

Operational Decision Record

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| Publication Date 22 July 2022 | Decision Reference Number 4681 |
| Decision Title Consultant Tree Officer Continuation | |
| Decision Value Up to £45,000 | |
| Revenue or Capital Spend Revenue | |
| Department Growth and City Development | |
| Contact Officer Nigel Turpin, Heritage and Urban Design Manager nigel.turpin@nottinghamcity.gov.uk | |
| Decision Taken To continue the use of a consultant to carry out the statutory responsibilities of the Tree Officer role | |
| Reasons for decision and background information <p>The consultant (SP Tree Consultancy) is fulfilling the vacant Tree Officer post, which provides a statutory duty. The post has statutory responsibilities and is highly specialised, with no in-house knowledge available. Therefore, not having the post occupied cannot be absorbed, even on a short term/temporary basis, whilst tendering and/or permanent recruitment takes place.</p> <p>Recruitment to the post has been unsuccessful, so there is a requirement to rely on a qualified consultant to maintain and deliver the Council's statutory responsibility to determine applications for works to protected trees, and in turn safeguard the city's trees, which provide a public benefit to health and amenity. With no consultant Tree Officer in post, there is a high likelihood that unauthorised tree works and felling of protected trees would take place. This would result in poor planning and place-making outcomes, with risk to inward investment and to the health and wellbeing of citizens, as well as hindering and conflicting with the Council's Carbon Neutral agenda.</p> | |
| Other options considered and why these were rejected <p>To do nothing: this option is rejected, as the post has statutory responsibilities. Not having someone in post cannot be absorbed, even on a temporary basis.</p> <p>To use of in-house capacity: this option is rejected due to insufficient internal expertise to undertake the role. The role requires specialised knowledge and necessary qualifications that are held by the consultant currently appointed. This</p> | |

reduces the risk for the Council so it can continue to meet and deliver its statutory responsibilities and obligations. It is also considered to be best value for money for the Council to retain the consultant's services until the recruitment of a permanent appointment to the vacant Tree Officer post, with the consultant working at a reduced cost, below the current market rate for an experienced qualified tree consultant.

Reasons why this decision is classified as operational

The decision has a value below the £150,000 threshold and falls within the delegated authority given to the Corporate Director for Growth and City development. The cost to deliver the statutory duty will be met within existing staffing budgets and service area income.

Additional information

The consultant cost is based on working 16 hours a week at a reduced hourly rate of £50 per hour. The consultant's standard charged hourly rate is £65-£80 per hour, dependent on the amount and complexity of the work. This aligns with the market rate for a qualified and experienced tree consultant, with quoted private sector arboricultural consultancy rates ranging from £55 an hour for regular work up to two days a week, up to £120 an hour. Therefore, at £50/hr, the Council is achieving best value for money. The consultant's contract is to be terminated on recruitment of a permanent appointment to the vacant Tree Officer post.

Decision Maker

Sajeeda Rose, Corporate Director for Growth and City Development

Scheme of Delegation Reference Number

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Date Decision Taken

22 April 2022