

<b>CARLISLE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP</b>
Meeting date: 11 October 2018
From: 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 a longer term management strategy for Council Maintained trees within the highway and the Carlisle Local Committee Area.*
- 1.2 *Members of the HTWG are asked to discuss the issue and the options, recommending to Local Committee their preference for the long term tree management strategy.*

### **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 work is ongoing and will continue to follow the County Council Policy.*
- 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 to Local Committee that ALL long term maintenance strategy options should 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.*

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Trees are a significant and important feature on the highway, providing a range of benefits, however they can also become a risk to both people and property if not correctly managed and maintained. The cost of maintaining the current tree stock is likely to increase over time.

4.2 The County Council have a sound risk based approach to the management of trees applying a Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QUANTRA) methodology in order to prioritise a programme of regular inspections and works.

4.3 Tree inspections are routinely undertaken by a suitably qualified person who records the condition of the trees and any potential works.

4.4 Trees in the highest risk areas such as on urban roads and pedestrian areas are inspected every 2/3 years. Trees in medium risk areas such as key rural roads are inspected every 5 years. Trees in the lowest risk areas away from traffic are inspected infrequently, if concerns are raised. Tree defect observations can also be noted and recorded during routine safety inspections which occur no less than annually.

4.5 All tree works are prioritised as either:

Emergency Work	Completed
P1 High Priority	1100
P2 Medium Priority	1350
P3 Low Priority	1850
Monitor only or	1945
NWR No works required.	305

4.6 There are approximately 2,400 trees that are inspected in the Carlisle Local Committee Area and that are currently being managed. The number fluctuates due to some being removed and or replaced.

Belah	134	Upperby	137
Belle Vue	142	Yewdale	177
Botcherby	263	<b>Carlisle City Total</b>	<b>2238</b>
Castle	517		
Currock	52	Aglionby	31
Denton Holme	128	Cummersdale	13
Harraby North	141	Cumwhinton	9
Harraby South	77	Little Corby	10
Houghton	5	Longtown	63
Morton	185	Wetheral	25
Stanwix Urban	280	<b>Carlisle Rural Total</b>	<b>151</b>

4.7 A number of trees along the edge of the highway boundary are maintained by the adjacent land owner and regular contact is made with land owners to remind them of their responsibilities.

4.8 Some trees are within conservation areas and will require consent from the City Council before any work is undertaken.

- 4.9 Currently the Carlisle Local Committee allocate £30,000 each year to Minor Tree Maintenance. This level of funding covers the Emergency Work we need to do and the higher priority P1 works.
- 4.10 Ongoing growth (height and girth) and the longer term maintenance requirements for the current tree stock is increasing and it is likely the costs to maintain the tree stock will exceed the current budget allocation. Consideration is therefore now being sought around a longer term strategy.
- 4.11 The costs involved (estimated)
- Felling a tree £200 - £400
  - Removing timber £50 - £150
  - Stump grinding £100 - £200
  - Reinstatement £400 - £500
  - Replacement £300 - £600

## 5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 The Highways and Transport Working group agree the Recommendation.
- 5.2 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider a recommendation to Local Committee to do nothing.
- 5.3 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider a recommendation to Local Committee that involves the reducing the total number of trees being managed by removing some trees from some areas is considered further.
- Reducing the total number of trees from 2,400 to 1,800 would reduce future maintenance liability.
  - Removing circa 600 trees would need to be done over a number of years (Circa £420,000, or £100,000 per year over 4 years)
- 5.4 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider a recommendation to Local Committee that involves a tree replacement programme where larger trees are replaced with younger trees that require less maintenance.
- With circa 2,400 trees a cyclic replacement programme over a 50 year period would require 50 trees to be removed and replaced each year (Circa £35,000).
  - With circa 1,800 trees a cyclic replacement programme over a 50 year period would require 36 trees to be removed and replaced each year (Circa £25,200).
  - Without a tree replacement programme the impact of removing the trees when they eventually become hazardous will be uncontrolled (Unknown – Circa £1.2M over time if all trees were removed).
- 5.5 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider a recommendation to Local Committee that involves increasing the current budget allocation so that additional P1 and P2 maintenance work could be undertaken.

- Increasing the tree maintenance budget in the short term would reduce the risk to future budgets but only in the short term.
  - An increase of £10,000(+33%) - £20,000(+66%) would enable more P1 and P2 tree maintenance to be undertaken reducing the short term risks, with minimal impact on other highway budget allocations.
  - Not a long term solution.
- 5.6 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider a recommendation to Local Committee that involves other potential alternatives not in this report.
- 5.7 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider a recommendation to Local Committee that involves a combination of the above, with or without some of the options.
- 5.8 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider recommending to Local Committee a method for determining the level of consultation to be undertaken with the public around this potentially sensitive issue.
- 5.9 The Highways and Transport Working group may consider recommending to Local Committee that all of the long term maintenance strategy options should 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.

## **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 Pursuant to Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 (subject to a statutory defence under Section 58 of the 1980 Act), failure to maintain the highway in a safe condition, as far as is reasonably practicable, can leave the Council open to challenge.

7.3 When allocating and moving money between budgets Local Committee must do so in accordance with the financial standing orders and follow the rules set by Council following its consideration of the “Revenue Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Plan (2018/19-2021/22) and Draft Capital Programme (2018-2023)” report (the Report) on 01 February 2018 and any such additional restrictions set by Cabinet and/or Council regulating the use of such funds. Paragraph 106 of the Report provides that Highways revenue allocations must be spent on highways activities.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 There are a wide range of issues to consider. A balanced approach needs to be 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 (at this early stage) so Members can be briefed about some potentially challenging decisions related to the long term future tree management.

**Dominic Donnini**  
**Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure**

*September 2018*

## APPENDICES

None

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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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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