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| Subject: | Tree planting: response to Notice of Motion | | |
| Date of Meeting: | 16 November 2021 | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture | | |
| Contact Officer: | Name: | Robert Walker | Tel: 01273 29 |
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| Ward(s) affected: | All | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 21 September 2021, the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee agreed to receive a report on tree planting in response to a Notice of Motion. This report provides the response.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee note the response to the Notice of Motion.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Notice of Motion requested a report setting out responses to three points:
- The costs of different types of tree;
 - The costs in different planting situations such as park, old tree pit, etc; and
 - How applications should be made.

The costs of different types of tree

- 3.2 The cost of tree planting varies significantly, especially on the highway. The donation fee for a tree to a park is £336.53, as agreed at Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 19 January 2021 as part of the annual budget setting process. This is a good reflection of the actual costs involved in planting and establishing a standard tree when no replacement is needed. As numbers of donated tree have been low, replacement of trees that fail in their early years have been met from City Parks core tree planning budget of £15,000.
- 3.3 In the past, very few donations of street trees occurred however it is increasingly common that individuals and groups do want to plant in the streets. Suitable locations in streets are very limited and the historic methods used for street tree planting have been unsuitable adding to the problems we have in the city with restricted footpath widths and disruption of pavement surfaces. The shortage of suitable planting sites on the highway mean that donations may have to go on old stump sites or even buildouts into the carriageway which pushes up costs.

The costs in different planting situations such as park, old tree pit, etc.

- 3.4 Two large tree planting projects on stump sites have been funded by the council. On the first of these, average tree planting costs came out at £3,000 but the second scheme, which is now underway, looks as if costs will come out higher and nearer £4,000. The majority of the cost is associated with the civil engineering work, reinstating the damage caused by the previous tree and building a suitable tree pit for the new tree.
- 3.5 Occasionally there are opportunities to build new tree pits. In a straightforward case this would cost in the region of £800 for the civil engineering work. Build outs into the highway can also sometimes be an option. A recent buildout in Springfield Road cost in the region of £3,500. In both cases the £336.53 figure to plant the tree would need to be added. There are also occasions when wide highway verges are available for planting and planting costs are similar to parks costs.
- 3.6 Costs decrease dramatically when planting woodland trees and these are typically £5 with little aftercare (they are planted at a density where some losses are expected).
- 3.7 The principal cost issue on highways is usually the cost of civil engineering works but on other sites the size, species and growing method of the tree have a lot of impact on costs. On a woodland creation site, we would typically plant whips [small trees under 1m high] whereas on streets and for parks we would plant standard trees. We use trees of 10 to 14cm girth at chest height. Typically, a whip would cost around £1.50, a containerised standard around £120 and bare root around £60 [although with bare root delivery costs are higher per tree as we order in a number of batches].
- 3.8 Tree planting is largely funded by additional council or external money which is usually agreed for specific projects. There is no money to subsidise projects that fall outside of funding agreements. To plant a standard tree in a park there is very little cost variance therefore the council can let potential donors know costs without surveying the site. However, on streets it is necessary to survey sites to determine likely costs and if the site is suitable to plant. The council has appointed two staff to facilitate tree planting across the city and site surveying is part of their role. Any sort of buildout into the highway will also require highway engineer input.
- 3.9 In summary, costs for park trees and indicative costs for highways trees, where it can be given, are as follows:
- Parks whip: £5
 - Parks Standard: £336.53
 - New street tree in a pavement (indicative): £1136.53
 - New street tree in a build out (indicative): £3836.53
 - New street tree on a stump site: not possible to give an indicative cost as the cost varies massively.

How applications should be made

- 3.10 Information on how to donate a tree to one of the city's parks is available on the council website at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/parks-and-green-spaces/tree-trust-celebrate-or-commemorate-planting-a>
- 3.11 For other types of tree planting, City Parks is working closely with Plant Your Postcode (PYP). PYP can share information on the viability of tree planting for any given location, plus the sort of information needed to make that assessment. They can also assist with fund- raising efforts. The council's Tree Planting Officer works closely with PYP to identify and make viable planting opportunities in terms of site suitability and funding potential, be that from community groups or external funding. This is a new partnership and a new opportunity for City Parks to engage with a community group in this way, and this will develop as the first tree planting season approaches.

Current tree planting funding

- 3.12 Below is the current funding available for tree planting including details of how it will be spent where this has been agreed
- **Successful bids:** 183 Standard trees
 - **Forestry Commission Treescapes bid**
 - Submitted by the Tree Planting Officer
 - Successful bid for **£180,937.55**
 - This bid is match funded with £200,000 of BHCC funding
 - To be used for stump removals, new tree pits and tree replacements on the public highway
 - £122,869.74 of this will contribute towards stump removals, new tree pits and tree planting to boost planting from 63 new trees to 93 new trees
 - £58,068.27 of this bid provides us with half the costs of watering for all 93 trees (£16.01 per water over 26 weeks for 3 years = £1248.78 per tree)
 - **Forestry Commission Green Recovery Challenge Fund**
 - This successful bid was submitted by the Tree Planting Officer in conjunction with Tree For Cities and Plant Your Postcode
 - The bid is called the Forgotten Places Project, and aims to plant 90 new trees on the highway in areas of high deprivation and low/medium tree cover
 - This bid is for
 - **£36,900** for cost of tree and tree planting
 - **£37,400** for 1 year's watering (£16.01 per water 26 weeks for 1 year = £416 per tree)
 - This bid has been match funded with £13,986 from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, currently we are still awaiting confirmation on the success of this bid
 - **Section 106:** 13 standard trees
 - School Road/Portland Road surrounding area: 13 highways trees (subject to highways confirmation)

- At least 7 new highway tree pits and trees to be planted in the vicinity of School Road
 - Also 5 stumps removed and replaced with new tree pits and trees
 - This will be funded through Section 106 money from the School Road development
- **Schemes in conjunction with Plant Your Postcode:** 35 standard trees, 125 whips
 - Glebe Villas
 - Possibly up to 18 new street trees (subject to funding confirmation)
 - Surrenden Road
 - 5 new trees (funding confirmed)
 - New hedgerow with 125 whips (Funding confirmed)
 - Bristol Estate
 - 12 new trees (Funding confirmed)
- **Parks: Donations/Memorial trees:** 93 standard trees
 - Over 40 donation tree requests for parks sites
 - 13 new trees at Blakers Park organised in conjunction with Blakers Park Friends Group
 - 40 trees on Preston Park Cherry Avenue in conjunction with Preston Park Friends Group
- **Woodland Creation Scheme:** 2500 whips
 - Carden Hill phase 2
 - 2500 whips to be planted this winter
- **Carbon Neutral Fund**
 - £1,000,000

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 City Parks can work with volunteers on some schemes, although Covid disrupted plans for Carden Park which was originally planned to be planted by volunteers. Most of the negative feedback that officers have had about costs is for highway trees for which there is no potential to plant using volunteers but volunteers can help with watering newly planted trees, including those on streets.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Community, councillor and partner consultation takes place on individual schemes

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report provides a response to a Notice of Motion. Planting prices are variable and on highways it is not possible to price without surveying the site.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Planting is largely dependent on additional funding and the current available funding is listed in the report.

Finance Officer Consulted: John Lack

Date: 28/10/2021

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward

Date: 22/10/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Trees help provide a healthier environment by trapping air borne pollutants and providing a cooling effect. This is particularly helpful for anyone with breathing difficulties or more susceptible to overheating. The largest air quality benefit is achieved from trees in the more built-up parts of the city.
- 7.4 Trees can provide barriers for people getting around the city, principally pedestrians, and this can be a significant problem for those who are less mobile or visually impaired. City Parks are now more selective on planting sites, tree type selection and planting methods to reduce future impacts on current planting. This is increasing costs and reducing planting opportunities, but unfortunately, historic planting methods have led to significant access problems for some of the city's residents.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 As well as air quality benefits, trees help with flood management, carbon capture and biodiversity. With the city's elms, some of the associated biodiversity is found in few other places in the world – not just the elm trees themselves, but the other wildlife that depends on them.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

N/A

Background Documents

N/A

