior, and rather being mowed over, producing a confetti of rubbish which was also not cleaned.

A majority of the participants in this group maintained their own verge, though some were frustrated that they were paying council rates for this maintenance, and the poor quality drove them to do their own.

Four of the participants had contacted the council prior regarding issues that had arisen with verge maintenance, though only one had had their issue resolved through the council. The experiences surrounded missed spots, overgrown grass and personal bins being used by the contractors.

The Hills Ward's desired solution was driven by maintaining visual amenity. They were concerned by the aesthetic affects of the weed spraying, worried the damage it would cause to other plants, but agreed that it could take place where weeds are too high and in industrial areas. They were mildly apprehensive about the health concerns of spraying and chemical edging, and wanted solutions like widening the footpath of different ground cover in residential areas.

They also liked the solution of maintaining own verges, though agreed that incentives should be in place.

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GROUP 2

WEST AND SOUTH WARDS

MCGREGOR

TAN

RESEARCH. STRATEGY. SOLUTIONS.

	<p>Matthew: 44, Pooraka 44 years in current suburb 44 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Barbara: 61, Ingle Farm Unspecified years in current suburb Unspecified years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Diane: 67, Pooraka Unspecified years in current suburb Unspecified years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Jess: 33, Pooraka 2 years in current suburb 2 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Jess: 23, Ingle Farm 2 years in current suburb 2 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Doug: 76, Ingle Farm 54 years in current suburb 54 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Kelly: 51, Springbank Waters 11 years in current suburb 51 years in the City of Salisbury</p>

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GROUP 2

KEY FINDINGS

Group 2 consisted of seven participants of mixed ages, genders and suburbs from within the West and South Wards. The participants hailed from Pooraka, Ingle Farm and Burton. Just over half of the participants owned their current home, whilst the others rented and lived at home. Only two participants worked full time within the group, the others identified as unemployed, retired and non-age pensioners.

The West and South Ward's main likes about their current location was the convenience due to the close proximity of amenities, the city, the Barossa and shopping. They cited Salisbury as a hub, referred to the area as home, and associated it largely with family.

The overarching general dislikes of the Group regarding the areas they live in was the lack of safety – predominately due to crime. They raised lack of police presence as a catalyst in this, and it was evident they lacked a feeling of house pride and community as a result. One resident polarised the rest of the group's responses in having no similar experiences and their primary concern was building developments.

Group 2 agreed that they thought that verge maintenance came very rarely, approximately once or twice a year, and questioned whether the contractors even came at all due to the state of overgrown weeds and verges. They also strongly dismissed the possibility of the current maintenance contract occurring, given many of the participants stayed home during the day and concurred they did not come that regularly.

Their primary concern regarding the verges was the overall messiness of appearance. The group found messy to refer to the

infrequency of maintenance, meaning the verges were overgrown and contained green and general litter, the quality of the maintenance, meaning that post mowing was uneven, and the lack of clean up of the grass clippings following maintenance.

Approximately half the group stated they did their own verges, but even then had poor experiences and felt disincentivised to do it. A participant had planted flowers only to be removed by maintenance, and another had cut down a growth but cost them more money to take the dump as it was too large for their green bin.

Only two of the participants had been in contact with the council regarding verges, the others, though having issues, did not see a point as they believed nothing would come out of it. However, the group did have positive experiences with actual council employees, and agreed that due to this they should be maintaining verges, rather than contractors, also citing accountability.

Regarding weed spraying and chemical edging, the group strongly opposed due to health concerns, and did not see this option as a solution as a result.








The group had a small sense of community, and the desire for this drove their potential solutions to verge maintenance. They had ideas around electing community representatives, community service, avenues for community feedback and community gardens to increase community pride. They were less concerned with aesthetics, and had more desire for a low-maintenance solution that still was somewhat visually appealing but was not necessarily a priority.

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GROUP 3

PARA AND CENTRAL WARDS

MCGREGOR TAN
RESEARCH. STRATEGY. SOLUTIONS.

	<p>Paul: 67, Brahma Lodge 14 years in current suburb 67 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Tina: 53, Salisbury Downs 6 years in current suburb 20 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Robert: 57, Salisbury 20 years in current suburb 20 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Trevor: 53, Salisbury 15 years in current suburb 30 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Netra: 24, Salisbury Unspecified years in current suburb Unspecified years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Cheryl: 48, Salisbury Downs 48 years in current suburb 48 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Julie: 54, Parafield Gardens 14 years in current suburb 14 years in the City of Salisbury</p>

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GROUP 3

KEY FINDINGS

Group 3 consisted of seven participants of mixed genders, ages and suburbs from within the Para and Central wards. The participants hailed from Brahma Lodge, Salisbury Downs, Salisbury and Parafield Gardens. A majority of the participants rented their homes, with only two owning, and most of them worked either part time or full time, the remainder being pensioners.

The Para and Central Ward's main likes about their current suburb was the proximity to the centre and the amenities. They also identified interesting and diverse neighbours, and a sense of community in that their friends and family also lived here.

The groups' dislikes varied amongst participants – they named the footpath quality, abandoned shopping trolleys, poor lighting, noise from neighbours as well as planes and police accessibility.

Overall the participants were mostly satisfied with the council, with the majority citing a seven on a scale of 1-10. The group agreed that maintenance was not regular enough, however they thought there was some disparity of frequency depending on the profile of the street. They all however disagreed that the contract was being upheld to the six-weekly maintenance.

The primary concern the Para and Central Wards had with the maintenance of the verges was the grass clippings left behind. Their issues surrounded the grass being blown all over the road, footpaths, their gardens and driveways, as well as their cars. Some did not agree that the mess was ever cleaned up, and those that believed it was still thought 24 hours was far too long to leave it.

Their secondary concern was the frequency of the maintenance, stating it's well overgrown and weeds were also an issue. However, within the weeds they were concerned about the current spraying and the affect it had on their lawns, as well as the mowing spreading the weeds.

Majority of the group agreed it was the council's responsibility to maintain the verges, and those who did their own seemingly did it out of frustration of the current maintenance. Most said that council rates should be dropped if they were to do it.

A few of the participants had previously contacted the council regarding issues, however these were not specified. The group also agreed that social media is a preferred avenue of contact as they find it gets it done if they approach the council this way.

The Para and Central Ward's desired solution was driven by a low level of required maintenance. They were mildly concerned with the environmental effects of chemical edging and weed spraying; however they saw this as a potential solution still. Many weren't phased with the visual amenity, and some stated they would like it to be somewhat aesthetically pleasing though as long it was neat and low maintenance was priority. They were particularly interested in pavers and fake grass, however they mostly agreed as long as the current contract was being upheld, they would be satisfied.

They also thought that communication was key to improved satisfaction, agreeing a calendar and an SMS, and avenues of feedback, could improve the current contract.

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GROUP 4

NORTH AND EAST WARDS

MCGREGOR

TAN

RESEARCH. STRATEGY. SOLUTIONS.

	<p>Natalie: 34, Mawson Lakes 7 years in current suburb 7 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Carmel: 39, Salisbury East 7 years in current suburb 7 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Joanne: 49, Gulfview Heights 6 years in current suburb 49 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Michael: 44, Salisbury East 11 years in current suburb Unspecified years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Clare: 36, Mawson Lakes 20 years in current suburb 20 years in the City of Salisbury</p>
	<p>Andrew: 58, Salisbury East 4 years in current suburb 58 years in the City of Salisbury</p>

GROUP 4

KEY FINDINGS

Group 4 consisted of six participants of mixed ages, genders and suburbs from within the North and East Wards. The participants hailed from Mawson Lakes, Gulfview Heights and Salisbury East. A majority of participants owned their homes, with only two renting, and half worked either full or part time, the remaining being on a pension or conducting home duties.

The North and East ward's main likes about their area was the proximity to amenities and work, the reserves and open spaces, though two participants didn't like their area and preferred their previous suburbs though still within Salisbury council due to their community and proximity.

The main dislikes throughout the group and their respective suburbs was density, traffic, poor infrastructure and public safety.

The group disagreed that the current contract of verge maintenance was occurring consistently throughout the council. One person was aware they came every four weeks on a main road and agreed with that, however thought the back streets were overgrown. The other residents agreed they came either every three/four months, and others cited only having seen them once.

The primary concern with the verges for the group was inconsistency throughout the council. They agreed it was overgrown and messy in some areas, and other areas it was well maintained. Approximately half believed that verge only meant the side with the footpath as that it was their responsibility to maintain verges without as it wasn't being mowed by the council.

The secondary concern for the group was the mess – in both the quality of the verge

slashing and the grass clippings left behind. The group found the grass clippings weren't being collected at all, and it was all over roads, footpaths and private property. One participant was also concerned with the grass clippings being blown into reserves and lakes and the effect on the environment.

Majority of the group agreed it was the council's responsibility to maintain the verges as they were paying the rates for it, but most would still rather do it themselves or were currently doing it due to the dissatisfaction with existing maintenance. Some of the participants had previously contacted the council regarding verge issues, one very repeatedly, but most found their issues were left unresolved by the council and that there is no point attempting to give any more feedback for that reason.

The North and East ward's solutions were driven by a desire for consistency – though the opinions on how this could be achieved slightly differed throughout the participants.

Weed spraying was popular with some participants as it meant that the area was neat and tidy, but hated both others due to the look of it. Some of the residents favored if maintaining your own verge was encouraged by the council, through plant discounts or rate drops, whilst others preferred the weed spraying option or low maintenance concrete or stones. What they did agree on was that they would be content with the current contract if it was being fulfilled. They called for greater accountability, with better feedback systems, and communication prior to maintenance.

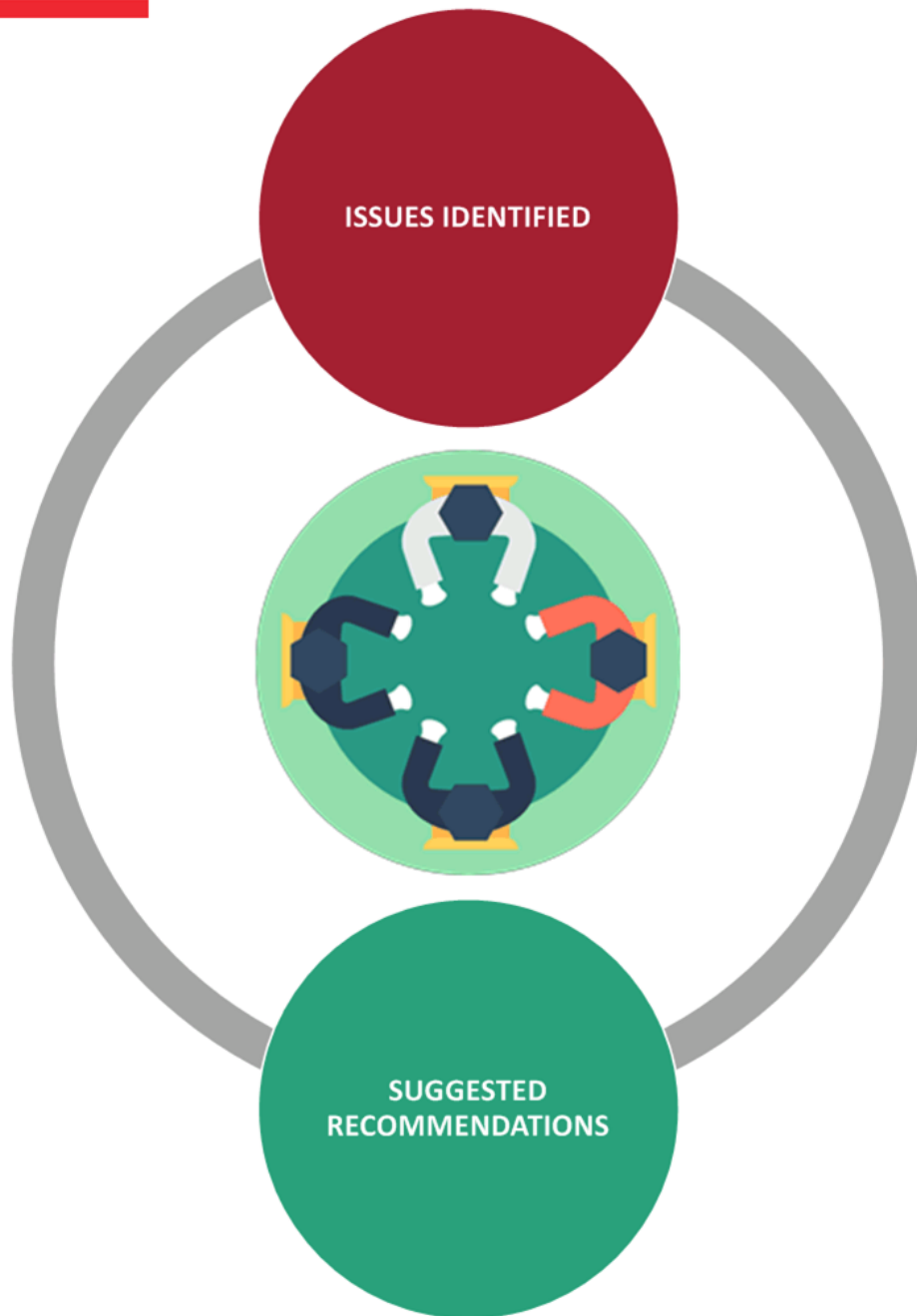
They particularly liked the idea of calendars for fridges, and being bale to submit photos of verges to the council.

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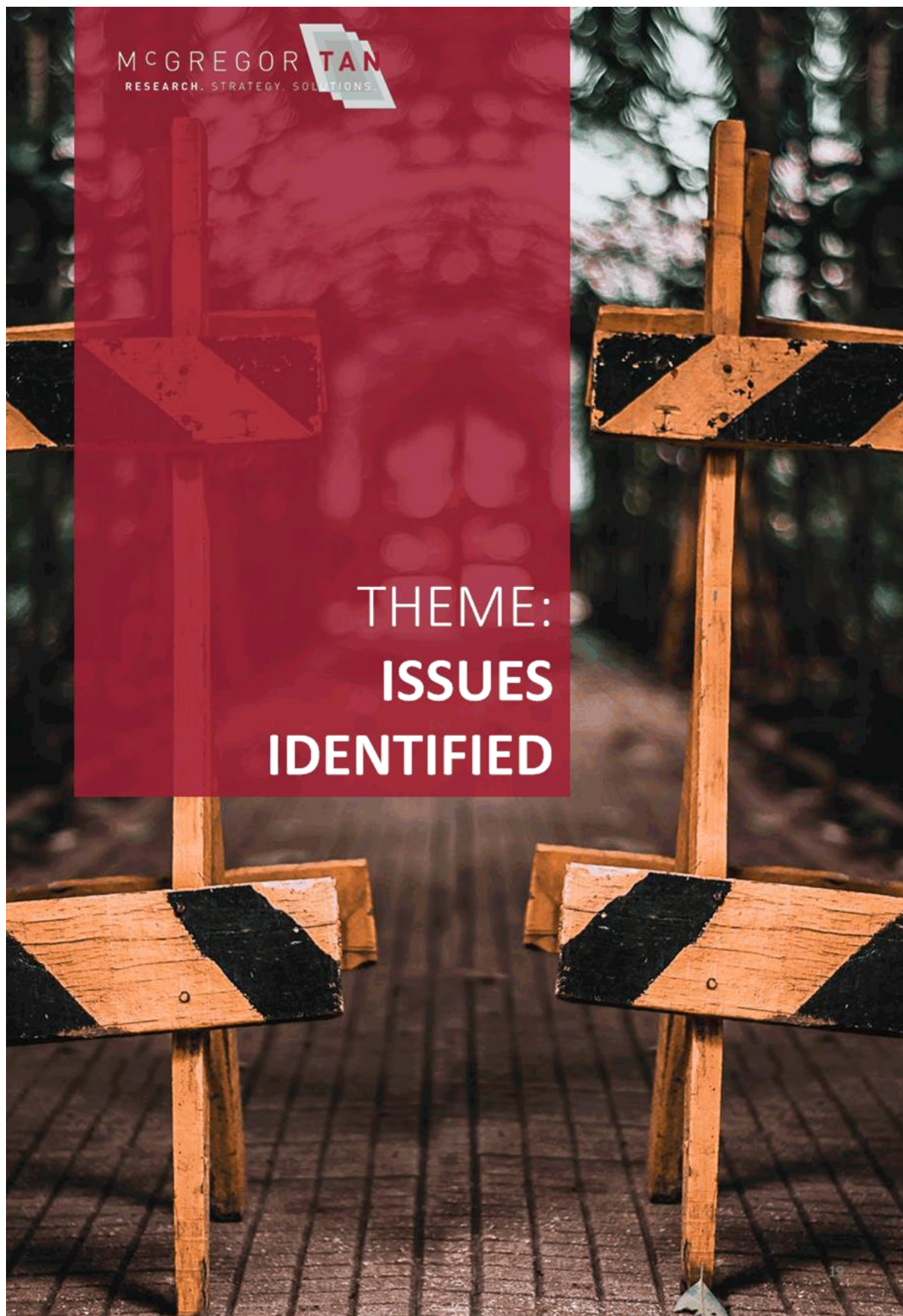


Item IBDSC4 - Attachment 4 - Verge Focus Groups - Unpacking Perceptions

KEY THEMES **SUMMARY**



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Item IBDSC4 - Attachment 4 - Verge Focus Groups - Unpacking Perceptions

CONTRACT FULFILLMENT:

ANALYSIS

Whilst each group came from different areas, there were many commonalities of their perceptions of verge maintenance. It was found, however, that Groups 1 and 2 shared similarities, likewise, Group's 3 and 4 held similar views.

Whilst a few participants from each group noted they saw contractors or the finished product of verge maintenance, there was consensus amongst all groups that they strongly disbelieved their verges were maintained on a 6-week cycle, with participants from the Para and Central Wards finding this standard a 'joke' that it happened that frequently. A resident from the Para and Central Ward stated they had to constantly ring council about this issue for it to be resolved, feeling quite irate; participants from other groups made mention of this also.

Only one participant from North and East Ward noted they saw contractors more regularly, stating between 4 weeks to every 3-4 months. Others did not hold this view.


Participants from the North and East Wards were dubious upon hearing the council met once a week to do an audit as the verges were unkept.

In particular, those from the Hills Ward and West and South Ward were more likely to do this, with the majority stating they do so already; this was as these areas were more community orientated and showed pride in the areas they lived in.

Whilst participants from Para and Central, and North and East Wards also maintained their own verge, the majority of North and Eastern ward residents felt it was up to the council to maintain the verge area, stating they 'pay enough council rates' and expected them to do this

Those from Para and Central wards identified potential issues that not all residents/ renters in the area own a mower, and would, therefore, be unable to mow their own lawns.

QUOTES	 CONTRACT FULFILLMENT
Hills Ward	<p><i>"I've seen them once or twice in two years maybe."</i></p> <p><i>"I know they do ours twice a year."</i></p> <p><i>"I would I thought it has been every quarter."</i></p> <p><i>"I thought it would have once a quarter."</i></p> <p><i>"They come through once a quarter maybe."</i></p>
West and South Ward	<p>What do you think happens with maintenance?</p> <p><i>"Rarely!"</i></p> <p><i>"They mow it occasionally."</i></p> <p><i>"oh, once or twice a year."</i></p> <p>If I was to tell you the road verge maintenance, comes 7 times a year on a 6-weekly cycle to residential streets</p> <p><i>"No way that's not true at all."</i></p> <p><i>"That's not true completely."</i></p> <p><i>"I can't say I would see them that regularly."</i></p> <p><i>"When I was at home for 4 months, I saw them once."</i></p>
Para and Central Ward	<p><i>"They would mow it eventually; you know they haven't been for a while as you can see they haven't done it."</i></p> <p><i>"it feels like twice a year."</i></p> <p><i>"If you're a more higher profile area it'll get mowed."</i></p> <p><i>"My road is a quiet little road, so never."</i></p> <p><i>"I reckon about 4 times a year."</i></p> <p>The verges are cut 7 times a year on a six-weekly basis</p> <p><i>"I don't believe a word of that – I've lived in my place 6 years brand new and I've seen them twice."</i></p>

QUOTES	<div>  CONTRACT FULFILLMENT </div>
North and East Ward	<p><i>"They come every four weeks...They look after it quite well because they know they will get a phone call, but it's pretty bad up the side streets."</i></p> <p><i>"Probably once every 3 or 4 months, but in winter they don't come more."</i></p> <p><i>"They're supposed to mow the verge, since we moved in 11 years ago, they haven't."</i></p> <p><i>"I've only seen them once."</i></p>

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QUALITY OF VERGE MAINTENANCE: ANALYSIS



The quality of verge cutting was an issue stating that whilst some areas were mowed, there would be other areas left with patches everywhere. For those who lived in low socio-economic areas stated their area appeared 'unsightly', in particular, noting how verges had deteriorated.

This poor quality drove them to do their own verges.

Residents were more so aware that maintenance has been done by the 'mess' left behind by contractors; this was a major source of dissatisfaction.

Whilst another contractor is supposed to clean up the mess left over by upon cutting the verges, several participants observed that this was not the case, being irate around the 'mess' or mowed grass being left on the streets. They noted it was rarely cleaned up, leaving the area looking unsightly.

A few participants, from each group, did not find this the case, however, stating other contractors cleaning up the mess the next day, but were dissatisfied with the outcome. Many observed the contractor's blowing grass into drains, gutters or lakes in which they were extremely displeased with. These participants did not find this process efficient nor effective as it clogs up their gutters, causing further issues in future.

Furthermore, litter was also a cause of issue, as they believed it was not being picked up at


all. Many stated contractors mowed over rubbish, making the litter situation worse, with one participant from the Hills Ward stating that rubbish was not getting collected prior, and therefore, was being mowed/ slashed over, producing confetti of rubbish which was also not cleaned.


To minimise the left over of grass clippings, it was suggested by one participant from the Para and Central Ward to have a 'catcher' on the whipper snipper to catch the excess grass.

One participant from the West and South Ward, whilst having well maintained verges, fallen tree branches from maintenance is left and never cleaned up, stating it stays there for weeks. Because of this, when it came time to mowing again, contractors would mow around it and leave patches of unmown grass.


PERCEPTION OF VERGE SLASHING


Many disliked the slashing of verges, preferring to have it hand mowed instead, as the quality of the slashing was subpar. Those from the Hills Ward felt contractors did not do a good job, with one stating she saw a contractor do an entire road in 20 minutes inefficiently. Further, if the maintenance was contracted on the same day as rubbish collection day, contractors would often cut around bins, rather than move them, leaving uncut sections.

QUOTES	 QUALITY
Hills Ward	<p><i>"No care, and it's up to here next to the trees etc, so no edging around the trees, and sticks and weeds out, and a bit of lashed grass in the middle."</i></p> <p><i>"They come in and make a terrible mess of the trees."</i></p> <p><i>"I agree with the overgrown grass, on the sidewalks, the verges, whatever and we pay top rates! That is what bugs me."</i></p> <p><i>"The council is neglecting the area – we pay top council rates in that area, and the only way the guys who mow the place do it is really loud, they miss places."</i></p>
West and South Ward	<p><i>"I go out and tell them please leave ours, as I do not like how they do it...when they do turn up, they don't do it in a line and when they spin there's bits left everywhere."</i></p> <p><i>"Messy – mix of weed and grass, bark, pebbles – it's just annoying, messy bark everywhere."</i></p> <p><i>"Sometimes you drive down the road, just talking about rubbish and things... Welcome to Salisbury, we live in a tip, this is just horrible."</i></p> <p><i>"Grass, weeds together, it's long, it's not mowed, the trees have dead things hanging off them, they're litter tangled up in it all, there's the whole look of it, we go for the edge of the road as well as well as the roundabout, it's not maintained of weeds or attended to if it gets out of shape."</i></p> <p><i>"Rubbish, overgrown grass and weeds, and they completely avoid around the tree where it gets tricky, and it makes it messy and it's obvious it hasn't been mowed."</i></p> <p><i>"The mowing is inconsistent, it never gets done, it ends up being long short long short."</i></p>
Para and Central Ward	<p><i>"They leave all the debris into the gutter and the footpath."</i></p> <p><i>"They don't cut it; they slash it and big chunks for it goes everywhere."</i></p> <p><i>"They don't go down low enough, and the footpaths aren't level."</i></p> <p><i>"They slashed rubbish and left it everywhere."</i></p>
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QUOTES	 QUALITY
North and East Ward	<p><i>"(They) don't take care of them, they plant bushes and don't maintain it -, when I reported the dead plants, they came and ripped up half and left the rest."</i></p> <p><i>"Oh, it's hit and miss – they should edge the concrete, but they'll just leave it – I'll walk through the reserve, and its beautiful and then it's these patches of grass."</i></p> <p><i>"They left a whole lot of a mess, they mowed, didn't bother to clean, all on the roads, and all over the footpaths."</i></p> <p><i>"They don't fertilise the grass, there's come great bits, but others are dead."</i></p>

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QUOTES	<div>  <h1>GRASS CLIPPINGS</h1> </div>
Hills Ward	<p><i>"They leave the grass everywhere."</i></p> <p><i>"If we mow, we get fined for blowing grass clippings, and the contractors do the exact same thing – we have to blow back into our yard and put it in the green bin, but they just blow it into the gutter and all over the road."</i></p> <p><i>"It's all over the road, all over our drive way, everywhere."</i></p> <p><i>"They slash up newspapers as they do the grass, or cans or whatever, and they don't clean it up."</i></p> <p><i>"If the verge is going to be cut, you just see the clippings."</i></p>
South and West Ward	<p><i>"The mess – all over your drive way, in the gutters."</i></p> <p><i>"I can't remember when I've last seen them, they used to clean up the day after, but you don't really see that anymore."</i></p> <p><i>"Messy, just rubbish that blows, does anyone else pick it up?"</i></p> <p>MOD: How do you know they've been?</p> <p><i>"The mess!"</i></p>
Para and Central Ward	<p><i>"They do mow ours, they leave all the debris into the gutter and the footpath, and if I did that, they'd be all over it, and it can be rained on and flow into the stormwater."</i></p> <p><i>"It's all over the footpaths, and taking it into my house and into the shops as they don't pick it up."</i></p> <p><i>"To mow it and leave it for 24 hours, you can't do that."</i></p> <p><i>"How hard is it to have a catcher? Like you say, they slash, they don't do a need a catcher when they slash it."</i></p> <p><i>"I notice the clippings in my driveway."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't know why they blow it; they blow it from one spot from the other."</i></p> <p><i>"I saw them blowing the lawn onto road."</i></p>
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QUOTES	<div>  <h1>GRASS CLIPPINGS</h1> </div>
Para and Central Ward (Cont.)	<p><i>"It's not a little bit of grass left on the roads, it's a lot of grass – to leave it for 24 hours is a disgrace – to see the grass everywhere is disgusting – if they're gone I shouldn't see that mess."</i></p>
North and East Ward	<p><i>"They left a whole lot of a mess, they mowed, didn't bother to clean, all on the roads, and all over the footpaths, and my hubby could have just done it and done it all nice, but no they did it and left a mess and didn't even come back to clean it up."</i></p> <p><i>"The grass left every where."</i></p> <p><i>"They are supposed to clean it up, it was going into the lake, and the ducks aren't coming down – they blowed the grass all in the lake, and I called and complained as they were killing the lake."</i></p>

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DISPARITY OF COUNCIL AREAS: ANALYSIS

The inconsistency of verge cuttings was an issue with residents, more so with those who lived in the Para, Central, North and West Wards, with many feeling that higher socio-economic areas get mowed more frequently compared to lower socio-economic areas.


This issue was mainly identified by residents/renters of the North and East Wards stating that their areas, in general, are not well looked after, with verge maintenance a part of this issue. Many stating their area was 'ignored', comparing it to other 'well-looked after' areas such as Mawson Lakes. This was observed by those who lived in the Hills Ward.

Further, those in the Hills Ward also noted differences within their areas. This group made comments of how other suburbs within the Salisbury area had better treatment compared to others, such as how Mawson Lakes had better upkeep and maintenance of the area compared to the

Gulfview Heights area. Others also compared their own area to the Salisbury town center, stating they were 'horrified' by how unkept Salisbury was.

Several in this group also compared their suburb to the Eastern suburbs in Adelaide, how that area was better looked after, had more pride. Similarly, one participant from West and South Ward made similar comparisons of the City of Salisbury and Golden Grove. However, one female noted she worked within the Eastern Suburbs area and stated residents there paid higher council rates, hence why their area was better maintained.

One participant from the North and East Ward noted they've never seen any type of weed management in her area, but noted other areas such as Bridge Road and Mawson Lakes were managed, feeling her area was forgotten. Many participants within this area displayed similar thoughts.

QUOTES	 DISPARITIES
Hills Ward	<p><i>"The local parks around here are left to their own devices, you have to go out of your way to certain good parks which are maintained."</i></p> <p><i>"Would be nice to be able to walk and be able to walk down at your local lake and it look nice as Mawson lakes."</i></p> <p><i>"Why does Mawson lakes look nice but Gulfview heights doesn't!"</i></p> <p><i>"I was horrified driving down the main street (of Salisbury), so why is it that it's unequal?"</i></p> <p><i>"We all pay rates; we all live here."</i></p>
South and West Wards	<p><i>"Golden Grove is beautiful, its colour coordinated, why can't we have that in our suburb?"</i></p> <p><i>"There's councils that are doing so much more elsewhere, I don't mind maintaining it, but there are councils that are making much better use of the land."</i></p> <p><i>"They could be smarter with what they do, in Queensland they have beautiful fully maintained rainforests in roundabouts which really take care of themselves."</i></p>
Para and Central Wards	<p>Nothing was stated.</p>
North and East Wards	<p><i>"I live on the boulevard so they do it all for me...but it's pretty bad up the side streets."</i></p> <p><i>"The major thing is consistency across the city of Salisbury, my area is nice, but they other areas, and they need to make it more even to make it an even area."</i></p> <p><i>"They don't do it in Salisbury Downs."</i></p> <p><i>"I've never seen weed management on my street, but I have seen on Bridge road."</i></p>
	<p>29</p>

CONTRACTORS VS COUNCIL:

ANALYSIS

There was the perception held by all groups that the current contractors in place have little care of their job with most finding the contractors the issue rather than the council. The main issue identified of the contracts was around missing spots when mowing verges, issues around the deliver of the work and what contractors are delivering of the contract.

It was perceived by residents of the Hills Ward that the contractors only care for their own profits at the end of the day and, therefore, don't do a proper job.

There was the general conclusion that contractors did not respect their surroundings, with numerous issues stated.

Hills Ward residents also expressed that they will get fined if they blow mow clippings onto the road, however, when contractors do this, there was no penalty for them; this caused many to be annoyed as the offcuts ended up in gutters, clogging it up. Residents of the West and South Wards held a similar opinion.

Residents of the West and South Wards observed:


- Those who slash their verges, hit fences

taking paint off;


- Contractors don't stop mowing/ slashing when residents walk past, making it dangerous; and
- Contractors have no care of the visual amenity and therefore leave a mess as they go;
- Those who do clean up the mess, blow it into gutters

Residents of the Para and Central Ward upon completion of trimming the verges, found fresh green grass all over parked cars. Many were irritated by this, with one participant stating that there should have been protective sheets in place to ensure cars do not get dirty. Many agreed with this statement and believed it should be common practice.

One participant from the North and East Ward noted how not one, but two different companies blew clippings into the neighbourhood lake, stating it was contaminating the water. She was horrified by this and rung council to complain. Whilst she was happy with the quick resolve from council, she was dissatisfied with the contractor's behaviour.

QUOTES	 CONTRACTOR V COUNCIL
Hills Ward	<p><i>"I think the problem is they have dodgy contractors, they're better having locals do it who actually care about the area, contractors are zooming around no care about anything except the profit in their pocket, and half the time I think they're getting paid then doing half the job."</i></p> <p><i>"Our council is being ripped."</i></p> <p><i>"There needs to be more contact between those on the mower and the contractor, they're not going to tell their boss they didn't mow this today."</i></p> <p><i>"What would be better is if they got rid of contractors and directly employ the people."</i></p> <p><i>"If you're reporting to the council, they're your bosses, you'll do a better job."</i></p> <p><i>"When the council puts the contract, the contractor's job is to make the most profit. If the council employees the people, they're not having to pay for the overheads of the company making the profit."</i></p>
South and West Wards	<p><i>"That it's outsourced, and it's inadequate, and the company clearly for the sake of saving, money isn't good enough."</i></p> <p><i>"I would like the council employees to take care of it, in the time it's been contracted out the appearance of the verges has deteriorated and it's disgusting."</i></p> <p><i>"My interaction with council, I've contacted them over the years regarding trees and shrubs, they come out, they're respectful, their customer service, their job they do we cannot fault ever, that's direct with the council, the contractors have no respect, a zero-care factor."</i></p> <p><i>"It certainly resonates with me that if someone lives and employed in this area, they'll have more care."</i></p> <p><i>"if they're actually employee with the council, I think it makes them more accountable."</i></p> <p><i>"I'd like to see my council rates, the council e responsible directly and not the contractors, to employ people and give them jobs, I think the other things are great, but we are fighting a losing battle working through a third-party contractor."</i></p> <p><i>"the council should take direct responsibility for how the rates are spent, and for the public land."</i></p>

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QUOTES	 CONTRACTOR V COUNCIL
Para and Central Wards	<p><i>"Maybe the council can do with a better method."</i></p> <p><i>"The contractors doing the work, they need to do spot checks."</i></p> <p><i>"there's difference between a someone higher up in the contractor saying oh yes it's done, can't imagine them going and checking."</i></p>
North and East Wards	<p><i>"I think that's why they contract out, because then they can shift responsibility but then there's no accountability."</i></p> <p><i>"the accountabilities means that if they don't do their job properly, they lose their contract they don't get paid."</i></p> <p><i>"Current contract is fine it just needs maintaining."</i></p> <p><i>"They just need to fulfil the contract."</i></p> <p><i>"They just need to actually do the job."</i></p>

PARKED CARS: ANALYSIS

Parked cars during planned verge maintenance days was an issue, primarily for those in the Hills, West and South Wards, and slightly for those in the Para and Central Wards. Those from North and East did not discuss this issue.


One participant from the Hills Ward appeared to be aware of how the contract worked stating that contractors had a certain time period to complete their task. This participant stated that if a car was in the way, contractors should leave a note on the car saying they would be coming back to cut the verges the next day and to kindly move their vehicle.

The majority, however, whether they were aware of the contract or not, did not see


such notes left on vehicles, with those from the West, South, Para and Central Wards recommending to leave a note/ card stating they will be back

Further, residents of the West and South Wards felt it was on the onus of the contractor to follow back if a car is in the way and ensure the area is mowed. It was deemed that if a contractor was unable to do their job, they should report this to council so they become aware; many felt this did not happen.

Overall, participants were unaware of the rules regarding parked cars and believe the system of returning in 24-hours is unlikely to be effective without communication surrounding it.

QUOTES	 PARKED CARS
Hills Ward	<p><i>"As far as I know, they go around, so they don't damage a car which is a good thing, but as far as I know they don't come back until that next six-week cycle, so you've got uneven grass."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't know why they can't email you and tell you when your verge is going to be cut so we don't park there."</i></p> <p><i>"A sign like what they put up for roadworks coming up etc – on this day this time no parking as there is verge cutting."</i></p> <p><i>"they should leave a message on the windshield of a car saying they're coming back to cut the verge and they should move it."</i></p> <p><i>"Even in your letterbox."</i></p> <p><i>"Do they reduce council rates for those affected by the parking, and say if you take responsibility for your verge, we won't raise your rates."</i></p> <p><i>"If they're going to do the same sort of are around that same six-week mark, they can send out a calendar as well, marking the days."</i></p>
South and West Wards	<p><i>"The contractor is responsible to follow back; they should report where they are not able to follow through."</i></p> <p><i>"Communication – like if water readers come and they can't get to it and leave a card, and they say they'll be backs, they have really lax council guidelines, that's all changing next year, but simple planning mistakes have caused this."</i></p> <p><i>"I'd like them to say so I can know not to have my car around to get clippings all over it, or to make sure the bins are out the way."</i></p>
Para and Central Wards	<p><i>"They potentially are going to damage they go around."</i></p> <p><i>"They're meant to put something between your car and the mowers so it doesn't get all over your car but they don't, and there's clippings all over your car."</i></p> <p><i>"They should come back the next day to mow again."</i></p> <p><i>"Notifications in letterbox that they're coming."</i></p> <p><i>"Logistics suggest you can't ever suggest that parking in those areas could stop, having seen some cars definitely covered in green grass, they don't want to come back next day, they're contractors, maybe enforce that they bring cardboard to cover the card."</i></p>

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QUOTES	 PARKED CARS
Para and Central Wards	<i>"If there's places like that, they shouldn't have grass there."</i>
North and East Wards	<i>"If you park on the street next to the verge, they need to cut the grass even I can do that"</i>

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ALTERNATIVE METHODS: ANALYSIS

EDGING

Edging was not frowned upon compared to weed treatment, with one resident of the Para and Central Ward stating that it is more efficient and did not need to be done as frequently, alleviating work for contractors.

However, a few noted that it could kill their lawn if not applied correctly. Another participant from the Hills Ward noted that pets would need to be indoors as it is poisonous.


Overall, chemical control maintenance was observed by many to turn their area into a 'dustbowl' in summer as it 'killed everything off'. Although they appreciated that whilst other councils used this, the City of Salisbury have bigger verges.


As this issue was not discussed deeper, it warrants further investigation.

WEED TREATMENT

Residents of the Hills Ward found it acceptable to use weed spray to maintain unkept verges, however stating, that whilst it was acceptable to spray flat grassed areas, anything near houses drew concerns that it would kill of their garden. The other wards, however, strongly disapproved with some citing concerns for health as well as concerns on the aesthetics of the area.

A few from each group, however, found it mildly acceptable to use sprays within the industrial area. Similarly, one participant from the Para and Central Wards noted that it may be acceptable to use weed treatments in the city center where it was deemed free from cars, gardens and parks, making it easier and safer to maintain the verges.

QUOTES	<div>  </div> ALTERNATIVE METHODS
Hills Ward	<p><i>"If we do weed treatment, we would have dust!"</i></p> <p><i>"There's some houses where no one is clearly going to do anything about it, and they need the spray."</i></p> <p><i>"My verge, because it's all native, you couldn't spray there as you'd kill everything around it as well – but the flat grassed areas, you could spray around there if it's more economical, and keep the weeds at bay."</i></p> <p><i>"They should spray around the industrial areas."</i></p> <p><i>"As long as it's not sprayed in my yard, my pets can't go on the lawn with the chemical edging."</i></p> <p><i>"Have to go around and make sure they do the manual edging thoroughly, and then make sure they do the chemical edge, and maintain the chemical edge."</i></p> <p><i>"Chemical edging, to have long term kill, the pesticides put your dog in danger for the 48 hours, all of the chemicals are dangerous."</i></p> <p><i>"I think that if you're using it around houses, people are going to be upset, because of their pets or their plants."</i></p>
South and West Wards	<p><i>"I hate it, they scare, what they're using terrifies me, and we know what these chemicals do to our bodies, and I get really scared when I see the council vehicles, it's one thing for me to be concerned, but I worry for the people spraying these things every day, I don't like the idea of it either being sprayed around primary schools."</i></p> <p><i>"I wouldn't want them spraying down my street – I just don't like chemicals, I'm allergic to things, even if they say it's noncarcinogenic, I have allergies, it can make me feel grubby."</i></p> <p><i>"the chemicals are residual anyway, they stay in that land for years – it's an unknown, its been questioned – I used it years ago and it was diagnosed with cancer from the same time they said in the US, and I used to sell it in the store, and the fact they're spraying it around where you live."</i></p> <p><i>"If they've got the centre of the main road, and they're spraying it – it's a touch and kill poison, what is that going to be that it's dirt – they're not going to have any grass."</i></p>

QUOTES	 ALTERNATIVE METHODS
Para and Central Wards	<p><i>"I love it – I love that there's no prickles, they don't have to mow it, t's uniform and tidy."</i></p> <p><i>"You were talking about just killing it off and having dirt ... and I don't want that."</i></p> <p><i>"Possibly in the city centre where you have a lot of general things around, and you don't have the issue of messing up people's cars or waiting for after hours."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't want that across the board as it looks horrible, and it summer it makes it dusty."</i></p> <p><i>"There's got to be a better way then spraying, it's so harmful to the environment and the people, I don't see much spraying my area much and you see the mist, and it's got to go somewhere."</i></p> <p><i>"It's harmful to the workers, the environment, and the animals."</i></p>
North and East Wards	<p><i>"It looks horrible, patches of dirt everywhere, it's tacky."</i></p> <p><i>"Onkaparinga does it, and it doesn't look that bad actually."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't mind it – you don't see it, it's not really ugly."</i></p> <p><i>"I haven't got a problem with spray, I would rather it tidy than not untidy."</i></p> <p><i>"As long as it's asthma friendly, I have four asthmatics in my house."</i></p>

OTHER ISSUES: ANALYSIS

SEASONALITY ISSUES

Participants from North and East Wards identified the lack of frequency of verge maintenance during the winter months, stating that their area looked like an 'overgrown forest'. In the summer months, however, verges were left unwatered and would turn into 'dust-bowls'. Because of this, many were inclined to maintain the own verges.

UNKNOWN WHEN VERGES WILL BE CUT


Participants from the Hills Ward took it upon themselves to mow their own verges as it was neglected. A few noted they managed their own verges due to the infrequency of contractors, stating they came sporadically and never on a known schedule, making it impossible to know when they would come to do their lawns.

SCHOOL ZONES AND VERGE SLASHINGS

It was identified by a few parents from each group or those who lived near schools that school zones were often ignored during scheduled verge slashings. This was as there were many cars parked in the area, in the way of contractors.

A few noted that verge maintenance should occur outside of school hours, for example on the weekends or between 10am to 2pm, when the influx of cars is low. However, one participant from the Hills Ward expressed concerns that teachers would often park outside the school, stating that cars would still be in parked there regardless.

QUOTES	<div>  OTHER ISSUES </div>
Hills Ward	<p>"MOD: My next question is how, if and when, you know the verge is going to be cut?" <i>*All: you don't know*</i></p> <p><i>"I live on a school road, so a big primary school and high school on my road, so there's cars parked every day, my bin doesn't get emptied, but maybe that's why they're not mowing my verge, I don't know."</i></p> <p><i>"Part of the solution is the same day every month, the school zone should be done on a Saturday or a Sunday after 10 o'clock."</i></p> <p><i>"7am till 3pm there's cars both sides, and some people park there to catch the bus."</i></p> <p><i>"Well if it's a school zone, it's the whole street, the council can come out and put out not standing zones like they do for events."</i></p>
South and West Wards	<p><i>"I do ours, because it doesn't seem to get done enough."</i></p> <p><i>"We normally keep it cut and do a good job, but if it's due to be mowed by them, but they don't do it."</i></p> <p><i>"Fact they don't even care enough to send them on a regular enough basis to actually maintain it."</i></p>
Para and Central Wards	<p><i>"In a school zone you'll never have no cars."</i></p> <p><i>"Sometimes there's a drop off zone so they could use that and give notice no parking."</i></p> <p><i>"The street I wrote has a high school, primary school and etc, so that whole street at school time is very busy, I'd assume they'd be sensible and not mow at those times."</i></p> <p><i>"This year the contractors had it easy till April when they got the first rain, they didn't have to do anything."</i></p> <p><i>"In winter time the issue is the weeds grow, and need to be cut down shorter."</i></p>

QUOTES	<div>  OTHER ISSUES </div>
North and East Wards	<p><i>"How are you going to do that in the winter they need to come more and summer they can come less and how is that going to work, the first 12 months were very hit or miss."</i></p> <p><i>"In winter they don't come more and it's a forest in winter I do it every 2/3 week myself."</i></p> <p><i>"A little more of a regular schedule, saying this is due to come today, let us know if you have many issues to investigate, because of the grass left every where."</i></p> <p><i>"Is there a publicly accessible schedule?"</i></p> <p><i>"I haven't seen it."</i></p>

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Item IBDSC4 - Attachment 4 - Verge Focus Groups - Unpacking Perceptions

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS: ANALYSIS



Below are the recommendations suggested by participants from each of the seven wards.

1. Communication needs to happen

Communication in general needed to happen for participants from each group with many noting they were unaware when and if verge maintenance happened.

Current forms of contact with council:

Those from the Hills, West and South Wards were found to contact council most frequently compared to the other wards.

Participants noted they frequently rang up council voicing the concerns about unmaintained verges, but felt that nothing was done about it stating that often verges were left untrimmed for long periods of time; many felt there was a lack of accountability if council outsourced their maintenance.

There was the perception that social media gets traction and attention with one participant from this ward, posting her complaints of verge maintenance on Facebook to gain the attention of council. She felt that, otherwise, her issue would not have been dealt with if she was to call or email the council

Preferred contact

There were a variety of channels each group preferred communication of verge trimming from council noting:

- **Email:** an email to be sent out notifying residents when verge maintenance was going to occur
- **Letterbox drop:** for those who were not as tech savvy, were older, or preferred paper methods would rather have a paper copy to place on their fridge at home, notifying when verge maintenance was to occur
- **SMS:** this was more so preferred by those from the Para and Central Wards
- **Social media:** this channel was considered to gain most traction and had the most wide audience spread
- **Have a sign:** having a sign stating that in the coming weeks maintenance was going to occur, notifying residents when work will be commencing and for how long
- **The council website was not a source of access:** many felt the website was not a source of gathering information or making complaints

2. The need for a feedback mechanism

It was suggested by those from the Hills, North and East Wards that there needed to be a feedback mechanism for council to go back to contractors when unhappy with the service provided.

Further, participants wanted an email or phone number specific to verge maintenance that residents can contact when a job was not done correctly. They wanted this to be a simple and easy way to relay their dissatisfaction back to council.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS: ANALYSIS (CONT.)

MCGREGOR **TAN**
RESEARCH. STRATEGY. SOLUTIONS.

3. Have council take care of verges instead of contractors as council does it better

All participants felt contractors were doing a poor job of maintain verges, and commented that the council could do a better job of maintaining verges.

Throughout discussions, many commented positively on the job the council was doing in other areas of business, with many wanting the same level of care/ experience in verge maintenance, suggesting this work should go back to council.

It was also strongly put forth that the council would be help better accountability compared to contractors.

A few participants from the Hills ward suggested the possibility to hire people within the City of Salisbury area as it created job growth. It was perceived that people within the council area would care for the area more and will therefore do a better job.

Further, a few from West and South Wards perceived the overheads would be lower if council did not outsource work, keeping it all in-house.

4. Send out calendar of when jobs will happen so residents are made aware

As there was a lack of knowledge of when contractors maintained verges, it was suggested by many for council to send out calendars of when verge maintenance occurred similar to how bin calendars are sent out.

Keeping the bin schedule in mind, participants also recommended monthly verge maintenance on the same day, citing the first Monday of every month as an example. This would make it uniform and would, therefore, know when to expect contractors to come.

5. The choice to maintain their own verges

There was some polarity regarding maintenance of residents own verges, with those from the North and East Wards stating they did not feel it was their obligation to look after their verges, but the councils. Although, those who opposed stated that if they did, they should receive a drop in council rates.

Overall, those from the Hills, West and South Wards, notably from Mawson Lakes and Gulfview Heights area, had a sense of pride and ownership of their area and home and felt empowered when taking ownership of their verges, more so compared to low socio-economic areas/ low communal aspects. They found it practical for individuals to look after their own verges, stating it was impractical for the council to maintain it all.

Other participants were also interested in encouragement through a variety of different ways, such as a community garden sale, however also agreed council led maintenance should still occur as they believed many people would still not maintain their verges, as identified by those from the North and East Wards.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS: ANALYSIS (CONT.)

MCGREGOR **TAN**
RESEARCH. STRATEGY. SOLUTIONS.

6. Suggestion to have other options instead of grass


The issue regarding verge maintenance called for a variety of different solutions. Most agreed just paving and extending the footpath would solve the issue, although more crease ideas also arose.

Suggestions included:

- Investment in smart landscaping where minimal effort is needed to look after greenery such as plants instead of grass; it was also perceived large grass areas costs council more money
- Those from the Hills Ward felt that

solutions that don't require the level of maintenance that is currently required would be beneficial to council, however, still maintain the visual amenity.

- Participants from Para, Central, North and East Wards recommended having more paved/ concreted areas instead of grassed areas, stating it would be easier to maintain and would be more cost effective.
- The option of bark or mulching was discussed from residents of North and East Wards but felt it would be more expensive in the long-term as it could wash away.

QUOTES	 SUGGESTIONS
Hills Ward	<p><i>"But that's the benefits of putting natives in but they aren't putting in natives."</i></p> <p><i>"Our native birds are not attracted, they can't feed on the seed, and the bugs aren't attracted from them."</i></p> <p><i>"The other options is too look at other landscaping where it needs to be mowed instead."</i></p> <p><i>"Put in some ground plants that don't need mowing instead."</i></p> <p><i>"Why do they need the grass verges anyway, the curb the sidewalk then my property, to we need to have the grass and the trees there, does it add anything?"</i></p> <p><i>"Why aren't we thinking about the box like that, or widen the footpaths and make them concrete...it's a thoroughfare, so widen it so there's no maintenance."</i></p> <p><i>"I think if you're doing your verge you should get a reduced rate."</i></p>
South and West Wards	<p><i>"Come down to town hall and get some free seedlings and you can come in for a small amount of money to plant the bulbs, like low cost options for the areas."</i></p> <p><i>"They could be smarter with what they do, in Queensland they have beautiful fully maintained rainforests in roundabouts which really take care of themselves, if they could invest in a smart landscaping plan with low maintenance that may be more expensive short term but cheaper in the long run."</i></p> <p><i>"An incentive, to do it yourself, like a cut on council rates, to do it yourself."</i></p> <p><i>"To have a community garden in the street would be an amazing."</i></p>
Para and Central Wards	<p><i>"The cost would have to come off the council rates."</i></p> <p><i>"There's a lot of people without lawn mowers, or access or afford, do City of Salisbury have a rent system? If you're going to encourage people to do these things, something needs to be able to access for a lot of people."</i></p> <p><i>"All the people near me have fake grass and it looks nice and it's tidy."</i></p>

QUOTES	 SUGGESTIONS
Para and Central Wards (Cont.)	<p><i>"Have the pavers and then the squares can have trees in them."</i></p> <p><i>"Maybe we need better species of plants in these areas that can survive the hot summers, like native species."</i></p> <p><i>"Ground creeper flower all year round, they don't look the nicest but better than nothing."</i></p> <p><i>"Concretes, pavers whatever but some sections with something there like trees, or plants to break it up – a nice flower bed in the middle."</i></p>
North and West Wards	<p><i>"I would be happy to pave them or fake grass."</i></p> <p><i>"Ground cover - like pygmy."</i></p> <p><i>"They could put in fruit trees."</i></p> <p><i>"Something like flowers, or just a discount, so I could buy then plants to put in the road verge, or ground cover on discount."</i></p> <p><i>"Just put down concrete – I would have rathered concrete at my old house."</i></p>

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