

Report of: Leisure and Parks Business Unit Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 16 January 2006

Item No:

Title of Report : Tree Strategy

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: This report reviews the current management of trees in Oxford City Council and highlights the fact that to undertake the work specified the Council will have to approve a budget increase as part of Final 2006-07 to 2008-09 budget, because there is no budget provision for this extra work. This report is background information to a budget bid.

Key decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mary Clarkson

Scrutiny Responsibility: Environment

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by: Jeremy Thomas (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) Emma Burson (Group Accountant)

Policy Framework: This report meets the policy framework of Oxford City Council as follows:

- a. Improving the environments in which we live and work;
- b. Making Oxford a safer city.

Recommendation(s): The Executive Board is recommended to agree to consider this report as part of the Council's forthcoming budget bidding process

1. Tree Numbers in Oxford

- 1.1 Leisure and Parks have undertaken an assessment of the number of trees under the ownership/management of Oxford City Council (Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Trees/Council Service

Council Services	Number of Trees
Leisure and Parks	23155
Allotments	4528
Countryside	29990
Car Parks	341
Asset Management	17065
Sheltered Housing	316
Housing	12000
TOTAL	87395

1.2 The trees itemised in Table 1 have never been inspected or maintained in their lifetime which presents an unknown liability to the City Council.

2. Proposal

2.1 To undertake a comprehensive tree survey of all trees under City Council management/ownership.

2.2 To focus on trees that have as yet not been inspected specifically including;

- a. Allotments (L&P)
- b. Cemeteries (L&P)
- c. Ecological sites (L&P)
- d. Housing estate areas (HSNG)
- e. Housing properties (HSNG)
- f. Commercial land (F&AM)
- g. Asset management owned properties (F&AM)

2.3 Highway trees are being effectively and intensively managed under the current arrangement and it is not proposed to include these in this survey.

2.4 The survey would be undertaken by the private sector through a process of open tender.

2.5 The results would be captured and stored on the tree management database.

2.6 The findings would include conditional comments about trees and the specifying of any necessary work, along with a priority for that work and an individual risk assessment of the tree.

2.7 The data would be collected on hardware, which would need to be procured as part of the process.

2.8 If budget approval is given for this then a Major Project Approval report will also need to be produced

3. Benefits

3.1 The benefit to Oxford City Council of undertaking a large-scale survey will be that;

- a. The City Council would be working in line with best practice and within principles generally accepted by industry specialists as the way to undertake large scale tree management;
- b. The survey would be completed within an acceptable timeframe;
- c. The data collected would allow comprehensive planning and resourcing for the short to medium term;
- d. Risk management principles would be closely managed and followed;
- e. Reduction in overtime and call out payments as a result of improved tree management.
- f. Increased levels of safety in Oxford.

4. Financial implications

4.1 To undertake a comprehensive assessment of 87395 trees the cost is estimated at £213k dependent on a satisfactory tendering exercise.

4.2 Other costs would include;

- a- £15k for hardware and software to allow data capture.
- b- £60K for short term employment of an arboriculturist to carry out day-to-day management of the tree service, to allow for adequate supervision of the contractors undertaking the survey.
- c- £213k for the carrying out of work, which becomes necessary as a result of the survey.
- d- £20k to acquire a suitable system for locating/positioning trees.

5. Project management

5.1 It is proposed to undertake this survey within two years from successful letting of the contract.

5.2 The survey would generate a significant amount of work, which will be equal to the amount of money spent on the survey.

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Date

