

Proposed Grounds maintenance specification

2027-2031

1. General Description of the Service

1.1 Overview

1.1.1

The Service Provider shall deliver the Grounds Maintenance Service in full compliance with this Specification and all associated appendices. No deviation, omission, or alternative method shall be implemented unless authorised in writing by the Supervising Officer.

1.1.2

The Service Provider shall maintain all land and assets for which Karbon Homes holds responsibility, including but not limited to:

- public open spaces;
- communal housing environments;
- landscaped areas;
- grassed areas;
- hedges, shrubs, borders, swales, and associated soft landscape features.

1.1.3

All sites shown within the Appendix 2 mapping documents are indicative only. The Service Provider shall accept all sites in their existing condition and shall not submit claims relating to site condition, access constraints, or pre existing dilapidation.

Any such dilapidation shall be rectified to specification standard within Year 1 of the Contract without additional payment.

1.2 Scheduled Work

1.2.1

The Service Provider shall carry out all scheduled works defined within this Specification, including the following mandatory work categories:

- maintenance of grassed areas;
- maintenance of shrub beds, hedges, roses, borders, and planted areas;
- cleansing activities, including litter removal, weed control, and leaf clearance;

- herbicide applications to Hard Surface Areas (where permitted);
- winter services including gritting, snow clearance, and grit bin replenishment in line with Karbon Gritting Policy.

1.2.2

The Service Provider shall determine—at its own cost—the labour, plant, equipment, and operational frequencies required to achieve all performance standards. Failure to allocate adequate resources shall not constitute grounds for non-performance.

1.2.3

Each map area shall be completed in full before the Service Provider proceeds to the next. No partially completed area shall be left unless approval is issued by the Supervising Officer.

1.3 Acquisition and Disposal of Sites

1.3.1

Karbon Homes may add new sites or remove existing sites at any time. The Service Provider shall accept new sites at the contracted rates and shall cease work on removed sites immediately upon instruction. No additional payments shall be made for mobilisation or demobilisation. Unless there are major changes (with discussion) E.g.: site removed or added.

1.4 Use of Chemicals and Environmental Requirements

1.4.1

No plant growth regulators shall be used unless explicitly authorised in writing by Karbon Homes.

1.4.2

The Service Provider shall minimise use of chemicals and shall use only biodegradable, non-persistent, low toxicity products in accordance with legislation and this Specification.

The use of Glyphosate or any glyphosate-based product is prohibited.

1.4.3

Chemical fertilisers shall not be used.

1.4.4

The Service Provider shall prevent pollution of land, water, or air. Any pollution event caused by the Service Provider or its subcontractors shall be remedied at the Service Provider's cost.

1.4.5

All waste materials shall be disposed of at appropriately licensed waste facilities. Green waste shall not be sent to landfill. Hazardous waste shall be disposed of in accordance with The Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 and subsequent amendments.

1.4.6

Only peat free products shall be used for all operations under this Specification.

1.5 Health and Safety

1.5.1

The Service Provider shall comply with all statutory Health and Safety requirements, including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and shall at all times protect its employees, Karbon Homes customers, and the public.

1.6 Vehicles and Plant

1.6.1

All vehicles, plant, and equipment shall be maintained in good working order, taxed, insured, and free from oil or fuel leaks.

Handheld machinery shall be maintained to eliminate the risk of fluid spillage.

1.7 Noise

1.7.1

The Service Provider shall comply with BS 5228 (2014) relating to noise control on open sites and shall conduct all operations in a manner that avoids nuisance to customers and the public.

1.8 Hours of Working

1.8.1

Working hours shall be:

- 0730–1800 Monday to Friday
- 0800–1600 Saturday

Work outside these hours shall not be undertaken without written permission from the Supervising Officer.

1.9 Inclement Weather

1.9.1

Work shall cease when weather conditions render operations unsafe or likely to cause damage.

Suspension of work shall not relieve the Service Provider of its duty to complete all tasks by programme deadlines unless authorised in writing.

1.10 Code of Conduct

1.10.1

The Service Provider shall comply with the Karbon Contractor Code of Conduct at all times.

1.11 Complaints

1.11.1

All complaints received shall be reported to the Supervising Officer within 24 hours and responded to

in writing. Failure to comply shall constitute a contract default.

Contractors should provide their insurance details just in case a claim wants to be made

1.12 Assessment of Standards

1.12.1

Weekly work reports shall be submitted by 0930 every Monday.

Quarterly performance meetings shall be attended as required.

Any works identified as non compliant shall be re performed or credited in accordance with the Pricing Schedule.

1.13 Out of Hours Contact

1.13.1

The Service Provider shall provide an out of hours contact number, staffed until 22:00 daily, for emergency instructions.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this Specification, the following definitions shall apply in all cases without exception.

Where a term is not defined, the Supervising Officer's written interpretation shall be final.

2.1 Arisings

All material generated as a result of any grounds maintenance activity including, but not limited to:

- grass cuttings;
- hedge and shrub trimmings;
- leaves;
- weeds and root materials;
- branches and pruning's;
- litter and debris removed as part of maintenance operations;
- edgings and soil crumbs resulting from turf or bed edging.

All arisings shall be collected and removed from site on the same day unless otherwise instructed in writing.

2.2 Cleanse / Cleansing / Clean / Sweeping

The complete removal and disposal of all unwanted material from Hard Surface Areas. This includes:

- litter, leaves, detritus, mud, sand, grit, chippings, and organic debris;
- animal fouling and carcasses;
- spillages including oil, vomit, or bodily fluids;
- deposits resulting from fly tipping;
- unwanted vegetation of any height, type, or density.

All waste produced during cleansing operations shall be transported to a licensed disposal site and disposed of legally.

Emergency cleansing shall be carried out immediately upon instruction.

2.3 Cut and Collect

A grass cutting operation where all clippings are collected mechanically and immediately removed from the grassed area during the same visit.

A clean finish free of clippings and debris is mandatory.

2.4 Daily

Every operational day of the calendar year excluding Bank Holidays.

If daily tasks fall on a Bank Holiday, they shall be completed on the next operational day unless directed otherwise.

2.5 Dog Faeces

Any excrement from any domestic animal.

Removal and disposal shall be undertaken at every visit.

Persistent fouling to be reported to Supervising Officer

2.6 Edging to Footpaths

The use of a half moon edger or equivalent tool to form a clean, straight, vertical edge between turf and any adjacent hard surface.

Edging shall restore the original line and prevent grass encroachment.

2.7 Frequency Based Maintenance

Any operation required to be delivered at a fixed interval stated in the Specification.

Failure to meet a frequency constitutes non compliance.

2.8 Hard Surface Areas

All non-vegetated surfaces including:

- tarmac, concrete, block paving, resin, gravel paths;
- car parks, access roads, driveways;
- play area surfacing;
- any other constructed surface.

These areas shall remain free of weeds, moss, detritus, or obstructions at all times.

2.9 Leaf Clearance

The removal and disposal of all fallen, windblown, or accumulated leaves.

No leaf build up that creates slipping hazards, obstructions, or aesthetic detriment shall be permitted.

2.10 Litter

All unwanted material, whether organic or inorganic, including but not limited to:

- rubbish, packaging, plastics, glass, metal;
- detritus, grit, salt residues;
- dumped items (small scale only);
- animal fouling.

Large scale fly tipping shall be reported immediately and will be removed under separate instruction unless expressly included.

2.11 Sharps

Hypodermic needles, syringes, razor blades, and drug related paraphernalia.

All sharps shall be handled in accordance with COSHH Regulations and disposed of as clinical waste.

All discoveries shall be reported to the Supervising Officer immediately.

2.12 Performance Based Maintenance

Any operation where the Contractor is responsible for determining the method and frequency required to achieve the stated performance standard.

Failure to achieve the standard shall be deemed non compliance regardless of frequency applied.

2.13 Pesticides

Any chemical substance for the management of pests, weeds, fungi, algae, or moss.

Only products authorised by the Chemicals Regulation Division (HSE) may be used and:

- Glyphosate is prohibited;
 - Neonicotinoids are prohibited;
 - Only biodegradable, low toxicity products may be used.
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2.14 Disposal Site

A facility licensed under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for the disposal of specific waste types.

The Service Provider shall be responsible for all disposal fees and legal compliance.

2.15 Obstacles

Any fixed or movable feature located within or adjacent to grassed areas including, but not limited to:

- street furniture;
- trees and shrubs;
- walls, fences, and boundaries;
- posts, bollards, utility covers;
- play equipment.

The Service Provider shall avoid causing damage to obstacles during any maintenance operation.

2.16 Removal and Disposal of Litter

The systematic collection and lawful disposal of all litter present in any area maintained under the Contract.

2.17 Removal and Disposal of Sharps

The identification, collection, containment, and disposal of sharps strictly in accordance with clinical waste regulations.

Immediate reporting to the Supervising Officer is mandatory.

2.18 Scalping

Any grass cutting action resulting in removal of turf surface or cutting of grass to a level that causes visible deterioration or damage.

Scalping is prohibited.

2.19 Scarify / Scarification

The mechanical removal of dead thatch and creeping stems from turf to promote renewed growth and aeration.

2.20 Supervising Officer

The designated Karbon Homes representative authorised to issue instructions, assess compliance, and interpret the Specification.

Their written direction shall be binding.

2.21 Trimming Grassed Edges

The removal of grass overhang using long handled shears or equivalent tools to maintain a clean edge around obstacles, beds, and structures.

2.22 Weed

Any undesired vegetation, including but not limited to broadleaf weeds, grasses in non grassed areas, self seeded saplings, or vegetation defined by the Supervising Officer.

2.23 Weed Free

A condition where no more than 15% of any surface is covered with weeds, no weed exceeds 50 mm in height or spread, and no weed is allowed to reach seeding stage.

3 Maintenance of Grassed Areas.

3.1 General Requirements

3.1.1

The Service Provider shall maintain all grassed areas identified within Appendix 2 and any additional areas added to the Contract during its term. All grass maintenance operations shall comply with the requirements of this Section.

3.1.2

The Service Provider shall assess every site in advance and determine appropriate machinery, access arrangements, operational methods, and safety controls. No

additional payments shall be claimed for failure to identify operational constraints at tender stage.

3.1.3

All grassed areas shall be maintained to the required standard for their allocated maintenance code (A, B, C or D).

Failure to achieve any standard shall constitute non compliance.

3.2 Categories of Maintenance

3.2.1

All grassed areas are assigned one of four maintenance categories:

- Code A — Cut and Collect (25–50 mm)
- Code B — Open Plan Cut (25–75 mm)
- Code C — Open Plan Cut (50–75 mm)
- Code D — Rough Cut (50–100 mm, twice yearly)

3.2.2

The Service Provider shall deliver all requirements associated with the designated code, including height of cut, frequency, method, cleanliness, waste removal, and edge presentation.

3.3 Code Specific Requirements

3.3.1 Code A — Cut and Collect (Maintained at 25–50 mm)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Mow and collect clippings every 10 working days to achieve 14–16 cuts per season (March–October).
2. Remove all arisings from site on the same day.
3. Maintain a finished grass height of 25–50 mm with no deviations exceeding ± 10 mm.
4. Use pedestrian or ride on machines appropriate to area size and ground conditions.

5. Prohibit herbicide use around obstacles; strimming only is permitted.
 6. Present all edges cleanly trimmed and all adjacent hard surfaces free of debris at completion.
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3.3.2 Code B — Open Plan Cut (Maintained at 25–75 mm)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Mow every 10 working days to achieve 14–16 cuts per season.
 2. Allow clippings to disperse evenly, ensuring no clippings remain on footpaths, play surfaces, roads, or hardstandingshardstanding's.
 3. Maintain a finished height between 25–75 mm.
 4. Strim all edges and obstacles on the same day as mowing.
 5. Maintain bed edges for spring and summer bedding areas.
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3.3.3 Code C — Open Plan Cut (Maintained at 50–75 mm)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Mow every 20 working days to achieve 7–8 cuts per season.
 2. Maintain an even distribution of clippings with no deposition on hard surfaces.
 3. Maintain finished height within 50–75 mm with no scalping permitted.
 4. Complete trimming of edges and obstacles during the same visit.
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3.3.4 Code D — Rough Cut (Maintained at 50–100 mm, Twice Yearly)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Complete two cuts per year at times instructed by the Supervising Officer.
 2. Maintain a finished height of 50–100 mm, with consistent coverage and no large missed areas.
 3. Maintain a 1.5–2 m margin around the perimeter of rough cut areas to Code B standard.
 4. Prevent clippings from spreading onto paths, roads, or hard surfaces.
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3.4 Operational Requirements for Codes A–D

3.4.1 Machinery and Equipment

The Service Provider shall:

- Use equipment appropriate for the area, terrain, finish standard, and cutting height.
 - Ensure all machinery is sharp, properly set, and in correct working order at all times.
 - Avoid use of heavy machinery where it would damage turf, edges, obstacles, or soft ground.
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3.4.2 Pre Mowing Inspections

Before mowing any area, the Service Provider shall:

1. Remove all stones, litter, dog faeces, toys, debris, and foreign objects.
2. Report any hazards, damage, or abnormal ground conditions to the Supervising Officer immediately.

Failure to remove hazards prior to mowing shall make the Service Provider liable for all resulting damage.

3.4.3 Cutting Quality and Turf Protection

The Service Provider shall:

- Maintain an even, uniform cut with no scalping, ridging, uncut strips, or wheel ruts.
- Reinststate at the Service Provider's cost any damage to turf, levels, or surfaces resulting from poor operation or inappropriate machinery.
- Restore any damage to street furniture, trees, shrubs, walls, or hard surfaces.

Repairs shall be completed within 72 hours unless otherwise directed.

3.4.4 Edging and Strimming

All edging and strimming shall be completed on the same day as mowing.

The Service Provider shall:

- Maintain crisp, straight edges using hand tools; herbicide edging is prohibited.
 - Trim around trees without damaging trunks; guards shall be installed where required.
 - Prevent grass encroachment onto hard surfaces at all times.
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3.4.5 Clean Down and Waste Removal

The Service Provider shall:

1. Remove clippings from all adjacent hard surfaces before leaving site.
 2. Remove all arisings from Code A areas on the same day.
 3. Prevent clippings from entering drains, gullies, or watercourses.
 4. Leave all areas clean and free of debris.
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3.4.6 Completion of Cycles

Each full mowing cycle shall be completed before the next cycle begins.

No area may be left partially completed without written approval.

3.4.7 Use of Herbicides Around Obstacles

The Service Provider may use herbicide to maintain obstacle perimeters only where permitted, subject to:

- A maximum treated radius of 100 mm
 - Prohibition of use on all Code A areas
 - Compliance with chemical restrictions stated in Section 1.4
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3.4.8 Protection of Trees and Shrubs

Damage caused by mowing operations shall be rectified at the Service Provider's cost. Replacement of damaged trees or shrubs shall be with like for like species and size.

3.4.9 Wet Ground Conditions

Where ground conditions would cause damage, the Service Provider shall:

- Suspend mowing;
- Notify the Supervising Officer;
- Resume mowing only when conditions permit;
- Complete all necessary remedial actions to return the grass to compliance.

All remedial actions shall be completed without additional payment.

3.4.10 Mowing Season

The mowing season shall operate from third week of March to third week of October, unless amended by the Supervising Officer.

4. Hedge Maintenance

4.1 General Requirements

4.1.1

The Service Provider shall maintain all hedges identified within Appendix 2 and any additional hedges added to the Contract during its duration.

4.1.2

Tractor mounted flail cutting shall not be used unless explicitly authorised in writing by the Supervising Officer. Pedestrian or handheld hedge cutting equipment shall be used where hedges are adjacent to paths, buildings, windows, utilities, or customer access routes.

4.1.3

The Service Provider shall ensure all hedge works are carried out safely, without obstruction to residents or the public, and in accordance with all legal restrictions on hedge cutting periods (see Section 4.7).

4.2 Scope of Hedge Maintenance

4.2.1

The Service Provider shall undertake:

- Cutting and shaping of hedge sides and tops

- Removal of all current season growth
- Removal of all lodged arisings
- Removal of weeds and vegetation at hedge bases
- Clearance of litter, debris, and obstructions
- Removal of self-seeded saplings within hedge lines
- Control and management of ivy
- Identification and reporting of hedge defects, dieback, or required replacements

4.2.2

The Service Provider shall maintain all hedges within the Karbon Homes boundary lines. Overhanging growth onto footpaths, roads, windows, or access/egress routes shall be removed immediately.

4.3 Hedge Maintenance Standard (Code X)

4.3.1 Frequency and Timing (Code X)

The Service Provider shall carry out hedge cutting twice annually:

- Autumn/Winter Cut: October–November
- Winter/Spring Cut: January–February

No hedge cutting shall occur outside these periods unless written authorisation is provided by the Supervising Officer, and unless compliant with all legislative restrictions (Section 4.7).

4.3.2 Cutting Requirements

During each Code X operation, the Service Provider shall:

1. Remove 100% of the current season growth.
2. Maintain hedge dimensions to the agreed specification with no deviation exceeding ± 25 mm.
3. Produce hedge sides that are straight, vertical, and uniform, unless a tapered profile is specified in writing.
4. Produce hedge tops that are level, even, and perpendicular to side faces.

5. Retain any ecologically significant features only where approved in writing by the Supervising Officer.
6. Hedges must not exceed 2.3 m in height.

4.3.3 Removal of Unwanted Vegetation

The Service Provider shall remove:

- All small self-seeded saplings, including (but not limited to) elder, ash, willow, sycamore, and birch.
- All non-native, invasive, or alien species.
- All suckers, bramble, bindweed, nettles, or vegetation encroaching into hedge structure.
- Any growth obstructing sight lines, access to properties, utilities, or pedestrian routes.

No sapling or invasive growth shall be permitted to persist between cycles.

4.3.4 Ivy Management

The Service Provider shall:

- Control ivy to prevent structural suppression, shading out, or distortion of hedge form.
- Remove heavy or smothering ivy growth.
- Retain limited ivy only where ecological value is beneficial and where authorised in writing by the Supervising Officer.
- Ensure ivy removal does not expose bare stems in a way that compromises hedge health; staged removal may be instructed.

4.3.5 Arisings and Site Cleanliness

The Service Provider shall:

1. Remove all arisings from hedge tops, sides, bases, and surrounding areas on the same day.
2. Ensure no debris remains lodged within hedge structure.

3. Dispose of all waste at a licensed green waste facility.
 4. Leave all areas clean, free of debris, and free of obstruction.
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4.4 Operational Requirements

4.4.1 Wildlife and Environmental Compliance

The Service Provider shall:

- Comply fully with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- Cease works immediately where active nests or protected species or other wildlife is present.
- Report all ecological constraints to the Supervising Officer immediately.

No works that risk harm to nesting birds shall be permitted.

4.4.2 Hedge Structure and Framework

The Service Provider shall:

- Maintain a strong and stable framework appropriate to hedge species and height.
 - Maintain width appropriate to site constraints and height ratio.
 - Prevent hedge encroachment beyond the Karbon Homes boundary or into public rights of way.
 - Ensure hedge widths do not impede sight lines, pedestrian access, or vehicle movement.
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4.4.3 Reporting Requirements

The Service Provider shall notify the Supervising Officer immediately upon identifying:

- Hedge sections requiring renovation or replacement
- Disease, dieback, gaps, pest issues, or structural instability
- Invasive species (e.g., Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed)
- Damage caused by vandalism or vehicle impact

All reporting shall include location, extent, and recommended actions.

4.4.4 Litter and Weed Removal

The Service Provider shall:

- Remove all litter, weeds, and detritus from hedge bases during each visit.
- Remove all arisings and leave hedge bases clean and visible.
- Prevent weed encroachment into hedge lines or onto paths.

4.4.5 Prohibited Practices

The Service Provider shall not:

- Use growth retardants.
- Create uneven, stepped, or scalloped hedge faces.
- Damage adjacent structures, trees, or fencing.
- Leave arisings embedded in hedge branches.
- Undertake works in prohibited cutting periods.

4.5 Safety and Public Protection

The Service Provider shall:

- Implement all required traffic and pedestrian management measures.
- Prevent obstruction of footpaths, entrances, and driveways.
- Maintain safe exclusion zones where powered equipment is used.
- Protect properties, vehicles, and glazing from debris or tool damage.

4.6 Damage and Remediation

Any damage caused by hedgecuttinghedge cutting operations, including but not limited to:

- fencing,
- walling,
- glazing,

- signage,
- street furniture,
- trees or shrubs,

shall be made good by the Service Provider at their own expense within a timescale set by the Supervising Officer.

4.7 Legislative Compliance — Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024

All hedge maintenance operations shall comply fully with the Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024, including:

- Prohibited cutting periods
- Protection zones around hedgerows
- Prohibited damaging activities (e.g., deep cutting, harmful root disturbance)
- Notification requirements for qualifying removal or works
- Retention obligations for legally protected hedgerows
- Protection of hedgerow bases and root structures
- Requirement to avoid severe or harmful cutting outside allowed periods

No work that risks regulatory breach shall be undertaken.

Where notification to the Local Authority is required, the Service Provider shall not proceed until written approval is received through Karbon Homes.

4.8 Completion Standards

Upon completion of hedge cutting operations, the Service Provider shall ensure:

- All hedge faces are uniform and structurally sound.
- No overhang remains onto paths, carriageways, or neighbouring land.
- All arisings are cleared.
- All bases are weed free and litter free.
- No safety hazards remain.
- The site is left in a clean, neat, and professionally presented condition.

5. Cleansing and Associated Activities

5.1 General Requirements

5.1.1

The Service Provider shall undertake all cleansing activities necessary to maintain all Karbon Homes sites in a safe, clean, hygienic, and presentable condition at all times.

5.1.2

All cleansing operations shall be performed at every scheduled visit unless otherwise stated, and shall include litter removal, sharps removal, leaf clearance, weed control on hard surfaces, moss control, and winter service duties.

5.1.3

All waste generated during cleansing operations shall be removed from site on the same day, transported safely, and disposed of at a licensed facility.

5.2 Removal and Disposal of Litter

5.2.1 Standard of Cleanliness

5.2.1.1

At every visit, the Service Provider shall inspect all areas listed in the Appendices and shall remove all litter, including but not limited to:

- general rubbish
- fly tipped small items
- packaging, plastics, cans, bottles
- paper, cardboard, foil
- food waste
- broken glass
- organic litter (e.g., fruit fall)
- cigarette waste
- wind blown debris

5.2.1.2

All litter shall be removed from:

- grassed areas
- shrub beds, rose beds, flower borders
- beneath, within, and at the base of hedges
- trees and woodland edges
- hard surface areas
- car parks, pathways, communal areas, bin stores
- play areas and surrounding safety surfaces

No litter shall remain upon completion of the visit.

5.2.2 Disposal Requirements

5.2.2.1

All collected litter shall be removed from site the same day and transported to a licensed disposal facility.

5.2.2.2

Where recycling is possible, the Service Provider shall segregate waste appropriately.

5.2.2.3

Failure to remove litter in accordance with this clause shall constitute non compliance.

5.2.3 Sharps and Clinical Waste

5.2.3.1

Sharps, needles, syringes, blades, or any drug related paraphernalia shall be collected using approved sharps handling equipment only.

5.2.3.2

Sharps shall be disposed of strictly in accordance with:

- COSHH Regulations
- Clinical waste handling protocols
- Any applicable local environmental health requirements

5.2.3.3

All discoveries of sharps or clinical waste shall be reported to the Supervising Officer immediately, with date, time, location, and photographic evidence where permissible.

5.2.4 Dog Faeces

All dog faeces found during any visit shall be removed and disposed of at a licensed waste facility or dog waste bin. No dog faeces shall be left on site under any circumstances.

5.2.5 Reporting Responsibilities

The Service Provider shall report to the Supervising Officer:

- damaged structures (fences, walls, signs, play equipment)
- tree defects, fallen branches, wind damage, hazards
- abandoned items, repeat fly tipping locations
- graffiti or vandalism
- anything posing risk to residents or the public

Emergency hazards shall be reported immediately.

Non urgent issues shall be reported no later than the end of the next working day.

5.3 Herbicide Treatment of Weeds on Hard Surface Areas

5.3.1 Weed Control Requirement

5.3.1.1

The Service Provider shall maintain all designated Hard Surface Areas with no more than 15% weed cover at any time.

5.3.1.2

No individual weed shall exceed 50 mm in height or spread.

5.3.1.3

No weed shall be permitted to reach seeding stage.

5.3.1.4

Where weeds are in flower, the Service Provider shall remove them mechanically, not chemically, as part of a system of integrated weed management.

5.3.2 Chemical Restrictions

5.3.2.1

Only biodegradable, low toxicity herbicides authorised for use under UK regulations shall be used.

5.3.2.2

Glyphosate and glyphosate based products are strictly prohibited.

5.3.2.3

All chemical use shall comply with environmental requirements and Section 1.4 of this Specification.

5.3.3 Application Frequency

5.3.3.1

The Service Provider shall apply herbicides as often as necessary as part of a system of integrated weed management to achieve the performance standard.

Fixed frequencies are not provided; outcomes are mandatory.

5.4 Leaf Clearance

5.4.1 General Leaf Removal

5.4.1.1

The Service Provider shall remove all fallen or wind blown leaves from all areas during leaf fall season or whenever build up occurs.

5.4.1.2

The Service Provider shall give priority to:

- footpaths
- hard standings
- play surfaces

- drains, gullies, channels
- building entrances
- car parks

5.4.1.3

No leaf accumulation shall be permitted to create hazards, block drainage, or detract from site appearance.

5.4.2 Cut and Collect Areas

5.4.2.1

In Code A areas, leaf collection is mandatory on every visit during the leaf fall season.

5.4.3 Disposal

5.4.3.1

All leaves shall be removed from site on the same day and disposed of at a green waste facility.

5.5 Moss Clearance

5.5.1 Safety Requirement

5.5.1.1

All Hard Surface Areas shall remain free from moss at all times.

5.5.1.2

Any presence of moss that creates slip risk shall be removed immediately using mechanical or approved chemical methods.

5.5.1.3

Resulting debris shall be collected and removed from site.

5.6 Gritting and Snow Clearance

5.6.1 Service Scope

5.6.1.1

The Service Provider shall carry out gritting and snow clearance at the properties listed in Appendix 3 between 06:00 and 18:00, or upon request by Karbon Homes.

5.6.2 Priority Areas

The Service Provider shall prioritise:

1. main access paths
 2. subsidiary pedestrian routes
 3. fire exit routes
 4. car park pedestrian routes
 5. entrances and access ramps
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5.6.3 Method of Snow Removal

5.6.3.1

Snow may be removed using hand tools or appropriate machinery. Machinery shall not be used where risk of damage exists.

5.6.3.2

Any damage caused by machinery shall be remedied at the Service Provider's cost.

5.6.4 Prohibited Practices

5.6.4.1

The Service Provider shall not pile snow onto plant beds without written approval.

5.6.4.2

Snow piles shall be placed to preserve pedestrian and vehicle access.

5.6.5 Materials

5.6.5.1

All road salt shall comply with BS 3242:1994.

5.6.5.2

The Service Provider is responsible for procuring and maintaining adequate stock.

5.7 Grit Bin Replenishment

5.7.1

Grit bins listed in Appendix 3 shall be replenished at the start of the winter season with bags of salt.

5.7.2

Replenishment during the season shall be undertaken upon request from Karbon Homes.

6. Maintenance and Care of Shrub Beds and Herbaceous Borders

6.1 General Requirements

6.1.1

The Service Provider shall maintain all shrub beds and herbaceous borders identified within the Appendices and any additional beds added during the Contract term.

6.1.2

Maintenance operations shall include:

- weed removal
- pruning
- shaping
- litter removal
- soil cultivation
- edging
- removal of arisings
- management of overhanging growth
- reporting of defects or plant health issues
- Removal of self-seeded saplings within shrub beds
- Control and management of ivy

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6.1.3

The Service Provider shall ensure all shrub beds and borders remain clean, weed free, well defined, aesthetically maintained, and safe for residents and users of the site.

6.2 Code Y — Maintenance and Care of Shrub Beds and Herbaceous Borders

6.2.1 Pre Work Cleanliness and Preparation

Before undertaking any operation, the Service Provider shall:

1. Remove all litter, debris, and foreign materials from each bed.
2. Remove and lawfully dispose of all arisings on the same day.
3. Inspect the bed for hazards, pests, diseases, invasive species, and obstructions.
4. Report all abnormalities to the Supervising Officer immediately.

No maintenance activity shall begin until the bed is fully cleared of litter and debris.

6.2.2 Weed Management

6.2.2.1

The Service Provider shall remove all weeds from shrub beds every 4 weeks between 1 March and 31 October, ensuring each bed is left fully weed free at the end of each visit.

6.2.2.2

No weed shall exceed 50 mm in height or 15% spread of area. No weed shall reach flowering or seeding stage.

These two contradict each other, needs to be clearer.

6.2.2.3

Weed removal shall be carried out manually or by mechanical means only. Herbicide use within shrub beds is prohibited unless explicitly authorised by the Supervising Officer.

6.2.2.4

Suckers, brambles, nettles, or invasive species (e.g., bindweed, ground elder) shall be removed completely at each visit.

6.2.3 Edging

6.2.3.1

The edges of shrub beds shall be cut, defined, and maintained at every visit to:

- preserve the original bed shape
- prevent grass encroachment
- maintain neat presentation

6.2.3.2

Edging shall be performed using manual edging tools. Herbicidal edging is prohibited.

6.2.4 Pruning and Management of Shrubs

Timing

6.2.4.1

The Service Provider shall carry out pruning and shrub care operations three times per year, scheduled at appropriate horticultural intervals based on species.

6.2.4.2

All hard pruning and reductions shall be carried out between mid October and mid March only, in full compliance with wildlife legislation.

Standard of Work

The Service Provider shall:

1. Prune each shrub in accordance with good horticultural practice for the species.
2. Maintain a strong structural framework to promote long term health.
3. Maintain shape, balance, and form consistent with the original planting design.
4. Encourage flowering wood where required for species such as roses and flowering shrubs.
5. Remove all branches that:
 - o obstruct sight lines
 - o overhang paths, windows, utility meters, or highways
 - o impede access or egress
 - o cause hazards to residents or the public

6. Maintain shrubs to their intended footprint without allowing excessive spread.

6.2.5 Ecological and Legal Compliance

6.2.5.1

All pruning works shall comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Where active nests or protected species are present, work shall stop immediately, and the Supervising Officer shall be notified.

6.2.5.2

No operations shall disturb wildlife habitats without written authorisation.

6.2.6 Quality and Technique Requirements

6.2.6.1

All cuts shall:

- be clean and precise
- avoid tearing or crushing
- be made at appropriate pruning points for the species
- avoid damaging buds or main stems

6.2.6.2

Incorrect cuts, improper pruning, or damage caused by poor technique shall be rectified at the Service Provider's cost.

6.2.6.3

Where shrubs have been incorrectly pruned to the extent that remediation is impossible, the Service Provider shall replace them with a like for like specimen at their own expense.

6.2.7 Cultivation of Beds

6.2.7.1

The Service Provider shall manually cultivate shrub bed soil to:

- break surface crusting

- alleviate compaction
- improve aeration
- enhance water infiltration
- improve nutrient availability

6.2.7.2

Surface soil shall be left level, friable, and free of footprints and depressions.

6.2.8 Management of Overhanging or Obstructive Growth

6.2.8.1

During every visit, the Service Provider shall cut back any shrub growth that:

- overhangs footpaths
- obstructs visibility
- interferes with property windows or doorways
- blocks meter access
- encroaches onto highways or driveways

6.2.8.2

Shrubs shall not be pruned into rigid or artificial shapes unless expressly required.

6.2.9 Removal and Disposal of Arisings

6.2.9.1

All arisings from pruning, weeding, edging, and cultivation shall be removed immediately after each operation.

6.2.9.2

Arisings shall not be left within the bed, on surrounding hard surfaces, or on adjacent grassed areas.

6.2.9.3

All waste shall be disposed of at a licensed green waste or composting facility.

6.2.9.4

On completion of all work, the Service Provider shall rake and tidy the bed to remove footprints, smoothing the surface and restoring professional appearance.

6.3 Completion Standards

On completion of each maintenance visit, the Service Provider shall ensure:

- Beds are weed free.
- Edges are clean, uniform, and clearly defined.
- Shrubs are pruned to species appropriate standards.
- No overhang or obstruction remains.
- Soil surface is cultivated and tidy.
- All arisings are removed from the site.
- No hazards, litter, or debris remain.
- The area presents a neat, professional, and well maintained appearance.

7. Acceptable Standards

7.1 General Requirements

7.1.1

The Service Provider shall ensure that all works undertaken across all disciplines (grass cutting, hedge maintenance, shrub bed maintenance, cleansing, and associated operations) meet the minimum acceptable standards set out in this Section.

7.1.2

All work shall be completed to a professional, uniform, and consistent standard at every visit.

No task shall be left partially completed, untidy, or below the standards described herein.

7.1.3

Photographic examples provided within this Section represent the required standard. Any work falling below these benchmarks shall be deemed non-compliant and subject to re work or financial deduction.

7.2 Acceptable Standards — Grass Cutting

7.2.1

Grass cutting shall produce:

- A uniform, even cut across the full area
- No scalping, gouging, ridging, or missed strips
- No uneven cutting or visible wheel marks
- No clumps of cut grass left on the surface
- All edges trimmed and defined
- All adjacent hard surface areas left free of clippings

7.2.2

The final appearance shall match or exceed the standard represented by the “Acceptable – Grass Cutting” reference images in Appendix 7.

7.2.3

Any visible imperfections (e.g., uncut patches, excessive clippings, poor strimming technique) shall be remediated immediately at the Service Provider’s cost.

7.3 Unacceptable Standards — Grass Cutting

7.3.1

The following conditions are unacceptable:

- Missed areas or inconsistent cut patterns
- Grass cut too short (scalping)
- Excessive clippings visible on grass or hard surfaces
- Strimmer damage to trees, posts, fences, or buildings
- Grass encroachment onto paths due to inadequate edging
- Wheel ruts from inappropriate machinery
- Areas left partially cut

7.3.2

Any of the conditions above shall trigger immediate re work or contractual deduction.

7.4 Acceptable Standards — Hedge Maintenance

7.4.1

Hedges shall:

- Be uniformly trimmed to a consistent height and width
- Have sides cut to straight vertical lines
- Have tops cut level with no uneven ridges
- Have no protruding branches or missed sections
- Be free of lodged arisings
- Be shaped in accordance with Code X requirements
- Not obstruct footpaths, windows, access routes, or sight lines

7.4.2

Completed hedge work shall match or exceed the standard shown in the “Acceptable – Hedge Maintenance” reference images.

7.5 Unacceptable Standards — Hedge Maintenance

7.5.1

The following conditions are unacceptable:

- Tearing, ragged, or rough cuts
- Uneven height or width
- Scalloped, stepped, or patchy appearance
- Arisings left lodged in the hedge
- Any overhanging branches obstructing access
- Cuts exposing large bare sections due to poor technique
- Failing to remove saplings, invasive species, or heavy ivy

7.5.2

Any such result shall be rectified immediately at the Service Provider’s expense.

7.6 Acceptable Standards — Shrub Beds

7.6.1

Shrub beds shall:

- Be fully weed free (no more than 15% cover, no weed >50 mm)
- Have clean, sharp, and defined edging
- Contain shrubs shaped according to good horticultural practice
- Be free of litter, debris, and arisings
- Have neatly cultivated soil with no footprints or depressions
- Present a tidy, well maintained appearance consistent across the site

7.6.2

The quality of presentation shall match or exceed the “Acceptable – Shrub Beds” reference images.

7.7 Unacceptable Standards — Shrub Beds

7.7.1

The following are unacceptable:

- Visible weeds or invasive plants within beds
- Untidy edges, encroaching grass, or misshapen beds
- Poor or incorrect pruning techniques
- Overgrowth obstructing paths, windows, or metering points
- Arisings left in beds or on surrounding surfaces
- Soil left compacted, rutted, or un cultivated

7.7.2

Any of the above conditions shall result in required re work at the Service Provider’s cost and/or contractual deductions.

7.8 Consistency Across All Sites

7.8.1

All work across all sites maintained under this Contract shall be:

- Consistent

- Professional in presentation
- Delivered to the same approved standard regardless of site size, location, or frequency of visit

7.8.2

Any inconsistency between sites will be treated as service failure.

7.9 Failure to Meet Acceptable Standards

7.9.1

Where work completed by the Service Provider fails to meet the standards specified in this Section:

- The Supervising Officer may require immediate rectification
- Rectification shall be completed within a timescale set by Karbon Homes
- No additional payment shall be made for re work
- Financial deductions may be applied in accordance with the Pricing Schedule and Contract Terms

7.9.2

Repeated failure to meet acceptable standards shall constitute a service default and may invoke escalation procedures under the Contract.

8. Swale Maintenance

8.1 General Requirements

8.1.1

The Service Provider shall maintain all swales identified in the Appendices and any swales added to the Contract during its duration.

8.1.2

Swale maintenance shall ensure the swale remains:

- fully functional for water conveyance and storage
- unobstructed

- well vegetated with appropriate species
- free of litter, blockages, and hazards
- compliant with environmental and drainage requirements

8.1.3

The Service Provider shall prevent any activity that risks:

- damaging the swale structure
 - reducing infiltration capacity
 - impeding water flow
 - destabilising banks
 - compromising safety or ecological value
-

8.2 Regular Maintenance Requirements

The following activities shall be carried out at the minimum frequencies stated.

8.2.1 Litter Removal (Monthly)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Remove all litter from the swale area, including:
 - o channels
 - o bases
 - o banksides
 - o vegetation
 - o inlet and outlet areas
2. Ensure litter is removed before any grass cutting or vegetation works.
3. Dispose of all litter at a licensed facility on the same day.

No litter or debris shall remain after the visit.

8.2.2 Grass Cutting (Monthly)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Cut swale grassed areas on a monthly basis using equipment suitable for soft, uneven, or moisture retaining ground.
 2. Ensure all grass cuttings are collected and managed on site in approved wildlife piles or compost piles.
 3. Avoid blocking channels, inlets, outlets, or water flow paths with cuttings.
 4. Prevent any scarring, rutting, or compaction caused by machinery.
 5. Maintain grass to the height specified by the Supervising Officer or to an appropriate height that allows free flow while maintaining ecological value.
-

8.2.3 Shrub Management (Annually)

The Service Provider shall:

- Perform annual pruning of shrubs associated with swales.
 - Remove dead, diseased, or damaged growth.
 - Ensure shrubs do not impede water flow, obstruct inspection access, or reduce swale capacity.
 - Maintain species appropriate forms consistent with drainage design.
 - Remove all arisings on the same day.
-

8.3 Occasional Maintenance Requirements

8.3.1 Silt Removal (Annually)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Inspect accumulated silt at the base and edges of swales.
 2. Remove silt using hand tools only, unless otherwise authorised.
 3. Avoid disturbing established vegetation unnecessarily.
 4. Avoid altering the levels or contours of any swale.
 5. Remove all silt from the site the same day unless a designated on site silt disposal location has been approved in writing.
-

8.3.2 Vegetation Replacement (Annually)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Replace dead, diseased, missing, or damaged swale vegetation.
 2. Restore planting to the specified density (plants per m²).
 3. Use species approved by Karbon Homes and suitable for wet/dry conditions.
 4. Water and establish replacement planting until successful establishment is confirmed.
 5. Report any widespread dieback or disease to the Supervising Officer immediately.
-

8.3.3 Inspection and Clearance of Drainage Components (Monthly)

The Service Provider shall:

- Inspect all inlets, outlets, culverts, and overflow points.
 - Remove any debris, vegetation, or obstructions restricting water flow.
 - Ensure all structural drainage components remain fully operational.
 - Report structural defects (e.g., collapse, erosion, cracking) immediately.
-

8.3.4 Inspection of Banksides, Structures, and Pipework (Monthly)

The Service Provider shall:

1. Inspect all swale banksides for:
 - o erosion
 - o slippage
 - o burrowing animals
 - o unsafe voids
 - o vegetation loss
2. Inspect any associated structures including:
 - o check dams
 - o headwalls
 - o stone linings
 - o gabions
 - o drainage pipes

- o retaining features
 - 3. Report any defect, instability, or risk to Karbon Homes immediately.
 - 4. Install temporary safety measures if a hazard is identified.
-

8.4 Environmental and Safety Compliance

8.4.1

The Service Provider shall avoid:

- disturbing wildlife unnecessarily
- damaging wetland habitat
- removing beneficial vegetation unless instructed
- creating bare earth on slopes
- compacting soil within the base of the swale

8.4.2

Chemical herbicides shall not be used within swales unless explicitly authorised.

8.4.3

Machinery must be selected to avoid rutting, erosion, or destabilisation.

Pedestrian machinery shall be used where ground is soft or uneven.

8.5 Completion Standards

Upon completion of each maintenance visit, the Service Provider shall ensure:

- All litter, debris, and obstructions have been removed.
- Grass height and condition align with swale requirements.
- Shrubs and vegetation are not obstructing water flow.
- No cuttings, silt, or debris remain in channels.
- All inlets, outlets, and drainage structures are clear and functional.
- Banksides are safe and visually stable.
- Wildlife piles are maintained neatly in approved locations.
- The swale presents a neat, functional, and safe condition.

8.6 Failures, Defects, and Remediation

8.6.1

Any damage caused to the swale structure or drainage function by the Service Provider shall be repaired at their own cost.

8.6.2

All remedial work shall be completed within the timeframe set by the Supervising Officer.

8.6.3

Persistent failure to meet swale maintenance standards shall be treated as a contract default.