

**ANNEX A TO ITEM 3**  
**SECTION 136 CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**16 SEPTEMBER 1999**



**THE QUALITY OF COUNCIL SERVICES**  
**HELP US TO MEET YOUR NEEDS**

As part of the Government's review into providing "Best Value" for local services Milton Keynes Council is reviewing the services it provides. The aim is to test the quality of our services compared to the needs and expectations of our "clients" – the people of Milton Keynes.

As a first step we are undertaking a Pilot Study of our Landscape Maintenance service.

The quality of your local environment is heavily influenced by the way your Council maintains the public areas such as landscaped parks and open spaces. In Milton Keynes the Council is responsible for the appearance of roadside verges and the general maintenance of parks and open spaces – both in older areas of the borough and in established parts of the New City. The Council maintains all public playing fields; children's play areas, cemeteries and crematoriums, some allotments and the Emberton Country Park. We do not have responsibility for the linear parks, for example Campbell Park and Willen Lake, which are maintained by Milton Keynes Parks Trust.

It is only with your input that we can measure how we are performing and how to improve our service. So we would very much appreciate your assistance in completing the accompanying questionnaire, for return by 31<sup>st</sup> July 1999.

If you wish to make any additional points for consideration as part of this review, please add your comments to this questionnaire, or submit them on a separate paper.

## LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read each question and then circle the answers you feel are most appropriate.

### Q1.

Do you live in the Borough of Milton Keynes?

(a)	YES
(b)	NO

**25 of 43 Local Councils have responded not all have answered every question.**

### Q2.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the general standard of landscape maintenance?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Opinion N/A
(a) In your own locality	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
(b) Around your place of work		<b>9</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
(c) Throughout the Borough	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	

**With reservations - often areas are left between developers finishing and MKC taking over**

### Q3.

How do you rate the standard of maintenance of the following landscape features?

	Very Well Maintained	Well Maintained	Badly Maintained	Very Badly Maintained	No Opinion / Don't Use
(a) Grass Verges	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	
(b) Other Large Grassed Areas	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>
(c) Football Pitches		<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
(d) Cricket Pitches		<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>

(e) Shrub Beds	1	12	8	1	3
(f) Trees	3	12	3	2	3
(g) Children's Playground	2	11	4	1	4
(h) Public Rights of Way	2	11	4	4	1
(i) Emberton Country Park	6	8	1	1	4
(j) Cemeteries /Crematorium	2	8			8
(k) City Lakes	6	10	1		4
(l) Redways	1	12	2	3	4
(m) Shopping Building	6	13	1	1	1

**Playgrounds vandalised too often**  
**Shopping building, insufficient heating.**

**Q4.**

Would you be interested in any of the following changes?

	Very Interested	Interested	Not Very Interested	Opposed to	No Opinion
(a) More floral bedding schemes	5	6	7	2	
(b) Naturalised areas (meadow land)	5	12	3	1	2
(c) Closer mown grass areas and verges	4	12	5	1	1

**More cuts**

**Q5.**

Have you ever directed a complaint or an enquiry to the Landscape Department?

(a)	YES 13
(b)	NO 8

If YES, how satisfied were you with the .....

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Opinion
(c) Speed of response	1	8	3	1	
(d) Level of helpfulness	2	8	2	1	
(e) Ability to deal with problems	2	7	3	1	
(f) Final outcome	2	7	3	1	

### Q6.

Have you observed workmen engaged in landscape maintenance activities, e.g. mowing, weedkilling, and pruning?

(a)	YES 24
(b)	NO 0

If YES, how do you rate their performance in the terms of .....

	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion / N/A
(c) General impression	1	19	2	1	
(d) Getting on with the job	4	15	3	1	
(e) Standard of tidiness	1	11	8	3	
(f) Consideration towards public	2	12	4	2	2
(g) Completion of work		16	3	2	1

**Many trees and shrubs planted on Council estates not annual pruned. Interfere with the free passage of pedestrians on footpaths. Grass verges in bad state of repair with no repair work carried out for several years. No action against car owners parking on grass verges. Very poor weed control, road to kerb areas. Mowing of grass areas, grass not collected but left on public footpaths, dangerous to the disabled, children etc when left in wet rainy periods. Cost cutting has reduced standard of landscape maintenance.**

**The Clifton Reynes verges have over the past few years become less and less attractive and need defining. This is partly due to hedge and general weed invasion due to poor mowing and maintenance.**

No weed killing has been carried out in the parish of Emberton to date. Edges now need cutting back to restore path widths.

The Parish Council is happier now with verge maintenance than it has been for some time, largely they believe because of the contract supervisor. One issue that causes great consternation is parking on verges. Similarly, no sooner is everything looking nice when another cable supplier, even Council workers come along and rip it up and never is well reinstated, if at all.

Grass has grown more quickly this year, neither of the contractors have adjusted to this. Unsightly clumps of dead grass left after a visit being the norm both on grass verges and in the Recreation Ground. The local cricket club has been unable to play home games because of very poor state of the outfield. It is accepted that part of the fault lies with the Parish Council for not specifying the standards they required. Do Synergy have the equipment to meet the needs of the village which are equal to those of clubs in Milton Keynes and if yes how much different would the costs be.

Manor Road cul de sac is only half maintained some verges are cut others left. Durrans Court pathway leading to no47 is extremely overgrown blocking light from the flats. No brambles cut out at the cemetery. Fenny so they are left to overgrow in the gardens of Manor Road. Brambles should be cut back to the ground Sept/Oct and the remaining stump treated with a strong shrub killer. The remaining hedge would only need cutting back every three years Sept/Oct not springtime when birds are nesting.