

## EXECUTIVE 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Treescape Funding</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	George Candler, Executive Director for Place and Economy
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Graham Lawman, Executive Member for Highways, Travel & Assets

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1974</b>	

### List of Appendices

None

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to request approval to accept the grant funding offered through the Local Authority Treescape Fund. Acceptance of the funding will allow the schemes to move forward to procurement and delivery.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 Through the Local Authority Treescape Fund, the Council has been successful in securing capital funding of £237,504.10 to plant 1,040 trees in North Northamptonshire.
- 2.2 This report seeks to agree the capital budget to progress the scheme through 2021/21 to 2024/25.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Accept the grant monies offered by the Forestry Commission for the proposed tree planting scheme; and
- b) Approve the capital budget of £237,504.10 funded by external grant monies, per the separate capital budget report.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations:

- The proposed scheme will enhance the Council's green space through planting of trees.
- The scheme supports the Council's ambition for climate change mitigation.
- The recommended course of action is the most cost-effective, being funded externally.

### **4. Report Background**

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4.1 The Local Authority Treescape Fund is aimed at establishing trees in non-woodland settings such as in riverbanks, hedgerows, parklands, urban areas, beside roads and footpaths. Trees in these settings are particularly valuable as they can provide the greatest levels of benefit to ecosystems and society, such as carbon absorption, flood protection and support for biodiversity, as well as connecting fragmented habitats.

4.2 The fund is administered by the Forestry Commission, with grants worth between £50,000 and £300,000 available. The Council has been successful in securing funding from the 2021/22 application round that opened earlier this year.

### **5. Issues and Choices**

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5.1 The Forestry Commission through the Local Authorities Treescape Fund invited applications for funding to transform spaces outside of woodlands which would benefit from tree planting.

5.2 The Council has been successful in securing a total of £237,504.10 of capital funding to be received between financial years 2021/22 to 2024/25. The funding awarded covers the purchase of 1,040 trees, associated stakes and cages and funds three years of aftercare to ensure that those planted have the best chance of survival.

5.3 In 2021/22, funding of £56,544.10 will be received. This is split into two payments, an upfront payment of £28,272.05 to support the capital purchase of the trees and equipment required to establish tree planting, followed by the remaining £28,272.05 payment received following the submission of evidence in the form of a Post Planting Report and site visit by a Forestry Commission. Existing Grounds Maintenance budgets used to deliver tree planting will be utilised to support the upfront cost of planting the trees.

- 5.4 Further grants of £60,320 will be received each year in two payments, up until 2024/25, to support the watering and maintenance regime to ensure the best chance of the trees reaching maturity.
- 5.5 As part of the bid, areas in Corby, Kettering, Broughton, Rothwell and Raunds were identified as eligible for the bid. As the Council develops its tree policy and strategy, further areas will be identified to benefit from tree planting in future years.
- 5.6 It is anticipated that project planting will start in January 2022, with completion in March 2022. The work, although not directly connected to the Queens Green Canopy celebrating the Jubilee year, will still be promoted widely and align with the wider promotion of this national campaign.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 Financial support is provided through external grant monies to be received from the Forestry Commission.
- 6.1.2 The planting and maintenance to deliver the scheme will be provided using existing Council resources.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 Administration of the grant will be covered via a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Forestry Commission.
- 6.2.2 The Council is obliged to utilise the grant for the intended purpose of the fund and must provide evidence of planting activities and maintenance to remain eligible to claim the grant.

### **6.3 Risk**

- 6.3.1 The deliverability of the scheme will be monitored by the accountable project manager and senior officer. There is further review throughout the financial year reported through the Executive Committee.
- 6.3.2 If any overspends or emerging pressures are identified during the year, then mitigating actions will be sought and management interventions undertaken.
- 6.3.3 Payment of grant funding is contingent on the tree survival rate. The Council is obliged to maintain a survival rate of 75% to secure the full second payment of the grant funding.
- 6.3.4 Details of pressures, risks and mitigating actions implemented will be provided as part of the finance monitoring reports as the year progresses. Areas such as future inspections, insurance and impacts on adjacent buildings have all been considered as planting plans were designed by a qualified arboriculturist.

## **6.4 Consultation**

- 6.4.1 As part of the tree planting, Ward Members will be consulted on the planting in their area where applicable.

## **6.5 Climate Impact**

- 6.5.1 The proposed planting of 1,040 trees supports the climate change mitigation through the reduction of carbon dioxide and carbon off-set.
- 6.5.2 Planting of trees also has biodiversity benefits, creating new habitats and flood risk alleviation.
- 6.5.3 The planting will also focus on diversifying tree species and replacing trees subject to disease, in particular Ash dieback, to mitigate the risk of major tree loss.

## **6.6 Community Impact**

- 6.6.1 Enhancing our green environment has a positive impact on health and wellbeing, whilst also improving air quality and creating a sense of place.

## **7. Background Papers**

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- 7.1 None.