

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 18th November 2019

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WARD(S): ALL

PORTFOLIO: Sustainable Transport & Environmental Services – Cllr Rob Anderson

PART I **KEY DECISION**

URBAN TREE CHALLENGE FUND

1 Purpose of Report

To consider the opportunity to provide £521,945.02 from general capital as match funding for an Urban Tree Challenge Fund Grant of £501,409.16 which, combined, would see the planting of 1,200 standard & small trees and 6,000 whips at 31 different sites across the borough in the next 18 months.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the re-profiling of the capital schemes in year be agreed to release £521,954.02 to enable the Council to comply with match funding conditions of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund and thus receive from the Forestry Commission a grant of £501,409.16 (51% SBC for 49% FC).

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The planting of trees improves visual amenity, air quality and the quality of our public realm. The health and wellbeing of residents improves where they interact with the natural world contributing to Priority 3: Improving mental health and well being.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

Provision of urban woodland assists in the delivery of our Five Year Plan in that it contributes to ensuring Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay. It also assists in improving air quality in the borough and contributes positively to our carbon agenda.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

The provision of £521,945.02 from the re-profiling in year of capital schemes will be achieved by reallocation of monies to the new UTCF Cost Code from P165 Leisure Centre Farnham Road.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
The Cabinet is requested to resolve to agree a re-profiling in year of capital schemes to release £521,945.02 to match fund an offer from the Forestry Commission for a grant of £501,409.16 (51% SBC for 49% FC)	If we don't satisfy the conditions of the grant during the project then grant funding could be withheld.	As part of the grant we will employ a Project Officer to manage the delivery of the 31 projects within the agreed parameters	Negligible	Continual monitoring and monthly review at Divisional SMT

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Implications for this proposal.

Under Rule 7.23 of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules in Part 4.6 of the Constitution any in year re-profiling of capital schemes will be reported to cabinet for consideration on the basis that the overall revenue cost of the capital programme is not exceeded. Any revenue increase in the Capital programme or the underlying borrowing requirement must be considered by the full council.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment as assessment criteria will not be reviewed as part of this process.

(f) Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs

This project will provide carbon offset.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) has been developed by the Forestry Commission to contribute towards meeting the Government's manifesto commitment to plant one million urban trees by 2022.
- 5.2 We have been successful in securing a Forestry Commission grant, subject to providing match funding. The Forestry Commission will provide 49% of the funding if SBC provide 51%. In monetary terms the Forestry Commission will provide grant funding of £501,409.16 if SBC provide £521,945.02.
- 5.3 Our successful proposals outlined the design and physical works to plant a total of 1,200 standard & small trees and 6,000 whips at 31 different sites across the

borough. The trees must be planted in the 2019/20 November to March planting season and the 2020/21 November to March planting season.

5.4 The time table is as follows:-

- Approval to match fund – Nov 2019
- Project commencement - Nov 2019
- Completion of tree planting – March 2021
- Completion of maintenance programme to ensure the trees become established and self sustaining March 2023 – Final Grant Payment

5.5 The Agreement with the Forestry Commission remains in place for 5 years after the Final Grant Payment is made so until March 2028. SBC are required to fund the maintenance of the trees planted during this “Maintenance Period” as part of the Agreement. This will be done within our budgets to maintain our general tree stock.

5.6 This is a fast delivered project which will positively change the appearance of Slough in years to come. It is intended that the urban woodlands will be supported by monitoring technology to collect data on soil moisture, the health of the trees and improvements to air quality. This data will inform the maintenance regime of the trees and demonstrate the environmental benefit of their presence. Once systems are in place, the data will be made available to residents through “Smart City” applications.

5.7 Collaboration with our Regeneration Officers means that the 31 projects will bring environment and public realm benefits to our Regeneration Strategy - enhancing the quality of the built environment and contributing to the current issues related to climate change adaptation.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

No other committees have been involved in this proposal.

7 **Conclusion**

This is an opportunity to collaborate with the Forestry Commission to positively change the appearance of Slough in years to come and will make a significant contribution to carbon offset. It is recommended that Cabinet resolve to agree to an in year re-profiling of capital schemes to match fund the offer from the Forestry Commission for a grant of £501,409.16

8 **Background Papers**

None.