



To: North Area Committee
Report by: Head of Streets and Open Spaces

Tree Planting Project - Parks and Open Space 2011/15

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The City Council is one of the largest single owners of trees in Cambridge.
- 1.2 Trees contribute greatly to our local environments. They provide habitats for wildlife, store carbon, offer natural spaces for rest and relaxation, release oxygen, filter pollution and provide shade and shelter for livestock and animals.
- 1.3 The Council identified the need to increase the investment in tree planting as detailed in the Budget Setting Report for 2011/12, in which the Council approved a four-year planting programme totalling £200,000.
- 1.4 The tree planting project will increase opportunities for communities to be involved with tree planting, create opportunities for local people to make decisions relating to tree planting proposals and to provide a focus for community based volunteering.
- 1.5 Provisional tree planting opportunities for Years 1 to 4 have been identified and detailed by Officers.
- 1.5 The City Council's Area Committees are being consulted on proposals, and given the opportunity to decide, and approve planting schemes.
- 1.6 There are opportunities for local people to volunteer and take an active role, in the planting and aftercare of trees.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Area Committee is recommended to: -

- a) Approve the provisional four-year planting schedule at paragraph 4.5 to 4.8;
- b) Consider, adapt and approve the list of proposed sites on an annual basis.

3. Background

3.1 The City Council is one of the largest single owner of trees in Cambridge. We own trees on public land such as parks and play areas, and also in local nature reserves, cemeteries, allotments, and other Council premises including the riverbank.

3.2 Trees are widely, and increasingly, recognised as an important contributor to people's wellbeing and to the liveability of places, both in rural and urban contexts. The City Council recognises the importance of managing and enhancing the City tree stock, to maximise these benefits and to ensure their continuance in the face of the threats that face trees now and in the coming years.

3.3 This project delivers outcomes for the Council's vision, for a City: -

- which is diverse and tolerant, values activities which bring people together and where everyone feels they have a stake in the community;
- which draws inspiration from its iconic historic centre and achieves a sense of place in all of its parts with generous urban open spaces and well designed buildings; and
- whose citizens feel they can influence public decision making and are equally keen to pursue individual and community initiatives.

3.4 A budget of £50,000 is available for each of the four years. The first phase of tree planting will take place in 2011/12. The project will complete in 2014/15.

3.5 Citywide parks and open spaces have been considered, prioritised are listed in Area Committee's detailed in tables 1 to 4 below; the tables also detail outline tree planting schemes with indicative costs.

3.6 Officers' have provisionally prioritised the sites detailed in Tables 1 to 4 using the following criteria: -

- Current tree stock levels, including tree age distribution;
- Identified deficiency of young tree stock;
- Geographical spread across the city – to ensure an even distribution and benefit to all areas;
- Asset type - to ensure a broad range of sites where considered from major parks and commons through to smaller local community spaces; and
- The use of the Performance Management Framework data to set priorities for sites scoring lowest for quality and value.

3.7 The prioritised Tables below are provisional and subject to change by Area Committees. There are opportunities available to consider additional sites through the duration of the project.

4. Considerations

4.1 The mortality rate for newly planted trees in public spaces and highways can be as high as 25%¹.

4.2 Aftercare, to include a summer watering programme, mulching and weeding of tree bases are important factors during the first two years after planting to reduce mortality rates. It is therefore recommended that the planting-aftercare costs be apportioned for the four years as follows: -

Year 1 – Planting £41,000 – Sundries purchase £9000

Year 2 – Planting £32,000 – Aftercare £16,000

Year 3 – Planting £16,000 – Aftercare £32,000

Year 4 - Planting £16,000 – Aftercare £32,000

4.3 In addition to the supply costs of trees and their subsequent planting, sundries are required. These include stakes (4 per tree with cross bars), ties, tree gators (for watering). It is recommended to purchase the sundries 'up front' in year one to achieve an economy of scale and the substantial discounts this approach offers.

4.4 Officers from the Procurement Team have provided help and assistance in drafting a framework contract for the supply of trees for Years 2 to 4. Other neighbouring Councils have also expressed an interest in collective buying using this framework contract. It is proposed to tender for the supply of trees in Year 1.

¹ Trees in Towns II; Communities and Local Government, February 2008

4.5 Table One Year One

Site	Scope of works	Area Committee	Cost
Chesterton Recreation Grd	Improve St Andrews Church boundary	North	£2,000
Nunns Way Recreation Grd	Boundaries	North	£3,800
Arbury Town Park	Succession planting	North	£1,500
Brownsfield Recreation Grd	Central planting	North	£1,000
St Albans Recreation Grd	Long grass areas	North	£2,500
Woodhead Drive	Structural layout improvements	North	£1,500
Ramsden Square Play Area	Boundary improvements	North	£1,500
		Total	£13800
		% of budget	37%

4.6 Table Two Year Two

Site	Scope of works	Area Committee	Cost
St Giles	Specimen/Landscaped scheme	North	£2,500
Arbury Court	Specimen/boundary planting	North	£2,000
Kings Hedge Recreation	Consider current stock & succession planting	North	£2,000
		Total	£6500
		% of budget	20%

4.7 Table Three Year Three

Site	Scope of works	Area Committee	Cost
Histon Road Cemetery	Additional planting to compliment original Victorian layout.	North	£1,600

Jubilee Gardens	Riverbank planting/replacement	North	£2,000
Vie/Simoco Site	Plant boundaries/specimen belts with understory planting	North	£2,500
Green End Road Recreation Ground	Work to Boundary planting	North	£1,500
		Total	£7600
		% of budget	48%

4.8 Table Four Year Four

Site	Scope of works	Area Committee	Cost
Scotland Road Recreation Ground	2-3 Trees	North	£600
Bramblefields	3-4 Specimen Oaks	North	£1,000
		Total	£1600
		% of budget	10%

- 4.9 It is recommended that the Tree Planting Project follows the *Protocol for the Consultation and Determination of Tree Works Operations to Trees on City Council owned land*, or any subsequent revisions.

Where trees are to be planted where none have been planted previously, or the proposals are for major planting as part of the long-term renewal of a landscape, the Council will undertake consultations.

- 4.10 All tree planting consultation will be undertaken with the community. The consultation will extend to interested persons, resident groups, and amenity societies and near neighbours.
- 4.11 Details of tree planting will be posted on the City Council website.
- 4.12 It is recommended that Area Committees are given the opportunity to amend and/or approve the final Tree Planting schemes prepared each year detailed at Tables 1 to 4.

- 4.13 Trees Officers' recognise the benefits of the Tree Planting Project and the opportunities it affords to involve local people and to trial/pilot a Tree Warden Scheme², The Tree Warden Scheme is a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. The scheme was founded and is co-ordinated by The Tree Council.
- 4.14 Tree Wardens would be volunteers, appointed by the City Council, who gather information about their local trees, get involved in local tree matters and encourage local practical projects to do with trees and woods.
- 4.15 It is recommended that the City Council pilot a Tree Warden Scheme, in year 2012/13.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

Capital spending on tree planting and subsequent tree maintenance for a period of four years.

5.2 Staffing Implications

Consultation, community engagement and preparing planting plans have been considered in the report. A project leader will be assigned from the Asset Team of Streets and Open Spaces.

5.3 Equal Opportunities Implications

An equalities impact assessment will be completed before commencement to ensure there is no negative impact from any proposal.

5.4 Environmental Implications

The project will have a high positive climate change rating. The outcomes are detailed at paragraph 1.2 & 3.2.

5.5 Consultation

Proposals are set out from paragraph 4.9 to 4.12.

5.6 Community Safety Implications

None

² <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/tree-wardens>

6. Background papers

These following background papers were used in the preparation of this report::

Budget Setting Report for 2011/12

7. Appendices

None

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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