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Subject: The Planting of Trees in the Borough

Report to: Executive Leadership Team, Wednesday 31st August 2022

Environment Committee, Tuesday 13th September 2022

Report by: Kate Blakemore, Strategic Director and Jon Barnard, Project Manager

SUBJECT MATTER

This report provides an update on Tree Planting Activity in Great Yarmouth, specifically referring to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, Parks and Green Spaces Levelling Up Fund and GYBS annual Tree Planting works.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to:

- Note the content of this report

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members recently approved at Full Council the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. This presents three challenges and considers what activities we need to undertake to meet these challenges. This is further supported by an Action Plan that outlines what we will be doing to address these challenges over the next 5 years.
- 1.2 The Nature Challenge's vision is: "Great Yarmouth provides space for nature, where the natural environment is protected and constantly improving. We envisage a Great Yarmouth where a resilient natural environment supports the health and wellbeing of our citizens and delivers key ecosystem services such as flood and climate change resilience. The Borough will prepare well and be resilient to the impacts of climate change, including coastal erosion, flooding and droughts". By planting trees in the Borough, we will help to make this vision a reality.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of three workstreams that are currently/propose to deliver tree planting in Great Yarmouth. These are Green Recovery Challenge Fund, Parks and Green Spaces Levelling Up Fund and GYBS annual Tree Planting works.

3. GREEN RECOVERY CHALLENGE FUND – TREES FOR CITIES

- 3.1 Trees for Cities is the only UK charity working at a national and international scale, with the ambition to improve lives through the planting of trees in cities and urban areas. The aim of the scheme is to revitalise forgotten spaces, create healthier environments and get people interested in growing and eating healthy foods.
- 3.2 As part of a consortium bid Great Yarmouth Borough Council (GYBC) secured funding for the planting of 505 trees within the urban areas of Great Yarmouth Town. This project is being delivered as part of the Forgotten Places: Greening Coastal Towns and Cities initiative, funded through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund. This is a two-year project. All planting must be completed by March 2023. The project is also part of The Queen's Green Canopy, a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.
- 3.3 The project aims to expand the tree canopy cover to increase resilience against the effects of climate change and supports local greening and biodiversity strategies in response to the climate crisis.
- 3.4 The objectives of this project include:
- Nature conservation and restoration; planting and establishing 505 trees. Increasing species-rich urban canopy cover and connecting habitats.
 - Nature-based solutions: targeted planting to increase ecosystem services and resilience to climate change, improve urban forest management, build capacity, and create resources for coastal communities.
 - Connecting people with nature: local communities and the authority are galvanised to plant, protect, and promote urban trees. Direct connectivity improves knowledge and skills to establish the right trees in the right places in the right way.
 - Reduce social deprivation: there is a strong correlation between low canopy cover (a measure of environmental deprivation) and social deprivation. This inequality means that people in deprived areas, the most vulnerable who face barriers to environmental justice, have less opportunity to benefit from urban trees.
- 3.5 As part of developing the planting strategy as part of this project, there are some specific requirements from the funders in terms of the areas in which trees can be planted. Areas selected for planting must fall within an urban area. This is defined as a built-up area, with a population of at least 2000 people.
- 3.6 As a result, the ten planting areas selected are:
- Trafalgar Road
 - Mariners Road
 - York Road/St Johns

- Deneside
- St Peters Road
- The Conge
- North Drive
- South Quay
- Marketplace
- North Quay

3.7 The project team have and are working hard to try and plant as many trees as possible within these specific areas. The tree species which have been chosen are best suited to the areas where these trees are to be planted, and the conditions needed for the trees to survive and thrive.

Phase 1 Planting

3.8 We were notified of our funding success in October last year. As a result, timescales were very tight in terms of delivering any planting for the Winter of 21/22. By working with landscape master planners as part of this project and the Town Centre Members Working Group, a small number of sites were identified which could be planted during 21/22, resulting in 86 trees being planted over 4 sites. The table below details the sites and trees which were subsequently planted.

Location	Total planted	Tree Types
Trafalgar Road	25	8 Italian Alder 3 Field Maple 1 European hornbeam 4 Norway Maple 4 Cherry Acolade 5 Littleleaf Linden
Mariners Road	40	11 Mount Fuji Cherry 4 European hornbeam 3 Cherry Acolade 12 Callery pear 6 Littleleaf Linden 4 Norway Maple
York Road/ St Johns	8	5 Callery pear 3 Mount Fuji Cherry
Deneside	13	3 Italian Alder 3 Mount Fuji Cherry 7 Italian Alder

Phase 2 Planting

- 3.9 Phase 2 is the planting scheme that has been designed with our master planners for tree planting between November 2022 and February 2023 and will consist of 205 trees being planted over 5 sites.
- 3.10 At this stage of the project our anticipated planting numbers are less than originally planned at funding bid stage, but the team are confident that the proposed trees will be planted in the right areas in a way that they will become established and thrive. The table below details the sites and trees which are proposed to be planted as the second phase of this project.

Location	Total planting of standard trees	Tree types
St Peters	19	5 Mount Fuji Cherry 4 Littleleaf Linden 10 Hornbeam
The Conge	6	6 Cypress Oak
North Drive	57	22 Austrian Pine 6 Scots Pine 9 Aspen 20 Sycamore
South Quay	96	4 English Oak 12 Whitebeam 6 Littleleaf Linden 9 Field Maple 47 Honeylocust 14 Aspen 4 Hornbeam
Marketplace	27	3 Silver birch 2 Sweet chestnut 3 Maidenhair tree 3 Whitebeam 14 Silver lime Brabant 2 London plane

- 3.11 Specific analysis has taken place with regards to South Quay, due to ongoing issues with tree survival rates in this area. This has included extensive investigation and soil testing. Several tree pits were excavated as part of site investigation to inform plans to replant in the area.
- 3.12 Recommendations for the most appropriate approach given the various site constraints were given and form part of the planting proposals in this area. Although it is stressed that there will still be a risk to tree planting in this location, much has been done to try and mitigate this risk in the longer term.

Phase 3 Planting

- 3.13 On the completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 planting, in total, 285 trees will have been planted. This will leave 220 trees which will need appropriate sites that adhere to the funders guidelines to be identified and proposed. Work is now underway to develop these proposals. It is therefore proposed that once any agreements have been made with the funders in terms of additional planting areas that phase 3 proposals will be finalised and presented for further discussion.

Other Activities

- 3.14 As part of the funding for this project, GYBC has created two traineeship Tree and Horticultural Assistants who are working with GYBS on a full-time basis for a period of nine months. These placements will assist in the planting, documenting, and monitoring of establishment to ensure longevity of trees. These placements commenced in June this year.
- 3.15 Working alongside the Field Studies Council, a range of workshops will take place, both face to face and remotely. With the aim to increase awareness of tree species, the health of trees both existing and new and how to identify healthy trees through the seasons. Creating a wider knowledge within the community of tree health, will support the long-term maintenance of trees within the borough and promote a sense of shared ownership of communal areas and trees.
- 3.16 This project is also part of the Queen's Green Canopy, created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee where residents will be invited to plant a tree for the jubilee. Everyone from individuals to children's groups, schools and businesses will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environments by planting trees during the official season between October and March. There is a focus on planting sustainably, encouraging the creation of a legacy to honour The Queen's leadership of the nation, which will benefit future generations.
- 3.17 The Queen's Green Canopy event in Great Yarmouth will take place between November 2022 and February 2023 and will involve the planting of trees by stakeholders, VIPS and school children, alongside a variety of engagement activities. A Queen's Green Canopy plaque will be unveiled, and an afternoon tea will be held for key stakeholders and VIPs.

Next Steps

- 3.18 To finalise the phase 2 planting proposals and progress with the planting of these trees, whilst developing phase 3 planting proposals and delivering all other activities as required as part of this externally funded project.

Financial Implications

- 3.19 This project is funded through The Forgotten Places: Greening Coastal Towns and Cities initiative, funded through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The total budget for the project is £261,840. This is made up of the following income:
- 3.20 GYBC submitted a bid to Defra/Forestry Commission (Urban Tree Challenge Fund) and was successful in securing a £75,546.72 investment for the project. GYBC has allocated £39,953 of

funding from the Town Deal Fund to the project. The grant awarded by the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to the project is £146,340.

3.21 A high level break down of the budget is as follows:

Budget Area	Cost
Delivery phase capital costs: surveys, tree planting and maintenance	£115,500
Delivery phase activity costs: project professional fees, traineeships, training workshops, volunteer activity and events	£133,440
Delivery phase other costs: recruitment and evaluation	£12,900
Total	£261.840

3.22 This budget is based on the delivery of all 505 trees and the subsidiary components of the project. If there is a shortfall of trees which cannot be planted, then funding will be reduced in line with the cost per tree allocated to the project.

4. PARKS AND GREEN SPACES LEVELLING UP FUND

4.1 In July 2022 the Council was notified that it had been selected as an area to receive monies as part of the Governments Levelling Up Parks Fund. This fund has been developed specifically to improve parks and urban green spaces within cities and towns, Identifying the importance of providing spaces for communities to come together and people to have access to the outdoors and green spaces to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

4.2 Rather than competing for monies, the Council has been allocated £85,000 via an opt in process. We have now opted in to receive this money and have until the 3rd of October to submit our proposals on how this money will be spent.

4.3 The funding allocation is split into three parts, £47,500 to be spent of capital works (can include paths, benches, play equipment etc), £18,500 to be spend on revenue (can include consultancy, project management resource, ongoing maintenance costs etc) and a £19,000 tree planting uplift (to only be spent on tree planting).

4.5 The broad project outcomes are the creation of a new park/green space or the enhancement of an existing one with the objective of being able to achieve green flag status going forwards. Looking at the recent work that both property services and strategic planning have undertaken in terms of our open spaces and need, we reviewed 20 sites that we believe require the most improvement going forwards, as detailed within the previous play and open spaces report received by this committee.

4.6 In considering which site would be able to meet these outcomes of this funding, we also needed to ensure that the site would have the available space on which trees could be planted. In doing this we considered which sites could receive additional funding to scale up the scope of the project.

- 4.9 Consultation has taken place with the relevant ward Councillors, and the proposals for this site are currently being developed. As this funding forms part of the Levelling Up Fund and involve section 106 monies, the final proposals will be presented to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in September for ratification.

5. GYBS ANNUAL TREE PLANTING WORKS

- 5.1 The GYB Services Arboriculture Team carry out tree maintenance and tree planting across the Borough in accordance with the Service Level Agreement on behalf of GYBC. GYBS have a limited budget to undertake any new tree planting which totals approximately £20,000.

- 5.2 Every year (during the winter months) trees are planted throughout the borough in open spaces, the crematorium (including memorial trees), cemeteries, parks, rec grounds, GYBC Housing communal areas. These planting locations are usually identified through the replacement of existing tree removal due to safety concerns, existing tree stock at end of life being replaced, GYBC Council officer request and GYBC ward Councillor requests.

- 5.3 Through the completion of tree works GYBS will also encounter locations within the GYBC's responsibility suitable for additional tree planting to enhance the existing tree stock within a certain area – based on sound professional Arboriculture opinion and knowledge. Decisions to plant in these areas are subject to agreement with property services and will also include relevant ward Councillor consultation going forwards.

- 5.4 The tree planting over the last 3 years consists of:

	Total
2021/2022	34 Trees
2020/2021	35 Trees
2019/2020	55 Trees

- 5.5 The trees are planted in accordance with best industry practice – stakes, irrigation system, wildlife protection. Newly planted trees are maintained and watered for the first three years following planting to ensure establishment (and replaced when unsuccessful in first year following planting).

- 5.6 The existing/mature Tree maintenance involves undertaking all arboriculture works in accordance with relevant legislation and current arboriculture best practices including BS3998:2010 (Tree Work Recommendations). This also includes Regulations, Codes of Practice and Guidance notes provided by the arboricultural industry. Tree operations carried out by GYBS will focus on retaining existing trees wherever possible to enhance the borough aesthetically but additional services such as pollarding, fracture and natural pruning and hedge reductions are undertaken.

Other works

- 5.7 **NCC tree planting;** is undertaken under NCC highways budget managed by the Highways engineers. Providing Arboriculture advice/recommendations/generating work spec's upon NCC highways trees across the entire borough following enquiries from the public and NCC engineers.
- 5.8 **S106/GYBC Planning;** providing Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) and Conservation Area tree works applications advice and Arboriculture recommendations for strategic planning officers. Including generating replacement planting specification/planning conditions. Working with developers and agents to agree Arboriculture matters pre planning and during planning application process.
- 5.9 Issuing TPO's to suitable trees, groups, woodlands and assessing and reissuing existing GYBC TPO no longer fit for purpose. Investigating and evidence gathering of breaches of TPO, and conservation tree works and damage to protected trees – working with GYBC enforcement officer.

Background Papers

GYBC Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	At ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	At ELT
Existing Council Policies:	Environmental Sustainability Strategy
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	Addressed in the report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Addressed in the report
Risk Implications:	Addressed in the report
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	Is in place for the Tress for Cities project (no issues)
Crime & Disorder:	n/a
Every Child Matters:	n/a