

Appendix 2
Summary of Lengthsman scheme evaluation

A: Overview of feedback from participating parish and town councils:

	Harworth and Bircotes cluster	Dunham-on-Trent cluster	Sturton Le Steeple cluster
Key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 part-time Lengthsmen working together and employed by 'lead' Town Council • Van and equipment supplied by Town Council for use across the cluster • Additional investment from Town Council for further training (weed spraying) and equipment • Largest cluster with 6 councils • 120 hours of work carried out between July and November 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 part-time self employed Lengthsman • Lengthsman provides own insurance, van and equipment • Average of 5-6 hours per week over entire cluster • Operating on a reduced grant (50%) to trial a smaller scheme suitable for area • Councils in the cluster share a Clerk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 part-time self employed Lengthsmen, operating alone in different areas of the cluster • Lengthsmen provide own insurance, vans and equipment • 74.5 hours of work carried out between September and November 2012 • Councils in the cluster share a Clerk
Work/projects completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the County Council to remove a brick bus shelter • Widening footpaths by clearing encroaching grass • Flood prevention by clearing blocked drains and gulleys • Constructing wooden flower planters • Planting bulbs • Clearing vegetation from obscured signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing blocked drains • Weeding verges • Strimming around signs • Clearing overgrowing vegetation and grass from footpaths • Additional grass cuts on County Council land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing years of signs and notices from lampposts • Sign repairs • Clearing and widening prominent pathways • Clearing and tidying around monuments • Clearing local dyke of debris
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive improvements in the area as a result of the scheme • The lead Council is ambitious about extending the scheme in the area • Plans to employ an 'apprentice Lengthsman' in 2013/14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller operation is working well across the area • The cluster is impressed with the improvements that have been made • Committed Lengthsman who provides a good quality service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good scheme that is working well in the area • Would like to see an increase in grant next year to enable more preventative work to be carried out • Would like pilot extended for an additional 12 months

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B: Summary of feedback from councils participating in the pilot

1. Town and parish councils taking part in the pilot scheme were asked to complete an in-depth evaluation looking at all aspects of their local scheme from local clustering and contractual arrangements to budget expenditure. The feedback looks at the first 3 operational months of the scheme.
2. Below provides a summary of feedback received from the 3 lead councils who have responded on behalf of the cluster as a whole. These are Harworth and Bircotes Town Council, Sturton Le Steeple Parish Council and Dunham-on-Trent Parish Council. Individual comments submitted from Ranskill Parish Council have also been included for consideration.
3. Overall feedback from those councils taking part in the pilot scheme has been positive. Clusters are enthusiastic and keen to see the scheme continue after March 2013.
4. The pilot has been operating across a variety of different models and scales – to suit local ambitions and requirements. Clusters have been provided with the freedom and flexibility to adapt the scheme to suit to local circumstances and make it their own.
5. The simplest scheme is operating across the Dunham on Trent cluster. The flexibility provided through the scheme has supported the area to operate a small scale model which is manageable for them.
6. The cluster requested a reduced grant (50%) to operate their smaller scheme. They contract with a self employed Lengthsman who works around 5 – 6 hours per week, with his work focusing on wherever he is needed within the cluster. He supplies his own insurance, van and equipment.
7. Some clusters have developed very ambitious schemes. Both the Harworth and Bircotes and Sturton Le Steeple clusters each employ two part-time Lengthsmen. The Harworth and Bircotes cluster also has access to a wide range of professional tools and machinery which have been provided courtesy of the Town Council. This includes a ride on lawnmower, strimmers, a van and a leaf blower.
8. The Clerks for both Harworth and Bircotes Town Council and Sturton Le Steeple Parish Council have said that they would like to extend the scope of the schemes in their area. The Harworth cluster would like to be more ambitious about the types of jobs being carried out and are planning to take on an ‘apprentice’ Lengthsman. The Sturton Le Steeple cluster would like to see more hours being funded for their Lengthsmen to enable more preventative work to be undertaken.
9. All of the lead councils have identified a range of positive benefits in their local area. The scheme has supported councils to undertake important local jobs, some of which has not been addressed for some time.

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10. Across the Harworth and Bircotes cluster significant work has been undertaken to cut back overgrown grass from footpaths. This caused a particular issue in the area preventing residents from using prams and mobility scooters along the narrow paths. The Town Council has reported that the work carried out has resulted in returning 0.5 metre to the width of paths in some areas.
11. Parish and town councils have full responsibility for managing their allocated grant locally. Analysis of the feedback indicates that each cluster is spending its allocation in a different way to suit their local scheme. The majority of councils appear to be utilising the money well with most councils employing the Lengthsmen for more than the 3 hours initially predicted.
12. Participating councils have responded positively about the freedom to determine how spend the grant in the best way for them. Two of the clusters have added additional resources (financial/equipment) to enhance the scheme in their area.
13. All of the lead councils have reported that they would like to see the pilot scheme extended for an additional 12 months. This would test the scheme over a variety of weather conditions and would open the scheme up to a wider spectrum of Nottinghamshire communities.

C: Summary of public survey

14. A short street survey was undertaken in two of the pilot communities: Dunham-on-Trent and Harworth and Bircotes. The purpose of which was to speak to a small sample of local residents to determine their awareness, perception and satisfaction of the pilot scheme in its first 3 months of operation.
15. In the Harworth and Bircotes area a total of 35 local residents were surveyed. Of those surveyed, 37% were aware of the scheme and were able to talk specifically about local improvements.
16. In the Dunham-on-Trent area 17 local residents were surveyed. Of this 23% of residents were aware of work being carried out under the scheme.
17. There was a high level of satisfaction and support for the scheme to be continued and expanded further. Residents in both areas were also aware that the scheme was being carried out in partnership with the County Council.
18. Even where the scheme was not directly known of or experienced directly the concept of a Lengthsman was valued and acknowledged to be a good way of delivering local services.

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D: Summary of evaluation event

19. A Lengthsman evaluation event took place on 13 November at Rufford Mill. The objective of this event was to meet with representatives from town and parish councils to review progress to implement the Lengthsman pilot
20. The event included feedback from both the County Council and town and parish councils taking part in the pilot scheme and 'Lengthsman Surgery' to meet and talk with the Lengthsmen and Clerks from participating councils. In addition, a workshop session provided an opportunity for in depth discussions on the implementation of the pilot as well as developing a suitable model to roll out.
21. 39 representatives from parish and town councils and 9 County Councillors participated in the event.
22. On the whole, the Lengthsman concept was positively received by attendees with only 1 town council noting that the scheme would not be applicable in their area. A number of parish and town councils who attended the event have expressed an interest in participating in any future scheme.
23. Key strengths of the pilot scheme identified by participants included:
 - The flexibility that has existed during the pilot scheme to 'make the scheme our own'
 - Improved local pride in the community
 - Greatly improved standard of service delivery by carrying out jobs locally
 - Ability to resolve issues locally e.g. having a quick word with local land owners about overhanging hedges and vegetation
 - Greater control and ability to prioritise jobs to suit local need
 - The training and equipment that was provided by the County Council to help start the scheme up
 - Effective co-ordination of the scheme by Nottinghamshire County Council
 - Faster response times to resolve minor issues, with the Lengthsmen on the ground and able to resolve local issues quickly, efficiently and without any red tape
 - Levels of professionalism and breadth of local knowledge provided by Lengthsmen
24. To support the successful design and development of a potential future Lengthsman scheme, participants were asked to provide critical feedback about the pilot scheme as well as ideas about how to improve it in future. Participants offered the following feedback:
 - Extension of the pilot scheme for an additional 12 month period to test the scheme in different weather conditions and seasons
 - Extend the Lengthsman concept to un-parished communities
 - The County Council fully funding the scheme in financial year 2013/14

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- Learning from the pilot and developing guidance about what the Lengthsmen can and cannot do
- Reviewing the way that grants to each council are calculated. There was a general feeling that larger councils should receive more of the available funding
- Funding the scheme for more hours
- Greater flexibility in the approach to clustering to reflect the wide disparity of responsibility between different town and parish councils
- Challenges facing smaller parish councils to participate in the scheme without the support of larger councils
- Allow some councils to 'go it alone'
- A simple and straightforward contract

25. Town and parish councils provided positive feedback about the opportunity to meet with representatives from the County Council face to face. A number of participants requested that the County Council facilitates further joint events on parish and town council issues, where views may be shared on a more regular basis.

26. At the end of the event each parish and town council was provided with a feedback questionnaire which enabled them to informally express an interest in participating in any future Lengthsman scheme. Twenty questionnaires were completed, with the following results:

- 5 councils and 1 County Councillor are already participating in the scheme and would like to continue to do so
- 6 councils are interested in working locally with other councils in their area to form local clusters
- 2 participants (both from the same council) responded that their council would not be interested in the scheme.
- 4 participants (covering 3 parish councils) indicated that their councils might be interested, but that this would require further discussion locally.
- 2 County Councillors, both from un-parished communities indicated that they would like to see the scheme extended to their local areas.