

Impact Assessment

Reduce All Activity Around Verge Maintenance
from the start of April 2024



Impact Assessments (IA) are a process of assessing how our proposals and decisions might impact upon different types of people and communities and developing proposals in line with relevant legislation.

This is a legal requirement, and ensures the Council considers key legislation, including Equalities, Welsh language, Future Generations, Socio-economic Duty and Risk when developing proposals.

It will also help the Council make the best possible decisions for the people of Powys.

1. Proposal Information

Author Name	Lyn Parry
Head of Service	Lyn Parry – Acting for Operational Highways / Matt Perry – acting Director
Portfolio Holder	Jackie Charlton
Proposal title	Reduce all activity around verge maintenance from the start of April 2024
Description of proposal	Reduce all activity around verge maintenance from the start of April 2024 which will include a reduction of grass cutting sites to encourage biodiversity and rewilding of verges. Trial areas will be set up across the county to monitor this to determine if this can be rolled out across all areas in the future and help with future budget management. The reduction around verge maintenance will also include a reduction in weed spraying, litter picking and tree maintenance. Trunk roads are not the responsibility of Powys County Council and any issues would need to be directed to WG.

2. Savings and Consultation

Profile of savings delivery

2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028+	Total Savings
0	173,000	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Further information

Click or tap here to enter text.

Consultation requirements

Consultation required?	No
Union consultation date	Click or tap to enter a date.
Staff consultation date	Click or tap to enter a date.

Public consultation date

Click or tap to enter a date.

Consultation plan (or justification where no consultation is required)

This would need to be communicated with the public as there is no doubt the service will be receiving more complaints around a reduction in verge maintenance. Trial areas for rewinding of verges would need to be agreed with local members. A social media strategy would be a means of communicating this reduction especially around the biodiversity and rewinding of verges.

3. Impact on other service areas, geographical areas, and data protection

1a. Impact on other service areas

There would be an impact on the helpdesk in dealing with an increase in requests around a reduction in verge maintenance due to an increase in complaints especially around safety.

1b. Impact on geographical locations

All areas across Powys would be equally affected by this proposal.

1c. Data protection impact assessment

Will the proposal involve processing the personal details of individuals?

No

Is Powys County Council the data controller?

Yes

Further information

Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Impact on well-being goals including Welsh language and equalities

1d. A prosperous Wales

Impact

None

Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1e. A resilient Wales

Impact	Increase in Biodiversity, rewilding of verges and a reduction in carbon emissions
Impact Rating	Good
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1f. A healthier Wales

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1g. A Wales of cohesive communities

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1h. A globally responsible Wales

Impact	Increase in biodiversity, rewilding of verges and a reduction in carbon emissions
Impact Rating	Good
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1i. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Using Welsh

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Promoting Welsh

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Sports, Art & Recreation

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1j. A more equal Wales

Age

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Disability

Impact	It may affect residents walking along uncut verges
Impact Rating	Poor
Mitigation	Could a 1metre strip be cut as a walkway.
Mitigated Rating	Good

Gender Reassignment

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Marriage or Civil Partnership

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Race

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Religion or belief

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Sex

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Sexual Orientation

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Socio-economic Duty

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1k. Evidence

We have reduced the grass cutting regime previously from 4 cuts down to 3 full cuts but now only carry out 2 safety cuts and just one full cut in September

5. Impact on key guiding principles & workforce

1l. Sustainable development principles

Long-term

Impact	A reduction in verge maintenance will improve biodiversity, rewilding of verges and provide a reduction in carbon emissions across the county but may lead to an increase in complaints being received and the service acting on these to ensure safe passage for residents as part of the 1980 Highways Act
Impact Rating	Unknown
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Collaboration

Impact	Currently in partnership with 3 wildlife trusts and biodiversity officer and will also look at the reduction of our RVNR sites cutting regime. Maybe reduce the number of sites and carry out better management of the remaining ones.
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Involvement (including Communication & Engagement)

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Prevention

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

Integration

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1m. Impact on the workforce

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1n. Impact on payroll

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1o. Welsh language impact on Staff

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1p. Impact on apprenticeships

Impact	None
Impact Rating	Neutral
Mitigation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Mitigated Rating	Choose an item.

1q. Evidence

Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Likelihood and risks

Risk 1

Increase in complaints

Likelihood score	4	Impact score	3	Risk rating	12
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Mitigation

Good communication and understanding of the proposed reduction in grass cutting. A social media strategy would be a means of communicating this reduction especially around the biodiversity and rewilding of verges.

Residual likelihood score	3	Residual impact score	2	Residual risk rating	6
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Risk 2

Increase of invasive species such as ragwort and Japanese Knotweed due to not cutting to present frequency on verges which will increase the use of pesticides to control this which goes against our current policy on use of pesticides to control invasive species. .

Likelihood score	2	Impact score	3	Risk rating	6
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Mitigation

Leave the present grass cutting schedule in place.

Residual likelihood score	1	Residual impact score	1	Residual risk rating	2
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Risk 3

Not having the correct equipment to cut to the new schedule thus the service requiring investment in this which would remove any potential savings.

Likelihood score	2	Impact score	4	Risk rating	8
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Mitigation

Leave the present grass cutting schedule in place

Residual likelihood score	1	Residual impact score	2	Residual risk rating	2
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Risk 4

Costs of dealing with ad hoc complaints under the highways act for safe passage due to reduction of grass cutting programme.

Likelihood score	3	Impact score	3	Risk rating	9
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Mitigation

Ensure all complaints are dealt with within the defect categorisation raised.

Residual likelihood score	2	Residual impact score	3	Residual risk rating	6
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Risk 5

Increase in road traffic accidents due to lack of visibility at junctions etc. And costs associated in dealing with these if liable.

Likelihood score	3	Impact score	4	Risk rating	12
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Mitigation

Ensure all complaints are dealt with within the defect categorisation raised to protect liability.

Residual likelihood score	2	Residual impact score	3	Residual risk rating	6
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7. Overall summary and judgement

Outline assessment

Although there is a financial benefit in this reduction of verge maintenance it doesn't come without risk. The current grass cutting schedule is at a bare minimum as it is. We currently carry out 2 safety cuts in May and July as that is when we currently get the most complaints and when the grass is at a height requiring cutting. The 3rd cut which is carried out in September onwards is then a full width cut, and this then also helps us control the growth of unwanted invasive species as well as briers, saplings etc. Should the proposal go through we would still have to act when the service receives complaints to ensure safe passage as part of the highways act and to ensure clear visibility when drivers are pulling out of junctions etc. Some residents however also currently complain that we cut our verges to much so this reduction would help address some of their concerns. There may also be an issue that the current grass cutting equipment is not suitable for the new regime of grass cutting so an investment may be required to buy new equipment to cope. Our current equipment is purchased based on the current cutting regime so further investment in larger equipment may be required to cope with the new cutting regime due to verges being cut less. Costs in dealing with ad hoc complaints and road traffic accidents which if proved are PCC fault due to not complying with the defect categorisation raised when reported could also remove any potential savings. This will however improve biodiversity on our roadside verges, and this provides a good structure on which to achieve that.

Cabinet reference

Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Additional evidence

Click or tap here to enter text.

9. Monitoring arrangements

Currently monitor around the number of complaints we receive throughout the grass cutting season.

Review date

01/04/2025