

CARLISLE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP	
Meeting date:	10 June 2019
From:	Acting Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure

TREE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 *This report presents an update on the current tree management process and policy. It also seeks to inform a discussion at Highways and Transport Working Group (HTWG) about the longer-term management strategy for Council Maintained trees located within the highway boundary.*
- 1.2 *Members of the HTWG may discuss the issue and the options.*
- 1.3 *The HTWG are asked to recommend that the Local Committee note the report and agree an annual budget for both the on-going maintenance and the proposed longer-term management strategy for Council Maintained trees located within the highway boundary to begin in 2020/21.*

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 *Maintaining trees is a fundamental part of the Council's statutory duty to maintain a safe highway network. This routine work is ongoing and will continue to follow the County Council Policy – Service Procedure 08.038 Tree Management (Attached as Appendix B).*
- 2.2 *The current tree management policy however does not cover the removal or replacement of trees considered too old or too large to economically maintain.*
- 2.3 *As trees grow older and larger and they become more difficult to maintain resulting in an increase in maintenance costs.*

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 *That the Highways and Transport Working Group note the report and recommend Local Committee note the report and agree the annual budgets will need to provide for both the ongoing maintenance and the proposed longer-term management strategy for Council maintained trees located within the highway boundary.*

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Local Committee has allocated a budget of £30,000 to Programmed Tree Works in its devolved capital budget for 2019-20.

4.2 This report follows the previous update report on the subject in October 2018 (Attached as Appendix A) and the Local Committee meeting in November 2018 where it was agreed all long term maintenance strategy options would be considered further namely:

- Reducing the total number of trees.
- Undertaking a tree replacement programme.
- Increasing the tree maintenance budget.
- Undertaking some informal consultation with the Public.

4.3 **Reducing the total number of trees**

4.3.1 Trees are a significant and important feature on the highway, providing a range of benefits, however they can become an increasing risk to both people and property if not correctly managed and maintained. The cost of maintaining trees increases over time.

4.3.2 Removing trees can be an emotive subject and the County Council are keen to listen to the views of the Local Members and the Public, building a partnership with all parties involved as we look to undertake this work.

4.3.3 **The longer-term management strategy is no longer looking to reduce the overall number of trees.**

4.3.4 For clarity, the County Council has reconsidered the strategy and a reduction in the overall number of trees is not considered necessary.

4.4 **Undertaking a tree replacement programme**

4.4.1 The strategy will look to **reduce the number of trees being maintained in areas that are the least suitable for trees whilst increasing the number of trees being maintained in areas that are more suitable.**

4.4.2 This 'swap' arrangement strategy is aimed at reducing the overall cost of the tree maintenance, without losing the benefit that trees bring.

4.4.3 Replacing our old less suitable trees that are poorly located with younger more suitable trees in good locations will provide the benefits of trees at an affordable cost to the public.

4.4.4 Currently the Carlisle Local Committee allocate £30,000 each year to Minor Tree Maintenance. This keeps the current tree stock in a safe condition but does not consider the longer-term. Without a longer-term strategy to manage the tree stock this cost will increase (see previous report)

4.4.5 The ongoing growth (height and girth) and the associated cost of this maintenance is increasing and it is highly likely, without action, the current budget allocation would need to constantly increase with no added benefit.

4.4.6 The proposed tree replacement programme is required to maintain the trees in the City for the foreseeable future. This is subject to the Local Committee agreeing an annual budget for this additional work.

- 4.4.7 It is recognised that Carlisle has a number of important tree lined routes. Warwick Road, Wigton Road, Dalston Road, Scotland Road to name a few.
- 4.4.8 Effectively this means that for the entire street to be replaced it would take no less than 15 years. However based on the cost to the Local Committee budgets the programme is more likely to be much slower and spread over 50-60 years.
- 4.4.9 **Reminder:** based on the figures provided in the previous report the removal and replacement of circa 45 trees per annum is estimated at around £30,000.
- 4.4.10 **The tree replacement programme may require additional separate costs.** Members should note that not having a tree replacement programme will also start costing more and that a tree replacement programme is inevitable at some stage if trees are to be retained. Timely intervention is aimed at keeping the routine costs low and value for money.
- 4.4.11 The tree replacement programme would not rule out any CAT 1 emergency works or pollarding (a process that cuts back most of the tree canopy).
- 4.4.12 **Where a healthy tree is to be removed consultation with local residents and the local Member for the area will be undertaken, prior to the removal taking place.**
- 4.4.13 In some areas, moving the location of a tree will be necessary, cost effective or desirable for other reasons. Roots can be difficult to remove and it may be more sensible to move the tree nearby rather than use the exact same location.
- 4.4.14 **Where a healthy tree is being replaced consultation with local residents and the local Member for the area will be undertaken, prior to the initial removal taking place.**
- 4.4.15 Consultation shall include a letter to the local Member and local residents and a notice located on, or near to each tree.
- 4.4.16 It is proposed that each area of the district would benefit from greater biodiversity in the range of trees. This will limit damage from fungus and other tree health problems.
- 4.4.17 **New standard details will ensure that replacement trees are placed in well-designed tree pits that encourage healthy trees.** Modern tree pits don't create the same historical problems that are associated with trees in urban areas. Roots are managed so they won't damage footways and the size of the tree can be limited.
- 4.4.18 Where existing trees are removed or moved the area where the old trunk was located will be reinstated to best match the surrounding area.
- 4.4.19 Where it is not possible or practical to replace trees near to their existing location alternative locations within the same Electoral Division will be considered first. If no suitable location is available then other areas will then need to be considered.
- 4.4.20 Whilst reviewing which areas in which to start it was clear the focus needed to be within the City area due to the numbers.
- 4.4.21 **Trees within heritage or other sensitive areas or trees with preservation orders are not being considered for now.**

- 4.4.22 Some initial informal consultation with Members and the public is likely to start in the coming months.
- 4.4.23 **Works would follow the tree inspection work and is subject to Local Committee agreeing a budget for 2020/21.**
- 4.4.24 Trees identified for the programme would be removed in the spring before nesting birds arrive, during the summer months the verges and pits would be prepared before new trees arrive and get planted in the Autumn.
- 4.4.25 It has not been determined whether or not the position of trees would be final or moveable in future. Some tree pit systems allow for trees to be moved from one pit to another.
- 4.4.26 In some areas the planting of new trees can be symbolic. If members would like to discuss the use of the tree replacement programme with regards any community engagement the Highways Network Manager should be contacted initially.
- 4.5 **Increasing the tree maintenance budget**
- 4.5.1 The current position within the Carlisle district has improved due to a reduction in the amount of emergency works undertaken so more planned maintenance is being undertaken. This has resulted in some changes in our approach.
- 4.5.2 **An increase in routine maintenance is not considered necessary at the moment** (to be kept under review and reported on annually to Local Committee).

5.0 **OPTIONS**

- 5.1 That the Highways and Transport Working Group note the report and recommend Local Committee note the report and agree that the annual budgets will need to provide for both the ongoing maintenance and the proposed longer-term management strategy for Council maintained trees located within the highway boundary.
- 5.2 That the Highways and Transport Working Group note the report and recommend Local Committee note the report only.

6.0 **RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Local Committee Highways budgets are limited. It is for Local Committee to allocate resources to programmes of work.
- 6.2 If the funding requirements for tree maintenance increase, then funding for other programmes of work would need to reduce.

7.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The recommendations in this report do not contain any legal implications however Local Committee could take decisions that could have future legal implications.

- 7.2 When allocating and moving money between budgets, Local Committee must follow the rules set by the Council following its consideration of the “Revenue Budget for 2018/2019, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2018/2019 - 2021/2022, the Capital Programme 2018 – 2023 and any other additional restrictions set by Cabinet and/or Council regulating the use of such funds.
- 7.3 Local Committees may, pursuant to Part 2D, paragraph 5.1.2 (f), of the Constitution, agree and keep under review the implementation of, the highways revenue budget and capital programme for the local committee’s area to support the Council to carry out its statutory duty to maintain the highway in a safe condition as far as reasonably practicable (KB 29.3.2019)

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 There are a wide range of issues to consider. A balanced approach needs to found between what will need to be done and what can be afforded in the future.
- 8.2 It is likely that a combination of the options presented in this report will be needed. Officers will need to provide more information to Members in the future for further discussion and consideration.
- 8.3 This report seeks to raise the issue with the Highways and Transport Working Group so Members can be briefed about some potentially challenging decisions related to the long term future tree management.

Angela Jones
Acting Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure

May 2019

APPENDICES

Appendix A – October 2018 HTWG report - Tree Management
 Appendix B – Tree Management Service Procedure

Electoral Divisions: All

Executive Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?
If so, give details below.

	No
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Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?

	No	
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Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?

	No	
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N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and necessary approvals have been obtained.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

No previous relevant decisions.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

REPORT AUTHOR

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