

**Decision Maker:** EXECUTIVE

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Decision Type:** Non-urgent Executive Key

**Title:** ARBORICULTURE – PROGRAMME OF TREE ESTABLISHMENT

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**Chief Officer:** Colin Brand – Director of Environment & Public Protection

**Ward:** All Wards

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## 1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The reason for this report is to seek authorisation to draw down funds from the Healthy Bromley Earmarked Reserve. The stated goal is to plant 5000 additional street trees to improve the health of residents through the provision of an improved environment. This report provides detail on the recognised health benefits of trees, relevance to existing policy and defines an outline of how the project would be delivered in partnership with residents.

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## 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 The Executive is requested to:

- (a) Approve the allocation of funding of £1,350,000 from the Healthy Bromley Earmarked Reserve to support a four-year programme of planting new street trees and providing tree aftercare.
- (b) Approve proceeding to procurement for tree planting for a four year contract (with the option to extend for up to two years) at an estimated whole life value of £600k;
- (c) Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Public Protection to approve, subject to agreement with the Assistant Director of Governance & Contracts, the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, the detailed procurement procedure and for subsequent award of contract;

(d) Agree that the Director of Environment and Public Protection reports to the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee the proposed 2021-25 programme of tree planting on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

## Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Improved health and wellbeing.
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## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
  2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People, Excellent Council, Quality Environment, Safe Bromley Supporting Independence, Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres, Healthy Bromley, Regeneration
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £1,350,000
  2. Ongoing costs: £N/A
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Arboricultural Management
  4. Total current budget for this head: £732k
  5. Source of funding: Healthy Bromley Earmarked Reserve
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## Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 7 FTE's (Includes agreed department funded administrative assistant)
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 0.2 of each FTE
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## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None
  2. Call-in: Applicable
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## Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Restricted procedure. The proposed contract period is four years with option to extend for up to a further two years. The full details of the procurement approach are to be determined in consultation with the Corporate Procurement Team and Legal Services. Delegated authority to the Director of Environment and Public Protection has been sought to approve the detailed process and proceed to procurement, with subsequent Contract Award similarly delegated (subject to call-in).
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Borough wide impact on businesses, residents and service users.
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 This proposal is designed to further develop the green infrastructure of the borough through the establishment of an additional 5000 street trees over a four year period. The primary aim of this project is to improve the health of residents in addition to the co-benefits such as carbon sequestration, effects on temperature modification and a reduction in surface water runoff. Trees have been demonstrated to improve both physical and mental health in many ways not limited to the examples below:
- Urban trees filter atmospheric pollutants like sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide through their leaves, and they also remove particulate matter, thus reducing the incidence of diseases exacerbated by airborne pollutants. Therefore, it's more important than ever that we plant more urban trees that will create greener, happier, and healthier cities for generations to come.
  - Trees have been found to enhance mood, improve self-esteem, and lower blood pressure. Research in the Netherlands and Japan indicated that people were more likely to walk or cycle to work if the streets were lined with trees and live longer and feel better as a result.
  - Two reports, sponsored by RSPB, published in 2004 and 2007 outlined the benefits to physical and mental health arising from contact with the natural environment. These included the reductions in obesity, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stress, ADHD, aggression and criminal activity, amongst others.
  - A study by the University of Manchester has shown that increasing tree cover in urban areas by 10 per cent can reduce urban surface temperatures by as much as 4°C.
- 3.2 It is recommended that this strategy is implemented over four years of tree planting with a fully supported resident partnership agreement for as many of the trees planted as possible to ensure successful establishment. The proposed programme will be based upon the following elements:
- Annual target of 1250 street trees planted per year for four years (during the planting season of the months between November to March), commencing November 2021 and ending March 2025.
  - The provision of an additional FTE will be required within the Environmental Services Tree Team to deliver the project. Responsibility will be assigned amongst all officers within the Tree Team to ensure good 'local' application.
  - The programme will be based upon four primary phases of tree planting with the ongoing tree aftercare and monitoring factored in.
  - Working in partnership with residents and local groups to provide the necessary aftercare to establish the trees. Residents will be encouraged to take ownership of the trees, provided guidance on watering, basic maintenance, monitoring, reporting and empowered to improve the tree pits through the planting of annual bedding.
  - All elements of this plan will be developed into a comprehensive programme which will be presented to Members of the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee in readiness of phase one of the planting season commencing in November 2021.
- 3.3 Due to the scale of this project exceeding routine planned planting plans provided by the Council's current Service Provider, Glendale, it is advised that the Council seek to procure additional services to deliver the supply of new trees, the planting and aftercare elements.

3.4 Creating a new service offer for this element of the programme will allow a company who are best equipped to deliver this service on the behalf of the council to tender at a realistic rate.

- Glendale will remain as our primary arboricultural contractor and supply all other elements of the practical tree work for the Council.

### Summary of Business Case

Cost of proposal:

- Additional staff resource. 1 FTE Arboricultural Officer £182k
- Cost of trees £568k (estimated)
- Estimated cost of planting, equipment, and basic maintenance £600k (estimated)
- Total cost of project £1.35m

Year	Trees	Equipment, planting & basic maintenance	Staff (Client)	Total
Y1: 21/22	£142k	£150k	£45.5k	£337.5k
Y2: 22/23	£142k	£150k	£45.5k	£337.5k
Y3: 23/24	£142k	£150k	£45.5k	£337.5k
Y4: 24/25	£142k	£150k	£45.5k	£337.5k

- Although allocated in the year of planting, tree aftercare and maintenance will be phased over a longer six-year period, but overall costs will remain at £1.350m. Actual phasing will be refined and reported to the Environment & Community Services PDS Committee.

In house procurement of trees:

- The supply of trees on this scale will be the biggest challenge faced by this project due to increased national interest in tree planting and limited availability.
- Time is of the essence to secure trees for the first year of planting. The Arboriculture team will be undertaking the purchase of these trees during the tender process in order to ensure the trees are available to be planted once the contract is awarded. This must be undertaken faster than a contract could be awarded.
- Officer control of this element will ensure only the highest quality trees are delivered.
- Any cost savings through bulk purchase trees will be retained within the project budget.

### Service Profile / Data Analysis

As measured against other boroughs Bromley Council has historically been cited as the borough with the most street trees. There is no question that when the total number of trees in a borough is considered that Bromley has the most trees given the councils vast resource of parks and woodlands. The measure of future studies will however, likely be specific to street

trees which further highlights the importance of projects such as this to ensure Bromley's legacy as the greenest borough.

Over the past decade the council has honoured its commitments set out in our Tree Management Strategy to replace every tree removed.

#### **4. MARKET CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 Supply of trees: There are only a few large-scale tree nurseries in the UK capable of sustain a project of this scale. Long term investment in this type of scheme provides assurance to the development of stock at these nurseries.
- 4.2 A contract of this size will be well suited to local SME's.

#### **5. SOCIAL VALUE AND LOCAL / NATIONAL PRIORITIES**

- 5.1 Through engagement with residents the council seek to build a sense of connection and ownership of the green infrastructure within the borough.
- 5.2 The contract will be developed to encourage SME's and local businesses to tender.
- 5.3 Focusing on the health benefits of tree planting will target this project toward areas highlighted as lacking in green infrastructure with the goal of providing a greener environment to those who have the most to gain.

#### **6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 This project will be launched with a press release requesting that residents assist the service to determine all available planting locations
- 6.2 Continued engagement with and support to residents throughout the term of the project to assist in the monitoring and maintenance of the young trees until established.
- 6.3 The service will develop a programme of engagement focused at the younger generation to educate on the importance of a green infrastructure and encourage career development in this burgeoning industry.

#### **7. PROCUREMENT AND PROJECT TIMESCALES AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

##### **7.1 Estimated Value of Proposed Action:**

The procurement will cover sundry equipment, planting and basic maintenance for 5000 trees divided equally over a four-year period. The estimated annual value is £150k with an estimated whole life value of £600k.

7.2 **Other Associated Costs:** The establishment of 5000 street tree assets will increase the total registered from 36k to 41k, an increase of 14%. In the short to medium term the financial impact of this increase will be low due to the trees being young, healthy and from carefully selected resilient species.

This project will be focused on reusing vacant tree pits and grass verges which have very low costs in terms of the tree pits. As the project progresses there will be the requirement to create new tree pits where none have previously existed.

7.3 **Proposed Contract Period:** The proposed contract period is four years with option to extend for up to a further two years. The use of the extension option will be dependent upon uptake of the resident partnership scheme and the estimated whole life cost of £600k would be spread over this extension period,

7.4 The full details of the procurement approach are to be determined in consultation with the Corporate Procurement Team and Legal Services. Delegated authority to the Director of Environment and Public Protection has been sought to approve the detailed process and proceed to procurement, with subsequent Contract Award similarly delegated (subject to call-in).

7.5 The outline procurement strategy is as follows:

- Market awareness raising, including amongs local SME providers;
- Restricted procedure – initial Selection Questionnaire process, following which successful providers will be invited to bid;
- Specification will be based on the recently revised tree planting and young tree maintenance procedure. Key changes from the old method are the utilisation of two stakes, hessian tree ties and enhanced aftercare and monitoring which will be complemented with a resident/stakeholder partnership scheme.
- Evaluation criteria to be fully determined but based on a 60:40 price/quality split.

7.6 The outline timetable, based on a Restricted procedure (which can be shortened if an Open procedure is used) is as follows:

- Issue Stage 1 tender: August 2021
- Receipt of Stage 1 submissions: September 2021
- Stage 1 Evaluation: September 2021
- Invitation to Tender: September 2021
- Receipt of tender: October 2021
- Tender evaluation: October / November 2021
- Contract award: November 2021
- Contract commencement: November / December 2021

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

8.1 N/A

## **9. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 A tree planting strategy that is integrated within all the other services provided by the LBB Tree Strategy is essential. It builds and complements the other LBB & Greater London strategies & plans such as

- Air Quality Improvement Statutory Compliance
- Bromley Net Carbon Zero Emissions Commitment
- Greater London Climate Change Adaptation Plans
- London Urban Forest Partnership
- Bromley Biodiversity Plan
- Bromley Climate Change Adaptation including Sustainable Storm Water Management Suds Guidance
- London Sustainable Drainage Action Plan
- Bromley Healthy Living / Healthy People & Places Directorate Plans & Mandates

## **10. IT AND GDPR CONSIDERATIONS**

10.1 Recording and monitoring of newly planted trees to be undertaken utilising CONFIRM Work Zone. 2 logins will be provided to the supplier by the council. Limited access to CONFIRM with no personal information viewable.

## **11. STRATEGIC PROPERTY**

11.1 N/A

## **12. PROCUREMENT RULES**

12.1 This report seeks to proceed to procurement for a tree planting programme at an estimated value of £150k per annum for a four year period with the possibility to extend for up to a further two years (estimated whole life value of £600k). The full detail of the planned procurement are to be determined but a Restricted procedure is likely to be used.

12.2 Due to the estimated contract value and the classification of the contract as a services contract, the procurement process shall comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 for an above threshold procurement process.

12.3 The Council's specific requirements for authorising proceeding to procurement are covered in 1.3 of the Contract Procedure Rules with the need to obtain the formal Approval of the Portfolio Holder following the Agreement of the Assistant Director Governance & Contracts, the Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Finance for a procurement of this value. In accordance with CPR 2.1.2, Officers must take all necessary professional advice.

12.4 In compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (Rule 3.6.1), this procurement must be carried out using the Council's e-procurement system.

12.5 The actions identified in this report are provided for within the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, and the proposed actions can be completed in compliance with their content.

## **13. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**



- 13.1 The total costs of this initiative are estimated at £1.350m as set out in Section 3.4, and funding from the Healthy Bromley Earmarked Reserve is requested.
- 13.2 The programme of planting will take place over 4 years and each tree will require maintenance for the first 3 years until established. Therefore, maintenance costs, although shown as incurred in the year of planting in Section 3.4, will be phased over a six-year period although the overall costs will remain at £1.350m. Actual phasing will be refined and reported to the Environment & Community Services PDS Committee.
- 13.3 Funding allowance for an additional fixed term post for four years has been included. In the event that the postholder is not retained there is a potential that exit costs would be payable; however, the Director of Environment & Public Protection will seek to mitigate that risk by taking this post into account in future service reorganisations and absorbing the role into the existing establishment. Any additional costs that may still be incurred will be funded from within the Environment & Community Services Portfolio existing revenue budget.
- 13.4 The report sets out that although the Borough's stock of trees will increase, future longer term maintenance costs will be minimised by selecting resilient species and locating in specific, lower-risk locations.

**14. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 14.1 The section in this report relating to Procurement accurately sets out the legal position regarding procurement.

**15. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 15.1 Officers may, if they wish to do so, consult with Legal Services for the production of appropriate contractual documentation for the proposed procurement exercise.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	IMPACT ASSESSMENTS, STRATEGIC PROPERTY,
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	None