

Trusts and Charities Committee - 27 February 2015

Title of paper:	Bridge Estate Charity - Tree Maintenance programme	
Director:	Stuart Knight - Director of Strategic Asset and Property Management	Wards affected: Various
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Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		X
Work in Nottingham		X
Safer Nottingham		X
Neighbourhood Nottingham		X
Family Nottingham		X
Healthy Nottingham		X
Leading Nottingham		
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>This report presents proposals for Bridge Estate to enter into a formal contract for the maintenance and management of trees located on land in its ownership.</p>		
Recommendation:		
1	That the Committee approve the proposal for Bridge Estate to enter into a contract with Nottingham City Council for the annual inspection and maintenance of its tree stock as set out in the report.	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Over the past 18 months the City Council's Tree Services team has undertaken a full survey and risk assessment of the tree stock within the city boundary. For the first time, the survey has incorporated known Bridge Estate trees which historically have only been managed on a reactive basis. The survey has been carried out in order to ensure that the Council and Bridge Estate fully mitigate their insurance risks and puts in place a rigorous process of inspection and a programme of works to resolve any identified areas of risk.

The survey has identified approximately 291 individual trees on 12 Bridge Estate sites (see appendix 1). These trees are located within both urban and rural locations. Approximately 107 of these trees are the responsibility of Bridge Estate to manage; the remaining trees are located on land leased to third parties. The survey found that 32 trees required immediate remediation. The majority of these trees are located on Old Coach Road and were attended to last autumn.

The tree works have been identified using the Tree Safety Management Plan (annex Urban Forestry Strategy see appendix 2) which gives us a methodology and process to identify risk and how best to prioritise the works.

Traditionally trees located within Bridge Estate have not been included within the Council's wider tree management programme and therefore have not received any proactive management. The survey is the first step towards addressing these problems. However, attention is now needed to put in place a suitable programme of works to deal with both the urgent reactive work and the long term proactive management of the tree stock.

1.2 The Tree Works Proposals

In order to mitigate the safety risks associated with the trees a programme of both urgent works and long term proactive management is required. These works will include removal of dead, diseased and damaged trees and will ensure that the trees are significantly improved and are more sustainably managed in the future years.

Annual maintenance cost

The cost for the annual maintenance of the total Bridge Estate tree population of 107 will be £5,000. This would cover the following:

- Incorporation into the Council's cyclical maintenance survey and operational programme ensuring that we meet our statutory obligations;
- 24 hour Emergency tree works cover;
- Full itinerary of trees stored on Tree Services Database "Ezytreev";
- Enquiries involving trees on Bridge land investigated and resolved through use of policy set in the Urban Forestry Strategy;
- Professional Arboriculture advice in insurance and litigation cases.

Not Included

- Stump removal;
- Replanting of removed trees;
- Collections of trees or plants classified as hedges;
- Ivy/invasive plant removal from walls and building.

These works can be carried out at extra cost.

Breakdown of priority and associated costings to carry out tree works:

Tree Works	Bridge priority trees No.	Bridge total costings (£)
Priority Work undertaken in 2014	27	£ 10,500
Priority work to be undertaken in 2015/16	80	Approx. £ 3,000
Annual Maintenance Programme including annual survey, programmed works and emergency call out	107	£ 5,000

The initial annual Maintenance Programme Costing is based on:

- Initial yearly Full Arboricultural Survey assessing condition of tree and potential risk potentials (amount of potential damage) and Zones (i.e. is tree in high footfall areas). This will cost £10 per tree for a total of £1,070.
- Estimated yearly works costs, this is predicted to mainly involve crown lifting, dead wooding and epicormic removal. With the occasional removal of recently deceased trees - £3,000 a year.
- Emergency Tree Cover - £500 a year.
- Administration costs - £430 a year.

These figures are based on average running costs.

It is proposed that Bridge Estate will enter in to an annual contract with the City Council for this service. It is expected that the tree works will be carried out by both the Council's in house team and also external contractors employed directly by it.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 To meet Bridge Estate's statutory obligation and reduce litigation in line with the Tree Safety Management Plan.
- 2.2 To ensure that budgets allow for proactive management of Bridge Estate trees.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Alternatives would not be viable as continued lack of management would lead to potential litigation cases brought against Bridge Estate.
 - 3.2 To not carry out the annual inspections and tree work would result in the continued deterioration of the trees and woodlands and would lead to increased costs incurred by reactive maintenance.
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4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

- 4.1 The Bridge Estate Charity will need to commit an annual budget to ensure that the tree safety and woodland management costs are fully covered. The annual cost has been included in the 2015-16 Budget (also being considered at this meeting).

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 Legal

The proposal to enter into a contractual arrangement with Nottingham City Council, on the basis set out in the report, raises no significant legal issues. On the assumption that the £5,000 annual payment provides cover for all of the trees for which Bridge Estate is responsible then it also makes good business sense. The Committee should still ask for annual updates on tree surveys and work undertaken to ensure that the contract provides value for money.

5.2 Risk and Opportunity Management

Resolving the urgent tree works and putting in place a comprehensive work programme to maintain the trees will ensure that Bridge Estate addresses the risks and significantly improves the service provided.

5.3 Performance Management

The ongoing monitoring and successful delivery of a comprehensive programme of works will be monitored directly by the City Council's Tree Service team in order to ensure that the works are to the required standard, cost effective and sensitively carried out.

5.4 Communications

There will be several key stages through the works programme to link to a communications plan:

- Public consultation will be carried out in local areas before any major tree operations.
- Localised tree priority plans will be developed in each area of the city.
- Establishment of a community Tree Warden Scheme will be established in order to ensure greater community ownership of trees and woodlands.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

Not required as there are no negative equality impacts relating to this proposal.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

- 7.1 None.
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8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Urban Forestry Strategy (viewable at <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/trees>)

Appendix 1

List of known Bridge sites, number of trees and if Leaseholder managed.

Known Bridge Sites			
Site	No. of trees	Lease holder managed	Estimated cost 2014
Glaisdale Drive East, Nottingham	68	Yes	0
Glaisdale Parkway, Nottingham	89	Yes	986.15
Mapperley Road Allotments	15	Yes	n/a
Old Coach Road, Nottingham	27	No	£10500
Vernon Road, Nottingham	6	Yes	0
Woodborough Road, Nottingham	7	Yes	n/a
Ransom Road Allotments	n/a	Yes	n/a
Bellevue Reservoir Allotment	n/a	Yes	n/a
Woodland opp. Wells Road Wellness Centre	80 approx	No	£3000
Farmland off Plumtree Road. Nr Cotgrave	n/a	Yes	n/a
Farm and Woodland, Strelley	n/a	Yes	n/a
Public House, Bracebridge Rd.	n/a	Yes	n/a