

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Record of Executive Decision

Capital Project Appraisal & Procurement Report – Tree Maintenance Database

Decision of: Councillor Reid, Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

Reference: 08/ENV/03

Date of decision: 15 March 2008 **Recorded on:** 25 March 2008

Decision Type: Non Key

Matters for Decision: Funding of a software system to provide the Council with a database to hold records of the condition, maintenance, planned and unplanned programmes of work issued and undertaken, of all existing trees and details of replacement and new planting for all trees growing on City and County Council Highway land in Cambridge.

Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options):

The loss of Local Delivery Funding (LDV) if all the scheme costs are not paid for by 31 March 2008 (purchase order for equipment required by 18.03.08). In the event that this occurs, an application for funds from the Planning Delivery Grant is incorporated within the report.

Alternative options:

1. To continue with the existing database.
2. To use a bespoke database and pay for expertise. Over the last 2.5 years the Tree Team has been working with a consultant to create a bespoke system. The specification has been prepared but the consultants can no longer deliver the project as the technicians employed within the organisation who could create the link between the database and our spatial mapping system were made redundant following a takeover. It will cost £30,000 to buy the expertise from India.
3. To use a bespoke database and paper records. To run with the bespoke system and survey and inspect using paper records.
4. To use existing Council systems– CONFIRM and CONTENDER. The former is held on a Server in Active Communities but is not in use, it was demonstrated in July 2006 and discounted as being not fit for purpose as it was unwieldy and could not run the required correspondence and reports. Contender is a system used for Waste Management and Grounds Maintenance and could not be easily adapted to tree management.

The Executive Councillor's decision:**Agreed:**

1. To recommend this capital scheme (which is not included in the Council's Capital Plan) for approval by Council, subject to resources being available to fund the capital and revenue costs associated with the Scheme. The total capital cost of the project is £28,050 and it is proposed that this is funded via the Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) and existing R&R funds. In the event that not all the scheme costs are paid for by 31 March 2008, and due to the time-limited nature of the LDV funding, a contribution from Planning Delivery Grant (PDG - capital) would be required. The revenue costs of the project are £5,867.50 per annum and it is proposed that these are funded from existing R&R funds and revenue budgets'.

2. To approve the carrying out and completion of the procurement of a software system to provide the Council with a database to hold records of the condition, maintenance, planned and unplanned programmes of work issued and undertaken, of all existing trees and details of replacement and new planting for all trees growing on City and County Council Highway land in Cambridge. (approx 45,000 trees). The estimated cost of such a system is £33,737.50, which includes support, upgrades and maintenance for 4 years.

3. To authorise the waiver of the requirement in the Contract Procedure Rules at Rule 13.1 for the obtaining of tenders from four suppliers (without the requirement for an advertisement) for contracts of a value in excess of £30,000

Reasons for the decision:

1. There is a duty of care for the Council to maintain its tree stock in a safe condition. Case law sets out the requirements for the competency of inspectors, the frequency of inspections and the acceptable time period in which necessary work should be carried out.

2. The existing system renders the Council vulnerable as it is single officer dependent.

3. A national survey of England's urban trees and their management was commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in February 2004. The overall aim of the project was to provide up-to-date information on the national urban tree stock and urban tree management by local authorities and to develop and implement a comprehensive tree strategy.

The findings are reported in a detailed publication printed by Department of Communities & Local Government "Trees in Towns II" in February 2008. The 10 recommendations include:

4. To undertake a Best Value Review of the LA's tree programme.
5. To install a computerised tree management system.
6. To ensure that at least 40% of the LA's tree maintenance work is done on a systematic, regularly scheduled cycle.
7. To ensure that at least 90% of all the LA's newly planted trees, excluding woodland plantings, receive systematic post-planting maintenance until they are established. This database will allow the Council to achieve targets 5, 6 and 7 immediately and 4 as staffing resources permit.

Scrutiny consideration: The Chair and Spokesperson of the Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the decision being taken.

Report: See attached Report.

Conflicts of interest: No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

Comments:

Capital Project Appraisal & Procurement Report

Project Title	Tree Maintenance Database
Target Start Date	Ongoing
Target Completion Date	31 March 2008
Project Manager / Lead Officer	Diana Oviatt-Ham
Scrutiny Committee and Portfolio	Environment - Climate Change and Growth
Scrutiny Committee Date	8 April 2008

1 Recommendations

Financial recommendations - The Executive Councillor is asked to

recommend this capital scheme (which is not included in the Council's Capital Plan) for approval by Council, subject to resources being available to fund the capital and revenue costs associated with the Scheme. The total capital cost of the project is £28,050 and it is proposed that this is funded via the Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) and existing R&R funds. In the event that not all the scheme costs are paid for by 31 March 2008, and due to the time-limited nature of the LDV funding, a contribution from Planning Delivery Grant (PDG - capital) would be required. The revenue costs of the project are £5,867.50 per annum and it is proposed that these are funded from existing R&R funds and revenue budgets'.

Procurement recommendations – The Executive Councillor is asked to

1. Approve the carrying out and completion of the procurement of a software system to provide the Council with a database to hold records of the condition, maintenance, planned and unplanned programmes of work issued and undertaken, of all existing trees and details of replacement and new planting for all trees growing on City and County Council Highway land in Cambridge. (approx 45,000 trees). The estimated cost of such a system is £33,737.50, which includes support, upgrades and maintenance for 4 years.
2. Authorise the waiver of the requirement in the Contract Procedure Rules at Rule 13.1 for the obtaining of tenders from four suppliers (without the requirement for an advertisement) for contracts of a value in excess of £30,000.

2 What is the project? Provide a description of the proposed project, justify the reason for the project, and note what alternative options were considered.

Description

The project will provide a database to hold records of all trees on Council land. The trees will be registered on a database linked to GIS records, accessed by all relevant departments, including City Services, who will be able to plan work schedules with their positions in mind. Each tree will have an identity number against which all records will be held. These will include a survey of its condition, specification of works required and the date of the programme of work in which they will be included. Where the condition of the tree causes concern, or where there is a case for felling a tree that is likely to generate considerable public interest, there will be scope for attaching photographs, technical data and detailed reports to the record. It will be possible to generate programmes of work, either planned or unplanned, and programme cyclical and risk associated inspections. It will be possible to carry out risk assessments. Trees of amenity could be recorded and protected, if appropriate.

Current situation

The existing system renders the Council vulnerable. It was conceived nine years ago by an officer for managing records of trees in the highway and on communal housing land and has evolved over the intervening years. It comprises of an access database linked to a mapping system and holds Council records of tree management for the last 9 years. The consultation for C&LG Trees in Towns II commended the Council for Best Practice for having this database in 2004. However, the system is vulnerable as it was designed by an officer familiar with IT, not an IT expert and the operation and function of the system is person dependent. No manual exists or could be written.

Justification

1. There is a duty of care for the Council to maintain its tree stock in a safe condition. Case law sets out the requirements for the competency of inspectors, the frequency of inspections and the acceptable time period in which necessary work should be carried out.
2. The existing system renders the Council vulnerable as it is single officer dependent.
3. A national survey of England's urban trees and their management was commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in February 2004. The overall aim of the project was to provide up-to-date information on the national urban tree stock and urban tree management by local authorities and to develop and implement a comprehensive tree

strategy. The findings are reported in a detailed publication printed by Department of Communities & Local Government "Trees in Towns II" in February 2008. The 10 recommendations include:

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6. To ensure that at least 40% of the LA's tree maintenance work is done on a systematic, regularly scheduled cycle.
7. To ensure that at least 90% of all the LA's newly planted trees, excluding woodland plantings, receive systematic post-planting maintenance until they are established.

This database will allow the Council to achieve targets 5, 6 and 7 immediately and 4 as staffing resources permit.

Options

1. To continue with the existing database.
2. To use a bespoke database and pay for expertise. Over the last 2.5 years the Tree Team has been working with a consultant to create a bespoke system. The specification has been prepared but the consultants can no longer deliver the project as the technicians employed within the organisation who could create the link between the database and our spatial mapping system were made redundant following a takeover. It will cost £30,000 to buy the expertise from India.
3. To use a bespoke database and paper records. To run with the bespoke system and survey and inspect using paper records.
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3 Outline the aims and objectives of the project and highlight how it contributes to achieving the Council's Medium Term Objectives.

Aims and objectives:

To effectively and securely record details of the Council's trees.

To provide accurate, auditable and sufficient records for insurance purposes.

To contribute to the Council's responsibility of Duty of Care by recording works required and scheduling programmes of work, within budget constraints.

To be accountable to members and the public for the management of the urban forest.

To plan the management of the existing tree stock in accordance with the risk and within budget constraints.

To effectively plan the replacement and renewal of the tree stock.

To manage one of the Council's most valuable capital and environmental assets.

To increase the range of species planted in the city to reduce dependency risk (e.g. Dutch elm disease).

To increase the biodiversity of the tree stock.

To assist in the management and promotion of trees as a sustainable resource.

The database would enable detailed SLA with client departments as it gives accurate details of the resource being managed.

Facilitate appropriate budget allocations.

Enable the assessment and programming of staff and financial requirements.

Contributes to the Council's Medium Term Objectives

Objective 1: Promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region

Trees are a sustainable resource and contribute significantly to reducing the carbon footprint.

Objective 2: Ensure that residents and other service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council.

Trees that are managed responsibly do not constitute an unacceptable risk to persons or property and enhance the city for residents and visitors.

Objective 3: Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods.

Trees that are managed responsibly do not constitute an unacceptable risk to persons or property and enhance the city for residents and visitors.

Objective 4: Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a

good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car.

The new growth areas are being planned so that existing trees are retained and new planting is undertaken. The management of the urban forest in these areas will be the responsibility of the Council's Tree Team.

4 Identify and summarise the impact on and major issues for stakeholders & other departments. Summarise the key results of initial consultation (including members where appropriate).

The benefits include:

Better service to client departments by providing them with a secure record of the Council's tree stock.

Better service to the public by providing them with a secure record of the Council's tree stock.

More effective use of staffing resources.

Accurate records for insurance purposes.

The disbenefits

The existing system renders the Council vulnerable.

Consultation

No formal consultation, but all Senior Management (Director of Planning; ICT Client Manager; Head of Customer Support and Services; Strategic Procurement Adviser:) accept there is an unacceptable risk in continuing with the current system and the benefits of the new system are evident.

5 Procurement. What resources for this project will be procured from outside the Council? What method of procurement are you to use? What is the estimated total value for each procurement element?

The software, maintenance and support for this project will be procured outside the Council.

An opportunity to fund the project using Cambridgeshire Horizons funding has arisen but the funding has only been identified very recently (indeed an application for further funding to provide the balance of the costs was only confirmed on 17 March 2008).

Given the requirement for Horizons funding to be used (the project completed and paid for) by 31 March 2008, the Lead Officer was unable to

carry out a tendering process as required by the Contract Procedure Rules. With the agreement of the Head of Policy and Projects, the Lead Officer obtained two written quotations and the one recommended, from R&A Software (Systems) Limited, is considered to be the most economically advantageous quotation. A formal waiver of the requirement for tenders from four suppliers is therefore sought.

Database – procured externally - £23,050

Maintenance and support – procured externally - £10,687.50

Total £33,737.50

Tablets (2 No) and associated equipment will replace existing equipment due for renewal - **£5,000.00**

These items to be procured by the Council from an existing contract.

6 Summarise key risks associated with the project. Include the key risks the project aims to mitigate, risks involved in delivery of the project and risks that might occur if the project does not take place.

Key risks the project aims to mitigate.

Vulnerability of current system as a consequence of being dependent on one individual and lack of integration to other Council systems.

Risks involved in delivery of the project.

The loss of funding from Horizons if the project is not completed and paid for by 31 March 2008. In the event that this occurs, an application for funds from the Planning Delivery Grant is incorporated within this report.

The loss or corruption of data in installation, paper copies would remain and data could be retrieved or recreated at a cost.

The Company may be taken over or go into liquidation – there is a prohibition on the assignment in the contract without the Council's consent that would only be forthcoming if alternative arrangements for completion of the project were in place.

Risks that might occur if the project does not take place.

The vulnerability has been explained previously.

Internal Audit have identified the following risks:

1. Failure to achieve national tree maintenance targets
2. Failure to keep records of tree maintenance, etc suitable for insurance purposes
3. Failure to protect Council data from loss (if current system fails).

7 Financial implications. Comment on any special financial considerations associated with the project such as grant or funding conditions.

Appraisal prepared on the following price base

2007 / 2008

Initial funding of £10,000 from the Local Delivery Vehicle was approved by Horizons for bespoke system in November 2007 and approved at Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2008. The City Council submitted a successful revised bid to Horizons on 17 March 2008 for £23,050, towards the capital cost of the project.

The terms of the LDV funding mean the database has to be procured, delivered, installed, tested and signed off in sufficient time to enable the invoice for the system to be paid by the 31 March. Any delays may result in a reduced LDV contribution as Horizons may only be prepared to reimburse the City Council for cost incurred to 31 March. There is sufficient PDG (Capital) to meet any shortfall in costs, however the Council should look to maximise its use of the external funding available via the LDV.

Existing PCs and monitors are considered at the end of their useful life and are due for replacement. These will be replaced and upgraded to meet the required specification of the new system, funded using accumulated R&R fund contributions.

Database maintenance costs at 15% of the system price will be met from existing tree maintenance budgets. These begin in 2009/10.

8A Capital costs & funding		
	£	Comments
Capital Costs		
Purchase of vehicles, plant & equipment	23,050 5,000	Database, modules, licenses x3. Replacement PC's monitors etc.
Total Capital cost	28,050	
Capital Income / Funding		
Government Grant	(23,050)	LDV (or PDG if required)
R&R funding	(5,000)	Head of Policy & Projects R&R fund (23564)
Total Income	(28,050)	
Net Capital Bid	0	

Expenditure profiling:	£	Comments
Year 1: 2007 / 2008	28,050	The terms of the LDV funding mean the project has to be complete and paid for before 31 March 2008
Year 2: 20 / 20		
Year 3: 20 / 20		
Year 4: 20 / 20		
Year 5: 20 / 20		
Net Capital Bid	28,050	<i>(Must agree with total above)</i>

Appendix A, Capital Project Appraisal profiling, should also be completed.

8B Revenue costs			
	In 2008/200 9 £	Ongoin g £	Comments
Revenue Costs			
Supplies & Services	0	3,560	15% of initial investment as maintenance/support/training costs for 3 years.
Repair & renewal contributions	2,300	2,300	Assume life system of 10 years.
Total revenue cost	2,300	5,860	
Revenue Income			
Existing revenue budget/s	2,300	5,860	22407/20310/20312 etc
Total income	2,300	5,860	
Net revenue bid	0	0	

9 VAT implications. Comment on any VAT implications identified in consultation with the Finance Department.

There are no adverse VAT implications to this project.

10 Other implications. Comment on any other relevant implications including property, accommodation, environmental, health & safety, community safety, procurement, human resource, equal opportunities and diversity.

Other implications

There is a requirement to maintain the tree stock in a safe condition. There is a need to keep accurate auditable records of their management. Failure to do so could result in insurance claims against the Council for injury to persons and property, which could not be defended.

The Council's urban forest is a valuable capital asset, which should be managed responsibly. Failure to do so depletes the Council's resources

11 Estimate of staffing resource required to deliver the project. Comment on the availability of internal project team resources. Ensure that the costs of external resources required have been included in the financial table/s above.

Internal resources:

E&P –Tree Team (4): IT (Tim Cliff): Customer Support (Paul Boucher)
 Finance: - Procurement services Adviser (Debbie Quincey) Accountant (Richard Wesbroom) Senior Auditor (Jonathan Scott) IT (Tony Allen)
 Legal :-Legal Officer (Helen Redman)
 Serco,

Skills required / internal or external	Estimated number of hours	Proposed Timescale	
		Start date	Finish date
Arb team	74	7 March 08	31 March 08, unless project overruns

Procurement/Finance	30	7 March 08	31 March 08, unless project overruns
Legal	30	7 March 08	31 March 08, unless project overruns

12 Identify any dependencies upon other work or projects. Identify any other projects which cannot progress until this particular piece of work is complete

Auditable management of trees on client departments.

13 Background Papers. List any background papers used in the preparation of this project appraisal.

Diana Oviatt-Ham working papers
Specification from TerraQuest/Support for a commissioned bespoke system.
Trees in Town II

14 Inspection of papers

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Filename/path	N.../Arboriculture/TMP/Databases/ New databases/ezytreev	Last amended	26/03/2008 14:55

Finance Department use only:

Project Approval Dates	Date
Approved by DoF	
Reviewed by AMG / ICT	
Executive Councillor Approval	
Scrutiny Committee Approval (if applicable)	
Council Funding Approval	
Added to Hold List	
Removed from Hold List	
Added to Capital Plan	

Capital Project Appraisal - Capital costs & funding - Profiling

Appendix A

Make sure year headings match start date ...

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	
Capital Costs						
Purchase of vehicles, plant & equipment	28,050					
Total Capital cost	28,050	0	0	0	0	
Capital Income / Funding						
Government Grant	(23,050)					LDV (or PDG if required)
R&R funding	(5,000)					Head of Policy & Projects R&R fund (23564)
Total Income	(28,050)	0	0	0	0	
Net Capital Bid	0	0	0	0	0	