

Decision Maker: Environment and Community Services PDS Committee

Date: 17th November 2021

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

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

Contact Officer: Hugh Chapman, Arboricultural Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Colin Brand – Director of Environment & Public Protection

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

The reason for this report is to update the Committee on progress of the Programme of Tree Establishment. The stated goal of the project is to plant 5000 highway trees over a four year period. The original report (CSD21085) was presented to Executive Committee on 15th July 2021 where 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 was approved.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Environment PDS is requested to:

- Review the proposed programme and provide comment.

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

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £1,350,000
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Arboricultural Management
 4. Total current budget for this head: £754k
 5. Source of funding: Healthy Bromley Earmarked Reserve for the programme of tree establishment; existing revenue budget for Arboricultural Management
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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: Not Applicable: Information Only
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: None
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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:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Council publicly launched the programme in July 2021 requesting that residents submit requests for replacement trees in vacant tree pits. A good response of 141 requests have been received to date, many consisting of multiple locations in one request.
- 3.2 Councill tree officers were tasked with reviewing these requests and inspecting their areas to find any more available locations. To date a list of 1542 approved planting locations have been identified.
- 3.3 Work continues to ensure assessed locations are ready for planting.
- 3.4 The Council anticipates that there are approximately a further 1000 viable locations consisting of vacant tree pits and grass verges equating to approximately half of the target sum of 5000 trees.
- 3.5 As we progress through the project, filling vacant tree pits and planting on grass verges, we will begin to identify and register new and historically unplanted locations.
- 3.6 In January 2022 the Council will begin a new phase of our communications process where, through engagement with residents' associations, Friends' groups, the wider community, colleagues, and Ward Members, the Council will seek to identify locations where the creation of new tree pits can be undertaken on the public highway to best meet the stated objectives of the project.
- 3.7 This engagement alongside the efforts and achievements of the project will be publicised via the Bromley Council website, Environment Matters newsletter, direct communication and information notices affixed to the newly planted trees. A draft communications plan to accompany the programme of tree planting is shown at Appendix A.
- 3.8 In addition, the Council are currently exploring the provision and use of individual QR coded tags to be fitted to the stake of each tree which could link to a page for the tree, giving information on species, benefits, environmental value (e.g. CO₂ removed from the atmosphere) and provide the function of allowing our contractors and residents to log incidents of watering viewable on a scale set against the benchmarked requirements of the tree, enabling us to best monitor and effectively assign resource to ensure successful establishment. There is scope to expand this element further to enhance the engagement experience if successfully adopted.
- 3.9 Procurement of services: For the first year of the planting programme the Council's service provider for arboricultural services, Glendale, will provide additional resources commencing the project in November 2021. The existing contract specification includes the delivery of routine tree planting however, as additional resources are required to complete the full term of the project a tendering process will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2022 to appoint a new contractor to deliver the remaining planting and maintenance of trees associated to the project. This will involve the delivery of planting for the remaining three years and subsequent aftercare which will commence in November 2022 and end in September 2027. The phasing of the first year of the planting programme is illustrated in Table 1.

Month	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022
Proposed No. of Tree's Planted	100	100	300	300	300	350

Table 1. Proposed Phasing of Planting – Year One (2021-2022)

3.10 Procurement of Trees: The order for the supply of trees for year one of the project is now with Barchams, a major supplier of the Council's tree stock to its service provider, Glendale. This order is for 1266 trees at value of £150k (excluding VAT). Barchams have confirmed availability of a broad selection of species with a limited number of substitutions from the Council's original request. The proposed year one volume of tree's to be planted includes a pre-ordered amount with Glendale equating to a total of 1450.

3.11 Officer's are working to prepare purchase orders with the supplier for future years early, enabling the Council to secure tree stock of the most appropriate species. A provisional programme of tree planting for the four year project is provided in Table 2.

Year (Period of Planting November to April)	Proposed No. of Tree's	Proposed Expenditure (Tree purchase, materials, planting, maintenance etc) £'000k
2021 - 2022	1450	269
2022 - 2023	1250	275
2023 - 2024	1200	300
2024 - 2025	1100	346
2025 - 2026	-	96
2026 - 2027	-	64
Total	5000	1,350

Table 2. Project Programme of Phased Planting

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

4.1 The increase in tree planting across the borough supports the Council's approach to ensuring a safe and healthy borough for all of our residents. In addition to the benefits for wildlife and improved drainage (and therefore reduction in flood risk), the increase in street trees will contribute to an improvement in local air quality. Urban trees are also an excellent remedy for improving our mental health and wellbeing, as research demonstrates that spending time around trees and nature reduces depression and anxiety, especially when combined with exercise. Time amongst trees decreases levels of the stress hormone cortisol and increases people's sense of wellbeing. These benefits of street trees will be available for all residents and visitors to the borough, but will be of particular importance to those adults and young people suffering from poor mental health and respiratory illness.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A tree planting strategy that is integrated within all the other services provided by the LBB Tree Strategy is essential as it builds on and compliments the other Bromley and Greater London strategies and 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

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The costs of this multi-year planting programme were set out in the report to the Executive on 15th July 2021. A total budget of £1.35m was approved with funding allocated from the Healthy Bromley Earmarked Reserve.
- 6.2 It was reported to the Executive that 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 will be phased over a six-year period, illustrated in Table 2. Actual phasing over the period remains to be finalised by service officers.
- 6.3 The report also set 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. Service officers therefore anticipate to manage these longer term costs within the existing revenue budget.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Further to the Executive Report and minute made on the 15th July 2021, should officers require any legal assistance with regard to the proposed contractual documentation to purchase and Maintain the trees throughout the programme then they should liaise with the Legal Section. Insofar as the procurement rules under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Councils' Contract Procedure Rules these are properly set out in the Procurement Comments to this report.

Non-Applicable Sections:	PERSONNEL & PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Executive Committee Report No. CSD21085

APPENDIX A

Tree Planting Programme (Year One) Communications Plan