

Options Appraisal and SWOT Analysis

1. Do nothing

Return all meadow sites to amenity grass.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple to carry out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of biodiversity • No income from stewardship
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent approach to grassland management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputational harm from lack of commitment to conservation and climate change

2. Procure contractor to carry out annual grass cuts for 2024

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget and process already exist • No division of workforce • No extra waste disposal costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of flexibility in when cuts are carried out
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational staff resource to stay focussed on cut and drop operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclement weather or lack of contractor availability could mean cut is not carried out • Supervising and direction of contract needed by management

3. Procure equipment to carry out cut and collect operation in-house

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant cost saving to Council with stewardship grant income and contractor costs saved • Could open more grassland up to meadow management and therefore increase biodiversity • Proactive approach to conservation and climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs more equipment (tractor and cut and collect machinery) • Waste disposal issues (contaminated waste from dog excrement) • Need additional 0.5 FTE
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control retained by Council and have flexibility as to when work is done • Larger tractor can be used to carry out further projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclement weather can still hamper operation • Machinery will need to be maintained at cost to Council

It is not suggested that the hay operation be brought in-house at this time given the complexity of procuring and managing the machinery as well as the managing of selling/disposing of the hay. This can be done, but will take longer to do.