

# Chichester District Council

Cabinet

11 January 2022

## Planting Trees Outside Woodlands Project - DEFRA funding

### 1. Contacts

#### Report Author:

Tom Day – Environmental Co-ordinator  
Telephone: 01243 534854 E-mail: [tday@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:tday@chichester.gov.uk)

#### Cabinet Member:

Penny Plant - Cabinet Member for Environment and Chichester Contract Services  
Telephone: 01243 575031 E-mail: [pplant@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:pplant@chichester.gov.uk)

### 2. Executive Summary

The Council has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with DEFRA to deliver a tree planting project, fully funded by DEFRA and including a project officer. The project is fixed term and due to run until September 2023. This report seeks approval for the project budget and for the direct expenditure under that budget.

### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council that a budget of £290,240 is approved for the DEFRA funded Trees Outside Woodland Project.
- 3.2 That, subject to Council approving recommendation 3.1, Cabinet approves expenditure for the project officer and the following two pilot projects:
  - 3.2.1 £116,450 for the project officer
  - 3.2.2 £60,040 for the Subsidised Trees pilot
  - 3.2.3 £28,500 for the Urban Tree pilot.
- 3.3 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Environment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Chichester Contract Services, to accept an increase in the approved budget and expenditure for any of the four pilot projects up to a total of £50,000 per pilot if additional funding is offered by DEFRA or by another participating local authority.

### 4. Background

- 4.1 In September 2020, Chichester District Council was invited at short notice to join a DEFRA funded pilot project after one of the existing partners left the partnership. The project is fully funded by DEFRA grant. A Memorandum of Agreement was entered into with DEFRA in December 2020 and the Council are invoicing DEFRA quarterly in arrears for expenditure.

4.2 The purpose of the project is to trial different approaches to tree planting outside woodlands which have proved to be both difficult and not cost effective. The structure of the project means that DEFRA provides funding for the Council to lead on the Subsidised Tree Pilot, funding for a Project Officer for 2.5 years and also funding to participate in 3 of the 4 other pilots being led by the other partners.

4.3 In December 2021 Cabinet approved expenditure on two of the other pilots (Hedgerow Trees and Agroforestry) that are being delivered through grants to landowners. The Subsidised Tree pilot (on which we lead) and our participation in the Urban Trees project are being delivered by direct expenditure or through CDC procured contractors. The staff costs of the project officer also fall within overall budget. This report seeks approval for the overall project budget through to September 2023 and for the expenditure not already approved.

## 5. Outcomes to be Achieved

5.1 The main outcome to be achieved is to increase the numbers of trees planted in Chichester District with benefits for biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

5.2 By agreeing the recommendations, the Council will be fulfilling its obligations as a partner of the Planting Trees Outside Woodlands Project and as set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the District Council and DEFRA.

5.3 The main outcome for the whole Planting Trees Outside Woodlands Project is to influence future government policy and to develop new ways of expanding biosecure tree cover outside woodlands at reduced costs to meet increased ambition in England.

## 6. Proposal

6.1 The project budget and structure have been set through negotiation with DEFRA and the other participating local authorities and is given below. Approval is sought for the budget (£290,239) to September 2023 and for all elements of expenditure (£204,990) apart from those marked as being already approved (those delivered by grants).

	Budget (to Sept 23)	Type of expenditure	Spend to date (Dec 21)	Future expenditure
Staff costs	116,450	Direct	39,979	76,470
Subsidised Trees pilot (CDC expenditure only)	60,040	Procurement of trees, publicity and support costs	14,979	45,062
Urban Tree pilot – (Miyawaki plots)	28,500	By procurement of a contractor	0	28,500
Agroforestry/ Orchards pilot	37,000	By grant to landowners	0	37,000 (approved Dec 2021)

	Budget (to Sept 23)	Type of expenditure	Spend to date (Dec 21)	Future expenditure
Trees in the Farmed Landscape pilot (aka Hedgerow Trees pilot)	48,250	By grant to landowners	0	48,250 (approved Dec 2021)
Total	290,240		54,957	235,282

6.2 All the budgets given above are DEFRA funded under the MoA. As a multiple pilot project, the project officer is essential for pilot design, publicising the scheme, finding larger sites for those pilots that require them, coordination with the wider partnership, administration of grants and procurement and also the large element of post planting monitoring and evaluation required.

6.3 The budgets given above are the minimum budgets. If there are underspends in any other project partners budgets these may be offered to CDC. The recommendation in 3.3 is to give a delegated authority to accept any such increase to the approved budget should this happen.

## 7. Alternatives Considered

7.1 Withdrawing from the project at this stage is possible but would mean the benefits of increased tree planting are not delivered, future grant funding from DEFRA for environmental projects might not be forthcoming and such an option would not have any financial benefit to the Council.

## 8. Resource and Legal Implications

8.1 The financial implications are set out in section 6 above. The budgets are fully funded by DEFRA. If CDC underspends in any financial year the budget can be offered to the other local authorities in the project but would be claimed by them in their invoicing of DEFRA.

8.2 The project does not relate to any current statutory obligation, although Government has indicated it is considering the introduction of statutory tree targets as part of the UK's Net Zero Strategy.

8.3 The Tree Project officer has been recruited and is in post under the terms of the existing MoA. The post is managed within the existing resources of the Environmental Strategy team.

8.4 There are no additional IT or property implications.

## 9. Consultation

9.1 The development of the pilot has been discussed regularly with the external project partners, including DEFRA, Natural England, The Tree Council and the other four local authority partners. The project delivers Action 13.1 (increased tree planting) of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, which was subject to full public consultation.

## 10. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

10.1 The main community impacts will be increased tree planting and increased partnership working within the district. The council is participating in the project because the project fits well with our Climate Emergency Action Plan and brings additional benefits for the ecology of the District

10.2 One of the main risks for the project is that the sites do not come forward as trial sites for tree planting and the funding is not allocated. However, to date this has not proved to be the case and take-up has been good.

## 11. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		X
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation</b> Yes positive impacts for addressing climate change locally and for biodiversity	X	
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b> Equality issues has been considered by the wider partnership, including ensuring that the funding for trees is accessible to all.	X	
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		X
<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Appropriate</b> handling of data collected is integral to the project. No high risk or significant data handling is required by the project		X
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b> By supporting tree planting there should be minor but positive impacts on health and wellbeing.	X	

## 12. Appendices

12.1 Quarterly Budget breakdown to September 2023.

## 13. Background Papers

13.1 DEFRA Memorandum of Agreement 30238 - Shared Outcomes Fund: Promoting Trees Outside Woodland (version dated February 2021)