

FBC – Capital Bid 2019/20

Prepared by/Bid Originator – Paul Drinnan



No: 1 -Tree Planting Budget

Description of Scheme:

The Council is in the process of preparing a Tree and Arboriculture Strategy for the Borough. This is at an advanced 'draft' stage and has been approved by Planning Committee for consultation. A major part of the Strategy is one of seeking to achieve a significant increase in tree cover across the Borough. This will be brought about partly by ensuring that in the case of new developments, significant levels of tree planting are included. Tree preservation orders and the associated consent system seeks to ensure that existing trees will be retained wherever possible or replaced, if there are circumstances where they may be unavoidably lost. Trees are usually an integral part of regeneration schemes in town and village centres, where this is achievable.

The Strategy identifies that a significant number of street trees have been lost over the last decade or so, which are not being replaced. The natural conclusion can only be drawn that in the absence of highway tree replacement by Lancashire County Council (which operates a no replacement policy), then the tree stock will decline further and further. The 'street trees' of the Borough are important for a number of reasons and the Strategy has, as one of its specific aims, a desire to see an overall increase in highway trees. It should be pointed out however, that in the case of Fylde, the principle of replacement trees in highways is a policy the County Council may well support, depending on future management arrangements. The funding for such replacements (or new planting) will need to be funded from local sources.

In addition to increasing the number of highway trees, there are many other opportunities to enhance the local environment through tree planting schemes. Some of these could be located on existing open spaces, which are presently devoid of trees or woodland. They could involve developing schemes with other sections of the Council or indeed other organisations, examples being town/parish councils or other community organisations.

An important aspect of tree planting schemes relates to aftercare and future maintenance and so these factors always need to be considered when contemplating and then implementing schemes.

In order to present a pro-active approach to tree planting, in the light of the emerging Strategy, the Member Working Group, that has been party to the evolution of the Strategy and subsequently Planning Committee, endorsed the principle of having a budget to support tree planting initiatives.

A figure of £25,000 was considered to be an optimum amount that would result in a deliverable and manageable tree planting budget, sufficient to have a discernible impact, but also achievable given the resources that such a scheme would require, in particular officer time.

The precise allocation process and prioritisation of schemes has yet to be considered in detail. However, if the budget is approved, it would be the intention to draw together a protocol as to how the scheme might work and how a prioritisation system would form part of that consideration. This would be presented to Committee for its agreement at the time of the request to draw down the funds.

The potential for a budget has been well received, judging by comments made to officers. The general view is often taken that trees are often considered to offer significant visual and other environmental benefits relative to the financial outlay.

It has been suggested that the budget figure of £25,000 be allocated in the financial year 2019/20 effectively as a one year pilot exercise to be able to assess its effectiveness and deliverability. Towards the end of the next financial year, on-going monitoring of spend and importantly schemes 'on the ground' will then be used to partly inform a decision as to whether the scheme will continue in subsequent years and if so, to what extent.

Capital cost plan:

Cost Heading	Description	Total £
Tree Planting Budget	Creation of a budget to support tree planting initiatives across the Borough	£25,000
Total Project Cost		£25,000

Outputs (i.e. details of what the investment will specifically deliver):

- Significant increase in the overall tree cover in the Borough, numerically.
- Visual enhancements to particular localities to enhance the quality of the local environment and local economy increasing as appropriate street tree numbers and woodland cover area.

Outcomes (i.e. details of the broader benefits achieved by the investment, for example community or environmental benefit, health and safety compliance, or statutory obligations):

- Significant Environmental Benefits as referenced in the draft Tree Strategy
- Increase Visitor numbers, reputation and spend in particular locations by enhancing the quality of townscape i.e. place – making initiatives.
- Reversing the perception of a decrease of trees in towns and villages
- Sustainable management of tree stock
- Enhanced civic pride and presenting the idea of good environmental stewardship by the Council

Contribution to corporate objectives (i.e. how does the project achieve or help deliver priorities within the corporate plan):

- Value for Money. Procure the tree works to maximise high quality physical outputs commensurate with best value through sourcing of trees and prioritisation of schemes for maximum value for money impact.
- A Vibrant Economy. Research shows that a tree clad location can increase property values and the perceived quality of places, often stimulating investment.
- A Great Place to Live. Enhancing the visual amenity of local communities, in addition to offering other health giving benefits as described in the Strategy.
- A Great Place to Visit. Enhancing the reputation and quality of the Borough as a destination, capitalising on its landscape qualities of which trees play an important role as an integral part of the built and natural heritage of the Borough.

Budget Resource Requirements

Breakdown of initial capital costs and future revenue implications

Estimated Total Capital costs of bid: £25,000

Annual **additional Revenue costs** arising from the bid: There will be some initial maintenance implications associated with the implementation of the scheme within the first year which will be part of the capital budget. However any ongoing revenue implications will be absorbed within the existing budgets and roles and responsibilities.

Value and phasing of bid:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	These figures relate to Fylde Council capital spend funded from the capital investment reserve.
	£25,000	To be considered	To be considered	

Existing resources in the Capital Programme relating to this scheme:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	

Estimated timescales for the bid:

Start Date : Financial Year 2019/20	Completion Date: Financial Year 2019/20. Further operation of the fund will be dependent on a review prior to the setting of the budget for subsequent financial years.
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Project Risks (outline any risks to delivery of the project and how these will be mitigated)

Risk	Impact	Mitigating Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of officer time to implement the scheme Lack of interest from 'other parties' to participate in tree planting schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme does not go ahead in part or full. The budget not fully used Scheme does not deliver projects, budget not spent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the scheme into the work plan of the section/team to ensure delivery Publicise the scheme and invite expressions of interest from potential participants. Some groundwork e.g. with the County Council has already taken place and schemes delivered e.g. Clifton Drive, Lytham