

## Appendix 4 – Equipment used by other Local Authorities and comments on SHDC proposal

|                               | Approach and experiences   | Equipment used and pros/cons  | Other LAs comments on SHDC proposed equipment  | SHDC officer response/observations  |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| <b>South Somerset Council</b> | <p>Have some sites traditionally left to long grass at which they have undertaken cut and collect.</p> <p>In 2021 they introduced additional areas via 'no mow trials' and after being well received they will be expanding these areas in 2022.</p> <p>They targeted their 'no mow trials' working with supportive Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>They stress the importance of framing and path cuts, and also promotion of the schemes and signage where necessary.</p> <p>All of their arisings are removed from site in skips for green waste composting. They have had some 'vague' discussions about mini bio digesters.</p>  | <p>To date they have relied on a Kubota ride on mower that they already owned. They find this can cope with small-medium areas of long grass, but it has to be dry otherwise it clogs.</p> <p>They have used a contractor with a 'Bleccavator' to prepare sites on hire.</p>  | <p>In response to rolling out the cut and collect approach, they are looking at purchasing fit for purpose equipment for cut and collection – they too had been considering a compact tractor rear mounted flail with collector as per SHDC proposal.</p> <p>They are also looking at purchase of an Iseki 40" cut and collect tractor (cost of c.£15,000)</p> <p>They considered a small baler collector, but dismissed this as it adds another operation to the collection</p>                                   | <p>The South Somerset response acknowledges the proposed equipment for SHDC as appropriate. South Somerset having previously undertaken a review of the SHDC GM service in 2020 and understanding the service and sites well.</p> <p>The Iseki 40" cut and collect (or similar) is unlikely to be suitable to meet the variety of sites and SHDC purposes – whilst the machine would work well on small sites (and would undoubtedly be more manoeuvrable), it has a narrow cutting width, and a smaller collector than the compact tractor rear mounted flail collector – this would make cut and collection on larger sites significantly more time consuming.</p> <p>Such machines are also more expensive (c.£15,000) than the proposal (c.£10,000).</p> <p>Nonetheless such a machine would be worth considering in the future (if replacing expired machines) as they would work well for small sites and appear to have made incorporated features to make them more usable in wet conditions than standard/older ride on collector tractors.</p>                |
| <b>Dorset County Council</b>  | <p>Have several years experience (dating back to 2014) of cut and collect – often used as a national case study for cut and collect resulting in a reduction in grass vigour/growth rates and a resulting improvement in floral diversity</p> <p>For verge cuts, in year one, DCC reduced cuts from 6 cut and drops to 3 or 4 cut and collects. Within 2 or 3 years this has reduced to 2 cut and collects per annum</p> <p>They note that keeping the number of cut and collects at 4 initially will help to accelerate reduction in nutrient loading and vigour of grass growth – also this keeping the verges neat and tidy and keeping public onboard</p> <p>They note that wildflower establishment has happened naturally at most sites with</p> | <p>Use two brands of ride on, out front flail cutting mowers with rear collecting unit</p> <p>The general downside with this equipment being cutting in the damp and clogging – Dorset CC noting that in their experience one model they use (Iseki) cuts better than the other (Grillo).</p> <p>The other downside being cost – with a starting model at around £32,000.</p> | <p>They note that for bigger verges/wider areas that rear tractor (for compact or large tractors) mounted flails with collectors are efficient and work well</p> <p>They note that a compact tractor with rear flail and collector is relatively un-maneuvrable compared to a ride on mower.</p> <p>They also note that cutting is behind you which makes it more awkward to cut around obstacles on verges (trees, lamp posts, benches), compared to an out front mower which can easily cut around obstacles</p> | <p>The GM Manager considers that ride on, out front mowers commonly struggle in damp conditions (based on experience with SHDC's existing Grillo mower) – it is noted that Dorset officers indicate that this differs according to model.</p> <p>The type of equipment used by Dorset CC is certainly a perfectly sound approach.</p> <p>The manoeuvrability of the equipment used by Dorset is better than that proposed, albeit a compact tractor with rear mounted flail and collector is sufficiently manoeuvrable for most of our sites, and this has been taken into account when drawing up the proposals layer. It is accepted that for 'fiddly' verges a ride on, out front flail with collector is likely to be more suitable, however this is offset by the rear mounted flail collector being more efficient for larger sites.</p> <p>The cost of the rear mounted flail and collector (c.£10,000) is considerably cheaper than a ride on, out front flail mower and collector (starting at £32,000) and accordingly seems a sensible initial approach.</p> |

|                              |   |  |  |   |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
|                              | <p>reduced fertility, whilst at a minority they have accelerated this with overseeding</p> <p>On Dorset verges they tend to be able to dispose of cuttings onsite (behind tree/shrub/bramble areas) and out of sight – they have found the cuttings rot naturally and have not had to pay for disposal offsite</p>  |  |  | <p>It is noted that SHDC has a ride on Grillo currently which is reaching the end of its useful life (and is earmarked for replacement in 2023). This machine is primarily used for cutting grass on the Salcombe contract where cut and collect is necessary.</p> <p>It may be possible that when replacing this machine, options can be explored to purchase a model better suited to cut and collect including longer grass to diversify the equipment SHDC have to deliver more biodiversity focused cutting.</p>   |
| <b>Plymouth City Council</b> | <p>Over the last 5 years they have introduced various wildflower meadows (at nature reserves, highway verges and amenity areas), as well as managing longer grass, on cut and collect regimes.</p> <p>For larger sites, arisings are cut and baled, with some used as green hay and majority taken for green waste composting.</p> <p>They have varied approach – nature reserves have used a stone burier to prepare a site before being sown as perennial meadows, whilst a few prominent roadside sites are sown as annual meadows.</p> <p>At some sites they have introduced cut and collect and allowed wildflower in the seedbank to establish once fertility is reduced. In some case they have scarified and added yellow rattle.</p> | <p>Successfully use a stone burier (similar to ‘Bleavator’) to prepare their wildflower meadow sites.</p> <p>They have found that some ride on machines do not cut well in the wet (e.g. Grillos). They note such machines being fairly top heavy may struggle on gradients. They are (via their contractor) going to trial a new Grillo out front flail cutting mowers with rear collecting unit</p> <p>PCC use a ride on mower with baler attachment but find the setup awkward.</p> <p>They contract out the cutting and baling of larger sites – they are not keen on this approach, given the netting associated with bales, and also the need for separate trips to collect bales.</p> | <p>Consider that the SHDC proposal for a compact tractor with rear mounted flail collector sounds sensible and consistent with PCC’s approach.</p> <p>They note that cut and collection (with a flail collector and collection box as SHDC propose) would be a useful approach on some PCC verge sites given the ability to undertake the operation in one pass, whilst reducing nutrients and speed of grass growth.</p> <p>They note SHDCs proposal for disposal of green waste at a site near Brixton is the same approach as in PCC.</p> | <p>There are some similarities between the PCC and proposed SHDC approach.</p> <p>This including the approach to leaving some sites and managing under cut and collect to see what flowers naturally grow once fertility is reduced. They also undertake the same site preparation approach as is proposed for SHDC sites (using a stone burier). Equally, they focus on perennial meadow, but recognise the importance of annual flowers in some situations.</p> <p>The removal of cuttings to a green waste composting facility is the same.</p> <p>With the approach contracted out, and in many cases much larger sites in Plymouth, the cutting approach is different, namely cut and baling which is more appropriate for large sites.</p> <p>This approach is not considered appropriate for SHDC sites. SHDC sites generally being small-medium, and not suitable in general for large tractor cutting. Cut and baling also requires repeated passes including to collect bales. The proposed SHDC approach is a single pass which is more efficient in terms of staff time.</p> <p>The PCC approach to small sites, is currently not as effective as they would like, and they are seeking to address this with alternative equipment, not dissimilar to the approach proposed by SHDC officers, or that of Dorset CC.</p> |