

## CABINET MEETING – 2 FEBRUARY 2023

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

**Title of Report:**

Tree Planting and Maintenance Framework

**Author(s):**

Executive Director of City Development and Director of Environmental Services

**Purpose of Report:**

This report seeks approval of the establishment of a framework of Tree Planting and Maintenance approved contractors.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to approve the award of a framework agreement for Tree Planting and Maintenance.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?** **Yes**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The Council will be undertaking a significant amount of tree planting over the coming years as part of scheduled replacement activity, in line with our commitments as part of the North East Community Forest, and through other external funding opportunities which arise. The Council is currently conducting a procurement to establish a multiple provider Framework Agreement for the provision of tree planting and associated maintenance within the city.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

Consideration was given to not having a tree planting and maintenance framework agreement in place. Taking into account the increase in the scale of tree planting and associated maintenance which is proposed within the city, it is considered that external resources are required in addition to the Council's own resources within Environmental Services.

Consideration was also given to procuring tree planting and maintenance on a scheme by scheme basis, however, this was not considered appropriate as each individual procurement exercise would require significant investment of staff time and could also result in delays to work being undertaken.

**Impacts analysed:**

**Equality**

**Privacy**

**Sustainability**

**Crime and Disorder**

**Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values?** **Yes**

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?** **Yes**

**Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?** **Yes**

**TREE PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE FRAMEWORK**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT AND  
DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the establishment of a framework of Tree Planting and Maintenance approved contractors.

**2.0 Description of Decision**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the award of a framework agreement for Tree Planting and Maintenance.

**3.0 Background**

- 3.1 In July 2022, the Council adopted a tree management policy which sets out how the Council will manage and maintain the existing trees within the city. This includes a minimum commitment to replacing trees which need to be removed on a 1-1 basis.
- 3.2 In addition, the Council has also been successful in securing grant funding to support the delivery of new tree planting sites. This reflects the Council's recognition of the positive contribution which green spaces and green infrastructure (including trees, hedgerows and wildflowers) can make to communities across the city – helping us to deliver against our ambitious low carbon goals as well generating wider benefits to physical and mental wellbeing.
- 3.3 The Council became one of six local authority partners to formally establish the North East Community Forest (NECF) partnership, alongside a number of external partners, in July 2021. This enables the Council to access Government funding towards tree planting projects within the city. As part of the NECF partnership, the Council has committed to contributing its fair share towards an overall target of 500 hectares of tree planting by 2025, a further 700 hectares of trees planted by 2030, with an overall aim of achieving 30% canopy cover within the NECF area by 2050.
- 3.4 The Council has also been successful in securing external funding through the Government's Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) and as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to facilitate tree planting.
- 3.5 Tree planting and maintenance has traditionally been undertaken either internally within the Council or by appointing contractors to undertake works through a procurement exercise on a site-by-site or scheme-by-scheme basis.

- 3.6 Within the 2021/2022 tree planting season, the Council's Environmental Services team were responsible for tree planting the two Year 1 NECF sites at Hetton Park and Silksworth Park, alongside street trees which were delivered via the LATF. Delivery of the tree planting at Elemore (which represented the largest site to be delivered), was undertaken by an appointed contractor following a tender process.

#### **4.0 Current Position**

- 4.1 During the 2022/2023 tree planting season, it is anticipated that there will be approximately 12 sites of tree planting to be delivered across the city. This is to take place during February and March 2023 as part of the Year 2 tree planting for the NECF, totalling approximately 23 hectares. In addition, it is also anticipated that 72 street trees will be planted using LATF resources which have been secured. This is a significant increase on 2021/22 levels.
- 4.2 As part of the ongoing commitment to the NECF, it is envisaged that planting at these increased levels will continue in the coming years.
- 4.3 Taking into account the significant increase in the scale of tree planting proposed within the city, it is not considered that this can be delivered within existing internal resources. It is therefore considered necessary for the Council to procure the expertise of specialist contractors to undertake future tree planting and maintenance within the city as required.

#### **5.0 Tree Planting and Maintenance Framework**

- 5.1 In order to ensure that the Council has adequate resources in place to deliver planned tree planting over the next few years, a procurement exercise has been undertaken to establish a tree planting and maintenance framework. Alongside the planting of new trees, the contractors appointed under the framework will be required to undertake the first three years of maintenance, after which ongoing maintenance will be undertaken by the Council's Environmental Services team for planting on Council-owned land. Following the establishment of the framework agreement, it is anticipated that the subsequent award of individual call-off contracts for each scheme pursuant to the framework can be authorised under delegated powers by the Executive Director of City Development or the Director of Environmental Services (as the case may be) based on the estimated value of the proposed individual call-off contracts. Where planting being delivered with external funding takes place on privately owned land, the ongoing maintenance will be the responsibility of the landowner.

## **6.0 Reason for Decision**

- 6.1 The Council will be undertaking a significant amount of tree planting over the coming years as part of scheduled replacement activity, in line with our commitments as part of the North East Community Forest, and through other external funding opportunities which arise. The Council is currently conducting a procurement to establish a multiple provider Framework Agreement for the provision of tree planting and associated maintenance within the city.

## **7.0 Alternative Options**

- 7.1 Consideration was given to not having a tree planting and maintenance framework agreement in place. Taking into account the increase in the scale of tree planting and associated maintenance which is proposed within the city, it is considered that external resources are required in addition to the Council's own resources within Environmental Services.
- 7.2 Consideration was also given to procuring tree planting and maintenance on a scheme by scheme basis. However, this was not considered appropriate as each individual procurement exercise would require significant investment of staff time and could also result in delays to work being undertaken.

## **8.0 Relevant Considerations**

- 8.1 **Financial Implications** – There are no direct financial implications associated with approving the Tree Planting and Maintenance Framework. Any tree planting works and maintenance to be undertaken will only be commissioned once funding has been confirmed. Alongside council resources funding has been and is currently being provided via the NECF partnership through Trees for Climate, which is administered by DEFRA and the administered by the Forestry Commission.
- 8.2 **Legal Implications** – The proposed framework agreement (and the resulting individual call-off contracts) will be procured in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.
- 8.3 **Equalities Analysis** – It is not considered that there would be any equality implications arising from approving the framework. The framework has been informed by a full transparent procurement exercise.
- 8.4 **Health Outcomes and Health Inequalities** – Approval of the framework is not considered to have any health impacts, however the framework will facilitate the delivery of tree planting within the city, which will enhance greenspaces within the city which could have a positive impact upon health and wellbeing. Tree planting will also help act as a carbon store which could improve air quality within the city.

- 8.5 **Policy Implications** – Approval of the framework will assist in the delivery of specific actions within Strategic Priority 2 of the Council's adopted Low Carbon Action Plan and also the delivery of the Council's adopted Tree Management Plan.
- 8.6 **Sustainability** - Approval of the framework will assist in the delivery of specific actions within Strategic Priority 2 of the Council's adopted Low Carbon Action Plan
- 8.7 **The Public/External Bodies** – The Framework will assist the Council in delivering its fair share of tree planting activity as part of the NECF, which will help deliver the overall aspirations of the NECF across the region.

## 9.0 **Background Papers**

None