

REPORT TO	ON
CABINET	16 October 2019



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
110,000 Trees a Global Legacy	Cabinet Member for Environment	Director of Neighbourhoods and Development

Is this report a <b>KEY DECISION</b> (i.e. more than £100,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)	Yes
Is this report on the <b>Statutory Cabinet Forward Plan</b> ?	Yes
Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council?	No
Is this report confidential?	No

## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. This report details the environmental benefits of planting 110,000 trees, one tree for each of our residents and how we are proposing to achieve this. This report is also seeking views on the proposed programme of delivery.

## PORTFOLIO RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Cabinet recommends the tree planting plan detailed in this report is taken forward and will provide on-going support feedback and suggestions that can help shape/inform the ongoing process.
3. Cabinet authorise capital expenditure on this scheme over a 4 year period up to the overall budget value of £160,000 which will be allocated from the approved Green Links capital budgets.

## REASONS FOR THE DECISION

4. The reason for the report is to provide Cabinet with the proposals to plant 110,000 trees, one tree for each of our residents as a key part of our plan to combat climate change. We are focused on the environment, improving the air we breathe and having the right plans in place to safeguard and protect our natural environment.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Excellence and Financial Sustainability	
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Health and Wellbeing	x
Place	x

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

People	X

## BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

***“Right now, we are ignoring natural climate solutions. We spend 1,000 times more on global fossil fuel subsidies than on nature-based solutions. This is your money, it is your taxes, and your savings” Greta Thunberg***

***“There is a magic machine that sucks carbon out of the air, costs very little, and builds itself. It’s called a tree.” George Monbiot (Environmental Campaigner)***

6. Urban forests help to improve our air quality by removing (sequestering) CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere during photosynthesis to form carbohydrates that are used in plant structure/function and return oxygen back into the atmosphere as a by-product. Roughly half of the greenhouse effect is caused by CO<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, trees act as carbon sinks, alleviating the greenhouse effect.
7. On average, one acre of new forest can sequester about 2.5 tons of carbon annually. Young trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub> at a rate of 13 pounds per tree each year. Trees reach their most productive stage of carbon storage at about 10 years at which point they are estimated to absorb 48 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. At that rate, they release enough oxygen back into the atmosphere to support two human beings.
8. Trees also remove other gaseous pollutants through the stomata in the leaf surface by absorbing them with normal air components. Sulphur Dioxide, Ozone, Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulates. Studies have also shown that trees can provide up to a 60 percent reduction in street-level particulates.
9. Planting billions of trees across the world is by far the biggest and cheapest way to tackle the climate crisis, according to scientists. New research estimates that a worldwide planting programme could remove two-thirds of all the emissions that have been pumped into the atmosphere by human activities, a figure the scientists describe as “mind-blowing”.
10. South Ribble Borough Council will be part of this global legacy by planting 110,000 trees, one tree for each of our residents to safeguard and protect the natural environment of South Ribble.

## PROPOSALS (e.g. RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)

### 11. Planting introduction

Forestry Commission standards suggest 1 tree per square metre. 110 000 trees therefore equates to 110 000 square metres, or 11 hectares.

To meet the planting target within identified available space in South Ribble the recommendation is that we plant a combination of whips (single stemmed young trees) and a number of standard native trees.

## 12. Sites and numbers

The following sites have been identified as suitable for planting and the number of trees proposed for each site include the following:

• Leyland: Worden Park, Bent Lane	26 000
• Withy Grove Park	3000
• Farington Park	5000
• Middleforth Green	3000
• Land off Collins Road, Bamber Bridge	1200
• The Old Railway Line embankments	20 000
• Ribble Way bund at Howick Cross	4000
• Hutton Wildlife Area	2000
• Valley Road	1500

The following sites have also been identified, but are not available for planting in this financial year:

• Ribble Sidings	17 500
• Penwortham bypass compound	7 000
• Farington Moss	13 000

**Total 103 200**

In addition to the above planting the Council has been working with partner agencies such as Lancashire County Council, the Environment Agency, and developers to ensure that if any trees are removed in South Ribble that they are replaced. For example Lancashire County Council are planting in excess of 27,000 whips and trees as part of the Penwortham bypass development. We are also working with the Environment Agency to plant over 3,000 trees as part of the Preston and South Ribble Flood defence scheme.

The Council also has a two for one replacement policy if trees are lost as part of development schemes. We will ensure that all of these additional trees are recorded as part of this project.

There will be a natural failure rate with the whips and trees planted. We will continue to monitor the situation after planting and will replant as required.

## 13. Tree giveaway

For a number of years we have each autumn given free trees to residents to plant in their own gardens and this has proved extremely popular. This year to launch this project we intend to give away 300 standard trees and 3000 whips. The event is proposed to take place on the 16th November at Worden Park. A social media campaign will be run in conjunction with this event to encourage people to participate.

It is also proposed to approach all schools within the borough in conjunction with the Woodland Trust and our Sports Development Team to encourage them to become involved in the free tree planting scheme.

In addition our Neighbourhoods Team have a scheme to encourage residents to purchase trees in the arboretum at Worden Park. This scheme will be extended to help residents support this project and do their bit to combat climate change.

#### 14. Costs and supply

Currently one whip costs approximately £1.00 depending on the numbers ordered, a standard tree will cost in the region of approximately £15.00. The more significant cost would be the labour required for planting.

The Community Payback Service have confirmed that they can plant the whips meaning the labour costs would be in the hundreds of pounds rather than tens of thousands of pounds which would have made the project financially unviable.

The large number of trees poses a supply and delivery problem, local suppliers have been contacted and have confirmed that they can deliver the trees in the required numbers. There would be a seven day lead up time to delivery on site.

Procurement of trees would use the following processes:

- 5000 trees or fewer                      obtain competitive quotes from the two named suppliers
- 5000 - 13 000 trees                      competitive quotes from a minimum of five suppliers
- Over 13 000 trees                      competitive tender via The Chest

#### 15. Planting programme

With suppliers and labour in place planting can proceed. Trees should be planted between November and March. The suggested planting programme is:

Year 1 (2019-2020)

- Leyland: Worden Park, Bent Lane                      26 000
  - Land off Collins Road, Bamber Bridge                      1200
  - Hutton Wildlife Area                      2000
  - Middleforth Green                      3000
- Total    32 200**

*Rationale: The sites are available to plant. Residents at Collins Road and Hutton Wildlife Area are eager to get involved in the tree planting project as part of their local wildlife and conservation aims.*

Year 2 (2020-2021)

- Withy Grove Park                      3000
  - Farington Park                      5000
  - The Old Railway Line                      20 000
  - Valley Road                      1500
- Total    29 500**

*Rationale: The sites are available to plant.*

Year 3 (2021-2022)

- Ribble Sidings                      17 500
  - Ribble Way Bund at Howick Cross                      4000
- Total    21 500**

*Rationale: Ribble Sidings will become available to plant when Phase 1 of the Environment Agency's flood mitigation work is completed.*

Year 4 (2022-2023)

- Farington Moss 13 000
- Penwortham Bypass compound 7000
- Total 20 000**

## **CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION**

16. The Green links consultation which was undertaken early this year showed residents want green spaces to be protected and enhanced to support wildlife and natural habitats.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

17. An alternative to whip planting is standard tree planting. A standard is a single stemmed tree with multiple branches. Larger trees are heavy standards and extra-heavy standards.

The lowest price of a small standard tree can be £10-15 dependent upon numbers purchased. Ten times the cost of a whip. Based on this figure the lowest budget cost for planting standards could be as high as £1.1 million, making the project financially unviable.

There would also be additional significant labour costs involved in planting 110 000 standard trees.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. There is an existing capital budget of £40,000 for this scheme in 2019/20, with authority to spend to that level (approved by Cabinet June 2019). The 4-year programme requires budget for a further 3 years estimated at £40,000 per year for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, which would make the overall total £160,000. This will be allocated from the existing Green Links capital budgets for those years. The additional maintenance requirements can be absorbed within existing budgets. Service costs will continue to be monitored and future budget setting processes will consider whether these budgets might need increasing.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

19. The trees planted on land owned by the Council will have to be maintained as we have duties to maintain trees on our land.

## **AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

20. Please refer to the report regarding the Air Quality implications of planting trees.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

21. The Community Payback Service have confirmed that they can plant the whips and community volunteers also want to be part of the project reducing the costs of the project significantly.

#### **ICT/TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

22. None.

#### **PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

23. There is a possibility during this project that land may become available to develop woodlands to further achieve the aims of this project. If land is identified then further papers will be brought to Cabinet.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

24. Maintenance of these trees are essential to mitigate any future risk and this will be scheduled into the Councils maintenance programme.

#### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT**

25. None

#### **RELEVANT DIRECTORS RECOMMENDATIONS**

26. That Cabinet approves the tree planting plan detailed in this report is taken forward and will provide on-going support feedback and suggestions that can help shape/inform the ongoing process.
27. Cabinet authorise capital expenditure on this scheme over a 4 year period up to the overall budget value of £160,000 which will be allocated from the approved Green Links capital budgets.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

28. The purchase and planting of the trees is a capital cost which is budgeted within the Capital Programme as part of the Green Links programme. Ongoing tree maintenance work will be scheduled into the Council's maintenance programme and met from existing revenue budgets. The annual maintenance budgets will be reviewed periodically to assess if the additional maintenance requirements of this initiative causes any budget pressure which will then need to be addressed.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

29. It is right and proper that the council as a responsible public authority should seek to set a good example when it comes to combating climate change. The specific proposal here is to plant trees on council owned land. There are no legal concerns with this. We have to be mindful of our ongoing maintenance duties and liabilities.

#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

There are no background documents to this report.

**APPENDICES (or There are no appendices to this report)**

**None**

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