

## Land West of Park Farm Open Spaces Inspection Fee

### How often will the Open Spaces be inspected and by who?

As the Appellant will be selling the site, possibly to multiple developers, they have not been able to give any indication of how many phases of open space there will be.

It is not possible to say exactly how often the various phases of open space will be inspected. Every site is different and has own anomalies and problems. In all my years of dealing with open spaces, we have never found two sites to be alike in many ways, other than the fact they all experience difficulties in achieving Certificate A standard.

The quality of contractors varies widely. Even within individual housing developers there can be varying standards of open space provision. This can be due to site conditions, differing standards of landscape contractors, site managers with differing emphasis on the implementation of the site landscape.

Landscaping a major housing development site can be fraught with problems. It is not uncommon for areas of open space to have been tracked over by machinery and for contractors to be told to work during adverse weather conditions. Landscaping is season- and weather-dependent, and successful establishment can be hampered by the rush to get the site developed. We have, on occasion, had to get developers to:

- re-dig parts of an attenuation area where a sales car park had been installed at ground level and not dug out before grass seeding
- where we have identified that grass growth has been poor/there has been waterlogging, it has transpired that parts of site compounds have not been removed, de-compaction of the ground has not occurred before soiling and landscaping takes place

These types of issues lead to the need for repeated inspections and subsequent extended lengths of time to achieve satisfactory open spaces where Certificate A can be issued, with prolonged discussions, meetings, inspections, and snagging lists, particularly due to the seasonal nature of landscaping.

### Staff involved in the process

Partnerships and Delivery Officer or Landscape Architect – typical involvement:

- Collating and studying documents before going on site (hard and soft landscape plans, landscape specifications, play areas, plant schedules, tree pit details)
- Inspection on site, preparation of snagging notes, issue of snagging notes
- Repeat visits until the site is to an acceptable standard, often through the seasons to inspect success of the planting/sowing, etc.

- Collate tree replacements plan
- Email correspondence with developer/agents
- Reviewing RoSPA post-installation reports for play areas and inspecting after snags have been completed

Drainage Officer – typical involvement:

- Collating and reviewing engineering/drainage plans and calculations/as-built surveys
- Inspection on site, preparation of snagging notes for landscape colleague to issue to developer/agent.

Tree Officer – typical involvement

- Collating and reviewing documents (tree protection plans, tree retention and removal plans, tree and woodland management plans)
- Inspections on site when trees are in leaf and out of leaf Inspection on site, preparation of snagging notes for Partnerships and Delivery Officer or Landscape Architect to issue to developer/agent

#### An example from another site

At a phase of open space on a site in the district where inspections have been ongoing over a period of eighteen months, the best estimate is that officer time has reached over 50 hours (at least eight site inspections/meetings, subsequent preparation of snagging lists, replacement lists, emails, etc.). That phase of open space has not yet reached certificate A stage. As the staff involved are not required to log their time against POS inspection, this has been an estimate of the involvement from diary records, snagging sheets prepared, etc. If anything, it is an underestimation. Travel costs to and from site have not been factored in, nor have any management costs of the staff involved.

Using an estimate of an additional 10 hours to reach Certificate A standard that would be a total of 60 hours involvement for 1.4ha.

2021/2022 staff rates including overheads:

Landscape Architect - £46.29- £50.48/hr

Partnerships and Delivery Officer - £45.50/hr

Drainage Officers = £50.48 – £60.40/hr

Tree Officer = £51.77/hr

If an estimated value were to be put on that site to reach Certificate A standard, it would be 60hrs at an average of £50.00/hr, making a total of £3,000.00. That phase of open space was c.1.4ha.

#### How does this compare with Land West of Park Farm

Land West of Park Farm has a little over twelve times the amount of open space. We have no idea how many phases of open space there will be but we have assumed the development may be built out over a period of six years. If we were to use a proportional rate for the amount of open space that will be provided at Land West of Park Farm, the sum sought would be c.£36,700. This would equate to £21.43 per square metre.

#### Is the £500 Service Fee necessary?

As discussed during the Obligations round table session, we agreed to drop the £500.00 core service fee.