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|  | **Please reply to:** Mrs Frances Hughes,  |
| Assistant Director (Community & Customer |
| Services), c/o Town Hall, Castle Circus,  |
| TORQUAY, TQ1 3DR |
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|  | **My ref:** | FH/AMO/ |
| **Your ref**: |  |
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| **Website:** | [www.torbay.gov.uk](http://www.torbay.gov.uk) |
| **Date**: | 7 October 2015  |

**Re: Petition received regarding environmental matters in Watcombe**

Thank you for your petition regarding the Watcombe Estate. As you are aware the council’s financial envelope is extremely challenging and continuing austerity has resulted in a reduction in the amount of funding available for some services. Previous budget reductions are having an impact on the level of service we can provide and this includes the overall maintenance of parks, highways and open spaces across Torbay.

 In response to your specific points:

* 1. Cut back and trim all avenue trees on the estate to a reasonable level... remove dangerous old

trees that are ripping up paths.

* Council-owned trees in this area have up-to-date inspections. Council owned highway trees are managed under the Council’s cyclical works schedule (details in our FAQs document attached). Watcombe is next due to be attended in January 2016 (subject to work priorities/storms).
* The avenue of trees referred to is, we believe, the trees fronting properties on East and West Pafford Avenue and Starpitten Grove. These trees are privately owned (or Sanctuary Housing). They are subject to a Tree Preservation Order and therefore any works would require approval by the Local Authority.
* If the petitioner identified locations of concern, an inspection can be carried out.

2&3 Regularly cut and keep the grass areas in a better condition, as is done in all other parks in the

 Bay. Repair roads and paths and keep free from weeds etc

* The grass in this area is identified as ‘Highway Grass’ and is therefore maintained to the same standard as all other highway verges. It will not be maintained to ‘Parks’ standard as this is not per the contract requirements.
* The grass in this area has been cut four times this season. A further two cuts are planned before the end of the year (end of September and October). There can be issues with parked cars or weather but this is the same number as other highway areas.

4. I have been in touch with Sanctuary Housing about your concerns to ensure that they are also aware of the issues you have raised.

5. Keep the children’s park in a good state of repair and free from litter.

* The playground is identified as a community play area It has an operational inspection every three months, the last of which was carried out in 23/07/15. In addition to this, repairs were carried out to the slide and the park was re-inspected on 20/08/15. The next inspection is scheduled for October.
* There are currently 9 findings rated with a risk level of low or very low and this is monitored. Any health and safety issues are dealt with when they meet appropriate intervention levels.
* Additionally, the annual ROSPA inspection is scheduled for next month.
* The park is attended daily to remove litter. If there is a litter issue during the day, if this is reported, Glendale would attend.

Thank you for raising these matters with us.

Yours sincerely

## FRANCES HUGHES

Assistant Director

Community & Customer Services