



**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

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**to  
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
10 NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE REQUEST**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To request a Supplementary Estimate for Urgent Emergency Tree Works,
- 1.2 The approval and reporting arrangements in relation to virements and supplementary estimates are set out in the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures. These are as follows:

Supplementary Estimates:

- Up to £20,000 – Director and Director of Resources in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Leader and reported to the next Strategy and Resources Committee.
  - Over £20,000 –Strategy and Resources Committee.
- 1.3 Based upon the above requirement this Committee is asked to approve a necessary financial sum to fund the work.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) that a Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £112k is provided to fund the urgent tree works identified, broken down into two elements (as follows):
- that Essex County Council Place Services are engaged to oversee all of the works on behalf of the Council at a cost of £12k (Management);
  - that Essex County Council Place Services costs of engaging with the contractors for the tree works at a cost of £100k.
- (ii) that a further sum of £18k is provided as a contingency sum to cover unexpected costs associated in undertaking the work identified in (i) above;

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 In 2020, Essex County Council Place Services Arboricultural team (PS) were commissioned to undertake an assessment of all trees owned and managed by Maldon District Council (MDC). Due to practical issues in obtaining data, the surveys commenced in February 2021 and were completed in February 2022.
- 3.2 During this time, some urgent tree works were identified, and necessary works were undertaken through approved contractors. The initial budget for this was £14,500, however it soon became apparent, due to the volume of works needed, that this

budget was not sufficient. As a result, quotes were being obtained by PS and approved by MDC on a case-by-case basis.

- 3.3 This case-by-case work ceased in April 2022 due to a lack of formal agreement between MDC and PS, leaving works at the majority of the sites incomplete. No formal bid was made for additional funding at that time.
- 3.4 The current Operations Manager has identified that there are approximately 265 trees left within the Maldon district that were surveyed and currently have active works improvement plans to be carried out. The timescale for the works is now overdue
- 3.5 PS have been asked to re-visit their recommendations and prioritisation for works. PS conclude all works recommended in the initial survey are carried out. In addition because there have been several extreme weather events since the previous inspection, it is recommended that a rapid site walkover is carried out to determine whether trees requiring works are still present and whether any additional trees have died due to the extremely dry weather in 2022.
- 3.6 The potential additional works will be quantified and costed accurately after inspection. It is anticipated the value of all work (including additions) will be in the region of £130k. It is recommended a contingency sum of contingency of £18k is provided however this sum may be reduced if firstly, some trees have already failed but secondly, if the works are all combined into a single batch rather than splitting them depending on priorities achieving greater value for money .
- 3.7 As the Council has no in house capacity it is recommended Essex County Council Place Services be appointed to oversee the necessary work on behalf of the Council.

### 3.8 **Future Management of the Tree Stock**

- 3.8.1 As part of the revenue growth requests for 2023 / 24 a £12k bid has been submitted to update the software required to record the condition of Council Trees. The system will be used to record the condition of our trees and feed into an annual work plan. Officers will work on a five-year rolling programme of maintenance utilising the £34k annual provision to fund the works. Should additional work be identified beyond the resources available supplementary estimates will be sought at that time. It is anticipated the work will be undertaken by contractors secured through a competitive process. The Council has limited capacity to undertake works directly.

## 4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Council has identified through working with ECC place Services a number of trees which require attention to reduce risks. The works were commenced but insufficient financial resources existed to fund all of the essential works. Professional advice has indicated the works are required without further delay.
- 4.2 The Council will work with Essex Council Place Services to oversee the work utilising contractors to ensure best value is achieved A rolling maintenance plan will ensure trees are monitored and attended to going forwards overseen by the Operations team.

## 5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 The adherence to the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures contributes towards the corporate core values of being open and transparent, and accountable for our actions.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Trees that are not managed or maintained represent a risk to our customers and or adjoining property.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Trees within our portfolio should be managed or maintained to ensure they are safe, reducing possible future claims for injury or property.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – We do not currently have sufficient financial resources to cover the cost of the works identified and a supplementary estimate is sought to cover the identified backlog.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – As above.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – Trees are our natural ‘armour’ against climate change. Trees, hedgerows and woodlands are an integral part of nature, supporting a wide range of insects, animals, birds and plant life. Having trees, hedges and woodlands in our local environment is essential for the future health of nature and of people. Trees provide one of the most cost-effective ways to improve the environmental quality of our urban areas, delivering physical, social and economic well-being as well as mitigating climate change, improving storm water management, air quality, biodiversity and visual amenity to name but a few
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – None identified.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Farley Norman, Operations Manager.