



**To:** West/Central Area Committee 03/11/2011

**Report by:** Andrew Preston  
Project Delivery & Environment Manager

**Wards affected:** Castle, Newnham and Market

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

### **1. Executive summary**

- Consultation on the replacement of two highway trees on Fitzroy Street has recently completed and the results are presented in this report. The Committee are asked to decide whether to approve the implementation of replacement trees.
- The Committee are requested to approve the implementation of the Manor Street/King Street cycle rack and resurfacing scheme.
- The Committee are asked to decide whether to continue the Gough Way bridge replacement scheme, following the decision by Jesus College not to agree to the adoption of the route as a public right of way by the County Council.

### **2. Recommendations**

The West/Central Area Committee is recommended:

- 2.1 To approve the replacement of the two highway trees on Fitzroy Street as part of the approved Fitzroy/Burleigh St refurbishment scheme.
- 2.2 To approve the implementation of the Manor Street/King St Scheme at a cost of £9,000.
- 2.3 To approve the sealing of a license between Cambridge City Council and Jesus College, in order to regulate the agreement to provide cycle racks and carry out resurfacing on land owned by Jesus College at the Manor Street/King Street junction.
- 2.4 To approve the replacement of the Gough Way Bridge to improve access for cyclists and pedestrians along the Gough Way path, despite the lack of its adoption as a public right of way by the County Council.

### **3. Background**

#### **Fitzroy Street Tree Replacement**

- 3.1 The refurbishment works that have taken place in Fitzroy Street and Burleigh Street have upgraded street furniture and street lighting, removed redundant facilities, completed new paving work and, where underground utilities allow, will shortly plant new trees in Burleigh Street.
- 3.2 Before the project is completed, further work is planned by the Highway Department of the County Council to maintain the street surface. As part of this they propose to resolve the trip hazards caused by the surface roots of two of the four Ash trees at the western end of Fitzroy Street. An image of this problem can be found in Appendix B of this report.
- 3.3 Within the City Council refurbishment works, the original intention was to construct a plinth at the base of the two trees to encase and accommodate the surface roots. However over the past 12 months the surface roots have become much more prominent, meaning that a plinth would need to be much larger than anticipated and would obstruct the highway and entrances to nearby shops. There is also a possibility that with the rate of recent root growth a plinth would not solve the problem in the long term.
- 3.4 The proposed alternative is to remove the two Ash trees and to replace them with two new semi-mature Ash trees. These would be planted using a proprietary root cell system, a new technique that provides improved growing conditions for the roots to remain below the pavement.
- 3.5 The new trees would be of a variety with a slightly tighter crown, reducing conflict with surrounding buildings.
- 3.6 The City Council are committed to keeping trees in Fitzroy Street because they enhance and soften the streetscape. This proposal would enable new trees to become established ahead of any similar problem with the other two trees, thereby reducing the possibility of a protracted barren period along the street.
- 3.7 By adopting the new root cell technology, we would also be providing more sustainability for the new trees in the very challenging street environment.

- 3.8 This tree work would be completed as part of our refurbishment project, co-ordinated carefully with the County Council's surface maintenance work in order to rectify the damaged surfacing in the vicinity. The plan in Appendix C shows the location of the trees proposed to be replaced and the underground area of the new root cell system.
- 3.9 Aware of the concerns that arise when faced with a situation such as this, we have held discussions with surrounding traders and resident association representatives and are grateful for their input to the proposal.
- 3.10 Consultation has also taken place more widely to invite views on the proposed solution to this problem and whether this approach is supported.
- 3.11 Although the County Council has a legal responsibility to prevent unsafe obstacles in the highway, they have agreed to take the results from this consultation into account.
- 3.12 Just over four hundred leaflets were delivered to the consultation area illustrated in Appendix D. A total of twelve responses were received, seven in support and five objecting to the proposals. A summary of the responses can be found in Table 1 of Appendix B.
- 3.13 Officers and Ward Councillors were also available one evening at the location of the trees in question on Fitzroy Street, to discuss any concerns or questions that residents had regarding the proposals.
- 3.14 The consultation carried out has shown that the majority are in support of the approach to replace these trees. It is therefore recommended that the work be implemented as proposed.
- 3.15 If approved the work will be carried out at the same time as the remaining County Council maintenance work. This is programmed to start early in the New Year, once the Christmas period is complete.

### **Manor Street/King Street**

- 3.16 This project involves the installation of cycle racks attached to a private wall owned by Jesus College, tree pit surface and edging treatments and resurfacing of the surrounding damaged paving areas, also owned by Jesus College, at a cost of £9,000.
- 3.17 The images in Appendix E show the area in question at the junction of King Street and Manor Street.
- 3.18 The cycle racks will replace the current disused concrete tyre trap style units to provide secure cycle parking for up to six cycles.
- 3.19 As the land is privately owned, an agreement between the landowners and the City Council has had to be drafted in the form of a license.
- 3.20 This license provides the basis by which the City Council will provide the cycle racks and resurfacing that will become the responsibility of the landowners on completion.
- 3.21 Both parties and their legal representatives have approved the content of this license and all that remains is for this Committee to approve implementation of the project.

### **Gough Way Bridge Replacement**

- 3.21 This scheme proposes to replace the footbridge over the Bin Brook on the footpath between Gough Way and Cranmer Road at a cost of £25,000.
- 3.22 The first section of this route from Gough Way to the bridge is owned by the City Council, with the final part from the bridge to Cranmer Road owned by Jesus College and the subject of a lease agreement with the City Council.
- 3.23 The use of the route is then the subject of an agreement between the City Council and residents of Gough Way.
- 3.24 In order to simplify these arrangements the County Council had agreed to adopt the whole route as a public right of way and maintain it accordingly.
- 3.25 The capital cost of upgrading the bridge would therefore be funded by West/Central Area Committee's EIP budget and immediately adopted by the County Council.

- 3.26 However, Jesus College will not agree to the adoption of the route across their property.
- 3.27 The current lease for the Jesus College section of the path terminates in 2017. There is therefore a risk that the College will not grant a new lease in the future, despite their best assurances that this will not be the case.
- 3.28 The Committee therefore needs to decide whether to invest in the upgrade of the existing footbridge, to greatly improve accessibility, whilst taking into account the potential for the demise of the route should Jesus College not grant a new lease in the future.

## **5. Background papers**

None

## **6. Appendices**

### APPENDIX A

West/Central Area Committee Budget Table.

### APPENDIX B

Fitzroy Street tree replacement image and consultation responses.

### APPENDIX C

Plan of proposed Fitzroy Street tree replacements.

### APPENDIX D

Fitzroy St tree replacement consultation area.

### APPENDIX E

Manor Street/King Street scheme location.

### APPENDIX F

Gough Way Footpath bridge scheme location.

## **7. Inspection of papers**

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

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